

# The Provident FRIEND

October 14, 2020

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

## Providence Monthly Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business 11th of Tenth Month, 2020 Minutes

Friends gathered meetinghouse at noon via Zoom technology with 14 present.

Presiding clerk Rebecca Leuchak began the period of silent worship by reading the following queries taken from *New England Yearly Meeting Interim Faith and Practice*, 2015 edition.

Queries 13, 14, and 15, p. 112.

([https://neym.org/sites/default/files/Interim\\_F%26P\\_2015\\_web%20edition.pdf](https://neym.org/sites/default/files/Interim_F%26P_2015_web%20edition.pdf))

*Do you use your time, energy, resources, gifts, and material possessions in the service of God's love?*

*Are you ready to respond to any concern God may lay upon you, large or small?*

*Do you maintain an appropriate balance among work, service, worship, family, and recreation?*

*Are you ready to rest if God asks it of you?*

The clerk read announcements concerning the life of the meeting. The following items of business were brought forward:

### **Proposed Minute for the Functions of the Meeting Treasurer.**

For the Finance Committee, David Bourns brought the following minute for Friends' consideration:

*Our treasurer, Peter Swaszek, is fully authorized to manage the finances of Providence*

*(RI) Monthly Meeting of Friends. This authority includes, but is not limited to the opening and closing of bank and security accounts, and the purchase, sale, and exchange of shares in such accounts.*

*With respect to our yearly budget, the Treasurer may exceed any specific line by 5% or \$100 whichever is larger. With the concurrence of the Clerk of the Finance Committee, this limit may be extended to 10% or \$200, whichever is larger.*

We note that this is not a change from current practice; however, the Finance Committee wishes to provide a current document which our Treasurer can use when dealing with outside institutions. We approve the minute but ask Finance Committee to consider adding a requirement for two signatures on checks above a certain amount. We also wish to add a requirement that the authorization must be re-affirmed annually at the beginning of the fiscal year. Language to this effect should be added to the Meeting Handbook.

## CALENDAR

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

**Wednesday, Oct 14, 10:00 AM,**  
Meeting Social Hour (Zoom)

**Sunday, Oct 18, 10:00 AM,**  
Meeting for Worship (Zoom and Outdoors) and **Noon,** Southeast Quarterly Meeting (Zoom)

**Wednesday, Oct 21, 10:00 AM,**  
Meeting Social Hour (Zoom)

**Sunday, Oct 25, 10:00 AM,**  
Meeting for Worship (Zoom and Outdoors)

**Wednesday, Oct 28, 10:00 AM,**  
Meeting Social Hour (Zoom)

**Sunday, Nov 1,** Meeting for Worship (Zoom and Outdoors)

**Tuesday, Nov 3,** 4:00 PM, Special Meeting for Worship (Zoom)

**Wednesday, Nov 4, 10:00 AM,**  
Meeting Social Hour (Zoom) and **7:00 PM,** Special Meeting for Worship (Zoom)

**Sunday, Nov 8,** Meeting for Worship (Zoom and Outdoors) and **Noon,** Meeting for Business

**Wednesday, Nov 11, 10:00 AM,**  
Meeting Social Hour (Zoom)

**Sunday, Nov 15, 10:00 AM,**  
Meeting for Worship (Zoom and Outdoors)

**Wednesday, Nov 18, 10:00 AM,**  
Meeting Social Hour (Zoom)

**Sunday, Nov 22, 10:00 AM,**  
Meeting for Worship (Zoom and Outdoors)

**Report from Friends Committee on National Legislation Advocacy Team.** For Peace and Social Action, Steve Schwartz brought a report from our Meeting's FCNL Advocacy Team concerning the group's work, which this year focuses on prevention of war with Iran. The group welcomes participation by other Meeting members. More information is available from Steve Schwartz or Nancy Houston. Friends accept the report and recommend publishing it in our newsletter.

**Covid Relief.** For Ministry & Counsel Committee, Bruce Shaw reported that the \$10,000 approved last month for Covid-related relief in the Providence community has been distributed. It was divided evenly among Camp Street Ministries, the Alliance to Mobilize Our Resistance (AMOR), Mt. Hope Community Center, and Bethel A. M. E. Church. Friends are being invited to replenish our General Fund with contributions.

**Saylesville Meetinghouse Management Committee Report.** For the Committee, Bob Watt reported that members of the Committee opened the Saylesville meetinghouse and grounds, with appropriate health precautions, for the annual Great Road Day on September 26. Over 30 visitors attended and there were meaningful discussions about our Society. The Light Year project will be repeated this year, organized by Anne Durant and Bob Watt. Weekly worship continues at Saylesville meetinghouse with very small numbers in attendance. An outdoor book swap took place, and produce was harvested from the garden. Some damage to the fence and gates is being addressed.

