

The Provident FRIEND

Jan 12, 2022

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

Providence Monthly Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business 9th of First Month, 2022 Minutes

Friends gathered via Zoom technology at 12:15 p.m. with 23 present.

Presiding clerk Victoria Ekk began the period of silent worship by reading the following queries taken from Philadelphia Yearly Meeting's Faith and Practice, Section on Nurturing Community:

- *How does our meeting learn of members' needs and offer its assistance?*
- *How does our meeting nurture members in all stages of life?*
- *How does our meeting welcome those new to Friends and integrate them into our community?*

The clerk read announcements concerning the life of the meeting.

The following items were brought forward for information or discernment:

Hospitality Committee reports that, thanks to volunteers, we are confirming vaccination records as we welcome worshipers in the Meetinghouse on First Day. Friends are asked to please consider helping as a greeter.

First Day School continues to provide packets for families to work with their children, and the 10 years and older group holds discussion with Wendy Virgadamo and guests two Sundays a month. Walking Sunday continues on the first Sunday of the month to give students a chance to meet in person.

The **Afghan Refugee Apartment Setup** group is getting ready to collaborate on setting up another apartment for incoming Afghan refugees. Anyone interested in helping to clean, arrange furniture and make it a welcoming home, is asked to contact clerk@providencefriends.org.

For the **Aquetuck group**, Evan McManamy reported that his group has been meeting monthly and learning in various ways about the indigenous peoples of our area.

For the **Anti-Racism group**, Vicky Ekk reported that the group is making plans for the coming year, which may include both educational gatherings and researching possible activities benefitting people of color.

CALENDAR

Wednesday, Jan 12, 7:00 PM,
Anti-Racism Working Group
(Zoom)

Saturday, Jan 15, Noon,
Memorial Service for Jeanne
Whitaker (Zoom)

Sunday, Jan 16, 10:00 AM,
Meeting for Worship (Zoom and
Indoors)

Monday, Jan 17, 7:00 PM,
Aquetuck Group (Zoom)

Sunday, Jan 23, 10:00 AM,
Meeting for Worship (Zoom and
Indoors)

Sunday, Jan 30, 10:00 AM,
Meeting for Worship (Zoom and
Indoors)

Sunday, Feb 6, 10:00 AM,
Meeting for Worship (Zoom and
Indoors)

Sunday, Feb 13, 10:00 AM,
Meeting for Worship (Zoom and
Indoors)

Sunday, Feb 13, 12:15 PM,
Meeting for Business (Zoom)

Trip to Cuba: Rebecca Leuchak, rising New England Yearly Meeting Presiding Clerk, plans to travel to Cuba's Yearly Meeting in Second month, a trip organized by NEYM committee Puente des Amigos. She will be traveling with two Friends from NEYM and plans to bring donated supplies. While in Cuba, she will explore the possibility of a "sister meeting" relationship with one of the Monthly Meetings in Cuba. She will provide Providence Friends with possible ways of sending greetings and with a list of needed supplies.

Proposed Letter of Intent for Slave Medallion Project: For the Saylesville Meetinghouse Management Committee, Bob Watt brought a proposed letter of intent for our intended collaboration in the Rhode Island Slave History Medallions Project. After some discussion, Friends agreed to proceed with sending a revised letter, for which suggestions were made. The Saylesville Meetinghouse Management Committee will approve a final revised version, which the Providence Meeting Clerk will then sign and send.

No further business appearing, we closed with a period of silent worship a little after 1:00 p.m., intending to meet next on the 13th of Second month.

Respectfully submitted,
Victoria Ekk, presiding clerk
Rebecca Smith, recording clerk

Meeting for Worship During COVID: In-Person Worship Continues

Friends are continuing to gather for in-person Meeting for Worship in the Providence and Saylesville meetinghouses, with safety protocols approved at Meeting for Business In November. In addition, we continue to hold our online Meeting for Worship, also at 10:00 AM on First Days, with the Zoom link sent to our Providence Monthly Meeting members and attenders via email on Fridays and Saturdays.

First Day School

First Day School continues to provide packets for families to work with their children, and the 10 years and older group holds discussion with Wendy Virgadamo and guests two Sundays a month. Walking Sunday continues on the first Sunday of the month to give students a chance to meet in person. January's walk was postponed to the second Sunday, January 8, due to the holiday break.

