

# Worcester Friends Meeting

Religious Society of Friends (Quaker)

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November/December 2015/January 2016

## QUERIES

*A pillar of the Quaker faith, queries are an invitation to examine one's deepest values and consider how to live one's faith in the world.*

*How can I nurture the seeds of peace within myself, my community, and the world?*

*How can I increase my understanding of nonviolence and use it in all my interactions?*

*How do I help others – colleagues, program participants, supporters – recognize and use their gifts?*

*Winter Queries from a 2014 American Friends Service pamphlet*

## History

History – from a booklet, *Advices and Queries*, published by the Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain, 1995, 1997, and 2008.

When Yearly Meeting in 1682 decided to ask the representatives from each quarterly meeting to reply to three questions orally, Yearly Meeting itself had only been meeting consecutively for the previous few years and the systemic organization of quarterly and monthly meetings had been recently completed. These questions were intended to produce factual information from Friends with local knowledge, so that the progress of the Society throughout the country could be seen and help given in the areas where it was most needed.

- What Friends in the ministry, in their respective counties, departed this life since the last yearly meeting?
- What Friends imprisoned for their testimony have died in prison since the last yearly meeting?
- How the Truth has prospered amongst them since the last yearly meeting, and how Friends are in peace and unity?

These three questions were expanded in 1694 and further amended in the early 1700s but their purpose was still mainly to elicit factual information. The practice of requiring oral replies to the questions soon became too cumbersome and was replaced, following Yearly Meeting decisions in 1700 and 1706, by written replies from the quarterly meetings. The system of replying to the questions took root in the Society and the term 'query' was increasingly used, in Yearly Meeting minutes from 1723 onwards, instead of 'question.'

I think half of Worcester went to the Worcester Islamic Center on East Mountain Street in Worcester on Saturday, January 9th. At least fifteen Worcester Friends attended the event to learn more about Islam. We had a tour of the mosque, spoke with many people there and sampled ethnic food. We observed a prayer service. We learned that Moslems in Worcester county come from many different countries. There are over 5,000 Muslims in the Worcester area, and the Friday services are attended by 350-500 people. Our tour guide was from Worcester, and had converted to Islam sixteen years ago. The mosque has a fulltime Islamic school (Alhuda Academy) for students from pre-K to eighth grade, a gymnasium, and social hall.

It was difficult to hear our tour guide because of the large crowd, but we are pleased that so many people turned out to learn more about Islam and to support the people who worship there. Many of us are interested in returning to the mosque on another day when it is less crowded.

## Friends Journal

by Katie Green

*Friends Journal* is one of the favorite publications at the Green/Stone house. The December issue is especially interesting for us. The topic is Economic Justice and Poverty. Recently our meeting determined that Eliminating Mass Incarceration would be our corporate peace and social concerns project.

The December issue of FJ has several noteworthy articles in it, including an article about the Pendle Hill conference, Ending Mass Incarceration, that Phil and I attended in April, 2015. Two articles in this issue that I return to are *Talk Less, Do More* by J. Jondhi Harrell and *Reducing Violence from Within*, authored by the Sing Sing Worship Group.

I first met J. Harrell a couple of years ago at a national Alternatives to Violence Project Conference in Philadelphia. Phil and I had the pleasure of spending time with him at the five day Pendle Hill conference in April. We respect his commitment to facilitating social change in his community. A wise and charismatic man, a member of the Germantown Friends Meeting and co-clerk of their Peace and Social Justice Committee, J reminds us that although Quaker process moves slowly, suffering does not. Jondhi Harrell founded the Center for Returning Citizens (CRC) in Philadelphia after he served 25 years in federal custody. There are several YouTube videos of Jondhi speaking about mass incarceration, poverty and racism. The YouTube video of Jondhi Har-

rell titled "The New Underground Railroad" is a 20 minute sermon at a Unitarian Church:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xcjhWutfZSE>

The article from the worship group at Sing Sing prison in Ossining, NY is about the power of words to dehumanize people, leading them to tolerate poverty and violence. The incarcerated men advocate the use of Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) principles and Quaker teachings to help their community. *When You Hear the Word Violence* is a 15 minute youtube about AVP:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8oyh7jiY9Jk>



## State of Society Discussion to be held January 31, 2016, at 9am.

We plan a worshipful discussion with reflection out of silent worship. A sense of the gathered meeting will be captured as the "State of Society" report.

