

Worcester Friends Meeting

Religious Society of Friends (Quaker)

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December 2012 - January 2013

ADVICE & QUERIES

How do I strive to maintain the integrity of my inner and outer lives—in my spiritual journey, my work, and my family responsibilities?

How do I manage my commitments so that over-commitment, worry, and stress do not diminish my integrity?

Am I temperate in all things?

Am I open to counsel and advice on overindulgence and addictive behavior, such as gambling? Do I take seriously the hazards associated with addictive and mood-altering substances?

Am I careful to speak truth as I know it and am I open to truth spoken to me? Am I mindful that judicial oaths imply a double standard of truth?

Do I refrain from membership in organizations whose purposes and methods compromise our testimonies?

Faith and Practice, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting <http://pym.org>

Clerk's Corner

by Clarence Burley

Hearty thanks to the Peace and Social Concerns Committee headed by Mary Chenaille and Matt Shorten for sponsoring the poor persons' meal. It advanced this Friend's understanding of our traditional pot-luck to an important spiritual degree. He previously enjoyed the pot-luck with little thought of the loving generosity of the providers: their care in preparing a tasty dish; their efforts to transport it to meeting and to arrange the table. For all this he now wants to give heartfelt thanks to these generous and faithful Friends, and to God for leading him to such a loving community.

But the poor persons' meal reminded him that he has other Friends. For them a small bowl of soup and a slice of bread may not be just a quick lunch in a comfortably warm room, but all that they can hope during a winter day in some bare housing, on the streets or in a war-ravaged land. May it please God to lead him to be generous to these Friends from the blessings he has received. Pot-luck is a joyful community sharing; bread and soup, with all due respect to bread and wine, are a sacrament, a Eucharist.

Worcester Friend Travels to Honduras

Katherine Barnard participated in a medical trip to Honduras for a week in November. For the past 12 years, she has volunteered with Cape CARES, a non-denominational, non-profit group of doctors and dentists and support staff who provide services to people in rural Honduras who have very poor access to medical care. Katherine reports, "This year's group was terrific. We tended to 635 patients in 5 days -- so it was busy, and very gratifying. I love getting to know the patients over time, after seeing them year after year, and having the opportunity to work with a group of people who are really interested in contributing something to make the world a better place. It is really a wonderful experience."



This photo, taken by Katherine, shows a boy and his baby brother arriving on horseback for their medical care.

Worcester Interfaith by Frank Kartheiser, Lead Organizer, Worcester Interfaith

The WI leaders meeting brought together leaders from 13 member institutions to continue the conversation around strengthening institutions, identifying leaders, working on issues and standing for the whole. While reaffirming WI's mission of building power to take action on the pressures impacting families, we acknowledge the challenges facing our congregations and organizations. Sr. Connie Charette talked about the difficulties of identifying new leaders and Rev. Aaron Payson wondered how we might put our issues into a campaign.

While we raised up a number of issues; jobs, healthcare, CORI reform, School Site Councils, Responsible Employers Ordinance, youth jobs, increase revenues, immigration, hunger, increase minimum wage, how do we insure we have the muscle to take effective action?

Our January meeting will be an opportunity to find common ground as we work towards a Delegates Assembly to prioritize issues in the coming year.

The next leaders' meeting is Tuesday, January 8, 2013 from 8-9am at First Baptist Church, Worcester. The Worcester Friends Meeting is a member of WI. Please contact Clarence Burley or Katie Green if you are interested in attending a WI meeting. Frank Kartheiser can be contacted at worcester.interfaith@verizon.net- Editor

An aching head requires a soft pillow
a drooping heart a strong support.

Anne Bradstreet 1612-1672

Black Friday is known to be a time when merchants encourage consumers to buy, buy, buy! Stores force employees to come to work as early as 2 AM at Victoria's Secret, and customers line up outside of local Walmart stores before the sun rises. I've never participated in this new ritual, but workers tell about people roughly pushing and shoving each other to save a dollar or two.