Anti-Racism Working Group January 12

Any Friend interested in participating in this year's plans for the Anti-Racism Working Group contact Vicky Ekk (victoria.ekk@gmail.com) to receive the Zoom link for our next meeting on Wednesday, January 12, at 7:00 PM.

Memorial Service for Jeanne Whitaker January 15

Jeanne's sons are planning a celebration of her life with a Zoom memorial on Saturday, January 15, 2022 starting at noon EST (9:00 AM on the West Coast and 6:00 PM (18h) in France and Germany.) You can send Rebecca Leuchak (rleuchak@gmail.com) notice of your intention to attend and she will send you the link.

Aquetuck Meeting January 17

The next Aquetuck meeting is Monday, January 17 at 7:00 PM on Zoom. For more information, contact Evan McManamy.

Letter from Rebecca Leuchak Regarding Her Visit to Cuba Yearly Meeting

Dear Friends,

I have been asked to serve as a delegate of Friends in New England to participate in the Annual Sessions 2022 of Cuba Yearly Meeting in mid-February. I follow in the footsteps of many other New England Friends who have built strong F/friendships with our brothers and sisters in Cuba. Betsy Cazden is another Friend from Providence Meeting who has gone to visit Cuban Friends in the past.

The program of exchange visits between Friends in our two countries began as early as 1900, when North American Friends first visited Cuba. Nurturing ongoing Quaker intervisitation has since 1991 been the mission for New England Yearly Meeting's Puente de Amigos Committee (<https://neym.org/committees/puente-de-amigos>). Em McManamy, another member of our Meeting who has also traveled to Cuba, is the co-clerk of that committee. I am grateful that our monthly meeting and the wider New England Yearly Meeting are sponsoring my delegate travel.

Along with two other New England Friends, Mary Hopkins and Christel Jorgenson, I will be carrying material aid to Friends in Cuba who are sorely in need of many things we in North America have in abundance. Items needed especially are over-the-counter medications (valid expiration dates and unopened), personal hygiene supplies (new and unused), Covid PPE - especially N-95 masks and latex gloves, children's arts and crafts supplies. (For a more detailed list see below.) Friends who wish to donate items for the two large suitcases I will be carrying down are asked to please contact me to arrange for pick-up/drop off. Email is

best: rleuchak@gmail.com

The deadline for all donations is February 6th.

In addition, I would like to share with Cuban Friends news of our wonderful Providence Meeting community, taking photos, video, and information about us. Some “living letters” - video clips of individuals in our Meeting communicating wishes of good will and Friendly care for Friends in Cuba - would be a wonderful way to connect our two faith families. **Please contact me, if you would welcome the opportunity to say hello and give a short message for Friends in Cuba - via video or in a note or greeting card.**

Note: Communications in the Spanish language would be most accessible to Cuban Friends, but don't let language stop you! We have fluent speakers of Spanish in our Meeting community, so don't feel shy about speaking in English and having Spanish-speaking Friends translate your remarks for you in real time! That back and forth on video might make for a fun exchange to share with Friends in Cuba!

The specific items that are much needed by Cuban Friends are:

N95 masks (possible source: bonafidemasks.com – 20 for \$45), Boxes of latex gloves,
Powdered milk

Over-the-counter medications including: Gastro-intestinal laxatives, antacids, anti-diarrhea medication, Allergy medication, Vitamins, Pain relievers, such as acetaminophen (Tylenol, others), ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin IB, others), Antiseptic creams and ointments (no liquids)
Antihistamines, such as diphenhydramine, Cough and cold medications, Aloe Vera gel, Calamine lotion, hydrocortisone cream

Other First Aid supplies, such as: Band aids, Bandages, Packets of disinfectants (no bottles of liquids), Thermometers, tweezers, nail clippers

Other items, such as: Diapers, Eye glasses, Dental care products – toothbrushes, floss, Condoms

Articles for children: Coloring books, Crayons and colored pencils, Other art supplies – felt,

yarn, clay, English Language instruction materials - textbooks, activity books, games, flash cards, etc.

Gracias a todos, for your support. I will carry you with me when I go and will report back in full when I return.

In love and service,
Rebecca Leuchak

Apartment for Afghan Refugees

The Afghan Refugee Apartment Setup Working Group is getting ready to collaborate on setting up another apartment for incoming Afghan refugees. Anyone interested in helping to clean, arrange furniture, and make it a welcoming home, please contact clerk@providencefriends.org.