NEYM Ministry and Counsel has provided us with the following queries to guide our discussion:

- How is our meeting a community where we experience a depth of Divine Presence and transforming power?
- How does our community experience of the Divine ground and nurture our actions in the world?

The same queries were brought forward for reflection at NEYM Sessions (August 2015). The gathered response was as follows:

*"Open worship reflecting on these statements and queries gave voice to a sense that we are yearning for wholeness. We heard calls for honesty regarding our condition, including a desire for recognition of the places we fall short, and a naming of the truth that wholeness exists even in the places where we are broken or feel like we have "failed." We were invited to examine the ways in which we might be limiting our ability to hear God because the ministry comes from a particular person or someone in a specific "role" or*

*because our fear is leading us to act from - and into - fragility. We were reminded that willingness is a key component of living into who we are called to be, and that honesty and groundedness in our own lived experience is what allows us and the world to be transformed. We were also reminded that there is real work to do in the world beyond the walls of our own "community" and that it may be time for us to shift our focus outward."*

In considering the above, our Spiritual Life committee asks:

- What are the activities that build our community?
- How do our individual actions reverberate throughout the Meeting community?
- How do you see your individual activity or spirit being amplified or focused into the life of the Meeting?
- How do we as a Meeting community include people in the way that they wish to be included?
- How does our individual participation in Meeting prepare us to be a member of the greater society, to love others, and to be agents of positive change in the world? How do we support those who are feeling fearful?

## NEYM

Friends are encouraged to visit the NEYM website: <http://www.neym.org>

There is an excellent article: *Choosing Love in a Season of Fear*. The editor quotes briefly from it to tease you to read the complete article:

<http://neym.org/news/choosing-love-season-fear-new-england-quakers-respond-paris-attacks>

... Growing millions seek safe haven from escalating suffering caused by war, injustice and climate change. We know God loves each of us, even when we are terrified, even when we hate. We know God loves us always, even when we struggle to love each other.

Our hearts are breaking for the peoples of Syria & Iraq; the peoples of Lebanon, Turkey, and France. We mourn the loss of life and livelihood, the shattered hopes of peoples and nations, the brokenness of relationships.



We yearn for a world where all people are recognized as beloved children of God.

... Moment by moment, concrete acts done with patience set us free to live in courageous love. As we choose this path, we help release each other from the captivity of hopelessness and fear. This is how the Light is born anew among us; this is how Love triumphs. ... may we remember that the choices we make between love and fear truly matter.

Fritz Weiss, Presiding Clerk

Noah Baker Merrill, Yearly Meeting Secretary

The NEYM Staff stands on WFM's front porch. Front row: Nat Shed, Gretchen Baker-Smith, Kathleen Wooten. Rear: Beth Collea, Shearman Taber, Jeff Higgs, Frederick Martin, Sara Hubner, Noah Baker Merrill, and Nia Thomas.

## Veterans for Peace Spoken Word Event on Saturday, November 7

On November 7th, Worcester Friends Meeting hosted a Veterans Day/Armistice Day event. Members of Veterans for Peace and Iraq Veterans Against the War was organized by attendee Eric Wasileski. Eric read several of his poems, and Ross Caputi, Jason Hurd and Nicole Waybright spoke and responded to audience questions. The event was opened and closed by Able and Claire Wasileski who read original poems and shared their artwork. Eric read some of his poetry. Our library is happy to include Eric's book of his fine poetry. He has also been sharing his work and speaking at other venues.

Nicole Waybright's book, *Long Way Out*, will be released in February. Nicole is a Navy vet who realized she was "on a destroyer" and that the destiny of the U.S. was to be a super power, to be world police. Her book discusses the dramatic crises that led to her psychological and philosophical transformation.

Ross Caputi was in Iraq in 2004. He gave us a detailed history of Saddam Hussein and the war and the relationship between the Suni and Shia, stating that there was "a lot of misinformation" in the media.

Jason Hurd, also an Iraq War vet, spoke about several events that the Iraq Vets against the War have participated in, including mock patrols and guerilla theater. He said that the first casualty in war is the Truth, and that we need to talk about values and shape a national vision around values.

Some of the cited resources given by the vets included the following books: *Culture and Imperialism* by Edward W. Said; *Dirty Wars* by Jeremy Scahill (also an documentary Academy Award nominee); *War and the Soul: Healing Our Nation's Veterans from Post-traumatic Stress Disorder* by Edward Tick to name a few.

