

MEETING CALENDAR

Saturday, Nov 18, 11:00 AM, Memorial Service for Anne DiMase (Providence Meetinghouse and Zoom)

Saturday, Nov 18, 3:00 PM, Gathering Honoring Hannah Edgerly (Providence Meetinghouse)

Sunday, Nov 19, Meeting for Worship: at Providence, 10:00 AM (Indoors and Zoom); at Saylesville, 10:30 AM (Indoors); at Conanicut (Norman Bird Sanctuary), 9:30 AM (Indoors)

Sunday, Nov 26, Meeting for Worship: at Providence, 10:00 AM (Indoors and Zoom, Hybrid*); at Saylesville, 10:30 AM (Indoors); at Conanicut (Norman Bird Sanctuary), 9:30 AM (Indoors)

Sunday, Dec 3, Meeting for Worship: at Providence, 10:00 AM (Indoors and Zoom); at Saylesville, 10:30 AM (Indoors); at Conanicut (Norman Bird Sanctuary), 9:30 AM (Indoors)

Sunday, Dec 10, Meeting for Worship: at Providence, 10:00 AM (Indoors and Zoom, Hybrid*); at Saylesville, 10:30 AM (Indoors); at Conanicut (Norman Bird Sanctuary), 9:30 AM (Indoors)

Sunday, Dec 10, Meeting for Business at Providence, Noon (Indoors and Zoom, Hybrid*)

Saturday, Dec 16, 5:00 PM, Christmas Gathering (Providence Meetinghouse)

**Providence Monthly Meeting for Worship
with a Concern for Business
12th of Eleventh Month, 2023
Minutes**

Friends gathered at the Providence meetinghouse at noon with 17 present and two on Zoom. Presiding clerk Ariana Steele began the period of silent worship by reading the following queries taken from New England Yearly Meeting's *Advices and Queries*:

Do you allow the Inward Teacher to work in you? Are you teachable?

The clerk read the following announcements:

- There will be a memorial service for Anne DiMase at 11:00 a.m. on Eleventh month 18 at the Providence meetinghouse. All are welcome.
- The Christmas Gathering is tentatively scheduled for 5:00 p.m. on Twelfth month 16 at the Providence meetinghouse.
- Hospitality Committee wishes to hear from any Friends who would be interested in participating in a potluck Thanksgiving meal. Please contact Eugenia Marks if you would like to participate.

The following items of business were brought forward:

1. Heather Meehan, a member of Westbury Friends Meeting in New York Yearly Meeting, has asked to transfer her membership to Providence Monthly Meeting. Ministry and Counsel Committee reported that a clearness committee met with her, and that we have received a certificate for her from Westbury Meeting, which recommends her to our Christian care. Friends approved the transfer and appointed Martha Yager, Betsy Cazden, and Paul Graseck as a committee to welcome Heather to our Meeting. The Clerk will notify Westbury of this action.

2. Ministry and Counsel reported that Lynn Einig has moved out of New England and has resigned her membership in our Meeting. Friends accepted this report.

3. The Library Committee requested permission to offer to the American Antiquarian Society the collection of old books which were removed some years ago from the Saylesville meetinghouse, and which have not yet been placed elsewhere or requested by members of our Meeting. Friends approved.

4. Peace and Social Action Committee brought a draft minute concerning the United States' embargo of Cuba, requesting that our Meeting unite with this minute and that the Presiding Clerk communicate copies to the Rhode Island Congressional delegation with a request that they work to end the embargo and support proposed legislation to that effect, and to Southeast Quarterly Meeting with the request that the Quarter unite with the minute and forward it to New England Yearly Meeting. Friends approved.

No further business appearing, we closed with a period of silent worship at 12:35 p.m., intending to meet next on the 10th of Twelfth month.

Respectfully submitted: Ariana Steele, Presiding Clerk Rebecca Smith, Recording Clerk

National Security and War

from guest columnist Jack O'Rourke

(The Providence Journal published this op-ed piece last month. We are including it here with the author's permission. Mr. O'Rourke lives in Narragansett.)

Humans share 98.7 percent of their DNA with chimpanzees, the most intelligent animals in the animal kingdom. Humans and chimpanzees are the only species on the planet known to kill members of their own species in organized assaults. History confirms that man has always been a war-like creature.

Centuries ago, the Hebrew Prophets were the first to preach that since we humans are all children of the one God, we should treat each other with dignity and respect. Not only did God give us the capability to act well beyond the natural instincts of an ordinary ape, but God expects us humans to live in accordance with the extraordinary gifts of reason, logic and compassion given to us.

It can be argued that civilization raised its head in a ruthless pagan world with the commandment passed down through Moses on the mountaintop "Thou shall not kill." Jesus of Nazareth, a devout practicing Jew, reinforced the teachings of the Prophets with the Sermon on the Mount and the Beatitudes, the core message of His short public ministry.

At a time when the ruling elite of the day amused themselves by pitting gladiators against one

another, Jesus delivered an earth-shattering message, revealing mankind's only true hope for salvation. Rather than treat each other like aged animals in war zones, Jesus said, "If someone strike thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other cheek...love your enemies, do good to those that hate you, and pray for those who persecute and calumniate you...."

