

The Provident FRIEND

March 16, 2021

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

Providence Monthly Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business 14th of Third Month, 2021 Minutes

Friends gathered by Zoom technology a little before noon with 19 present.

Presiding clerk Rebecca Leuchak began the period of silent worship by reading the following queries taken from New England Yearly Meeting's Faith & Practice, Chapter 11:

Do you allow the Inward Teacher to work in you? Are you teachable?

Is every aspect of your life open to the transforming power of God? What stands in the way?

Are you open to the many ways Spirit may speak to you?

The clerk read announcements concerning the life of the meeting.

- Southeast Quarter meeting for worship for the purpose of business will take place in one week, on Third month 21st. at noon.
- Providence Monthly Meeting called meeting for worship for business to consider the Providence Monthly Meeting's proposed budget for the coming fiscal year will take place the following week, on Third month 28th at 11:45 a.m.

The following items of business were brought forward:

1. Nominating Committee presented the proposed slate of members of Meeting Committees for the 2021-2022 year. Friends approved.
2. The Treasurer presented the financial report for the third quarter of our fiscal year. Contributions are similar to those at this time last year, and expenses are down. When the Meeting donated \$10,000 for Covid relief to area organizations earlier in this fiscal year, we requested additional contributions from our members to replace these funds, and enough has been received to cover about half. Part of our internal Covid relief has been used, but there is still a balance. We expect to finish the fiscal year in the black. Since our contribution to New England

CALENDAR

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

Wednesday, Mar 17, 10:00 AM,
Meeting Social Hour (Zoom)

Sunday, Mar 21, 10:00 AM,
Meeting for Worship (Zoom and Outdoors*)

Mon, Mar 22, 7:00 PM, Anti-Racism
Dialogs Meeting (Zoom)

Wednesday, Mar 24, 7:30 PM,
Meeting Social Hour (Zoom)

Sunday, Mar 28, 10:00 AM,
Meeting for Worship (Zoom and Outdoors*)

Sunday, Mar 28, 11:45 AM, Special
Called Meeting for Business (Zoom)

Sunday, Mar 28, 5:30 PM, Meeting
with Pokanoket Tribe (Zoom)

Wednesday, Mar 31, 10:00 AM,
Meeting Social Hour (Zoom)

Sunday, Apr 4, 10:00 AM, Meeting
for Worship (Zoom and Outdoors*)

Wednesday, Apr 7, 7:30 PM,
Meeting Social Hour (Zoom)

Sunday, Apr 11, 10:00 AM,
Meeting for Worship (Zoom and Outdoors*)

Sunday, Apr 11, 11:45 AM,
Meeting for Business (Zoom)

Yearly Meeting was reduced this year due to concerns about finance, we direct the Treasurer to use any surplus to make an additional contribution to NEYM for this fiscal year up to what would make the total amount equal to what we gave last year.

3. Religious Education Committee reported that First Day School plans for the spring include considerations of racism and relations with indigenous peoples. Several visiting speakers are planned.

4. As requested at our Second month meeting for business, Peace and Social Action Committee brought information about a proposed bill in the U. S. House of Representatives (formerly numbered HR 2407) which prohibits the use of U. S foreign-assistance funds to support military detention or mistreatment of children and which authorizes assistance for Palestinian children who have been subjected to such mistreatment. The Committee requested that our Meeting write to the Rhode Island Representatives David Cicilline and James Langevin, and also to the Representatives from other areas where our members live, expressing our belief that this bill is consistent with our testimonies and asking them to co-sponsor it. The Committee also requested our authorization for them to visit and speak with the Representatives on our behalf concerning this matter. Friends approved.

The text of our letter is as follows:

Dear Representative (Last Name) :

Providence Friends (Quaker) Meeting is a religious organization comprised of residents of Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Connecticut and other states beyond southern New England. We are asking that you cosponsor the upcoming version of the 2020 resolution H.R. 2407, the "Promoting Human Rights for Palestinian Children Living Under Israeli Military Occupation Act", previously introduced by Rep. Betty McCollum.

The official bill summary states:

"This bill prohibits the use of certain [US] foreign-assistance funds to support the military detention, interrogation, abuse, or ill treatment of children in violation of international humanitarian law. The bill also prohibits such funds from being used to support certain practices against children, including torture, sensory deprivation, solitary confinement, and arbitrary detention.

The bill also authorizes the Department of State to provide funding to nongovernmental organizations to (1) monitor and assess incidents of Palestinian children being subjected to Israeli military detention, and (2) provide treatment and rehabilitation for Palestinians under 21 years of age who have been subject to military detention as children."

This is in accordance with our belief that such treatment of any child anywhere is and should be forbidden.

Sincerely, Rebecca Leuchak, Presiding Clerk, Providence Monthly Meeting of Friends (Quakers)

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca Leuchak, clerk

Rebecca Smith, recording

Southeast Quarter Meeting for Business March 21

The third Sunday of this month, March 21st, is our annual Southeast Quarter's spring quarterly meeting for worship for the purpose of business. Friends from the monthly meetings of our quarter will be with us for our regular 10:00 a.m. worship followed by virtual potluck lunch with the actual meeting for business conducted from noon to 1:30 PM. Please join Friends from around our Quarter in worship, fellowship, and discernment of business.

Anti-Racism Dialogs Meetings March 22 and April 5

The Anti-Racism Dialogs continue with our next meetings on Monday March 22 and Monday April 5, both at 7:00 PM. All are welcome. Contact Rebecca Leuchak for more information.

Special Called Meeting for Business March 28

A special called Meeting for Business at 11:45 AM on Sunday March 28 will consider our Meeting's budget for the coming year.