Nicole stated, and I agree, that the presence of all the yellow ribbons during the beginning of the war served to stifle any honest discussion about the war.



Eric Wasileski, Jason Hurd, Ross Caputi, Nicole Waybright.

One of the things I will remember from this informative evening is the discussion about wounded warriors, and the custom of thanking veterans for their service. The veterans said that when they hear "Thank you for your service," they end up being polite, but they do not want to be thanked for what they did in the war. A friend asked, "What would be preferable to say to an Iraq war vet?" The response Nicole offered was echoed by the three men: "Welcome Home."



## A Blessing Bag

Social media creeps into our thinking and conversation in First Day School. Recently there was a post about keeping a "Blessing Bag" in the car. This bag contains items that could be useful for a person in need: such things as nutritious snacks, tissues, a toothbrush, socks, mittens, shampoo, etc. What a nice random act of kindness to hand such a parcel out the car window and give it to a person holding a hand lettered sign requesting help.

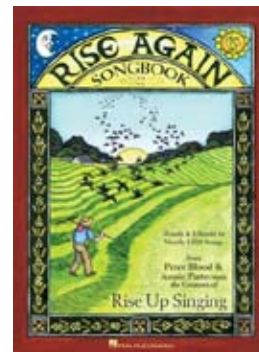
<https://www.facebook.com/lovewhatreallymatters/photos/a.710462625642805.1073741828.691679627521105/1035245786497819/?type=3>

Friends might find this a gentle reminder to bring such useful items into the meetinghouse for distribution in Fitchburg where Mark Sullivan works. Also to remember that the people holding signs are people. A friendly hello, eye contact and a smile can also be a Blessing.

## Woolman Hill

**Woolman Hill** is a Quaker retreat center situated on 110 acres of beautiful meadows and woods in the Connecticut Valley of western Massachusetts. Founded on the Quaker belief that there is that of God in every person, Woolman Hill welcomes all who wish to nurture the spirit within and without. A weekend at Woolman Hill is a treat for Friends. Our young Friends enjoy their retreats at Woolman Hill, and there are two upcoming weekends that Friends may enjoy.

**February 12-14: Rise Again: A Weekend of Joyful Song** with Annie Patterson and Peter Blood. Singing brings people together and keeps hope alive. Peter and Annie's song book, *Rise Up Singing*, has been a staple for Quaker gatherings for decades. Join them over Valentine's Day weekend and celebrate the brand new song book: *Rise Again*.



**March 18-20: Renewal & Resources: A Spring Weekend with our First Day School (FDS) Community of Practice** with Beth Collea and Melinda Wenner Bradley. This weekend is co-sponsored by NEYM's Quaker Youth Education Committee. This will be a weekend of learning and support for those engaged in the ministry of children's religious education. Topics for the weekend include: children's spirituality; shapes and models for FDS: resources and planning; outreach and in-reach: nurturing families in our meetings; differences and inclusion: FDS today and anti-racism resources; child safety resources. Beth Collea, Wellesley Meeting, serves as the Religious Education and Outreach Coordinator for New England Yearly Meeting. Melinda Wenner Bradley of New York Yearly Meeting is a religious education consultant who specializes in children's spiritual lives, program development, and how to support families and teachers in meeting communities.

For more information about Woolman Hill or to register for a program or a private retreat, visit the Woolman Hill website [www.woolmanhill.org](http://www.woolmanhill.org) or contact Margaret Cooley at 413-774-3431; [info@woolmanhill.org](mailto:info@woolmanhill.org) or [www.Facebook.com/WoolmanHill](https://www.facebook.com/WoolmanHill).

## The Friends General Conference Gathering

The Friends General Conference Gathering will be held at the College of St. Benedict, St. Joseph, Minnesota, July 3-9, 2016.

This year's theme is: Be humble, Be Faithful, BE BOLD

Registration opens April 1, 2016. Register early to maximize access to workshops and financial aid. Check the website, [www.fgcquaker.org](http://www.fgcquaker.org) for information on registration and financial aid. Attending the FGC Gathering is a fantastic Quaker experience.

## Welcome New Members

Worcester Friends Meeting is delighted to welcome the Brenner family as members; they have transferred their membership from Fort Collins Friends Meeting in Colorado.

Genivieve Sweetser, came to meeting with her friend young Marrie Brenner, Standing behind girls are Tom Brenner and Marrie's sister Andreana Brenner. Sheila Brenner was not present.



