

The Provident FRIEND January 14, 2025

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

MEETING CALENDAR

Saturday, Jan 18, 10:00 AM to noon, Saylesville Book Swap (Saylesville Meetinghouse)

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

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

Sunday, Feb 2, Meeting for Worship: at Providence, 10:00 AM (Indoors and Zoom); at Saylesville, 10:30 AM (Indoors); at Conanicut (Norman Bird Sanctuary), 10:30 AM (Indoors)

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

Sunday, Feb 9, Meeting for Business at Providence, Noon (Indoors and Zoom, Hybrid*)

Monday, Feb 10, 6:30 PM, Elements of Quakerism Course (Zoom) (See article below)

*Hybrid = the in-person and online meetings are combined.

**Providence Monthly Meeting for Worship
with a Concern for Business
12th of First Month, 2025
Minutes**

Friends gathered at the Providence meetinghouse at noon with 22 present and five on Zoom. The meeting began with a period of silent worship.

Presiding clerk Ariana Steele read an announcement concerning the Elements of Quakerism course which will begin on Second month 10 and will be held via Zoom. Pre-registration is required, and those interested should contact Laura Landen at Laura.Landen@hotmail.com, Flyers with more information are available.

We have learned that our dear Friend Adele Bourne died last night; we hold her family in the Light.

The following items of business were brought forward:

1. The Auditors' report was presented by Matt Hackman. The Meeting's finances were reviewed by him and Bill Monroe and were found to be in good order. Copies are kept in several locations, and the auditors are working with the Treasurer to ensure that the records remain available into the future and to improve the level of documentation. There is currently no assistant treasurer.

2. Ministry and Counsel Committee proposed adding Em McManamy to that committee to fill a vacancy. Friends approved.

3. Nominating Committee requested that Mycah Hogan and Ashley Marchesi be added to the Religious Education Committee. Friends approved.

4. Our member Willis Monroe has asked to transfer his membership from Providence Monthly Meeting to New Brunswick Friends Meeting in Canada. Friends approved and directed our Clerk to prepare an appropriate certificate for him.

5. Ministry & Counsel brought a proposal to create a designated fund for the purpose of purchasing and installing a new microphone and related equipment in the worship room, the fund to be administered by Ministry and Counsel and to be in place for a year, at the end of which time any remaining balance will go to Meeting's general fund. This allows the implementation of the decision by the Meeting for Business in Tenth month 2024 to approve the possible installation of a microphone system to enhance audio quality within the worship

room for those who need it. It was noted that this will be done in cooperation with Property Committee and that the old microphones may be removed. Friends approved.

6. Peace and Social Action Committee brought a proposal that the Meeting discern whether we wish to allow use of the Providence Meetinghouse as an emergency cold-weather shelter, possibly involving food. Volunteers from the Meeting would be needed to be on hand when the shelter is in use. A sub-committee of P&SA, consisting of Steve Schwartz, Marcus Mitchell, Martha Yager, and Sarah Morenon, has begun investigating what would be involved in offering this service without disrupting our building or regularly scheduled activities. Many details remain to be investigated. Some Friends expressed discomfort with being asked for a decision without much information. It was pointed out that this request should go through the Providence Meetinghouse Management Committee. A Friend with relevant experience suggested that it could be helpful if a group of people from our Meeting spent time volunteering with organizations currently providing shelter in order to learn and to prepare recommendations for possible future work by ourselves. Friends directed the Peace and Social Action subcommittee, with possible additional members, to communicate with F/friends and with appropriate community groups to see if they can develop a realistic proposal involving identified responsible parties. If so, Peace and Social Action will bring it to the Providence Meetinghouse Management Committee for their discernment. We anticipate that the Management Committee may feel called to bring the matter to Meeting for Business for a final decision.

No further business appearing, we closed with a period of silent worship at 2:00 p.m., intending to meet next on the 9th of Second month at the Providence meetinghouse.

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

Elements of Quakerism Course

What is an Elements of Quakerism class?

This is a seven-week course on Zoom that looks at the basic elements of Quakerism. The course is text-based. Each week there is about an hour of reading to do before the class; then in the class we discuss the materials. This is not just facts about Quakerism; it is about the spiritual underpinnings of Quakerism, and how those relate to your own spiritual life. Most materials are available to you online. The others can be borrowed from the Meeting library.

Who can attend?