According to www.forrespect.org, Walmart is one of the country's largest employers; therefore Walmart has a lot of power to improve the economy. This year, across the country, Associates came together as the Organization United for Respect. Walmart employees stood up and spoke out for higher pay, better schedules, and basic respect at the stores. Workers in California walked off the job carrying placards reading, "Stand Up, Live Better," "Respect Work, Rebuild America," and "Stop Cutting Hours." The strikers felt elated and empowered, despite their worry about potential retaliation.

On the day after Thanksgiving (Black Friday), Worcester Friends Karen Sargent, Phil Stone,

Whitney Mikkelsen and Katie Green handed out leaflets in support of the Walmart workers' rights to customers of the West Boylston Walmart store. The responses from people were quite supportive.



Katie Green and Karen Sargent stand out in front of West Boylston's Walmart store on Black Friday. Photo by Whitney Mikkelsen.

I spoke with a local woman who had been a Walmart employee for over eleven years. She volunteered that Walmart's mandatory health care insurance was expensive and did not cover much. She also said that as a Walmart employee, she was in constant fear of losing her job or having her hours reduced.

When Walmart workers are paid an average hourly wage of \$8.81, some Walmart executives make more than \$10 million dollars each, and six members of the Walton family have more wealth than the bottom 42% of American families combined. Jobs with Justice believes that changing Walmart's treatment of employees will make a move toward reducing poverty in the U.S.

Fifteen members and attenders from the Worcester Friends Meeting signed a letter to Rob Walton, Chairman of the Board of Walmart Stores. The letter called on Walmart to share its corporate wealth with workers by providing a living wage, improved benefits and safe working conditions.

On the morning of December 14th, a young man killed twenty children and six adults in Newtown, Connecticut. He also killed his mother and himself. The knowledge and pain of such a tragedy does not disappear because it is Christmas time.

Our tree stands in the living room on December 21 wearing only white lights. Only lights. I haven't been able to pull the ornaments out from the eaves. I try to make light of it (no pun intended) by saying, "We have a Quaker tree this year. It is simple."

I attempted to purchase a few toys for my grandchildren. Instead I became overwhelmed by the junk I saw in the store. The truth is that my eyes are leaking and my heart is crying. I break into tears when I think of this awful thing. The families in Newtown will never recover. Maybe we who have heard this news will never recover.

And then I remember the beautiful metaphor that I see in Christmas. The darkest, longest night will be followed by longer days. We will not be in darkness forever; the light will return. It is no accident that a child is born during the darkest of times. The birth of a child brings hope. I pray that I will recover in time to celebrate that hope with my grandchildren on December 25.

Minutes of the Joint Meeting

Minutes of the Joint Meeting of The Trustees, the Ministry and Counsel Committee, and the Nominating Committee 2 December 2012

Present: Karen Sargent, Clarence Burley, Mary Chenaille, Paul Gallagher, Ellen Perry, Matt Shorten, Daran Barnard, Betty Poynton, Brian Poynton, Katie Green, Phil Stone, Betty Jones, Mark Sullivan, Jill Tetreault and Fred Mikkelsen.

A period of silent worship opened the meeting.

The minute of the Ministry and Counsel Committee leading to this joint meeting was read:

A discussion of staffing the various offices and committees evoked the need for support of the Nominating Committee through the careful and prayerful self-discernment by Friends of their gifts and leadings. M and C and Trustees might well consider the staff and committee structure for presentation to the Meeting for Business.

It was observed that New England Yearly Meeting and other monthly meetings have these same concerns and are addressing them with imaginative solutions.

Preliminary suggestions included:

Not having set times for committee meetings, calling them as needed.

Combining committees: e.g., Cemetery with Building and Grounds; First Day School with M & C; Market Day with Peace and Social Concerns/ Outreach. Combining all committee functions into only two committees (possibly called Spiritual and Physical was mentioned.)

Individual appointments will only be needed for Clerk, Recording Clerk, Treasurer, Recorder and the two committee clerks.

A Friend observed that service to the Meeting should be a major part of each Friends life if we are to truly be called Friends. Another Friend brought up the word "responsibility," noting that the attitude of a clerk should be that of a shepherd taking responsibility for guiding a group.