No further business appearing, we closed with a period of silent worship at 1:10 p.m., intending to meet next on the 8th of 11th month.

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

### **Address for Contributions**

The address for contributions to Meeting is now as follows:  
Providence Monthly Meeting  
c/o Peter Swaszek  
Box 1787  
Kingston, RI 02881

### **Anti-Racism Dialog Series October 12**

Friends are invited to join our continuing Anti-Racism Dialog Series. The next meeting is Monday October 12th from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. Contact Rebecca Leuchak for the Zoom link, which is the same link for all of these evening sessions. Hope you can join us!

### **Southeast Quarterly Meeting October 18**

Our fall Southeast Quarterly Meeting for Business will be held on Sunday, October 18<sup>th</sup>, hosted by Worcester Friends Meeting via Zoom. Mark your calendars now and plan to attend. More

details to come.

## **Spiritual Support at This Critical Time November 3 and 4**

Let us all hold on to hope! We are all feeling the stresses of our world at this time. Now more than ever we all could use the nourishing gifts of our spiritual community. Let's strive to take care of ourselves and each other. Friends are welcomed to two special meetings for worship to be held on Election Day, Tuesday, November 3<sup>rd</sup>, from 4:00 to 5:00 p.m. and again on the day following, Wednesday, November 4<sup>th</sup>, from 7:00 to 8:00 p.m. via Zoom. Contact the Presiding Clerk, Rebecca Leuchak, to receive the Zoom link. And if in the run up to the elections you would benefit from some Friendly conversation about your concerns, please reach out to members of our Pastoral Care Committee, clerked by Hans-Dieter Gomes, or to your clerk, Rebecca Leuchak.

### **Meeting's COVID-19 Fund**

*from Bruce Shaw*

Providence Meeting has established a COVID-19 Fund to assist anyone in our Meeting community who is facing financial hardship due to the COVID-19 pandemic. If you are in need of financial assistance or you become aware of anyone else in our community in need of financial assistance, please speak with a member of the Pastoral Care Committee (Hans-Dieter Gomes, clerk) or a member of the COVID-19 Fund oversight committee (Bruce Shaw, Dan Lederer, Vicky Ekk). All communications regarding the fund will be considered confidential. Let's be sure we all reach out to any Friends who may be facing a variety of challenges during this strange and stressful time.

### **In-Person Worship in the Grove**

Outdoor in-person worship is continuing at the Providence meetinghouse. Friends will follow the same procedure as they have all summer, although warm layers for sitting still in the crisp fall weather are encouraged. The Grove is beautiful this time of year! Note that in case of rain we will meet on the front lawn of Moses Brown School (the Lloyd Avenue side of the campus) under a big white tent with open sides – it is labeled the “Fox” (as in George) tent! The School has chairs – so if we do move to the tent, you won't need to bring your own chair. Look for an announcement on Sunday morning before 9:00 a.m. if the location is changed for inclement weather.



Friends gather for worship in the Grove at the Providence meetinghouse.

## **The FCNL Advocacy Team** *from Peace and Social Action Committee*

The Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) Advocacy Team sends this request to the clerk of Peace & Social Action for an announcement at Meeting for Business, to remind the Meeting that we exist, continue to be active, and always welcome new members.

We are one of 120+ teams in 42 states. All the teams work on the same topic each year in order to maximize our collective impact. The topic chosen is just one of the many, varied topics FCNL works on which include preventing further climate change, stopping gun violence, immigration issues, and Native American rights. This year's topic is the prevention of a war with Iran, and we have met with our members of Congress to urge them to support several pieces of legislation that would explicitly prohibit a war of choice with Iran without prior Congressional authorization. Many informed people are concerned about the possibility of an "October Surprise", a war started to sway the outcome of the upcoming election.

Along with meeting to discuss the monthly FCNL National Call with FCNL staffers in D.C., we meet by Zoom for a weekly check-in where we plan lobby visits (currently virtual), encourage each other in writing letters to the editor, and find ways to express our concerns over the administration's reckless brinkmanship with Iran.

One specific action anyone can do is to write, call or go to the websites of your congressional representative and Senators, to ask them to call on the administration to issue a "Worldwide Temporary General License" to support humanitarian trade related to COVID-19 for the duration of the pandemic. Currently the Trump administration's harsh and increasing sanctions on Iran prevent essential aid needed to control a burgeoning Covid-19 outbreak there from reaching the country. Family and friends anywhere in the US can be encouraged to do the same.

