

The Provident FRIEND

May 16, 2023

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

Providence Monthly Meeting for Worship

with a Concern for Business

23rd of Fourth Month, 2023

Minutes

Friends met in the Providence meetinghouse and by Zoom at 12:15 with 18 present.

After a period of silent worship, the Meeting considered the proposal that Providence Meeting act as lead sponsor for the visit of the *Golden Rule* in Sixth month 2023 and submit an application to the City of Providence for use of India Point Park for activities related to the visit.

The ship is expected to dock at the Community Boating Center adjacent to the park; this is already arranged. The purpose of this visit is to conduct educational events promoting peace and the end of nuclear weapons, and these would take place in the park.

The Clerk reported that we have received information from our insurance provider that our Meeting's policy with them would cover this sponsorship and activities.

Bob Watt reported that the Rhode Island Council of Churches has agreed to co-sponsor and promote the visit if we are lead sponsors. He also reported that the local Rotary club may wish to participate. Bob has spoken with at least one member of the Providence City Council and has hopes that the city may provide security without charging us.

An implementation committee is being assembled, including people from both inside and outside our Meeting. This committee has received information from Hartford Friends Meeting about their planned

MEETING CALENDAR

Meeting for Worship is 10:00 AM at Providence (Indoors and Zoom), 10:30 AM at Saylesville (Indoors), and 9:30 AM at Conanicut (Indoors)

Sunday, May 21, Meeting for Worship (3 locations as listed above)

Sunday, May 28, Meeting for Worship (3 locations as listed above)

Saturday, June 3, 2:00 PM Memorial Service for Penny Jackim at Providence

Sunday, June 4, Meeting for Worship (3 locations as listed above)

Sunday, June 11, Meeting for Worship (3 locations as listed above)

Sunday, June 11, 12:00 PM, Meeting for Business (Indoors and Zoom).

Sunday, June 11 – Tuesday, June 13, Visit to Providence of Peace Ship The Golden Rule

Sunday, June 18, Meeting for Worship (3 locations as listed above)

Sunday, June 25, Meeting for Worship (3 locations as listed above)

Sunday, June 25, 12:00 PM, CPR Training (Indoors at Providence)

connection to the ship visit there shortly before it comes to Providence and has also been in communication with people in Bristol, R.I, where it will go next. Possible sources of funding are being explored and may include contributions from the Rotary Club, a GoFundMe appeal, and others.

The responsibility of Providence Meeting as lead sponsor is limited to applying for the permit and ensuring that its requirements are carried out. We note that we do not yet have full knowledge of what the requirements will be and that it may or may not be possible for the events to proceed as we hope.

The following minute was approved: *Friends approved the request to sponsor the use of India Point Park for the visit of the Golden Rule and to appoint Bob Watt, Eugenia Marks, David Bourns, Jennifer McFadden, Claudia Arroyave, and Steve Schwartz as our representatives to the implementation committee.*

The meeting ended with more silent worship a little after 1:00 p.m., intending to meet next for our regular Monthly Meeting on Fifth Month 14, 2023.

Respectfully submitted,
Victoria Ekk, Presiding Clerk
Rebecca Smith, Recording Clerk

**Providence Monthly Meeting for Worship
with a Concern for Business
14th of Fifth Month, 2023
Minutes**

Friends gathered by Zoom technology and at the Providence meetinghouse at noon with 11 present (8 in person and 3 online).

Presiding clerk Victoria Ekk began the period of silent worship by reading the following queries taken from John Woolman's writings: *Does the Creator's love fully influence our minds? Do I take hold of every opportunity to lessen the distresses of the afflicted and increase the happiness of creation? Is our common interest to turn all the treasures we possess into the channel of universal love?*

The clerk read the following announcements concerning the life of the meeting:

- First Day School will hold its annual end of school year picnic on June 4 at the rise of meeting.
- Volunteers are needed to supervise our youngest Friends in the nursery on Sundays, assisting teacher Susan Brumbelow. If you are able to give a Sunday, contact Erin Biebuyck or Vicky Ekk.
- The peace ship Golden Rule is scheduled to arrive in Providence on June 11 and will stay anchored at India Point through June 13. Stay tuned for information on activities and events.

On behalf of Hospitality Committee, Eugenia Marks thanked all Friends who have volunteered to set up, make coffee, and clean up for the community's weekly coffee hour and monthly potlucks.

The following items of business were brought forward:

1. For Nominating Committee, Dan Lederer asked for approval of the addition of Karen Andes and Kyria Abrahams to Peace and Social Action Committee. Friends approved.
2. For Peace and Social Action Committee, Steve Schwartz asked Meeting for Business to add \$400 from its discretionary line to supplement the committee's contribution of \$1600 in support of the activities and events planned for the peace boat Golden Rule's visit to Providence. Friends approved.
3. For the same purpose, Steve Schwartz asked for an additional \$500 from Meeting's general fund to be used if needed. Friends approved.
4. Steve Schwartz asked Meeting to cosign an FCNL-sponsored joint organizational letter addressed to Congressional leadership requesting strong investments in non-Pentagon discretionary spending. (The letter was distributed to Friends ahead of Meeting for Business.) Friends approved, and also approved sending the letter to our local Congressional representatives.

No further business appearing, we closed with a period of silent worship at 12:30 PM, intending to meet next on the 11th of Sixth Month.

Respectfully submitted,

Victoria Ekk, Presiding Clerk

Dan Lederer, Recording Clerk Pro Tem

Memorial Service for Penny Jackim June 3

We remember Penny Jackim fondly as a valued member of Providence Monthly Meeting. A memorial service for her will take place at 2:00 PM on Saturday June 3 at the Providence meetinghouse.

