

The Provident FRIEND

March 14, 2022

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

Providence Monthly Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business 13th of Third Month, 2022 Minutes

Friends gathered by Zoom technology at 12:15 p.m. with 19 present.

Presiding clerk Victoria Ekk began the period of silent worship by reading the following queries taken from New England Yearly Meeting's *Faith and Practice* chapter 11:

What calls us into a Religious Society? Do we grow together in faithfulness?

Do I do my work and call others to do theirs?

Do I walk by God's guidance, ...knowing every day and every act to be a sacrament?

The following items were brought forward for information or discernment:

1. The **Seeking Racial Equity** group is planning support for our Providence neighbors following recent activity by a neo-Nazi group. For more information, please contact clerk@providencefriends.org.
2. **First Day School** will hold outdoor walking classes on first and third Sundays this spring.
3. **Southeast Quarterly Meeting** will take place by Zoom on the 20th beginning at 9:30 a.m. The agenda will include presentations by Betsy Cazden and Rebecca Leuchak.
4. Members of our meeting met recently to discern items to be recommended to the **Friends Committee on National Legislation** as priorities for the 118th U. S. Congress. The report is attached.
5. Bob Watt reported on the status of local **legislation concerning nuclear weapons**. Hearings were held at the R.I. state house this past week on House bill H7518, concerning possible support for the International Committee Against Nuclear Weapons resolutions. This continues the campaign for which we supported bus-stop posters earlier. Additional information and a proposal for our discernment will be presented at our Meeting for Business in Fourth month.
6. For **Finance Committee**, Steve Thomas presented a revised draft **budget** for the coming fiscal year, reminding us that our Meeting is still attempting to balance the changes in income and expense resulting from the expansion of the Providence meetinghouse. Income from Moses Brown School's use of our nursery this year is not expected to continue once they have finished their own construction work. The revised budget includes an increased contribution to New England Yearly Meeting in accordance with the request made by the business meeting last month; contributions from members and attenders will need to rise in order to meet this. Discussion included a request that the Meetinghouse Management Committees consider possible additional sources of rental income. Friends approved the recommended budget, with thanks for the work of the Finance Committee.

CALENDAR

Thursday, Mar 17, 7:00 PM,
Aquetuck Meeting (Zoom)

Sunday, Mar 20, 9:30 AM,
Southeast Quarterly Meeting
(Zoom)

Sunday, Mar 20, 10:00 AM,
Meeting for Worship (Indoors and
Zoom)

Sunday, Mar 27, 10:00 AM,
Meeting for Worship (Indoors and
Zoom)

Sunday, Apr 3, 10:00 AM, Meeting
for Worship (Indoors and Zoom)

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

Sunday, Apr 10, 12:15 PM,
Meeting for Business (Zoom)

7. Treasurer Peter Swaszek brought the **third-quarter financial report**. Contributions have been strong and the increased income from the use of the Providence meetinghouse was higher than budgeted. Investment income is lower due to a drop in the financial markets but we are "in the black" for the year so far. Friends accepted the report with thanks.
8. For the **Providence Meetinghouse Management Committee**, Dan Lederer brought a proposal that the Providence worship room and library be available for masked socializing for half an hour after the rise of worship. The return of coffee hour would be deferred pending an increase in membership in the Hospitality Committee, although Dan reported that the Management Committee hopes to revisit this matter soon. There was considerable discussion about coffee hour, with a lack of unity concerning how much we should rely on volunteers who are not committee members. Friends approved the proposal and look forward to further discernment about coffee hour in the near future.

No further business appearing, we closed with a period of silent worship at 1:45 p.m., intending to meet next on the 10th of Fourth month.

Respectfully submitted,

Victoria Ekk, Clerk
Rebecca Smith, Recording Clerk

Losses

It is with sadness that we report the loss of two Meeting members: Al Dahlberg died on March 1, and Penny Jackim died on March 5. Cards may be sent to Al's wife Pam at 554 Wayland Avenue, Providence, RI 02906, and to Penny's family at 178 Indian Trail South, Wakefield, RI 02879. Memorial services will be announced at a later date.

Aquetuck Meeting March 17

The next Aquetuck meeting is Thursday, March 17, at 7:00 PM on Zoom. Aquetuck is focused on building right relationship with local indigenous people through a variety of interactions and projects. For more information, contact Evan McManamy (evan.l.mcmanamy@gmail.com).