Loving your enemies is an extremely difficult command to accept unless you fully consider the reality of the world in which we live. World War II was the most destructive and barbaric war ever fought. Our bitterest enemies during that war are today among our closest allies: Germany, Italy and Japan. They are no different from us today than they were then. Jesus made no distinction between who is good, evil, just or unjust; the rain and sun fall on all of God's children equally. Under the skin, we humans are the same.

National security is secured through peace, not war. To those not inclined toward the Scriptures or the Divine, the reality of the physical worlds leads us to the same conclusion.

Given our war-prone DNA, the destructive power of the atom, and the mindset of today's ruling elite, which is not much different from that of pagan Rome, we humans either pay heed to the Sermon on the Mount and act accordingly or we self-destruct in a thumbs-down moment of satanic madness. The choice is ours to make.

Memorial Service for Anne DiMase November 18

A memorial service for Anne DiMase will be held at the Providence meetinghouse on Saturday November 18 starting at 11:00 AM. Anne was a long-term member of Meeting and is remembered fondly by many of us. Elsie Morse is coordinating arrangements with the family. The service will be viewable on Zoom via the same link used for Meeting for Worship.

Gathering for Hannah Edgerly November 18

We received the sad news that Libby Edgerly's daughter Hannah died on November 8 at Miriam Hospital. We will not be having a formal memorial service for her, but Libby will be hosting a gathering in her memory for friends and family in the downstairs social room at the Providence meetinghouse from 3:00 PM to 5:00 PM on Saturday November 18, one week from today. (This is the same day as the memorial service for Anne DiMase, which will start at

11:00 AM upstairs and will be over earlier.) Light refreshments will be served, and Friends are invited. For this gathering, please come in via the downstairs door.

Message from Conanicut Worship Group: Winter Location

Conanicut Friends Meeting held its last summer season service at the old meetinghouse (built 1786) on Weeden Lane on a chilly Sunday, October 29. For winter services, the Meeting moves to warm and sun-filled Mabel's Studio at the Norman Bird Sanctuary, 583 Third Beach Road, Middletown, RI 02842. The building is about a 100-foot walk from the parking lot and visitors center. It is handicap accessible and has bathrooms. Meeting for Worship starts there at 10:30 AM (as opposed to 9:30 on Jamestown). We will be holding services at the Norman Bird Sanctuary through April 28, 2024, including December 24 and 31, 2023, and March 31, 2024 (Easter).

Conversation on Caregiving and Caretaking Took Place October 18

from Ministry and Counsel Committee

On October 18 Ministry and Counsel Committee sponsored an interesting and enjoyable Zoom "conversation" on aging facilitated by Patti Muldoon, the coordinator for NEYM's Aging Resources, Consultation, and Help (ARCH) program (for more information on the ARCH program, click [here](#).) The focus was on caregiving and caretaking, and, with Patti's guidance and encouragement, Friends shared generously about their own experiences.

However, turnout was small (seven Friends in addition to Patti), so before scheduling any additional events the committee would like to gauge the level of interest in participating in future discussions on this kind of topic. If issues related to aging pique your interest and you would be willing to attend similar gatherings in the future, please let Ministry and Counsel clerk Dan Lederer know (dlederer1@verizon.net).

Can Doubt and Faith Co-Exist?

from Dan Lederer

I'm troubled by doubt. The horrendous events occurring in Gaza once again raise the question of whether organized religion is, on balance, a benefit to mankind or a curse. Certainly, multiple factors are contributing to the conflict in the Middle East, but religion, and the extremism it can engender, is playing a role on both sides.

I acknowledge that religion has created a lot of good in the world. It's able to promote a sense of community, provide comfort in times of hardship or sorrow, and inspire noble acts of generosity and courage. But religion has also been used to manipulate people to accept tyrannical leaders and miserable living conditions, to identify outside groups of people whom it deems unworthy (and therefore who can be subjected to abuse), and to justify such atrocities as war, slavery, and genocide. Considering all this, a person can begin to doubt that religion is worthwhile.

And then what is one to make of the various religions' narratives, each one claiming to be God's word? Isn't it possible that all these stories were invented by man for one or more of the purposes listed above, sometimes for good, sometimes for evil? The validity of these narratives seems doubtful, especially given that they often tend to contradict each other.

So there's much reason to doubt, but maybe doubt has its place. A paradoxical saying goes that *in the absence of doubt there can be no faith*. I interpret this to mean two things:

First, when it comes to religion, questioning and doubt seem unavoidable. For example, how can an omniscient, omnipotent, loving God stand by and watch man inflict unspeakable suffering on his fellow man? Are the characteristics we attribute to God just wishful thinking? Does God exist at all? If you accept that no one can prove that God exists, or, for that matter, that God doesn't exist, then you're left with the agnostic's answer to these questions, which is "I just don't know."

But doubt doesn't necessarily rule out faith; it's possible that the two can co-exist. It may be that the uneasiness of doubt prompts us to choose a faith that provides a framework of meaning for our lives. For example, we can decide to accept a particular religion's narrative and try to adhere to its tenets, or, as Quakers, we can choose to seek guidance from within. Personally, I like to think that there's a Spirit that underlies everything and gives rise to

us and the world around us, a true Creator. I don't know this for a fact, and I can't prove it, but it works for me. If it is true, then in a sense we are all brothers and sisters, and we need to start treating each other as such.

My questions to you are: Do you have religious doubt? And even if so, do you also have religious faith? If you feel comfortable doing so, I hope you'll share your thoughts.

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**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
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Providence, RI 02906