## Christmas in Monte Verde, Costa Rica

by Lucy Barnard

Our family went to Costa Rica for Christmas. While we were there, we went on some nature walks. One was a night hike, where we saw a tarantula and her babies, and 2 different species of ants – leafcutter ants and army ants. We visited the same trail in the day in the morning, and it looked completely different.

On the Sunday before Christmas, our family went to Meeting and the First Day school was going to perform a Christmas pageant. Their angel was sick, so I took the role. Malcolm was a sheep. It was fun to perform! Other people performed different things. On Christmas Eve, a group from the Meeting (including us) got together to go house-to-house Christmas caroling. We were served



Lucy and Malcolm milk a cow in Costa Rica.

cookies (or other food and drinks) at peoples' houses that we sang at. The next day, Christmas, we went to Meeting and there was a "Secret Santa" going on afterwards. Everyone made beautiful gifts (there was a guideline that you couldn't purchase any gift).

We did volunteer work during the week, making recycled paper, and I felt good that I was able to help out. The organization that we were helping was protecting the Children's Eternal Rainforest which in Spanish is called the Bosque Eterno de los Ninos. They will use the paper to write thank you

cards to donors.

Overall, the trip to Costa Rica was monumental.

## Joy, Hope and Peace

by Katie Green

The Christmas Season was pretty low-key at the Green-Stone household this year. The warm weather and the lack of snow certainly contributed to that, but I think the world situation and the political climate dampened my mood even more. The Syrian refugees, the fear mongering and Islamophobia are disheartening.

The Christmas cards that came into the house sat on the side table and brought reminders of the joy of friendship. A few seasonal wishes came electronically and were quickly swept away with digital ease, in spite of the senders' intentions. (Those of you who know me are aware of my poor relationship with email.)

The Christmas card that most lifted my spirits was a small card, the color of a paper bag, most likely made

out of recycled paper. The message on the front, Joy, was held inside a wreath. The handwritten message of Joy was contained inside the card was written by Daria Meshenuk, Director of Resident Services at Briarwood Retirement Community: "The Interfaith prayer service at City Hall was uplifting to me. Important. And then 42 elderly residents at Briarwood organized themselves to go visit with neighbors at the mosque. That gave me hope, too, in dark times."

The printed message in the card is a prayer for all of us:

*May joy be in your life.*

*May hope be in your heart.*

*May peace be in the world.*

## Ice Skating

by Elliot Walsh and Casey Seems

On December 20 we went ice skating at the Worcester Common Oval. We went right after meeting, so the Greens and the Mikkelsen's came with us.

Every winter they put up an ice rink on the Worcester Common. The rink is oval shaped, hence its name. A food truck called The Dogfather comes and sells hot dogs, fried dough, and hot cocoa to skaters. There is also a shack that rents skates for people who don't have their own.

We skated for two hours or so and had a very good time. Hopefully, we can do something similar again this January.



Fred and Dika Mikkelsen, Tyler Green, JoAnna Mikkelsen

## Veterans for Peace Trip To Viet Nam

Each year since 2012 members of Viet Nam's Hoa Binh (Peace) Chapter 160 of Veterans For Peace (VFP) invite up to 20 veterans and non-vet spouses and peace activists to come to Viet Nam every Spring for an insider's 2-week tour. The Hoa Binh chapter is the first and only overseas VFP chapter of American veterans living in Viet Nam! Since the beginning in 2012, 54 people (31 veterans and 23 non-vet spouses and peace activists) have gone on the spring delegations and have delivered nearly \$200,000 in aid - over \$100,000 has come from non-tour individuals and organizations!

Phil Stone and Katie Green will be joining this year's group. Each tour participant is asked to bring a minimum of \$1,000 as a donation. The money will go to VFP Chapter 160's humanitarian projects in Viet Nam: bomb clearance, chemical warfare victims, hospitals, orphanages, schools, etc. Donations from individu-

als and their organizations not going on the tour are also encouraged; non-tour donations have accounted for more than half of the almost \$200,000 donated to date. Donations are divided up between six recovery and assistance projects supported by VFP. The group will meet with Viet Nameese families and war veterans struggling with Agent Orange/Dioxin, Unexploded Ordinance (UXO) and Poverty. Agent orange (AO) birth defects now continue into the 4th generation! (NOTE: The AO-affected children and grandchildren of American VietNam vets receive no medical benefits at all.

If you would like to join others in making a contribution to support the work of Hoa Binh (Peace) Chapter 160 of Veterans for Peace, please contact Phil or Katie for more information or a specific list of the six organizations our donations will be supporting. We are looking forward to sharing our stories when we return.