Anyone is welcome to attend. All classes will be on Zoom, so you do not need to live nearby or worry about inclement weather to attend. The material is geared for those fairly new to Quakerism, but longtime members and attenders may benefit from hearing about others' experiences, as well as thinking about ideas new to them or taken for granted after many years. The number of participants is limited to 10 per class so that people can get to know and trust each other and share about their own experiences and understandings. This is a great way to get to know others in the meeting. The class is free.

When will the classes meet?

The class will meet on Mondays in February and March, from 6:30 until 8:00 PM. The dates are February 10, 17, and 24, then March 3, 10, 17, and 24.

What are the topics of the classes?

Here is a tentative sequence of topics:

Week 1 *Quakerism*. What is the essence of Quakerism?

Week 2 *Quaker History*. How did Quakerism begin, and how has it changed and developed over time?

Week 3 *Silence*. What is happening in the silence of worship?

Week 4 *Vocal Ministry*. What is spoken during worship? How do I know if I have a message to speak?

Week 5 *Quaker Decision-making*. What happens in Quaker Meeting for Business?

Week 6 *The Testimonies*. How is Quaker faith lived out in the world?

Week 7 *Community*. What is the basis of community in the Quaker meeting?

How can I sign up or get more information?

Contact Laura Landen, Laura.Landen@hotmail.com, 401-227-1649.



Holiday Concert Took Place December 22

At the Providence meetinghouse on Sunday December 22, The Little Red Quartet treated a sizable and enthusiastic audience to a delightful holiday concert. The quartet's members are Ada McFadden (violin), Lillian Rimmer (violin), Lee Sweeten (viola), and Sean Thoma (cello).

The group performed Mozart's Quartet # 4 in C major, Piazzolla's Libertango, Tchaikovsky's Arabian Dance (from The Nutcracker), Conley's arrangement of The Hanukkah Song, and a variety of holiday melodies including Holly Jolly Christmas, Rocking Around the Christmas Tree, Let It Snow! Let It Snow! Let It Snow!, Frosty The Snowman, Jingle Bell Rock, We Wish You a Merry Christmas, Silent Night, and Somewhere In My Memory.

Those in attendance marveled at the skill of the individual players as well as the cohesion of the ensemble, without needing to make any concessions for the youth of the performers. We look forward to hearing more from The Little Red Quartet!

What I Believe

from Melissa Mastrostefano

[Melissa is a new member of Meeting. What follows was part of her request for membership, appearing here with her permission.]

Quakerism makes intellectual and spiritual sense to me. Following are my current beliefs:

Truth comes from many sources and is not limited to the Bible.

The "seed", that of God, is within everyone which fosters unity rather than judgement and healthy curiosity to seek understanding of other people's perspectives

People are equally valuable and have contributions and gifts to share. The religious Society of Friends is an open space for me to be my unique self and for others as well. There is no pressure to conform to strict gender roles.

The depth and quality of love is what is important for a marriage.

The Bible is a source of wisdom and revelation, but is not a complete or closed system. God still speaks. There is mystery, the Bible is not without errors and I believe, continual revelation for changing times and circumstances occurs.

I accept a place of humility, knowing I do not have all the answers. I believe that the Spirit will guide. I focus now on the most loving way rather than on correct doctrine and creeds.

I believe Loving Presence, Spirit, Light continues to speak, guide, and enlighten me as I walk through life.

I do not believe in war. It is not the answer to problems. It only creates more human suffering, destruction to families and communities. It also harms our planet, dehumanizes people and ignores that which is sacred in human beings.

The values of simplicity and stewardship, to share resources with others so all people can live and thrive, is also a value of mine.

Quaker Recipes

This is a new feature in The Provident Friend. We welcome favorite recipes from Friends. Send your recipe, ideally along with a photo of the finished product, to providentfriend@providencefriends.org. Our guest chef today is Elsie Morse.

Raisin Bread

Simmer one and ½ cups of raisins in one cup of water three minutes.

Add two cups milk, ½ cup sugar, and one tablespoon molasses.

When all that is lukewarm sprinkle on one teaspoon yeast.

When the yeast is dissolved stir in enough flour to make a thin batter.

Rest that at least 30 minutes, but it could also rest for hours. The longer it sits the more gluten will develop in the batter, which will make the kneading much easier.

Finally, add one tablespoon cinnamon, one tablespoon salt, and ¼ cup melted butter making sure it is not too hot, which could kill the yeast.

Start mixing in more flour until the dough feels ready to be shaped. Because of the batter resting stage, you don't need another waiting time.

Bake at whatever temperature you please between 250° and 375° or even more or even less! A typical standard loaf pan may be at 350° for 35 or 40 minutes.

The best indication of being done comes from the blast of aroma that comes just when the bread is done.