

The Provident FRIEND

June 14, 2022

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

Providence Monthly Meeting for Worship

with a Concern for Business

12th of Sixth Month, 2022

Minutes

Friends gathered via Zoom technology at 12:15 pm. Presiding clerk Victoria Ekk opened the meeting by reading the following queries and asking for silent reflection:

- *Do I carefully discern my personal values through calm attention to the Light Within?*
- *What experiences have helped me to deeply listen to others?*
- *Have I set aside my own needs and concerns to be open to God's guidance for our gathered community?*

The clerk read announcements concerning the life of the meeting.

The following items for business were brought forward:

1. Report on progress on the Neighborhood Outreach project– Clerk Victoria Ekk and Friend Eugenia Marks reported on the implementation of Friendly 8's dinners in conjunction with the Mt. Hope Neighborhood Center at 199 Camp Street. Friends are invited to participate in these potluck dinners with the purpose of building relationships and trust among neighbors. (To see the report, go to <https://docs.google.com/document/d/15LbWWcbOfTPXYoI4PPWliH9NCOgwf4w/edit?usp=sharing&oid=110958960481738919460&rtmpof=true&sd=true>).

2. Treasurer Peter Swaszek presented the end of year financial report. Friends accepted the report.

3. Saylesville Meetinghouse Management Committee clerk Bob Watt presented a draft of the content for the Medallion Project. The Project includes textual content and a short performative presentation of the medallion. Comments may be sent to Bob Watt at wattesq@aol.com. Approval of the final version of the text will be in September.

4. Peace and Social Action Committee requested the following minute to endorse the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons: *We urge the President of the United States to sign, and the United States Senate to ratify, the United Nations Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW)*. Friends approved. Additionally, Peace and Social Action proposes that our minute be sent to NEYM as an agenda item for consideration of approval at the upcoming yearly sessions. (See proposal below). Friends approved.

CALENDAR

Saturday, June 18, Poor People's Campaign March on Washington

Sunday, June 19, 10:00 AM, Meeting for Worship (Indoors and Zoom)

Sunday, June 26, 10:00 AM, Meeting for Worship (Indoors and Zoom)

Sunday, June 26, 2:00 PM, Memorial Service for Al Dahlberg (Manning Chapel)

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

Sunday, July 3 thru Saturday July 9, Friends General Conference Gathering (Zoom)

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

Sunday, July 17, 10:00 AM, Meeting for Worship (Indoors and Zoom)

Sunday, July 24, 10:00 AM, Meeting for Worship (Indoors and Zoom)

Sunday, July 31, 10:00 AM, Meeting for Worship (Indoors and Zoom)

Saturday, Aug 6 thru Thursday Aug 11, NEYM Sessions (In-person at Castleton University and Zoom)

5. Peace and Social Action presented a revised request to become a Back from the Brink Coalition partner. Partnership is defined on their site as: "Coalition Partners endorse the campaign and agree to actively support the coalition, its policy goals and initiatives through various means, such as periodically communicating with supporters about the campaign; making a financial contribution; attending coalition events and meetings; promoting the campaign on social media; or helping grow the coalition's relationships and partnerships with other organizations, influencers and decision makers. Back from the Brink supports Coalition Partners by providing consultation, training and campaign materials if desired." Friends approved.

6. Religious Education Committee gave a brief report on the status of assistance for First Day School and Nursery.

No further business appearing, we closed with a period of silent worship at 1:30 PM, intending to meet next on the 11th of Ninth month.

Respectfully submitted,
Victoria Ekk, Clerk
Laura Landen, Recording Clerk *pro tempore*

Peace and Social Action Proposal

Peace and Social Action proposes for discernment that our Meeting endorse the following in a minute:

We urge the President of the United States to sign, and the United States Senate to ratify, the United Nations Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW).

Additionally, Peace and Social Action proposes that our minute be sent to NEYM as an agenda item for consideration of approval at the upcoming yearly sessions.