## Did You Know?

**Mary Chenaille** spent the Christmas holidays in Florida visiting her mother.

**Ginny Powell-Brazier** has returned to England for a couple of weeks. She will stay at the Penn Club on Bedford Place, and she plans to worship at Westminster Meeting on Wednesday. Ginny's also looking forward to a train ride to Lincoln where she will visit the Mary Magdalin chapel, a place with special meaning for her.

**Paul Gallagher and Sandy** went to Florida after Christmas, and they will return in April.

**Tyler Green** is visiting a colleague in Puerto Rico for a couple of weeks.

**Aaron Sakulich** has returned from Panama, and he attended the YAF Mid-winter Retreat at Woolman Hill January 7-10.

**Addison Green** and **Elliot Walsh** will be at Westport Monthly Meeting for a Junior High Friends Retreat on January 15-17. The theme will be: *What are all those people doing with their eyes shut?* This is a Sculpey Retreat.

The Junior Yearly Meeting's retreat theme in November was *Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Days* (from Judith Voist's popular book). Several of WFM's youth in grades 2-6 attended this retreat at Westport Monthly Meeting.

**Zika Mikkelsen** played her violin in the Worcester Youth Orchestra's Christmas program.

**JoAnna Mikkelsen** is engaged in gymnastics competition, and the Mikkelsens will accompany her to Florida in January for the Tampa Bay Invitational Competition (and visit Disney World while in the area).

**Casey Seems** and **Elliot Walsh** have been "playing out" at contra dances and other events. Ask them where and when the next one will be, and support all of our youth's artistic endeavors.

Kudos for **Jane Cutting**, **Paul Gallagher** and **Matthew Shorten**. They are now trained facilitators for AVP and will be leading workshops at Gardner NCCI and possible other sites.

**Clarence Burley** and **Mary Chenaille** often join the Tuesday vigil for peace at Lincoln Square, standing out with the Catholic Workers and others.

**Barbara Sullivan** has retired from her position in Fitchburg where she worked for years.

*Friends, you are encouraged to send information about yourselves to [info@worcesterfriendsmeeting.org](mailto:info@worcesterfriendsmeeting.org). Our meeting is fortunate in that we have potluck at the rise of meeting for worship, so we are able to know each other better, but waaayyy to often we may not be aware of what's going on with each other.*

## Semantics, Tradition and Faith

by Katie Green

The other day a radio voice talked about *holiday* trees being donated to immigrants in some Massachusetts towns so they could celebrate an *American* holiday. The intention was to make this holiday more inclusive, and to recognize that Christmas is more a cultural, commercial event than a Christian celebration.

I guess the phrase “holiday tree” is preferable to talking about a Christmas tree, since the phrase holiday tree takes Christ out of Christmas. When I was young, my parents frowned upon writing “Xmas” as an abbreviation of Christmas. The tradition of setting up the Crèche at Christmas continues to be important to us as we remind ourselves of the origins of the Christian holiday, and the miracle of a new born.

For the last few years, I have struggled against the commercialization of a religious holiday – the birth of Christ. I have also struggled to find a comfortable definition of Christ in my life. I’ve noted the Winter Solstice for many years. Surely marking December 25th as the birth of Christ is related to the Solstice and celebrates the return of light (hope) at the darkest part of the year. I recognize that Christians attempted to absorb Pagan practices by celebrating some holidays near the same time of year.

My daughter, Whitney, posted a query on Facebook this December, asking if a religious education was important in a child’s development. Not only did a LOT

of people respond; most people responded in detail. Many wrote of damage caused by religion and/or their parents’ enforcement of attendance; others appreciated their parents encouragement to find their own way. Most wrote that spirituality and community were more important than belonging to a religious organization. Reading the responses to Whitney’s Facebook query made me happy to be a Quaker. And.....

While others may decorate lovely holiday trees that bring joy and assimilation, I shall continue to see a Christmas tree that sparkles in the center of our home.



## Voices for Peace

by Clarence Burley

On New Year’s Eve, while first-nighters were roaming Worcester’s streets enjoying cultural events and moderate temperatures, a modest group gathered in front of the First Unitarian Church to raise their voices for peace and goodwill on earth. Christians, Jews and Muslims joined hearts and voices in song, poetry, testimony and prayer that God’s peace would prevail over the violent headlines of our times.

