

The Provident FRIEND

April 14, 2021

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

Providence Monthly Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business (Called Meeting) 28th of Third Month, 2021 Minutes

Friends gathered by Zoom technology at 11:45 with 20 present. Friends began the meeting with a period of silent worship.

The clerk of Finance Committee presented a draft budget for the next fiscal year. The major changes from last year are increases over last year's figures for the amounts proposed for our contributions to NEYM and for our contributions to our internal reserve funds for the two meetinghouses. The new figures are still lower than ideal and may be increased again in the following year. Contributions will need to increase somewhat to meet the budget. The proposed budget will come to our next Meeting for business for approval.

Friends noted that we have not been clear about which building expenses should be considered routine and which should come to the Monthly Meeting for approval. The Meeting's Reserve Fund study may provide helpful guidance. We ask the Presiding Clerk and the clerks of Finance and Property Committees to prepare information for our next Meeting for Business.

We also note the need for more explicit corporate discernment of our spending priorities. We refer this matter to a future meeting for business.

No further business appearing, we closed with a period of silent worship at 1:25 p.m., intending to meet next on the 11th of Fourth month.

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

CALENDAR

Note that the Providence and Saylesville meetinghouses are closed.

Sunday, Apr 18, 10:00 AM,
Meeting for Worship (Zoom and Outdoors*)

Sunday, Apr 18, 11:45 AM,
Worship Sharing on Hybrid Model (Zoom)

Mon, April 19, 7:00 PM, Anti-Racism Dialogs Meeting (Zoom)

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

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

Wednesday, Apr 28, 7:30 PM,
Meeting Social Hour (Zoom)

Saturday, May 1, Memorial Service
for Ed Turco (Zoom)

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

Monday, May 3, 7:00 PM, Anti-Racism Dialogs Meeting (Zoom)

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

Saturday, May 8, 9:00 AM, NEYM
Workshop (Zoom)

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

Sunday, May 9, 11:45 AM, Meeting
for Business (Zoom)

*weather permitting

**Providence Monthly Meeting for Worship
with a Concern for Business
11th of Fourth Month, 2021
Minutes**

Friends gathered by Zoom technology at noon with 22 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 inform yourself about the diversity of Friends' theology and practice?
The space within Quakerism is graciously large. Where are its boundaries?
Are you open to the many ways Spirit may speak to you?*

Announcement: The clerk reminded Friends that a worship-sharing will take place next First Day, the 18th of this month, after the rise of worship, to discuss in-person and virtual forms of gathering. Some invited guests will attend from other meetings that are practicing new ways of conducting Meeting for Worship. Because this is such an important issue for Meeting, we hope as many Friends as possible will attend.

The following items of business were brought forward:

1. Ministry and Counsel Committee Proposal for Presiding Clerk/ Assistant Presiding Clerk Transition. On the committee's behalf, Dan Lederer brought the recommendation that Victoria Ekk take on the position of Presiding Clerk at the beginning of Ninth Month 2021. Rebecca Leuchak would then replace Vicky as Assistant Presiding Clerk for a period of time. Friends approved, with gratitude to Rebecca for her leadership during the many challenges of the past year.

2. Finance Committee Fiscal Year 2019 - 2020 Audit Report. For Finance Committee, Steve Thomas reported that the Friends chosen as Auditors have examined the Meeting's finances and found them to be in order.

3. Finance Committee Proposed Budget for Fiscal Year 2021-2022. For the committee, Steve Thomas presented a proposed budget for the coming fiscal year. He noted that the enlarged Providence meetinghouse costs more to maintain, and that the moneys taken from the General Fund mean that income is somewhat lower than it was. He also noted that Friends are concerned to commit sufficient funds for the stewardship of our buildings and for the support of the wider Quaker community through New England Yearly Meeting. The proposed balanced budget includes increases in both these amounts. Friends approved the budget, with thanks to the Finance Committee for their work.

4. Providence Meetinghouse Management Committee Proposal for Re-opening the Meetinghouse for Meeting for Worship: For the committee, Nina Berry brought a proposal to resume in-person worship in the Providence meetinghouse, while still continuing the Zoom worship and possibly outdoor worship as well. Indoor worship might begin as soon as the beginning of Fifth

month. Details of the protocol would include open windows, an air purifier, masks, distancing, no refreshments, outdoor socializing only, etc. Two greeters would be required to oversee this each week. Friends expressed general approval of the proposed protocols, but were concerned that public health concerns may lead us to wait somewhat longer to re-open. We ask the Management Committee to work with Ministry and Counsel for further discernment on resumption of indoor worship.

No further business appearing, we closed with a period of silent worship at 1:00 p.m., intending to meet next on the 9th of Fifth month.

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

Worship Sharing April 18 Regarding Combining Online and In-Person Worship

from Ministry and Counsel Committee

On Sunday April 18, worship sharing will explore the following question: How can in-person Meeting for Worship be as inclusive as possible using what we've learned about online connectivity during the pandemic? One model is a hybrid worship service, with Friends participating both in person and online, but there are other options such as separate in-person and online gatherings.