Excerpted from the treaty's "Article 1 – Prohibitions":

1. Each State Party undertakes never under any circumstances to:

(a) Develop, test, produce, manufacture, otherwise acquire, possess or stockpile nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices;

...

(d) Use or threaten to use nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices;

...

(g) Allow any stationing, installation or deployment of any nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices in its territory or at any place under its jurisdiction or control.

The treaty entered force on January 22, 2021, and currently has been ratified by 61 countries.

Additional information:

The TPNW was crafted at the United Nations with the help of The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), which received the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize "for its work to draw attention to the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons and for its ground-breaking efforts to achieve a treaty-based prohibition of such weapons." [from Nobelprize.org].

Complete background and information is available on the official United Nations website at: <https://www.un.org/disarmament/wmd/nuclear/tpnw/>

The status and an English copy of the treaty is here:
<https://treaties.unoda.org/t/tpnw>

The treaty in English and other languages is here:
<https://undocs.org/Home/Mobile?FinalSymbol=A%2FCONF.229%2F2017%2F8&Language=E&DeviceType=D+esktop&LangRequested=False>

Poor People's Campaign March on Washington June 18

Peace and Social Action Committee reported previously that The Poor People's Campaign was organizing a March on Washington, modeled after the Martin Luther King marches on Washington. The march will take place on June 18, this coming Saturday. Local buses leave from near the Charles Street Home Depot Friday night, at about 1:00 AM on Saturday, and return to the same place arriving about 11:00 PM Saturday night.

There are people who want to go but cannot afford to and so need to be sponsored, and about 13 empty seats. If you want to go yourself, that is greatly encouraged. If you cannot, but can afford to sponsor someone, that is as well appreciated, as the rally is more effective the larger it is, so filling seats is key. It will also be fun. In case an additional 20 or so want to go (in addition to the 13 mentioned already), another bus can be had. Tickets are currently \$140 round trip, whether for yourself or someone else.

Please contact Steve Schwartz (steve@absteve.com) if you can sponsor someone, and he will instruct you how to buy a ticket and then send the ticket number to him so that it is re-assigned to someone wanting to go. If you can pay for a portion of a trip, Steve can arrange for that. A PDF describing how to buy the ticket will be sent out in an email to anyone interested.

Memorial Service for Al Dahlberg June 26

A memorial service for Meeting member Al Dahlberg will be held on Sunday June 26 at 2:00 PM in the Manning Chapel on the Brown campus. The memorial will be in the manner of Friends. There will a reception at the Hope Club following. For more information contact Pam Dahlberg (pamelakathy@hotmail.com).

Friends General Conference Gathering July 3 - 9

Friends General Conference will be holding its annual gathering via Zoom from Sunday July 3 to Saturday July 9. For more information go to <https://www.fgcquaker.org/fgcprograms/the-gathering/> .

Message from Religious Education Committee

First Day School asks you to donate a Sunday morning of fun with our youngsters outdoors during June, July, and August. Your creative ideas for playing with children are

needed -- musical, painterly, crafts, games, etc. Contact Wendy Virgadamo (virgadamo.wendy@gmail.com) or Eugenia Marks (emarks66@gmail.com) to volunteer for one Sunday.

Parents of children 4 and younger are welcome to participate in nursery care during Meeting for Worship each First Day. This is a cooperative service that includes scheduling one parent and a Nursery Helper to ensure that two adults are always present as required by NEYM childcare requirements. A sign-up sheet will be posted. We ask nursery care parents to bring unvaccinated children through the side entrance to the nursery area and bring them directly outdoors during coffee hour.

Update on Dave McNab

from Liz McNab

Please thank everyone at Meeting for the absolutely beautiful plant - it sits on the table right next to the window and the chair that they have Dave sitting in during the day and brings him joy. With the hard collar around his neck to help promote healing of the two bones, eating, reading, etc. are not easy, but he is thankful to be in the situation he is in - it could have been so much worse.