Southeast Quarterly Meeting March 20

The Southeast Quarter will meet online on Sunday March 20 beginning at 9:30 AM. The agenda and relevant documents as well as the Zoom link will be sent out this coming week. Two Providence Monthly Meeting members, Betsy Cazden and Rebecca Leuchak, will be presenting during the afternoon portion of the meeting. We'd love to see PMM Friends participate in support!

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 (dlederer1@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, providing upcoming event notices and other items of interest to Friends, including links to Zoom meetings. If you are not receiving these notices but would like to be, contact Dan.

Let's Help Hospitality Committee

from Nominating Committee

If Rhode Island's low transmission status continues, we hope soon to resume Social Hour in the meetinghouse. Hospitality Committee has been responsible for providing one of the two greeters each First Day. If the committee is also going to be responsible for setting up and cleaning up downstairs, plus any additional tasks related to ensuring a safe environment there, we need a sizeable group of people who are willing to make a commitment to help with this by joining Hospitality Committee, regardless of any other Meeting responsibilities that they may have. They don't have to wait until the beginning of the new fiscal year on June 1; they can start helping immediately.

In fact, the number of Friends signing up for Hospitality Committee now will be a good gauge of the level of interest in returning to Social Hour downstairs. So the hope is that anyone wanting to resume Social Hour will also be willing to help in this way. In order to join the committee, just contact Nominating Committee clerk Dan Lederer (dlederer1@verizon.net).

Low Carbon Emitters

from Val Reishuk

Everywhere is walking distance if you have the time. ~Steven Wright

On my journey to car-free, I became enamored of walking and of riding public transit. But for the life of me, I could not think of what we might be called. Those of us on bikes, on buses/trains, and on

foot must have some *collective* name, right? Everywhere that I read about us or watched us on YouTube, we were referred to in our separate pods. Cyclists. Transit riders. Pedestrians.

Quaker literature doesn't offer much illumination about a name for this group, but there is plenty of support in the Testimonies for all of the Rhode Islanders who have chosen to drive less, or not at all. Simplicity. Stewardship of our planet's resources. Integrity.

And individual Friends show lots of love for this group of travelers. I have seen Friends brake for cyclists and pedestrians. I have witnessed Friends choosing a home in a walkable community—or helping their offspring choose a bikeable neighborhood for their first apartment.

Lately, I'm calling my fellow Ocean State car-free travelers "low-carbon-emitting humans". I have observed that low-carb-emitters are quick to self-identify when I use the term. "I ride my bike with my kids on Tuesdays!" one person offers. Another says, "I commute to work on a RIPTA bus." I am becoming convinced that we low-carb-emitters are an important constituency in Rhode Island, and that we will impact local politics and the green future of our state in a big way.

Friends, hold us In the Light, please. Rhode Island is still a dangerous place to be if you're not in a car. During the pandemic, traffic fatalities for low-carb-emitters went *up*.

Ukraine and the Quaker Peace Testimony

On March 8, Friends gathered via Zoom to consider the following queries:

Russia's unjustified invasion of Ukraine has provoked widespread outrage. As Quakers, our Peace Testimony requires us to oppose killing and war. But how would we respond if we were citizens of Ukraine and our homes and lives were threatened? And how should we respond as Americans?

The format was a "talking circle" in which every person had an opportunity to speak prior to a general discussion. What follows is not a verbatim report but rather an attempt to convey the essence of the messages that Friends delivered during the discussion.

- If I was in Ukraine, I would be supportive of people in the war zone. I wish the UN had sent in peacekeepers before the war started. I feel ashamed that our country hasn't stood up to Putin more vigorously.
- In Ukraine, I would be outraged. I would stay behind to help by consolidating resources to protect people. Here in the USA I also feel outraged but am aware that we also have a history of invading sovereign countries. I support diplomacy. Sanctions hurt innocent people but are better than bombs. A no-fly zone would escalate the war. I feel helpless.
- During the war in Vietnam I was first attracted to Quakerism by the peace testimony. I participated in anti-war protests but now realize that it was relatively easy to do so since our country was not being directly attacked. If that were the case I probably would have felt and acted differently.
- I have empathy for the people in Ukraine because, as a child, I experienced civil war and remember being afraid of bombs, which was traumatic, with the trauma being long lasting. I worry about how the people in Ukraine can remake their lives. When I came to this country in

the 1960's I was faced with the possibility of nuclear war. I'm having a hard time with the Peace Testimony, especially if we needed to defend ourselves and our families.