A starting process must be the identification of the areas of interest, the talents, and the willingness to use the talents confidently of all members and attenders. Friends were encouraged to look for our own talents as well as the gifts of others in the Meeting.

The discussion turned to the welcoming of newcomers to meeting for worship. The need for a rotation of volunteer greeters (or mentors) who will attend newcomers and introduce them to Quaker particularities was recognized. The greeter should be in the hall for fifteen minutes after gathering to greet latecomers and guide them into the meeting for worship at the break for the departure of the youngsters. A suggestion was made for the recorder to maintain the mailing list.

A Friend emphasized the need to express recognition and appreciation for service to the Meeting.

The joint committees will present these minutes to the Meeting for Business on December 11th for further discussion and action, always allowing for the possibility of further discernment and the continuation of the current status for a month or so.

A period of silent worship closed the meeting.

Submitted in the Light,

Clarence Burley, Recording Clerk

Report from NEYM Permanent Board Meeting

Holly Baldwin, Clerk of Permanent Board, reports that in November, 2012, the Permanent Board met at Midcoast Meeting in Damariscotta, Maine. In addition to Permanent Board members, we were delighted to have several visitors from Vassalboro Quarter, and some from YM Ministry and Counsel.

Major points of discussion included the following:

Structural Review Committee

At Sessions 2012, Permanent Board shared a recommendation from Nominating Committee that we examine the structure of the Yearly Meeting. This is the third such request in about ten years from the Nominating Committee. Yearly Meeting at Sessions agreed that this was important work, and asked Permanent Board to take it on.

At this meeting, we approved a charge for the committee asking it to consider multiple areas of concern which have arisen including: Nominating Committee's concern about their work and the committee structure; Permanent Board's composition and relationship to Monthly Meetings; staff structure and work load; and a more general concern about the relationships of Monthly, Quarterly, and Yearly Meeting.

Friends Camp

Nat Shed, Director of Friends Camp, brought forward some ideas for improving the governance structure of the Camp. We appreciate his oversight, and established an ad hoc committee to work with him and the Friends Camp Committee to move forward on these ideas.

Financial Deficits

Our Treasurer, Ed Mair, reported that we finished the 2012 fiscal year with a \$58,000 deficit. We were able to cover this with our reserves, but the deficit is concerning. It is all the more concerning given the \$38,000 deficit budget for the coming year. Friends will need to give generously to ensure the ongoing work of supporting the Yearly Meeting and its constituent meetings.

Complete minutes are available on the Yearly Meeting web site. Friends who would like to know more about what is happening at Permanent Board are welcome to join us at our next meeting on January 19th, 2013, at Framingham. Also, Worcester Friend Phil Stone serves on NEYM's Permanent Board and is available to answer questions you may have about the work of the Permanent Board.

2013 Mid-Year Gathering:

The Mid-Year Gathering will be in Portland, Maine on Saturday, March 23. The theme is *Let the Living Waters Flow, Friends Serving God's Purposes*. Special guests Simon Lamb and John Fitzgerald of Ireland Yearly Meeting will present the FWCC Section of the Americas theme, *Let the Living Waters Flow, Friends Serving God's Purposes*.

Both speakers grew up in the evangelical unprogrammed tradition of Ulster Friends in Northern Ireland. We can look forward to an open and dynamic dialog with these world-traveled Friends who seek the challenge of sharing a concrete, transformative experience of the Inward Christ within a liberal yearly meeting.

Worcester Friends and Attenders are encouraged to attend the Mid Year Gathering. The Portland Friends Meeting is located at 1837 Forest Ave, Portland, Maine. Look for more information in the next newsletter or contact Jeff Hipp at the NEYM Office (508-754-6760 or neym@neym.org)



Goings On At The Hill

Woolman Hill Quaker Retreat Center is offering programs jointly created by New England Yearly Meeting Ministry & Counsel, Quaker Studies Program and the Woolman Hill Retreat Center. Information about the series Cracked Open is available at the Worcester Meeting and on line at the NEYM website.

