

The Provident FRIEND

July 14, 2020

News from the Providence Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends

Providence Monthly Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business 12th of Seventh Month, 2020 Minutes

Friends gathered at via Zoom technology at noon with 22 present.

Presiding clerk Rebecca Leuchak began the period of silent worship by reading the following queries taken from "Understanding Racism and Privilege Among Friends," Friends General Conference webpage on Challenging Racism: <https://www.fgcquaker.org/resources/understanding-racism-and-privilege-among-friends>

Are we ready to accept the challenge to move out of our area of comfort with regard to awareness of racism?

What things do we do or say that continue racism?

Taking responsibility is not accepting blame. It is empowering.

Do we accept the gift of our responsibility for positive change and racial justice?

The clerk read announcements concerning the life of the meeting.

There was some conversation about our current experiences of worship outdoors and via Zoom. Friends have mixed feelings about the possibility of connecting the outdoor worship to the Zoom version but intend to try it next week if the weather is suitable and then discuss the matter again.

The following items of business were brought forward:

Peace and Social Action Committee brought a proposal that the Meeting join with some other local churches to sponsor a workshop using the curriculum of the Alternatives to Violence Project, the goal of which would be to help people learn to transform conflict in non-violent ways. The workshop might take place in person but more likely online, possibly in Eighth month of this year. A budget of \$200 to \$400 may be needed and may be available through the Ministry and Counsel budget. Friends approved.

For Providence Meetinghouse Management Committee, Nina Berry reported that so far only a few people have expressed interest in resuming indoor worship and even fewer in helping with the required safety procedures; therefore, indoor worship continues to be unavailable. Moses Brown School may not be using the meeting room this year. Some of the other groups which use the building have cancelled plans for this year. The status of the Music for Children program remains uncertain. We thank the committee for its work.

The Working Group on Systemic Racism brought a proposal that the Meeting adopt a minute of exercise. Friends approved. The minute is as follows:

CALENDAR

Note that the Providence and Saylesville meetinghouses are closed. All Meeting gatherings are online via Zoom.

Wednesday, July 15, 10:00 AM,
Meeting Social Hour (Zoom)

Sunday, July 19, 10:00 AM,
Meeting for Worship (Zoom and Outdoors)

Wednesday, July 22, 10:00 AM,
Meeting Social Hour (Zoom)

Sunday, July 26, 10:00 AM,
Meeting for Worship (Zoom and Outdoors)

Wednesday, July 29, 10:00 AM,
Meeting Social Hour (Zoom)

Wednesday, July 29, 7:00 to 7:40 PM, Community-Wide Worship at Moses Brown (Zoom)

Sat Aug 1 through Sun Aug 9,
NEYM Sessions (Zoom)

Sunday, Aug 2, 10:00 AM, Meeting for Worship (Zoom and Outdoors)

Wednesday, Aug 5, 10:00 AM,
Meeting Social Hour (Zoom)

Sunday, Aug 9, 10:00 AM, Meeting for Worship (Zoom and Outdoors)

Wednesday, Aug 12, 10:00 AM,
Meeting Social Hour (Zoom)

Sunday, Aug 16, 10:00 AM,
Meeting for Worship (Zoom and Outdoors)

Monday, Aug 17, 4:00 to 4:40 PM,
Community-Wide Worship at Moses Brown (Zoom)

As Quakers, we are called to a testimony of equality, to “answer that of God in everyone”. This testimony requires us to challenge the historical and current-day racial inequities that surround us, and in which we participate. We are deeply grieved as we take note of the white supremacy and structural racism that are present in our society, in our meeting, and in us as individuals. We are committed to undertake a process within our meeting to examine these truths deeply and to consider, with divine guidance, what may be needed to transform our lives, our meeting community, and our society. We commit to undertaking a process of self-examination and corporate action to do our part to bend the arc of the moral universe towards justice.