Details about doing this are on this month's advocacy team "Action Sheet" <https://www.fcnl.org/documents/96> which also gives a general background to the issue of preventing war with Iran and suggests 3 actions we can take individually or as a team. Please look at these materials and consider whether you are led to join us or otherwise take action with FCNL. Another general link is below, and please contact either Steve Schwartz or Nancy Houston to learn more.

FCNL sent this out to their teams across the country: "We are calling on the administration to issue a worldwide temporary general license to support humanitarian trade related to COVID-19 for the duration of this crisis. We expect a letter soon from Rep. Jesus Garcia (IL-4), which your representative can sign on to. Stay tuned."

Please see <https://www.fcnl.org> to learn more about the Friends Committee on National Legislation and the work they are doing. The website has information on training to lobby virtually, on how to write effective letters to the editor, etc. One can sign up for FCNL's weekly newsletter at the bottom of their website home page under "Stay Connected."

## **The Meeting Directory** *from Communications Committee*

The next edition of the Meeting Directory will come out later this month. If you've had a change in your contact information since the last edition (April) or if you aren't listed in the directory but would like to be, contact Dan Lederer ([dlederer1@verizon.net](mailto:dlederer1@verizon.net)).

Communications Committee maintains several other means of communication for Friends: We have two email groups, one being the Meeting Email List, often referred to as "the listserve", which

functions as our electronic bulletin board via notices of upcoming events and other items of interest to Friends, and the second being the Meeting Social List, which is for more personal messages and for back and forth dialog.

Yet another means of communication is our newsletter, The Provident Friend, published ten times per year. And finally there's our website, accessible to all at [www.providencefriends.org](http://www.providencefriends.org). In order to engage fully in the life of the Meeting, it's helpful to be listed in the Meeting Directory, to be on the email lists, and to receive the Meeting newsletter. If any one of these is not happening for you, please contact Dan.

## Light Year Project at Saylesville

The Saylesville meetinghouse will continue its successful "Light Year Project" this year starting in the middle of November. There will be a beautiful display of solar lights on the front lawn, each light signifying a year of the meetinghouse's existence. The cost of sponsoring a light will be \$10. For more information please contact Ann Durant ([dingodurant@yahoo.com](mailto:dingodurant@yahoo.com)).

## A Letter from the Albuquerque Friends' Sanctuary Task Force

Dear Friends,

I write to share with you the work of Emma Membreño, a Honduran immigrant, who learned to paint while spending 21 months in Sanctuary at the Albuquerque Friends' Meeting from 2017-18. Emma's charming paintings - often depicting flowers, birds, moonlit skies and landscapes - have been converted into popular greeting cards, "Paintings for Peace." Sanctuary Works is the sole US distributor for Emma's work, and as such, celebrates not only the *works* created by Emma in Sanctuary, but also the *process* of Sanctuary as an avenue for undocumented individuals to pursue legal status in the United States. In that sense, Sanctuary truly *works!*

Emma's quest for legal status continues, complicated by COVID-19 induced delays. Our commitment to her, however, remains strong and steadfast, notwithstanding the unexpected delays and passage of time.

Thank you for sharing the attached flier promoting Emma's cards with your friends, colleagues and congregations. Proceeds from card sales go to support Emma's immigration process. Further information is available at: [www.sanctuaryworks.org](http://www.sanctuaryworks.org) or on Facebook.

Appreciatively,

Sarah Malone

Co-Clerk, Albuquerque Friends' Sanctuary Task Force

[www.sanctuaryworks.org](http://www.sanctuaryworks.org)

[info@sanctuaryworks.org](mailto:info@sanctuaryworks.org)

To see a sample of Emma's greeting cards, go to :

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1tet\\_oJc9em3bqbj2EiWfxOAXOJfNlx-6/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1tet_oJc9em3bqbj2EiWfxOAXOJfNlx-6/view?usp=sharing)

## How Awake Are We?

*from Dan Lederer*

In today's parlance, the term "woke" has come to mean an awareness of racial and social injustice along with a willingness to act on these issues. The idea of awakening to truth is not new. Ever since the Buddha became enlightened around 2500 years ago, his followers have aspired to do the same, as have countless seekers of truth from many other religious traditions, including Quakers. In a broader sense, waking up means seeing all kinds of things more clearly and being skeptical of the common wisdom, which can often be mistaken.