- If I was in Ukraine I would choose to remain in order to bear witness by photographing what was happening. In the US there is fear of nuclear war, especially now that there are "tactical" nuclear weapons that would probably be used first. We must appeal to people with a conscience and try to find a moral center in our opponents. Unfortunately it seems that sanctions are our only resource at this time.
- I am angry that the world is still so uncivilized. In Ukraine I would be terrified and would probably try to escape. I might use a weapon but I know that wouldn't be right. None of this is right. United economic pressure is a good thing, as is humanitarian support and the willingness of countries to accept refugees. People shouldn't have to be refugees; they should be able to go home.
- In Ukraine I'd be even more despondent than here. Is it possible for the US to have a non-violent defense? Are we again standing by and letting another country fight our enemies?
- I'm torn between anguish and anger. If I was in the Ukraine I would think first of protecting people. The Peace Testimony wouldn't apply. There have been so many wars, many involving us. It's hard to love those who think it's their right to do wrong. I feel sad and I want to help, but what can we do?

What do you do about a bully who's attacking your family? Do you turn a blind eye and not combat that? How do you get enough traction to communicate with "the other"?

Daily Worship with Moscow Friends

Friends House Moscow (FHM) sponsors a daily international Meeting for Worship for Peace at 12:00 noon on the East Coast. The link is:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/4165005614?pwd=NUtieEtqbDBYbjBrcGdMMzBKQ3drQT09>

Meeting ID: 416 500 5614

Passcode: 18280

Moscow Friends describe the worship as follows:

"The first 10 minutes will be silent for centering and the last 10 minutes silent to let the messages settle in our hearts. The host will mute everyone at the beginning of Worship. Sink deeply into the Spirit which is not of this world and let ministry rise from that Spirit to give us guidance and light. Raise your digital hand if you have ministry to offer. We leave a cushion of silence between messages, giving everyone a chance to fully absorb the message and return to centering in the Spirit, so wait patiently to be asked to un-mute yourself to speak. On your

phone, 'raise hand' is #9. You can also use chat to request to speak.

“During Worship, use the chat only for contacting the host if you are having technical difficulties or notice something that does not seem right. Live transcription is available for those with hearing difficulties.

“After Worship, chat will be open for personal messages. You can rename yourself, indicating your location. A poll will ask where you are located. You will be invited to a breakout room where you can introduce yourself to a small number of Friends and share thoughts that did not rise to the level of ministry.”

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 and third Sundays of the month to give students a chance to meet in person.

Clerk's Corner: Coming in Like a Lion

from Vicky Ekk

The month of March can “come in like a lion” and so it has, but not necessarily because of tough weather. The invasion of Ukraine has shaken us to our roots as we helplessly watch or hear news of death and destruction. Some of us have family roots in that area of the world and that makes the evil of war even more disturbing. We have been having conversations about this war, the war in Yemen, and the many wars that have been and are being fought around the world within our lifetimes. Mankind has not yet shaken off

the drive to seek what benefits the few without considering the good of the many. There is much to be done to get all of us to seek peace!

We also lost two Friends this month, Al Dahlberg and Penny Jackim, who passed away in the first few days of the month. Both Al and Penny were active and beloved members of Providence Monthly Meeting and we remember their generosity and creativity in supporting our community through the decades! Soon we will gather our warm memories to celebrate their lives among us. I look forward to these memorials as they remind us not only of their many contributions but how community is essential to our growth as human beings.

We are seeing the first signs of spring and planning a step by step transition to a normalized Meeting life. If you read the emails and the newsletter, you've noticed that there is increased activity in several committees. There have been several opportunities to participate in online events with a variety of themes. Upcoming, on March 20 is our Southeast Quarterly Meeting where PMM Friends Betsy Cazden and Rebecca Leuchak will be making presentations. Betsy will share one of her projects where she is researching family history in relationship to benefits garnered from the land and labor of indigenous people in Rhode Island. Rebecca will share and show artifacts from her travel to Cuba last month. We hope to see many of you look in on this meeting which will be held online.

And while the robin is letting us know spring is nearly here, many of us believe it will only be here when we can have coffee hour after Meeting for Worship! We remember with warmth the many times we gathered together at the tables in the community room downstairs. After two years, we can see that time approaching and in planning for it, we know that everyone's help will be needed to make it possible for us to have coffee and baked goods on Sundays and a potluck on the first First Day. As we did in the past, folks will need to volunteer to bring goodies, set up and clean up. Be on the lookout for the sign up sheets and remember we all need to take a turn!

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@providentfriends.org
Newsletter: **Jen McFadden and Dan Lederer** providentfriend@providentfriends.org
Website: **Sam Schiffman** webclerk@providentfriends.org
Questions and Information: **Steve Schwartz** info@providentfriends.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