Invitation to NEYM Sessions August 6 - 11

from Bruce Neumann, NEYM Presiding Clerk, and Philip Veatch, NEYM Sessions Planning Clerk

Friends around New England and beyond—you are invited to the 362nd annual sessions of New England Yearly Meeting, August 6–11, 2022!

Two years ago we had our first-ever remote Sessions, an event which would have been inconceivable even 50 years ago, let alone 300. This year we will pioneer hybrid sessions, with some of you attending at Castleton University, and others participating by Zoom. For those who can travel and take time off, and are comfortable enough being with other people, we will welcome you to Castleton University. For those who are unable to join us on campus, we will have a significant Zoom component for many events. Our tech team is already deep in the weeds of figuring out how to make Zoom participation as integrated and seamless as possible.

Why do Friends come to Sessions? Why should you come to Sessions? Some come for the opportunity to be with other Friends from around New England. Some come for the business. Some come for the full range of the ways that we gather - not excluding eating ice cream! In all of these, though, is the awareness that when two or more are gathered, the Holy Spirit is present and at work; and when we join with Friends from around the region, we are challenged to new ways of thinking and seeing. When we spend 5 days focusing on the life of the Spirit, we are renewed and re-convinced that the power of the Lord is at work among us.

Our theme, “This is the hour - how does the Spirit find you?” acknowledges that we will bring a panoply of conditions - from joy to grief, from grounded to lost - but challenges us to name what this is the hour for. What am I led to? What are we led to? But the hidden message in “This is the hour” is revealed when we learn that

Mary Dyer uttered the words “This is the hour of my greatest joy” at a moment when, despite great difficulty ahead, she experienced joy in following what God had asked of her. Can we, too, find joy in the Divine in difficult times?

The Bible Half Hours will be presented by Regina Renee Ward, a Christian Friend from Pueblo, Colorado, and a member of Ujima Friends Meeting. Regina Renee may be familiar to some New England Friends, having given Bible Half Hours at Friends General Conference and co-presented the Walking with the Bible series offered by Woolman Hill Quaker Center and the Beacon Hill Friends House. She is passionate about social justice, intellectual freedom, reading, and building community. Her work with Friends and racial healing was born out of necessity as she navigates life as both a woman of African descent and a Christian Friend. Regina Renee is someone for whom the Bible is not just a foundational document for our faith tradition, but is a living, breathing, guide to daily living.

Emily Provance from New York Yearly Meeting will give this year's plenary. Emily has a travel minute from 15th St. Meeting in New York City and travels widely in the ministry, carrying a particular concern for helping Friends know each other while embracing differences. One particular manifestation of this is her encouragement of Friends to grow into a deeper understanding of the spiritual benefits of being intergenerational, and how to move from aspiration to practice. Indeed, in this year where we are focused on inviting children and families back after two years apart, this concern is what led us to her.

Business Sessions are an opportunity to hear some of what's been going on with Friends around New England and to discern how God is leading us as a larger body of Friends. Among other things, we will consider a chapter on Marriage from the Faith and Practice Revision Committee, hear some recommendations from the Ministry Transition Team, and discern how we make choices about supporting other organizations.

Growing out of our concern for the well-being of participants, in particular a desire to have a less crowded schedule, we have decided that we will not have traditional workshops this year. We will debut a “Sessions Video Library” with content that can be viewed individually or in small groups, at a time that's convenient for you.

Hopefully, Friends will have seen the earlier announcement that Sessions will be free for those 18 and under. If you're a young Friend, or a parent, we hope to see you!

And in a recent development, Castleton University informed us that on-campus participants will need to move out of the dorms after breakfast on Thursday, as opposed to the usual after lunch. We have re-configured the schedule to have more limited events on Thursday.