Music and song from Jim Scott, young songsters and a barber shop quartet encouraged us, often leading us to sing, in this work for peace. Hot chocolate, cookies and other ethnic calories encouraged comfortable fellowship.

Pastor Aaron Payson was a voice of prayer. President Mohamed Ilyas of the Islamic Society of Greater Worcester followed and was backed up by Steve and Mona Ives of the Worcester Islamic Center. Rabbi Valerie Cohen of Temple Emanuel Sinai provided the Jewish perspective.

Worcester Friends’ own Mike True gave us a poem. President Claire Schaeffer-Duffy of the Center for Non-violent Solutions closed the gathering. May peace be upon them all. by Katie Green



## Greetings from the Clerk of Permanent Board

4 January 2016

Dearest Friends,

Happy New Year! To that end, I share some updates of the recent work of the Permanent Board as it cares for and carries forward the ministries of New England Yearly Meeting between Sessions.

On 21 November Hanover Friends Meeting warmly welcomed Permanent Board Friends to their meeting-house. Following opening worship and consideration of 1 John 4:18, “perfect love casts out fear,” we turned to our business at hand, a rich celebration of the ongoing diligence and discernment of our Yearly Meeting committees.

The reports of the Presiding Clerk and Yearly Meeting Secretary provide useful overviews of what is going on around New England Yearly Meeting and the wider Quaker world. The theme of Sessions 2016 is how we together are “Being the Hands of God: A Call to Radical Faithfulness.” Doug Gwyn will be our Bible Half-Hour speaker. We have secured a contract with Castleton University in Vermont through 2020.

In response to the November attacks in Paris, NEYM released its third public statement, “Choosing Love in a Season of Fear,” since we approved the process for doing so at Sessions 2015 (Minute 2015-57).

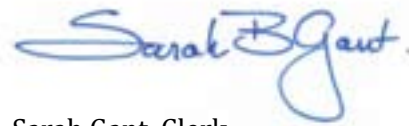
Through the good stewardship of the Treasurer, Finance Committee, Development Committee and—most important—YOU, our finances continue to stabilize. Our deficit this year was less than half of the

predicted \$44,000 and the \$10,000 challenge grant was matched by more than \$20,000 in qualified new and increased giving. While this is indeed cheery news, the Clerk of the Finance Committee points out that we do still run a deficit budget.

Finally, as we are all too sadly aware, Nat Shed will end his long tenure as Director of Friends Camp at the end of the 2016 camper season. Among the legacies that Nat leaves us with is his dedicated, diligent, hard work with Permanent Board’s Ad Hoc Committee on the Good Governance for Friends Camp. The Good Governance report of the committee addresses the relationship between the Camp and NEYM, establishes the mission of the Camp, and details the work and structure of the Friends Camp Committee and the budgetary process of the Camp. The Good Governance Committee brought its report to Permanent Board for further discernment.

Permanent Board meetings are open to all. Please consider joining us when we next meet, at Wellesley Monthly Meeting on 20 February 2016.

Blessings to you each and to the communities that you serve,



Sarah Gant, Clerk

Permanent Board

New England Yearly Meeting of Friends

The children from our First Day School enjoyed another overnight retreat on Saturday, December 12.

A great time was had by all at the third Worcester young Friends sleepover which was held at the Meetinghouse in December. Activities included service to the Meeting, cookie baking for the Christmas cookie swap, a talent show and of course indoor and outdoor play. The young Friends also cooked a dinner meal which they

shared with the residents of the Friendly House family shelter on Elm Street in Worcester. They later commented that they enjoyed providing a service, and that it felt all the more meaningful for having shared the meal together. They hope to do it again. Many thanks to all the Friendly adults who lent their presence to make this possible.



Music and dance by Casey, Elliot and Malcolm:



Zika, the MC



Lucy played piano



The gymnasts

### **The Peace of Wild Things** by **Wendell Berry**

When despair for the world grows in me  
and I wake in the night at the least sound  
in fear of what my life and my children's lives may be,  
I go and lie down where the wood drake  
rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds.  
I come into the peace of wild things  
who do not tax their lives with forethought  
of grief. I come into the presence of still water.  
And I feel above me the day-blind stars  
waiting with their light. For a time  
I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.