The Meeting Archives

Communications Committee maintains the Meeting Archives, a digital collection of documents related to the life of our Meeting that includes minutes of committee meetings, minutes of Meeting for Business, newsletters, reports from our treasurer, State of the Society reports, directories, handbooks, and contracts. Files from the Archives can be made available for research purposes on request to the presiding clerk or clerk of Communications Committee.

The Capitol Insurrection, One Year Later

from Dan Lederer

The anniversary of the January 6 attack on the nation's Capitol has led to considerable commentary about its implications for our democratic institutions. While some of the attackers have justified their action on the basis of its being a defense of democracy, specifically an effort to reverse a stolen election, many others who were not there have seen it as an attempt to overturn a legitimate election result and thus undermine our democratic process.

Our representative democracy is far from perfect. It allowed centuries of slavery. It has mistreated Native Americans, Japanese Americans, and Black Americans. It tolerates persistent poverty and gun violence. A basic tenet is majority rule, which can lead to factionalism and a disgruntled minority. In contrast, we Quakers make decisions for our group in a unique way in that, on any issue, we seek not a majority but rather a shared understanding

of what is best for Meeting as a whole or for our surrounding community, what we call “unity.”

But even though we may be troubled by its flaws and may envision a better way to reach decisions, we Quakers have enjoyed the freedom of religion our democracy guarantees, which is no small thing given that there are places in the world that don't afford this same privilege to their citizenry. That freedom has allowed us to exist.

So the events of January 6 one year ago raise several questions for us and for all Americans: Is there currently a real threat to our democracy, and is our country possibly heading toward minority rule or, even worse, autocracy? If so, can we resolve to defend our democratic form of government despite its historical missteps and current flaws? And once we've made that commitment, can we find the best ways to provide that support? I hope your answer is yes.

Clerk's Corner: Every Day is a Holy Day

from Vicky Ekk

Facing a new calendar year, we may see the opportunity for a fresh start towards improving our lives. People often make resolutions at the beginning of a new calendar year. They may resolve to take time for exercise, reach out to someone they haven't talked to in a while, clean out closets, remember to routinely turn off lights, and set some financial goals. This week, while working on the First Day School home packet, I realized how having a fresh start seems to energize and give me hope. It seems natural to do this naturally at the beginning of a year, but when we consider the Quaker concept that every day is a holy day, an opportunity for a fresh start, the field of vision widens.

From <https://colonialquills.blogspot.com/> we learn that:

“In the colonial Quaker community, days in general were handled differently from that of non-Quakers. The common names used for days of the week and months of the year were eschewed due to their original pagan origins; instead, January was First Month, February was Second Month, Sunday was First Day, Monday was Second Day, and so on. As well, holy days (or holidays) were not celebrated at all. This included birthdays, anniversaries, and religious and non-religious holidays. In the Quaker mind, every day of the year was considered

holy unto God, not just special days and times. For the colonial Quaker, every day was worthy of celebration.”

Making every day a holy day seems challenging if we see holiness as reaching perfection. But if we look at the word holy as “worthy of celebration”, the idea becomes less daunting. Perhaps we treat each day as a gift. We can start the day thinking about the people and things for which we are grateful: our family, the roof over our heads, good food, and for our community of Friends. We can be grateful for the gifts of nature, for weather, for the beauty of a snowfall. Gratefulness provides feelings of warmth and groundedness. We feel content and appreciative of life.

With the children we learned that when we experience every day as a holy day, we also want to do what is right. We want to help others as we are able, to listen to each other carefully, to take time to reflect on challenges before making decisions that affect others. Doing what is right also generates strong positive feelings within us, even more so when it takes some effort or sacrifice. Being happy about our actions and words, makes it easier for us to see the Light in other people. When we are happy with ourselves and others we tend to smile more, to enjoy our lives and walk cheerfully in our world as our Quaker forbears urged.

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: **Vicky Ekk** clerk@providencesfriends.org
Newsletter: **Jen McFadden and Dan Lederer** providentfriend@providencesfriends.org
Website: **Sam Schifman** webclerk@providencesfriends.org
Questions and Information: **Steve Schwartz** info@providencesfriends.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.**

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