<http://www.neym.org/m-c/>

Don't forget that Woolman Hill offers space for individual or group retreats. Contact Margaret Cooley, Executive Director at info@woolmanhill.org



Exploring The Unwritten Rules Of Meeting For Worship - February 15-17, 2013

If you have questions about Quaker Meeting for Worship (and who doesn't?) this is the workshop for you. Kathleen Wooton (Lawrence Monthly Meeting) and Debbie Humphries (Hartford Monthly Meeting) will explore (sometimes playfully) our use of language, assumptions, and the "hidden rules" of our experience and culture of worship. We hope through this exploration of worship in our home meetings, we will all be encouraged and prepared to further strengthen and deepen our own spiritual practices, and to contribute more fully to the corporate worship experience.

Winter Stillness Sifting Through The Silence - December 29, 2012 - January 1, 2013

At the New Year's Retreat, we will enter into intentional silence Saturday evening, and will sing our way into the New Year on Tuesday. In between, there will be opportunities to practice lectio divina (Holy Reading), to journal, experiment with art supplies, walk the land, and tune in to the sounds of longing that are just beneath the level of silence. We will have opportunities for worship and worship sharing, and nourishing silent meals.

This workshop is led by Jennie Isbell & Newell Pledger-Shinn, the Friends at residence at Woolman Hill.

Online Courses

Winter is a wonderful time to curl up with...a stimulating online course.

Check these out at: <http://www.bhfh.org/qsp/>

The Apocalypse Is Within You - Spiritual & social change in early Friends' lives and thought with Frederick Martin - 4 weeks starting January 7, 2013

James Nayler with Brian Drayton - 4 weeks starting February 4

An on-line offering in the **Cracked Open Series** *Plain Worship: -Four Puzzles* with Eric Edwards - 4 weeks starting February 15

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For Friends who travel all year, there's more! In and near Boston, Friends are also offering a variety of opportunities to learn and grow:

Business Meeting Saved My Life with Jonathan Vogel-Borne - a 3 week course - 6:45 - 8:45 PM, Sundays, January 13, 20 and 27 at Cambridge Meeting

[In?]equality ...the evolution of a testimony with Betsy Cazden a one-day workshop 9:30 - 3:30, Saturday January 26 at Beacon Hill Friends House

Never Neutral - the Living Struggle of Bayard Rustin with Greg Williams & Leslie Manning a one-day workshop 9:30 - 3:30, Saturday, February 23 at Wellesley Meeting.

From Ginny Powell Brasier:

God, I'm not asking for miracles at this time.
I'm asking to recognize Your movements in my
life. I'm asking to catch Your whispers. I'm asking to
sense Your presence in what I think are my darkest
moments, when I think I can't go on.
God, I'm asking for moments when I can see Your grace
as clearly as footprints in a fresh-fallen snow or wet sand
along a beach. God, I'm asking that You be with me
and somehow see me through.

We are so afraid of silence that we chase ourselves
from one event to the next in order not to have to
spend a moment alone with ourselves, in order not
to have to look at ourselves in the mirror.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer 1906-1945

Quaker Sitting

Sitting in the quiet
Thinking, self-consciously:
"Let the Light in."
"Please let me feel the Light."

But I don't really know what that means.
How would that be? How would that feel?
Am I alone here among these kind people?
I wish I could read their minds.

Because I feel like a scattering of metal shards,
Drawn toward a relentless, powerful magnet
To which I am held fast.

Oh, would rather be milkweed in the sun
My weightless seeds being blown about,
Or held gently within a fragile casement.

Jill Tetreault
September 1, 2012

Why I Went to my First Quaker Meeting ... and Kept Coming Back

By Jill Tetreault

As a person from New England, and someone who has always been interested in religion, I knew surprisingly little about the Quakers. I knew they were honest and sharp businessmen during the Whaling Era. Starbuck, the First Mate and a Quaker in Moby Dick, was Ahab's nemesis. I was quite aware, during my college years, as I watched friends be drafted to serve in an immoral war, that Quakers were exempt. And, oddly, I had the idea that The Quakers were a closed Society and that one did not just show up. I could not have been more mistaken about this last assumption.