This worship sharing will include some invited guests from other meetings that are practicing new ways of conducting Meeting for Worship. Worship sharing will begin at 11:45 AM and will use the same Zoom link as Meeting for Worship. Because this is such an important issue for Meeting, we hope as many Friends as possible will attend.

Anti-Racism Dialogs Meetings April 19 and May 3

The Anti-Racism Dialogs continue with our next meetings on Monday April 19 and Monday May 3, both at 7:00 PM. All are welcome. Contact Rebecca Leuchak for more information.

Memorial Service for Ed Turco May 1

A memorial service for Meeting member Ed Turco will be held on Saturday, May 1st at 11:00 AM.. A small group will gather following safety protocols in the Meetinghouse at Saylesville while more Friends are invited to join via Zoom. The details and a Zoom link will be sent out closer to the date.

**Tending the Spiritual Soil of Our Monthly Meetings
A Full Day, Zoom-Based Event on May 8**

from New England Yearly Meeting

Join us for a gathering of Friends in New England caring for the nurture of spiritual life and ministry in our local faith communities. We will worship, deepen our Quaker practice, share experiences among individuals and meetings and celebrate the various expressions of ministry and Quaker spiritual life in our midst. Whether you are new to Friends or have a lifelong concern for spiritual nurture, we invite you to attend!

This will be a participatory day—you are invited to roll up your sleeves and dig into this lively and life-giving event. We will learn from, support, inspire and challenge each other, lifting up and examining those experiences that have borne fruit and given us spiritual nourishment. In the metaphor of a garden, we will look at how we fertilize and enrich the soil, break up hard ground to clear space for new shoots and do companion planting for synergies to achieve the bountiful harvest for which we yearn. And yes, how we manage the pruning that is sometimes required for that which no longer has life.

Through worship, small group discussion, art, guided reflection and worship sharing, we will together explore the aspects of shared meeting life that support, enhance and enliven our spiritual life and the ministry among us.

- Do we effectively use resources and teaching to create fertile ground for ministry to arise?
- Do we offer loving eldering to break up set ways of thinking and encourage new understandings?
- Do we 'walk with' as companions on the journey so as to provide support at critical times?
- Do we welcome and make space for the newcomer or the Friend sorting out that nudge that is not yet a clear leading?
- Do we act on letting go of that which no longer feeds us, whether it has been valued for one season or many?

We especially encourage multiple Friends from a meeting to attend. The shared experience

will provide companions for each of you as you bring the fruit of new learnings back home.

This is the first of several planned seasonal gatherings. Future gatherings will engage with the call and challenge of public ministry and the relationship between the minister and the monthly meeting. You can read more about the vision for Spiritual Life and Ministry gatherings [here](#). You are welcome to participate in one or all of these events.

Interested? [Register here](#) for this free-of-charge online event.

Questions? Contact Interim Ministry & Counsel Clerk Jeremiah Dickinson at mc-c...@neym.org

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 a.m. The al fresco meeting for worship may be cancelled due to inclement weather.

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 who has such a need, please contact Bruce Shaw. All communications regarding the fund will be considered confidential.

Clerk's Corner: Preparing The Feast!

from Rebecca Leuchak

During this time of COVID restrictions and privations there have been many experiences worth pondering. I know we each have made our own observations and perhaps have had revelations about our lives and our world, as we have navigated the challenges and yes, surprisingly, the benefits of life during a pandemic. We have lived through much, including a politically fraught and extremely tense presidential election. Some of us have journaled these experiences, some of us have blogged. We have all shared with others our thoughts. As I look back at the life of our Meeting community over these months since last spring, one thing jumps to prominence out of all the other noticings that fill my mind.

We have together, by using our creativity and motivated by our deep care for one another, found the way forward to continuing as a community, in some ways stronger than ever before. We have together surmounted hurdles, strengthened our stamina, learned many, many new things, paid attention to the needs of others, confronted our privilege and our failings, and given selflessly of ourselves for the welfare of this beloved community.

I stand in awe of such a wave of energy and effort and wish to put a name to that. It is the Spirit working through us, in all the small and large acts of care and concern that we give and receive. What a blessed gift, to receive the elements needed to continue moving forward, to continue our efforts to build a new world always with the goal of justice, peace, love, right relations among all creatures.

My thoughts go to those in our community who have been quietly out there beyond the weekly worship connection and busy Meeting committee business that keeps our monthly meeting vibrant. Know that you are very much at the heart of the efforts, you are the motivation for the work that keeps the Light of our Friends Meeting bright. You are held in our hearts, held in the Light. I hope that when times shift, and the situation for gathering in-person becomes safe once again, that you will be with us. I know how much for many of you this community is a home. How much you care. And I know how much we all are eager to throw open the doors of our home to gathering in-person once again. What joy that reunion will bring!

In the meantime, the Meeting continues resilient and adaptive. We are here for you! We welcome communication from all. Let us know how you are doing! Let us know what needs there are that this amazing community might address!

We are, as I always say, a work in progress. We are creating the recipe for the rich repast. Our spiritual banquet is in perpetual preparation with all the adjustments, new ingredients, steps in the making, that lead to a really great feast. You are part of that glorious project.

I look forward to our first potluck back together, don't you?

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