

The Provident FRIEND

Dec 12, 2022

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

**Providence Monthly Meeting for Worship
with a Concern for Business
11th of Twelfth Month, 2022
Minutes**

With no reports or proposals forthcoming, Meeting for Business was postponed until January 8.

CALENDAR

Sunday, Dec 17, 4:00 PM, Caroling (Providence Meetinghouse)

Sunday, Dec 18, 10:00 AM, Meeting for Worship (Indoors and Zoom)

Saturday, Dec 24, 4:30 PM, Candlelight Service at Saylesville (Indoors and Zoom)

Sunday, Dec 25, 10:00 AM, Meeting for Worship (Indoors and Zoom)

Sunday, Jan 1, 10:00 AM, Meeting for Worship (Indoors and Zoom)

Sunday, Jan 8, 10:00 AM, Meeting for Worship (Indoors and Zoom)

Sunday, Jan 8, 12:15 PM, Meeting for Business (Zoom)

Caroling December 17

If you'd like to join us to go caroling around the neighborhood on Saturday December 17 at 4:00 PM and then gather at the meetinghouse for hot cocoa and cookies, contact Wendy Virgadamo (virgadamo.wendy@gmail.com) for detailed information..

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service at Saylesville December 24

from the Saylesville Worship Group

The Saylesville meetinghouse will once again be hosting a Christmas Eve Candlelight Service at 4:30 PM on December 24. This will be an in-person event with a Zoom setup. We will be following CDC guidelines, which do not mandate mask wearing although we strongly encourage people to wear one. There will be light refreshments afterwards. We hope that everyone will feel comfortable joining us, but if you prefer not to be there in person you may want to drive by and see our Light Year Display at some point in the next few weeks.

Help Needed for First Day School

The Religious Education Committee is in need of your assistance! Our committee is down to four members, one of whom is recovering from a serious accident. We are in desperate need of volunteers who will assist a few times during the school year to teach a pre-planned lesson, do an arts and craft project, sing and enjoy music with the children, or simply take part in a walking discussion. If you can donate 45 minutes on a Sunday for this purpose, contact Wendy Virgadamo (virgadamo.wendy@gmail.com) or Eugenia Marks (emarks66@gmail.com).

The Stephen Aldrich Fund

19th century Quaker Stephen Aldrich bequeathed a large portion of his estate to the Rhode Island-Smithfield Quarterly Meeting (now known as Southeast Quarterly Meeting) to provide emergency funding for Friends in need. This bequest continues today as the Stephen Aldrich Fund and is available to all members of the Meeting community seeking one-time emergency financial assistance. Anyone needing assistance or those who would like further information about the fund should contact Dan Lederer (dleder1@verizon.net), Meeting's representative to the fund. Meeting also has a couple of other sources of funding for those in need, so those can be discussed as well. All contact is held strictly in confidence.

On Gratitude

from Dan Lederer

Albert Schweitzer called gratitude the secret to life, and Eckhart Tolle has said, “Acknowledging the good that you already have in your life is the foundation for all abundance.” This line of thinking is the basis for psychologist Robert Emmons’ book entitled *Thanks! How Practicing Gratitude Can Make You Happier*. The title may bring to mind the multitude of self-help books that occupy countless bookstore shelves, and I suppose Emmons’ work could be considered in that category because it does point the way to a happier life. But it’s also an exploration of gratitude as an emotion, an attitude, a personal virtue, and a practice. And beyond all these it’s an argument for gratitude as a way of life.

So what then is gratitude? It’s the recognition that the source of goodness in one’s life lies at least partially outside the self, the acknowledgement that we are the recipients of help from others, and the realization that the gifts we receive are the result of the kindness of others rather than our own merit. Gratitude is “a stance, a posture, a way of positioning oneself so that one is attuned to the gifts that come one’s way.”

Based on his observations and research, Emmons recounts the many benefits that gratitude brings. It’s one of the few things that can change people’s lives for the better by driving out such emotions as envy, resentment, and anger, making room for more happiness. It facilitates a relationship with the Divine, from which all good arises, because grateful people may develop the sense that they are not separate from others or from God.

Clerk's Corner: Anger, Fear, and the Light On My Path

from Vicky Ekk

A common theme in many conversations these days is how often we are experiencing people's anger in different ways. It isn't just horns honking at someone who is a couple of seconds late responding to a green light. It's also hearing loud complaints about standing in line or having to accept a delay. Perhaps it's the busyness of the holiday season, or the leftovers of our COVID isolation, but in either case, it's palpable that people are finding it hard to be positive and hopeful. So how can we as Friends call upon the Light within to show us the way to hope and peace?

Anger often masks other feelings that are harder to recognize. For me, it's often a feeling of losing control over a situation or task. When I'm teaching a group of high school freshmen and there are side conversations interrupting the lesson, I sense my anger meter rising. Underneath, I ask myself if some of the students will miss an important part of the lesson and won't be able to retain the learning. Then what will that say about my teaching skills? The fear of not being good enough as a teacher is what feeds my anger. How often is it that anger in its many forms is a cover for fear?

It's true that fear often has its roots in reality. Life can often show us real reasons to be careful and take time to consider consequences. That is why we put temporary latches on the kitchen cupboards when there is a toddler around and why we have fire extinguishers near the grill. But fear can also stop me from looking into a problem to find a better solution. I may get

stuck in that fear or fall further into its depths. At an outside meeting last week, I was surprised by the number of times audience members were voicing the same concerns despite assurances that they would be addressed. When we have experienced disappointment and distrust, fear takes over and our survival instincts are all that is alive in us.

Author Frank Herbert of the Dune series wrote: “Fear is the mind-killer. It is the little-death that brings total obliteration.” When I’m afraid I’m in survival mode, and my mind and my ears don’t work well. I even struggle to find my path towards the Light. But I must, because being in fear is not the way I want to live! So I am making my new year’s resolution ahead of time. I’m going to ferret out what makes me angry and/or afraid and shine the Light on it so I can get beyond it. For that, I may need to seek the Light beyond just my own share. That is one of the reasons why we need a community, to help each other find our way towards hope and peace!

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Newsletter of
Providence Monthly Meeting of the Religious
Society of Friends
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**Current activities are listed
on the Calendar on page 1.**

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Providence, RI 02906