Let me tell you a little about my religious experience. Until I was eighteen, I was a member of a liberal and politically active Congregational church. I liked church, and enjoyed some of my leadership roles. After college, I travelled, had a good time and didn't think about church at all until I had children, and felt it was my responsibility to give my kids a "Christian Education". I returned to church with my kids (without my husband, who had become a vehement atheist after two tours of duty in Vietnam.) but church was not effecting me spiritually.

I tried other churches. When we moved to Worcester, I went to another Congregational Church. While the familiarity was comforting, I was not motivated to return. Up the street in my new neighborhood there was a Religious Society of Friends Meetinghouse.

One gorgeous fall afternoon I stopped there at their annual "yard sale." I began a conversation with a

member and asked if anyone could go to a meeting; his answer was a resounding "Yes."

He explained the bare bones of the service to me. Everyone sits in silence for an hour. And if during the course of the silence, you feel moved to speak, you may give "testimony" intended to bring some enlightenment to the others. You can dress however you please, and you may bring a contribution for a "pot luck" dinner which follows the silent time.

In the previous months my family has gone through some painful experiences. As they say, "There are no atheists in a foxhole", and I needed some spiritual care. I went to my first Quaker meeting the day after the yard sale, and was greeted by people who seemed genuinely interested in me. I felt at ease and comfortable. I began to think that there was a lot I could learn from these special people.

At times I struggle with the silence, other times it flies by. One morning I composed part of a poem in the quiet, wrote it later; the first poem I had written in 26 years.

"Pot luck" dinner is fun, meeting and talking with people, and the perfect way to part for the week, with the reassurance that you will see everyone again next week.

Chance brought me to the Quaker Meeting because I enjoy yard sales. Now I return every week because of the community of care that teaches me and supports me.

The monk at Clark University gently tapped the metal funnel that spread colored sand onto the mandala he was creating. The Venerable Lama Tenzin Yignyen is an ordained Tibetan Buddhist monk. He holds a degree



of “Master of Sutra and Tantra” studies from the Namgyal Monastery of His Holiness the Dalai Lama in Dharamsala, India. He has created sand mandalas in many museums and educational institutions throughout the United States. In early December, he created a Compassion mandala at Clark as part of their Difficult Dialogues series.

I sat at the Higgins Lounge in Dana Com-

mons on two occasions: one morning with my daughter and granddaughter and again with several Friends after the rise of meeting for worship on December 2. On both of my visits the Lama gave a Dharma talk. He clearly loves teaching, and I was impressed with the way his talk was meaningful to both the adults and young people who were present.

Whitney was pleased that the monk’s talk gave her eight-year-old daughter Zika new insight. While sitting

with the monk, watching him work, someone asked how he managed to make the mandala so perfect. He chuckled softly, “Nothing is perfect. Everything has imperfections.” He said that when creating a mandala he focused on a tiny part at a time – not whole thing. The next evening, Zika seemed to be overwhelmed with the number of problems she had on her math homework. She paused, was silent for a moment, and then said, “I can do this. It’s like the monk said. I need to focus on one part of the page at a time.” She quickly completed the page full of math problems.

When I was watching the creation of the mandala, the monk explained the meaning of the colors and the symbols in it. Yellow symbolized earth; red, fire; white, water; blue, air; and green stands for space. The lotus flower in the center of the mandala was for Compassion. “Compassion is essential to life”, Tenzin Yignyen said. “Compassion and loving kindness. These are the most important things necessary to live a good life.” The four pictured objects around the center of the mandala represented things that are necessary to develop compassion: Patience, Generosity, Wisdom, and Appreciation; all necessary for living a good life.

I was somewhat surprised when Tenzin Yignyen said that Buddhism is not a religion, but rather a way of living life. “All religions have beliefs and rituals,” he said. “And all religions teach us to love one another. Children go to school. They learn lessons in reading, writing, math, science, but there is no class to teach loving kindness. We need to include Compassionology in our schools’ curriculum.”

Odds and Ends



Worcester Friends will hold a Holiday Cookie Swap on December 16th. Bring your favorite cookies for an exchange.