The Working Group also intends to offer a bi-weekly program of online conversations about white supremacy and structural racism, which will be based on presentations drawn from New England Yearly Meeting sessions and other resources. The online conversations would take place on weeknight evenings to be determined. Bradford Roarr will send out information about signing up for the program. Friends approved this plan.

The Meeting’s Covid-19 relief fund has collected monies which have not been expended within our Meeting community. Steve Schwartz proposed that the Meeting seek permission of donors to redirect the contributions to a fund set up by the Governor of Rhode Island for pandemic relief within the state. Since the Meeting fund was set up to be overseen by a subcommittee reporting to Ministry and Counsel, Friends did not feel clear to take this step today. We ask the Covid relief subcommittee and Ministry and Counsel Committee to consider the matter and report to the next monthly meeting.

No further business appearing, we closed with a period of silent worship at about 2:00 p.m., intending to meet next on a date to be determined.

Respectfully submitted,
Rebecca Leuchak, clerk
Rebecca Smith, recording clerk

Thinking About Attending Annual Sessions?

from the NEYM Staff

We would love to welcome you.

From August 1 to 9, we invite you to join with Friends in new and exciting ways for Annual Sessions. In this time of pandemic, Friends will gather through the use of videoconferencing technology, knowing we are connected in the Spirit. Having first gathered in 1661, in 2020 New England Yearly Meeting of Friends celebrates 360 years of journeying together as a community of faith and witness. If you're hoping to attend, [registering online](#) as soon as you're able helps us prepare to welcome you. (You can go to [NEYM.org](#)). Teams of Friends are hard at work daily getting ready—and knowing your plans is a great help, and an encouragement to our work.

This year's Sessions will include:

- Five Bible Half Hours with [Cherice Bock](#)
- A plenary program with [Dr. Amanda Kemp](#)
- Meeting for Business
- Memorial Meeting
- Programming for Young Adult Friends
- Programs for teens and children of all ages
- "Home Groups" for small group connection, spiritual nurture, and discernment throughout the week

You can view the Sessions schedule and more [on the New England Quakers website \(NEYM.org\)](#).

For all or any part of Sessions this year—we hope you will join us.

Two Worship Settings on July 19

Next Sunday, July 19, for the 10:00 a.m. worship in the Grove by the Meetinghouse we will be experimenting with connecting the outdoor Friends via Zoom to the on-line Friends worshipping at the same hour. Friends are encouraged to participate in either worship setting to see what that inter-connected experience of worship may be like. Note that this is an experiment and Friends' input will be important to determine if we wish this to be the way forward or not.

Community-Wide Meeting for Worship at Moses Brown School

from Jen McFadden

As we all continue to process the profound and unrelenting challenges of 2020 – a resurgent pandemic, ongoing racial injustice, economic instability, and anxieties about the future – our commitment to support each other as a community feels more important than ever. I want to extend an invitation to everyone in MB's extended family for a series of community-wide Meetings for Worship, offered about every three weeks between now and the end of summer. My hope is that by providing different times and days of the week, all who are interested might find at least one time that will work for them. Here are the details (please note that passwords are required):

Friday, July 10 – 10:00-10:40 am (This session already took place.)

<https://mosesbrown.zoom.us/j/89606933335>

Meeting ID: 896 0693 3335

Password: 235047

Wednesday, July 29 – 7:00-7:40 pm

<https://mosesbrown.zoom.us/j/81692341800>

Meeting ID: 816 9234 1800

Password: 317216

Monday, August 17 – 4:00-4:40 pm

<https://mosesbrown.zoom.us/j/82435740787>

Meeting ID: 824 3574 0787

Password: 181470

Alternatives to Violence Training Program August 15 and 16

The Meeting-sponsored Alternatives to Violence program will be offering a two-day training program on August 15 and 16 from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. with location to be determined. Interested Friends should contact Em McManamy at mcmanamy3@gmail.com for more information.