Visit by the Peace Ship The Golden Rule June 11 - 13

The peace ship The Golden Rule (see photo above) is working its way north and will be in RI June 11, 12, and 13. Providence Monthly Meeting is the lead sponsor for the Golden Rule's visit. Anyone from Meeting who wishes to join the working group that is involved in the planning, promotion and participation in the peace chain silent vigil walk or who wants more information about the ship's visit is invited to contact Bob Watt (wattesq@aol.com).

CPR Training Sunday June 25

Lifespan will again be offering CPR (cardio-pulmonary resuscitation) training at the meetinghouse at noon on Sunday June 25. Marianne Stepaniak, a nurse at Miriam Hospital, will be leading the course, which will take place in the multipurpose room and will last about an hour. Marianne needs to know how many will be there, so if you're interested in attending, please contact Dan Lederer). (dlederer1@verizon.net)

Recording Attendance at Meeting for Worship

At the Providence meetinghouse, the greeter at Meeting for Worship will no longer be recording attendance for the purpose of notifying Friends in the event of a COVID exposure. If such an event occurs, a notice will go out to the Meeting Email List (aka "the listserv") with the details of what happened. If you aren't currently on the email list but would like to be, contact Dan Lederer (dlederer1@verizon.net).

Peace and Social Action Committee Projects

Be on the lookout for information about upcoming peace and social action work. Ad hoc groups are forming to plan for

- Welcoming the peace ship The Golden Rule (see article above),
- Supporting the efforts of the Tomaquag Museum as they raise funds for their new campus near URI
- Gathering information about the possibility of being a sister meeting with Quakers in Floro Perez, Cuba

For more information, contact our presiding clerk Vicky Ekk (clerk@providencefriends.org).

A New Baby!

Rebecca Leuchak and Bill Monroe are happy to announce that, as of May 3, they are now grandparents! Their son Willis and his wife Hayley are the proud parents of a baby girl named Juniper Violet. Anyone wanting to write to Willis and Hayley can find their Vancouver address in the Meeting Directory.

Pastoral Care Announces the *Year of the Elder*

All too often we have seen that longtime members of our community stop attending when they lose the ability to drive. Our meeting is stronger for their presence, so we hope that someone will be able to help them with transportation so that they can share their longtime experience and wisdom.

While we want to engage the whole community in caring for each other, we especially want to give attention to anyone who need help attending Meeting for Worship. We invite anyone who needs a ride to Meeting for Worship at Providence, Conanicut, or Saylesville, or help connecting to the online meeting, to contact Pastoral Care Committee via committee clerk Zona Douthit (401-305-8094 or zona.c.douthit@gmail.com). Pastoral Care will then try to connect them with a driver who lives near them. Drivers, be on the lookout for requests as they come in.

While we want to make a special effort to reach out to those with transportation issues, we ask any

elder who would like more contact with Meeting to contact Pastoral Care Committee. Helping each other spreads joy.

Clerk's Corner: The Near Enemy

From Vicky Ekk

John Woolman said: "So far as [our gracious Creator's] love influences our minds, so far we become interested in his workmanship and feel a desire to take hold of every opportunity to lessen the distresses of the afflicted and increase the happiness of the creation." John Woolman (date unknown)

One of the blessings of working as clerk of our meeting has been the exposure to so many different Friends' ideas and projects with a focus on "lessening the distress of the afflicted." I've had many opportunities to meet with Friends who meld ideas and action to assist those in crisis. Wednesday, some of us met virtually to consider how to reach out to a Quaker community in Cuba suffering from decades of economic distress exacerbated by the US embargo. We were frustrated by political barriers that prevent much of what we'd like to do to assist our Cuban Friends. But we are drawn to persevere as we experience their love for their Creator and their strength in face of extreme challenges.

At the planning meeting one of us asked, "Can we explain why we want to reach out to them? Is this yet another Quaker saying let's save the world?" Good question; why *do I want* to 'lessen the distresses of the afflicted'? Do I feel guilty for having more things than I actually need? Do I pity those who do not have as much? Do I have a savior complex? Or is the Light leading me to do what I can for my equal?

Author Louise Penny of the Three Pines series describes the psychological concept of the "near enemy". She describes it as: "Two emotions that look the same but are actually opposites. The one parades as the other, is mistaken for the other, but one is healthy and the other's sick, twisted. There are three couplings. Attachment masquerades as Love, Pity as Compassion, and Indifference as Equanimity." Buddhist monk Jack Kornfield states: "The near enemy of compassion is pity. Instead of feeling the openness of compassion, pity says, "Oh, that poor person. I feel sorry for people like that." Pity sees them as different from ourselves. Compassion, on the other hand, recognizes the suffering of another as a reflection of our own pain. It is empathetic, a mutual connection with the pain and sorrow of life. Compassion is shared suffering."

As a strong believer in the equality of every human being I am determined to act on compassion rather than pity. I want to work on making sure that my work towards lessening others' affliction comes from a desire to treat others as I would like to be treated myself. When I am mentally and spiritually at the same level as people in distress I understand why it is important to work alongside them to "increase the happiness of creation." I can feel and act compassionately when I know and live out the testimony of equality.

Presiding Clerk: **Vicky Ekk** clerk@providencefriends.org
Newsletter: **Jen McFadden and Dan Lederer** providentfriend@providencefriends.org
Website: **Sam Schiffman** webclerk@providencefriends.org
Questions and Information: **Steve Schwartz** info@providencefriends.org

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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the Religious Society of Friends
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