* * *

News from First Day School: Our Younger Friends have decided to collect Pennies for Peace again this year. The OAFs (Older Adult Friends) have made generous contributions to help this drive to build schools in Pakistan so that children (especially girls) can have an education. There was a simple meal of soup and bread prepared by the Peace and Social Concerns Committee, and Friends were encouraged to contribute the amount of money they would have spent preparing their contribution to pot luck.

Many of the children will be out of town on December 23rd, the Sunday before Christmas, but the children present will lead a celebration of the birth of Jesus.



Noah Baker Merrill

There's an illustration I love that speaks to me about who we're invited to be as Friends. In it, two figures stand in a field of tall grass. One, tired from long work, leans heavily on the handle of a hoe. The other, turning toward the first, brings a bucket of fresh water and a simple cup. Above the scene is the word encourage.

Maybe the most basic responsibility we have in community is to be encouragers—to build each other up, to help one another continue on the shared journey of faithfulness. We work hard in the fields of the Spirit. Where are you in need of a cup of fresh water? Where—and to whom—are you being asked to offer one?

At its roots, the word encourage is also about getting to the heart of things, turning toward what really matters. Our tradition calls us to keep free of distractions, living in simplicity of heart. Here we need each other's help, too. Together we can both find our "Yes!" and keep it clearly before us.

Living this encouragement frees us from fear. We can support one another to encounter and draw close to the voice in each of us, saying, "Be not afraid—I am with you." In our daily struggles, we can remind one another of the vital truth that every moment offers us the choice between Love and fear—and we are a people who seek to choose Love.

In my new role as Yearly Meeting Secretary, with your prayers, guidance and care, I look forward to exploring with you where the Life is in our journey as Friends, where we need encouragement and where we can give it.

Noah will begin serving our Yearly Meeting as YM Secretary on January 2nd. He succeeds Jonathan Vogel-Borne (Friends Meeting at Cambridge), who has served as Yearly Meeting staff for 21 years.

*Editor : This article was previously published in **The New England Friend** Fall 2012 issue, which is on line at: <http://newenglandfriend.neym.org/>. The Worcester Friends Meeting is looking forward to hosting a Third Sunday Discussion with Noah Baker Merrill in early spring.*

Introduction to Israel/Palestine History

The establishment of the nation-state of Israel in the Middle East in 1948 grew out of several decades of Zionist settlement and the horrors of the Holocaust in Europe. Land which had been part of the Ottoman Empire for centuries and then a British mandate after WWI was declared a homeland for Jews and, as a result, over 750,000 Arab citizens were displaced and their lands appropriated. The Palestinians refer to this as "The Nakba" or "Catastrophe."

In 1967 the state of Israeli occupied the additional territories of the Gaza strip (which had up until that point been administered by Egypt), the Palestinian Territory of the West Bank (which had been ruled by Jordan), and East Jerusalem. Most Americans are familiar with the narrative about the founding of the state of Israel, however few know the corresponding Palestinian narrative of dispossession. Both peoples have suffered profound traumas in their recent history.

Israel is now a prosperous, heavily militarized, nuclear-armed nation state whereas the Palestinians are an illegally (under international law) occupied people still waiting for a state of their own and the freedom to rule themselves. It is important to understand that there are a wide range of views in Israel, Palestine and the United States about the history and causes of the current conflict, the possible solutions, and that the language used to describe the issues is fraught with connotation and assumptions.

It is crucial for Americans to become better educated about this conflict since we are all heavily involved. The US government considers Israel a crucial ally in the Middle East, and our taxes pay the \$3 billion in military aid that we send to Israel each year. The present administration has been unable to influence the Israeli government to stop the expansion of settlements on Palestinian land, and the "peace process" has come to a halt.

Our task team seeks to elevate the grassroots movement for peace with justice being pursued non-violently by groups in Palestine, Israel and the US.

from the website of Massachusetts Conference, United Church of Christ <http://macucc.org/pages/detail/2553>

Massachusetts Conference, United Church of Christ to Meet at Worcester Friends

The December Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business on December 9 agreed to host a meeting to discuss the on-going violence between Israel and Palestine. The Meeting was contacted by Gary Shahinian, a Member of the Israel-Palestine Task Team, Massachusetts Conference, United Church of Christ (MCUCC).