FCNL Advocacy Team Carrying On Virtually

from Nancy Houston

Thanks to the miracles of technology, our advocacy team, guided by FCNL, has been able to keep active during this period when we've all been hunkered down at home as much as possible. FCNL has kept up their monthly nationwide calls with all 120+ teams in all corners of the country and we've had our regular monthly meeting to discuss those calls. In fact, we have been meeting more than we did pre-coronavirus having added optional weekly check-ins, all via Zoom.

When social distancing started, we initially focused on trying to get letters to the editor published. Sadly we were unsuccessful, in the ProJo and elsewhere. Then we decided to try our hand at virtual lobbying. This spring we've had a couple virtual lobby visits: a conference phone call with Senator Reed and a Zoom meeting with two of Rep. Langevin's military staffers in D.C. Two of our members have also participated with an ad hoc group of other R.I. peace activists in virtual lobby visits concerning Yemen.

We, along with all the other FCNL advocacy teams around the country, are asking our members of Congress to ease sanctions on Iran and to keep sending the message that Congress has not authorized a war with Iran. We've emphasized that it is Congress', not the President's, constitutional responsibility to decide to take our country into war. Of course, like FCNL more broadly, our faith leads us to oppose all wars but, as a matter of policy, we think that Congress must debate and vote every time before sending the men and women of our military into combat.

Below is a screen shot from our check-in Friday, July 10.

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Alternative Sources for Quaker Material

from the Library Committee

Since use of the Providence Meetinghouse is currently limited, the library is not available for browsing or borrowing of books. We look forward to being able to borrow and read our own books again. In the meantime, we are writing to share some alternative sources for Quaker material. New England Yearly Meeting website has *Faith and Practice* and other resources online at <https://neym.org/beliefs/faith-and-practice>. A good source for books of Quaker interest is <https://quakerbooks.org/>; some suggestions for newcomers are at <https://www.fgcquaker.org/discover/further-reading>. Many older Quaker classics are available online, for instance at the Quaker Electronic Archive: <http://www.qis.net/~daruma/index.html>. Finally, Quaker Speak videos at <https://www.fgcquaker.org/discover/quakerspeak-interviews-modern-friends> cover a wide range of topics.

Need for Action

from Penny Jackim

When I heard that a black American man, George Floyd, had been killed for no sufficient reason by a white policeman on May 25th in Minneapolis, Minnesota, I was very upset. This should not be happening in this country, the United States of America!

Protesters gathered and President Donald Trump tear gassed them, as he held a Bible and went to be photographed at a nearby church. If I was younger, I would have joined the crowd, but today I have difficulty walking. Nonetheless, I felt empathy for this angry crowd. I sensed that I was witnessing an important turning point in race relations in this country. I feel a need to be part of it, and wish that the Quaker Meeting felt the same way.

I have been a Quaker for most of my life, since a Quaker Meeting came to Scarsdale, New York, when I was in high school. I believe that we should play a role in social action at this important time.

Confronting Racism and White Supremacy

The Providence Friends Meeting Working Group on Systemic Racism invites Friends to participate in a series of conversations confronting racism and white supremacy in our lives and our monthly meeting. Look for a full description of the program and a survey to determine interest and the best times for sessions to be held - coming to your email in-box soon!

Showing Up for Racial Justice Workshops

The organization Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ RI) is holding a series of workshops on matters related to race and privilege. The deadline to register for the three sessions in the latter half of July is past, but Friends can register for the sessions happening in August. For more information see: <https://www.surjri.org/>

Tribute to Posy Wiggins

The late Rosalind C. "Posy" Wiggins moved to Providence in 1972 and is fondly remembered as a member of Providence Monthly Meeting. She taught history and world religions at Moses Brown School, and she worked tirelessly to combat racism and injustice in Providence.

The Paul Cuffee School website describes Posy as follows: "A valiant defender of civil rights and advocate for social justice, she spent her adult life teaching and writing, and collecting and editing the logs and letters of Paul Cuffee, our namesake – an 18th century African-American ship's captain, trader, humanitarian, and activist for social justice. After her death, her family donated her vast collection of books by and about African Americans to the Paul Cuffee School and thus began the special collection in each of our libraries known as the Rosalind C. Wiggins Collection. Today, the Collection numbers in the thousands of age-appropriate books and is ever growing."