So join us, whether for a day or 5 days, in Castleton or on Zoom. Come with the expectancy that we will be touched by the Divine, and that individually and collectively we will move a bit closer to the image God has for us. While the on-campus and Zoom experiences will not be the same, we are striving to have both be meaningful and Spirit-led. Your part is to show up with your full selves, leaving

behind as much as possible your daily cares.

Public Transit

from Val Reishuk

“We are all riding on the same bus.” - Mark Sheppard

Statistics are hard to come by, but one hears occasionally that one in five Providencians do not own a car. And one in ten Rhode Islanders do not own a car.

The reasons vary. Some Friends ditch the gas-powered vehicle a few days a week in order to follow the Simplicity testimony. (That’s how it started for me.) Some nondrivers are too young, too old, or medically unable to drive. Some have lost their licenses in court. But mostly, cars are expensive to buy, to maintain, to park, to fuel.

So we ride the bus, or occasionally, the commuter rail. I own a RIPTA WAVE card which allows me to pay in advance and board quickly. And I ride the bus several times a week. I’m one of the Providencians who doesn’t have a car. I ride the bus to buy groceries, to visit the doctor, to attend a public meeting, or to join friends for lunch.

All of this time on the bus allows me time to ponder another Quaker testimony: Equality. Who rides the bus? Suburban commuters, yes. But the overwhelming majority of bus travelers are lower-income people. We have segregated our society: bus and car. We are no longer in Community with each other. (Oh! Another Quaker testimony just popped up there.)

My solution is to continue to ride the bus. I have ridden the bus throughout the pandemic (vaxxed & boosted & masked), and somehow avoided infection. Some Friends just can’t do this – the risk of infection in closed spaces is real. As I am able to ride the bus, I do ride the bus. I am in community with Providence, my city. I am not apart from it.

Traveling with the people who rely on public transit has changed me. I am passionate about funding buses and trains. I volunteer and write and testify at the State House. Riding the bus has radicalized me.

And left me wondering why I can Google RIDOT statistics on car travel all day, but I can’t find statistics on car-free Rhode Island. Who is counting us?

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.

Clerk's Corner: How Do I Feed My Spiritual Life?

from Vicky Ekk

I was looking at the calendar today and smiled. One of my family's most prized annual gifts is the calendar published by one of my daughters in law. We enjoy sending her photos to place on key celebration days and depend on the colorful calendar to keep us straight on birthdays and anniversaries. The calendar cheers me up, seeing the happy faces and memories. It feeds the Light within me in gratefulness for the gift of family.

But there are times when even those cheerful memories are not enough to feed my soul. What is happening in our chaotic world right now is so disturbing that it is difficult to focus on the Light so it overcomes the darkness. I've heard that said in many different ways the past few days. Gun violence, congressional hearings, high prices, divided families and the exhaustion of dealing with a virus that just won't go away are taking a toll on our spiritual endurance. How do I, how do we, seek ways to fortify ourselves during these times?

Certainly, taking time to be grateful for the people in our life, our family and friends, helps to remind us that we are loved and that we can love others. Taking time to be with friends is also fuel for our souls. One of my blessings is a virtual meeting with a NEYM Sessions 2020 Home Group. We meet on the 10th at 7 am to spend an hour sharing where we are in our spiritual path. We have grown close through nearly two years of monthly meetings. Another group of friends from my undergraduate college years meets on Thursday nights in a very lively book club exploring a variety of issues and taking time to laugh together. Both of these groups are bright spots in my journey week to week and month to month and I need them to keep me spiritually alive. And of course, attending worship together gives us time to bask in the Light we each bring into the gathering.

Endurance is built through patient practice and care. Let's take care of ourselves, in body, mind, and spirit in the best way that works for each of us. Spiritual self-care is essential for being better Friends and building a better world, but it's also the key to joy. When we take time to care and feed the Light within us, we can be calm in the midst of chaos and we can discern what is right to do and be.

Presiding Clerk: **Vicky Ekk** 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