The Israel Palestine Task Team was founded in June 2010. It is part of the MCUCC's Justice and Witness Ministries and also works closely with Global Ministries. The purpose of this task team is to encourage churches to work together to promote peace between Israel and Palestine. The Task Team will work with Justice and Witness Ministries to provide educational opportunities to pastors and/or local churches and associations seeking to know more about this complex issue.

Reverend Dr. Peter Makari will visit Worcester on February 10, 2013.

He is the United Church of Christ and Disciples of Christ Executive for the Middle East and Europe of the Common Global Ministries Board. He will speak about the Christian presence in Israel/Palestine and the context of the conflict there, focusing on the occupation and the many injustices inflicted upon the Palestinians, both Christian and Muslim, by the Israeli government.

In preparation for his visit, there will be a series of three weekly studies on "Call to Action: US Response to the Kairos Palestine Document", which is a 16-page handout that responds to "Kairos Palestine: A Moment of Truth," which is a confession of faith and call to action from Palestinian Christians.

It is tentatively planned that there will be three weekly studies at three different venues around the city in churches of different denominations. The Park Congregational Church will host the first session in January in the building of the First Baptist Church. This session will be followed by two more sessions, concluding with to the February 10 visit by Rev. Dr. Makari. Our Meeting is pleased to host a session on February 1st; Friend Phil Stone agreed to be a co-facilitator.

Once all of the dates and venues are confirmed, an e-mail out will be sent to churches in the area.



For years, the United Church of Christ has had strong relationships with churches and related organizations ministering in Israel, Jerusalem and the Occupied Territories of Palestine through Global Ministries.

Present: Betty Poynton, Brian Poynton, Ellen Perry, Karen Sergeant, Daran Barnard, Mark Sullivan, Jessica Seem, Kevin Walsh, Aaron Shaulich, Mary Chenaille, Barbara Sullivan, Mary Bennett, Clarence Burley, clerk.

1. Meeting began with a period of silence and a reading from The Apocrypha, Book of Sirach 35:11-13.
2. Ministry & Counsel reports they have a concern regarding staffing the number of positions and committees in the meeting. This was brought to the Trustees to consider reorganizing the structure. There was a discussion among Friends, "Are we increasing our busyness, rather than enhancing the spirituality of the meeting?" Trustees, Nominating and M&C will have one meeting to discuss this subject on December 2 at 9:30 AM. Recommendations will be presented to the December meeting for business.
3. The following Sunday there will be a discussion of spoken ministry at meeting for worship at 9:30 AM; the third Sunday in December, Bible Study will return.
4. The treasurer notes contributions are still behind the budgeted amount; the cost of natural gas is down, leaving a \$1,928.26 deficit. The fiscal year ends December 31.
5. The Trustees sent out the annual appeal, and have asked Friends to utilize automatic deposit for donations. In discussing the upcoming budget discussion, and noting that the single largest expense is the upkeep of the meeting house, members began to think creatively about the use of the meeting house.
6. Building & Grounds reports that there has been no response re donation of a replacement for the meeting's computer. They found a refurbished computer with adequate hard drive for about \$200. Friends approve this purchase.
7. Peace & Social Concerns discussed his work on environmentally sensitive issues with David Legg; he will be doing a presentation in the spring. They will be doing a simple meal on December 2nd-bread, soup, with donations for 'Pennies for Peace'.
8. Religious Education - a schedule has been set up for volunteers to help with child care.
9. The cemetery committee notes they met with the company laying the headstone for Grace Blaber. The foundation was laid before the ground froze.
10. Opportunity having been given for questions and concerns, meeting ended with a period of silence, purposing to meet again twelfth month, ninth, or at the call of the clerk.

Submitted in the Light, Barbara Sullivan, recording clerk

Present: Betty Jones, Mary Chenaille, Karen Sargent, Mark Sullivan, Barbara Sullivan, Aaron Shaulich, Paul Gallagher, Katie Green, Phil Stone, Jill Tetreault, Mary Bennett, David Legg, Katherine Barnard, Kevin Walsh, Jessica Seem, Clarence Burley, clerk.