A 29 minute documentary about Posy's life can be seen by going to <https://vimeo.com/325521113>.

Clerk's Corner: Role Models

from Rebecca Leuchak

With my students, I talk a lot about role models: Who in their life experience exemplifies the things they value most, the personal qualities that they aspire to and wish to grow into over their lifetimes?

It's funny, but I have never explicitly paid attention to this in my thoughts about the Quaker communities of which I am a part. Yet when I pause and reflect, I realize that I do in fact operate on a day-to-day level very much keeping in mind those Friends who represent qualities that I would hope to have some day. I can, in fact, at the drop of a hat list the who and the why. And perhaps it is useful to make a list!

There is the woman who is a Friend of service in all her Quaker circles – at the monthly meeting level, the Yearly meeting, and internationally. She is always fully of joyful energy in her dedication to the work of building community. She is also very organized, thorough and precise. There is the very quiet, calm, and contemplative Friend who, when rarely he speaks, holds a passion for the divine in his voice to such an extent that the specific words he utters seem to be absorbed into the mist of his prophetic aura. He has seen much hardship in his life but has unbounded joy in professing his faith. There's the Friend whose sharp intellect and vision can make very unfocused issues suddenly become

understandable and clearly defined in a spiritual context. He is passionate and sometimes very forthright and does not shy away from calling others out for their laxities.

There's the Friend who lives so simply, without need of material things, that she travels with a simple backpack reaching out to meet people in all walks of life. She has created a very large network of Friendly connections and brings others into connection easily, gracefully, naturally. There's the Friend who is young and has constructed their own authentic identity that in no way conforms to the narrow strictures our society places around gender, body image, class aspiration. They are much like another Friend who understands the importance of creative thinking outside the box, using the arts to express their faith, to teach, and to delight.

All of these Friends are dear to me for their intentioned witness and their embodiment of the Quaker testimonies well lived. I have learned a great deal from their example. Which brings me right back to George Fox and his advice written in 1656, which he sent from his confinement in prison in Launceston, Cornwall, to fellow Quaker ministers:

“Be patterns, be examples in all countries, places, islands, nations wherever you come; that your carriage and life may preach among all sorts of people, and to them; then you will come to walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in everyone; whereby in them you may be a blessing, and make the witness of God in them to bless you.”

[Providence Monthly Meeting Contact List](#)

Presiding Clerk: **Rebecca Leuchak** clerk@providencefriends.org
Newsletter: **Jen McFadden and Dan Lederer** providentfriend@providencefriends.org
Website: **Sam Schiffman** webclerk@providencefriends.org
Questions and Information: **Steve Schwartz** info@providencefriends.org

Newsletter of
Providence Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends
(401) 331-4218 or <http://providencefriends.org>

Meeting for Worship each Sunday

Providence: 10:00 am Saylesville: 10:30 am
Conanicut: 10:30 am

First Day School, Providence - Sunday. Children join Meeting for Worship from 10:00-10:15 am and then proceed to First Day School from 10:15-11:00 am.

Other Meetings for Worship (All are welcome):

Monday - 12:30pm - Moses Brown Upper School

Wednesday - 8:25am - Moses Brown Lower School

Wednesday - 9:40am - Moses Brown Middle School

Wednesday - 10-11:30am 2nd & 4th Wed's - Saylesville

Wednesday - Noon-12:45 pm Brown University in
J. Walter Wilson room 411

Potluck, Providence - each First Sunday

Sing-along, Saylesville – 11:30 am each First Sunday

Meeting for Business

Providence: Second Sunday of each month at 12:00pm
(At Saylesville Meetinghouse May, June, Sept, Oct. At Providence Meetinghouse November through April.)

Please note that the information to the left applies to normal circumstances.

Current activities are listed on the Calendar on page 1.

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Newsletter of

Providence Monthly Meeting of the
Religious Society of Friends

99 Morris Avenue

Providence, RI 02906