One example of how we can be misled is that our culture teaches us to think of ourselves as being separate from all else, but, on reflection, we can come to see that we're inextricably interconnected and interdependent with others and with the world around us. The Buddhists teach that we're the way we are because everything else is the way it is. In fact, as Thich Nhat Hanh points out, the entire universe supports our existence. Realizing our interconnectedness and interdependence leads us away from alienation and toward stewardship, a commitment to care for our world.

What else distorts our perception of reality? Our consumer culture urges us to focus on what we don't have, but we're actually showered with countless gifts. For instance, we enjoy the earth's abundance, the sun's warmth, and the experience of our senses - sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch. Rather than taking all this for granted, an awareness of these and many other received gifts leads us to gratitude.

Another example of how we can reject reality is that we can become numb to the suffering of others. Certainly oppression on the basis of race, religion, ethnicity, or sexual orientation causes immense misery and must be acknowledged and addressed, but there are numerous other instances of suffering as well. Most likely every person we encounter has either suffered in the past, will suffer in the future, or is suffering right now. This realization leads us to compassionate action.

So what gets in the way of our embracing stewardship, gratitude, and compassion? The problem is that truth can be complicated, confusing, and sometimes scary, and when it's not to our liking we have a tendency to turn away from reality by forgetting, denying, ignoring, or deluding ourselves. How else to explain the attraction of ideas for which there is no evidence, such as the conspiracy theories so prevalent today?

To be a positive force in the world, to be truly helpful, it's first necessary to see things as they are in order to identify accurately the challenges that need to be addressed. This means resolving not to turn away from hard truths but rather to face them with the hope that so doing will lead us to act in ways that benefit our fellow beings and help sustain the planet we inhabit together.

[Clerk's Corner next page.]

## Clerk's Corner: Are We There Yet?

from Rebecca Leuchak

Years ago, Bill and I drove across the desert through southern California east to Arizona with our very young daughter and a couple of hours into this trip she loudly voiced her boredom with the parched scenery passing outside her backseat window. ARE WE THERE YET?

I find this simple, often plaintive question to be, in fact, quite profound. *Are we there yet?* It is in a general way a comment about the human condition. For most of us the destination is our focus, and we are impatient to get there. The ride – process – in-between stretch – we find tedious. We'd rather get where we are going in a hurry because the route we are traveling is not the point. As adults we feel this too -- yet we have learned to accept that the liminal space between start and finish is necessary, even though it often feels unimportant.

Quakers believe in ongoing revelation; one of my favorite things about Friends' perspective on life. I've often meditated on this word. Revelation is a revealing. If you read Biblical accounts of experiences of divine revelation, they are most often described as miraculously sudden moments completed start-to-finish in a burst of time with pyrotechnics included. But I prefer to think of the dynamic of revelation as not a bolt-of-lightening or burning bush "AHA" moment – at least for most of us and for most of the time. Rather I think of revelation as a slow process, a long journey, a careful preparation, with the final destination unknown in advance and the arrival time unpredictable. The key word that Quaker's insert is "ongoing." And therein lies the important lesson. What you and I are heading towards is a mystery. It is both uncertain at this moment *where* we will arrive and uncertain *how long we will travel*. All I know is that I am, we are all, on a journey.

I see my commitment to recognize my own White privilege and my commitment to work towards reparations and a world free of racism as just such a journey. I'm unable to predict the terminus to this trip personally and corporately. Indeed, I suspect that there is no end to my journey - to our journey. But what I'm sure of is that I must embrace what I am passing through. The landscape of this experience is extremely important. It is where I need to focus right here and right now. I need to mindfully pay attention to each step - the study of resources that help me in this work, the emotions I experience in this work, the people who teach and guide me, who challenge me and share this experience with me. My Friends, putting one foot in front of the other, learning to love the process, recognizing that it most rightly will never stop, that is my goal.

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### **Providence Monthly Meeting Contact List**

Presiding Clerk: **Rebecca Leuchak** [clerk@providencefriends.org](mailto:clerk@providencefriends.org)

Newsletter: **Jen McFadden and Dan Lederer** [providentfriend@providencefriends.org](mailto:providentfriend@providencefriends.org)

Website: **Sam Schifman** [webclerk@providencefriends.org](mailto:webclerk@providencefriends.org)

Questions and Information: **Steve Schwartz** [info@providencefriends.org](mailto: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 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> 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.**

## The Provident FRIEND

Newsletter of  
Providence Monthly Meeting of the  
Religious Society of Friends  
99 Morris Avenue  
Providence, RI 02906