1. Meeting began with a period of silence and a reading from The Octopus, by Frank Norris, on life and death.
2. A report was given on the joint meeting of trustees and ministry and counsel committees held last week to discuss the ability to meet the spiritual and practical needs of the meeting. This included the current committee structure and appointments. There was a deep discussion among Friends about responsibilities of and to the meeting, ways to organize these, and how to best utilize our human resources and gifts. Friends weren't clear on a plan today and asked nominating and ministry and counsel to meet and come back to the January business meeting with recommendations regarding committees and encouraging attender participation in them. Friends also ask that attenders be encouraged to give input and also for participation from several at this joint meeting. Friends also wish that the Annual meeting take place as scheduled in January, but that nominations be postponed to a later date.
3. The treasurer's report reflects the end of the year. While expenses were below budget, so was income, and the final net income was -\$1279.12.
4. Currently, for electronic giving, the treasurer is required to interact with the bank monthly. A proposal was presented from Vanco Services to take over this process for an initial cost of \$.50 per donor and \$.25 per person per month (transaction). They will also put a donor page on the website for us, if desired. Friends approve; the treasurer will contact Vanco Services.
5. Building & Grounds reported regarding a contractor to refinish the 1st floor hardwood floors. Abbot & Sons has provided an estimate of \$2352 for the entire floor.
6. The current felt pads on the bottom of the chairs need to be sanded off and replaced. Building and Grounds will pursue this prior to contracting the floor refinishing company. It was suggested that the upholstery be steam cleaned.
7. Peace & Social Concerns reports there was a request to use the meeting house as a site for one of three discussions on the Kairos Palestine Document as preparation for the visitation of Dr. Peter Makari on February 10, 2013, who will speak on the injustices inflicted on those of all faiths in Palestine. Friday, February 1st, was suggested as a date. Phil Stone offered to act as a co-leader.
8. A cookie swap will be held at the meeting house on December 16th.
9. Religious Education would like to revisit the backup schedule for childcare. Friends ask that this be continued, with the discussion laid over to a later meeting.
10. The committee thanks Friends for the donations to Pennies for Peace from the simple meal last week.
11. Opportunity having been given for questions and concerns, meeting ended with a moment of silence, purposing to meet again first month, thirteenth, or at the call of the clerk.

Submitted in the Light, Barbara Sullivan, Recording Clerk

Scheduled Meetings

First Sunday 9:30 am	Trustees and Peace/Social Concerns
Second Sunday 9:00 am	Meeting for Worship w/ Attention to Business
Third Sunday 9:30 am	Discussion as scheduled
Fourth Sunday 9:30 am	Ministry and Counsel
Fifth Sunday 11:00 am	Intergenerational Worship
Worship Groups:	1st Wednesday, 3:30 PM at Overlook in Charlton

Worcester Friends Meeting is the "Meeting for eating." We hold a pot-luck lunch every week after the rise of the Meeting for Worship.

Voluntary Set-up before Meeting for Pot Luck Lunch If you are unable to set-up on your scheduled day, make arrangements or tell one of the committee members. Thank you for your understanding and your help.

12/23/12	Clarence Burley	01/20/13	Amelia Fazackerley	02/17/13	Sandra Kocher
12/30/12	Mary Chenaille	01/27/13	Paul Gallagher	02/24/13	Geoff Knowlton
01/06/13	Michelle Corbin	02/03/13	Carol Goodenow	03/03/13	David Legg
01/13/13	Carolyn Erskine	02/10/13	Katie Green		

This is a voluntary responsibility. If you would like to be added to or removed from the list, please tell a committee member. If you have suggestions to add or remove anyone, your input is needed. Please contact Paul - 508-981-7285 - paulgallagherG@gmail.com

Editor of Newsletter: Katie Green. Deadline for next issue: December 15. Send contributions to katie@katiegreenstories.com

Clerk: Clarence Burley 508-735-4353. Watch your email for Weekly Friendly Reminders, or check our website:

<http://worcesterfriendsmeeting.org/calendar.htm>