It is still.  
In the air that flows through me,  
I smile and relax.  
Out.  
Head cleared and  
I am invigorated.  
The swallows silently soar.  
Ahead lay the mountains  
And behind me lay  
Vast open miles of  
beautiful fields.  
I love the feeling of being  
absolutely  
alone.  
It makes me  
open up and  
sing an eternal song.  
by **Claire Wasileski**

## Recipe!

### Curried Potatoes with Red Lentils

by Jessica Seems

(I scaled this up x4 to bring to meeting.)

Ingredients:

- 2 Tbsp. oil
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 2-3 cloves garlic, crushed
- 3 medium potatoes, chopped
- 1 Tbsp. fresh grated ginger
- 2 or 3 tsp. curry powder (original recipe called for curry paste, but I didn't have that)
- 1/2 c. dry red lentils
- 2 c. vegetable stock
- 1/4 c. coconut milk (this is about 1/4 of a can) (original recipe called for 1 cup)
- 3/4 c. water (skip this if you choose to use a whole can of coconut milk like the original recipe said)
- 2 tsp. lime juice
- salt to taste



Directions:

1. In a pot, heat the oil over medium-high heat. Saute the onion for 3-4 minutes, until soft and starting to turn golden. Add the garlic and potatoes and cook for another 3-4 minutes. Add the ginger and curry and cook for another minute.
2. Add the lentils, stock, coconut milk, and water. Stir to combine well and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to a simmer, then cover and cook, stirring occasionally, for 30 minutes or until the potatoes are tender. Add a little water, stock, or coconut milk if it gets too thick.
3. Add the lime juice and season with salt. Serve hot.

Every once in a while everyone at potluck gets quite excited about an offering, and asks the contributor for the recipe. Here's a "hit" from Jessica. Enjoy!

## Daughters of Abraham

The Greater Worcester Chapter of Daughters of Abraham is a women's interfaith book group. All Muslim, Jewish, and Christian women for whom their religion informs their daily life are welcome to join the group. The purpose of the group is to build relationships and understanding, emphasizing the common elements that unite these faiths.

The women plan to meet once a month on the 3rd Wednesday of the month at 7 PM. The first meeting was on December 16. The next meeting is scheduled for January 20th. The book being read is *The Faith Club A Muslim, a Christian, a Jew - Three Women Search for Understanding* by Ranya Idliby, Suzanne Oliver and Priscilla Warner. The location of the meeting is not firm at the time of this writing.

For more information, please contact:

email: [daughtersofabrahamworcesterma@gmail.com](mailto:daughtersofabrahamworcesterma@gmail.com)

on the web: <http://www.daughtersofabraham.com>

## Worcester Friends Meeting Twelfth Month, 13, 2015

Present: Daron Barnard, clerk; Karen Sargent, recording clerk; Clarence Burley, corresponding clerk; Mark Sullivan, treasurer; Phil Stone, Jessica Seem, Fred Mikkelson, Jane Cutting, Tyler Green, Kathryn Barnard.

The clerk read Query 12 on Peace and Reconciliation from NEYM Faith and Practice.

The Treasurer reported that income was about \$1000 ahead of budget as of 12/12/2015. Total income for 2015 as of 12/12 was \$27,927.21 which is about \$1000 better than budgeted. Total expenses as of 12/12 were 30,114.36. So the meeting is 'only' \$2187.15 in deficit as opposed to the \$3,988.17 that was budgeted. The Friends of Friends under Income is mostly rental fees for use of the meetinghouse, these rentals have been increasing. The windows cost more than previously reported, due to paying for painting after the cost for the windows and the installation. The treasurer reminds Friends that the budget for 2016 is prepared in December and committees need to submit expected budgets.

Practical Committee. The cost of a replacement for the hard wired telephone to the meetinghouse is being explored. The Worcester City Building Inspector has determined the capacity of the meetinghouse is a total of 150 people, 75 on each of the first and second floors. The safety lights on the first and second floors do not come on due to battery issues, several fire alarms are missing. Kevin and Mary are working on these issues. The tenants, Center for NonViolent Solutions and the NEYM Office need to be told not to remove the fire alarms. During the inspection, a pile of black plastic trash bags were found on the back stairs, these were moved to the basement. Tenants need to be reminded again that the hallways can not be blocked. Venture Community Services used the meetinghouse and will be welcomed back as they left the premises very clean. A Buddhist organization would like to rent the meetinghouse starting in Jan. 2016. The pots and pans in the kitchen were all sorted and some were donated.