Meeting with Pokanoket March 28

from Bob Watt

At 5:30 PM on March 28 there will be a Zoom meeting with three members of the Pokanoket Tribe. The Pokanoket Tribe was the headship tribe of the Ousa Mequin (Yellow Feather). Ousa Mequin also was known as the Massasoit and was the head of the Pokanoket Nation, a collection of some 70 sub tribes, clans, and bands from Rhode Island to the Cape and Islands. His son, Metacom, was also known as King Philip. The three Pokanoket who will attend are: (1) the Sagamore, Po Wauipi Neimpaug, Winds of Thunder (William Guy); (2) the

Sachem, Dancing Star (Tracey Brown-Guy), and (3) the Tribal Council President, Running Deer (Deborah Afdasta (Weeden)). Please attend with any and all questions as this meeting is intended to be interactive as the first introduction of the Tribe to the Meeting. [The link to the meeting will be forthcoming on the Meeting Email List.]

Revised Meeting Directory

from Communications Committee

Communications Committee will be publishing an updated edition of the Meeting Directory next month. If you have had a change in contact information since the last edition, which was in October, or if you're not currently listed in the Directory but would like to be, please contact Dan Lederer (dleder1@verizon.net).

In order to engage fully in the life of the Meeting, it's also helpful to be on the Meeting Email List, often referred to as "the listserve", which functions as our electronic bulletin board, with notices of upcoming events and other items of interest to Friends, including links to Zoom meetings. If you aren't receiving these notices but would like to be, contact Dan.

Outdoor In-Person Worship

Outdoor in-person worship will continue as weather allows. Look for an announcement via email on Friday or Saturday and then a confirmation on Sunday morning before 9:00 AM. The al fresco meeting for worship may be cancelled due to inclement weather.

Thoughts on Prejudice

from Dan Lederer

Do not search for the truth. Just do not have any prejudices. Taisen Deshimaru

At first glance this quote may seem inconsistent with the Quaker approach, since we like to see ourselves as seekers of Truth. In fact, one of the names for early Quakers was "Friends of the Truth". But I believe this Zen master isn't trying to dissuade us from our spiritual quest. Rather, he's making the point that our biases - our prejudices, our pre-judgments - can be obstacles to seeing the world clearly. For example, consider how easy it is to jump to conclusions about someone based on gender, ethnicity, or skin color, only to realize later that our initial impression

was entirely mistaken.

We've all encountered wise, grounded men and women who seemed to transcend prejudice. What was different about them? I wonder whether they were able to disregard previous experiences and approach each new situation with a fresh perspective, much like a curious child seeing something for the first time, and whether by so doing they found that Truth appeared.

Edward R. Murrow said, "Everyone is a prisoner of his own experiences. No one can eliminate prejudices--just recognize them." Certainly acknowledgement is the first step, but I think we can do better than that. It may be a matter of avoiding assumptions about others, which, while easier said than done, may be achievable if we can find ways to encourage and support each other in the process.

Meeting's COVID-19 Relief Fund

Meeting continues to maintain a COVID-19 Relief Fund to assist anyone in our Meeting community who is facing financial hardship due to the 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 contact Bruce Shaw. All communications regarding the fund will be considered confidential.

Clerk's Corner: Celebrating Change!

from Rebecca Leuchak

There seems always more to do than time to do it in. And in a world filled with things to do, when do we stop and reflect upon the really big questions of life? When do we sit quietly and ask ourselves:

What grounds me?

What is fundamental?

What is essential?

Simply asking those questions is a useful action, a shaking free of the sea of thoughts and pragmatic action that occupy us as a matter of course. And oh, how much we do avoid asking those questions! It is so easy and habitual to surround ourselves with distractions to keep from

thinking about what is our guiding truth.

In meeting for worship these, or versions of these, are the questions I sit in silence and consider. Often, I find useful images or processes in our everyday world that serve as metaphors which, when puzzled out, lead to some insight. Another approach is to sit with a past experience in my life which, although not previously pondered in any deep way, sticks stubbornly in my memory and bubbles up as I sit in worship - hinting at some importance yet uncovered.

Other times, I focus on a particular custom or practice in our Quaker faith that to my mind points to important answers. On-going revelation is one such belief that is central to Friends and is both an affirmation of a mental process through which I consider the questions above and, for me, an answer to them. The valuing and practicing of on-going revelation are actually canny strategies designed to deal with the realization that existence is forever inchoate and ever developing, inherently non-static, mutable, and dynamic. (Is it coincidence that Quakerism was born in the age of Scientific Revolution?) I am drawn to Quakerism largely because of this tenet. I believe that change is fundamental and essential and living in a changing state is what grounds me. How I feel grounded in change – seemingly oxymoronic – is to fully embrace on-going revelation.

This truth is present at every level of consideration – micro and macro, physical and intangible. With each breath in and exhale out, the physical matter of our bodies is different from one moment to the next. As I sit in quiet meditation the thoughts that come bring new ways of seeing and understanding that I did not have before the hour of worship. This world I live in is not in this moment what it was just before, nor in the next moment will be.

If change is the constant, then what a journey, what an adventure it is to live into that change! And how grateful I am for the gift of Quaker conviction that on-going revelation is our committed engagement with the truth of transience. My life instructions thus set out for me the goal of keen awareness, examination, reflection, deep appreciation, and joy in the constancy of change.

For me, living creatively and gracefully in a state of change is truly living in Spirit.

Address for Contributions

The address for contributions to Meeting is as follows:

Providence Monthly Meeting
c/o Peter Swaszek
P.O.Box 1787
Kingston, RI 02881

Presiding Clerk: **Rebecca Leuchak** clerk@providencefriends.org
Newsletter: **Jen McFadden and Dan Lederer** providentfriend@providencefriends.org
Website: **Sam Schifman** 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>

**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