Spiritual Life Committee. The State of Society report will need to be started in January, there is no theme from NEYM this year. The fifth Sunday in Jan. is Jan 31, it was agreed that this would be a good day to begin the State of Society report. Geoff Knowleton has offered to lead a Bible study on the third Sunday in Dec. A Worcester Meeting youth retreat was held this weekend. Ten kids slept over at the meetinghouse including Anna, Mari's older sister. A dinner was prepared for the Friendly House shelter; the kids ate with the residents. The extra pots and pans were donated to the Friendly House. The cost of the ingredients for the dinner was \$120. Other activities were a talent show and baking Christmas cookies. Gifts and Leadings is working with Friends on positions for next year.

Peace and Social Concerns/Outreach Committee. No report from the committee, individuals reported. At Mt Toby on the Nov 22, 50 people attended an event on mass incarceration. The Climate Justice rally in Boston has attendees from several NEYM meetings including Worcester. It was reported that there have been at least 3 people who have approached the Worcester Friends after connecting with the website.

Clerks of committees were reminded that the next Meeting for Business is also the Annual Meeting and Annual Committee reports are due, in advance would be good.

The corresponding clerk reported that the Islamic Society of Central Massachusetts is sponsoring an interfaith prayer at the Worcester City Hall at 1:30 today. On Dec. 17 at Worcester City Hall at 7pm there will be a discussion on Stop Arresting Kids at School, the city of Worcester has no policy on this, and it is up to the officer present.

Clarence reported that the NEYM archives will be moved to the University of Massachusetts library in Amherst from the previous location in Rhode Island, probably in March. A temporary archivist will be hired. It is hoped that there will be clarification of how to handle ongoing material including meeting minutes.

## Monthly Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business

Date: January 10, 2016

Present: Daron Barnard, Katharine Barnard, Mary Bennett, Tom Brenner, Clarence Burley, Mary Chenaille, Katie Green, Karen Sargent, Jessica Seem, Matt Shorten, Mark Sullivan, Phil Stone, Kevin Walsh

Clerking: Daron Barnard

The meeting opened with silence and reading from NEYM Faith and Practice queries on spiritual life. Monthly business was held until completion of the Annual Meeting.

Items for consideration:

1. Spiritual Life committee has received a request for membership transfer from Fort Collins Meeting for the Brenner family (Tom and Sheila, and their daughters Marrie and Andreana). The Meeting heartily approved the membership transfer, recognizing that our Meeting has already enjoyed the Brenners' active participation.
2. A traveling Friend, Diane Dicranian, from Winthrop Center Friends Church (ME), has contacted the Meeting with a proposal to visit the Meeting to discuss concerns of LGBT people in Uganda. They propose Saturday evening January 30. Our Meeting is interested but concerned about potential poor attendance due to weather, short notice, and day of the week. Clerk will contact Diane about postponing the event.
3. A march against racism is being planned for Martin Luther King Day (January 18) 2016 by a coalition of human rights and Progressive Labor Party activists, and the organizers have contacted the Meeting as they are seeking for co-sponsors for the march. The underlying concerns of racism and mass incarceration are of concern to our Meeting members, but the language of the March organizers is divergent from our nonviolent approach to the issue. The Meeting will continue to find alternative ways to support peace and justice and to keep Dr King's work alive. Clerk and PSCO clerk will draft a response to the event organizers to express our support of their work on the issues.

### **Committee Reports:**

Spiritual Life:

- State of Society discussion is planned for January 31 at 9am. Matt Shorten will facilitate the discussion. Queries have been provided by NEYM Ministry and Counsel to guide the discussion. These, along with reflections from our Spiritual Life committee, will be made available in the lobby for contemplation in advance of the discussion.
- Clarence will participate in NEYM Library committee. He also continues to seek anyone who is interested in helping with maintenance of our Meeting's library.
- Gifts and Leadings work will continue to be under the monthly care of Spiritual Life.

### **Announcements:**

- The Meeting is not sponsoring a table at the Worcester city-wide MLK Day celebration breakfast this year but would like to consider doing so in future years.

The meeting closed with silence.

Respectfully submitted,

Katharine Barnard

## Scheduled Meetings

Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business .....	Second Sunday, 9 AM
Spiritual Life Committee, convener Matthew Shorten .....	Fourth Sunday 9:30 AM
Practical Committee, convener Aaron Sakulich .....	First Sunday, 9:30 AM
Peace/Social Concerns/Outreach, convener Phil Stone.....	Fourth Saturday, 9:30 AM
Mid-week Meeting for Worship, convener Aaron Sakulich.....	Wednesdays, 7 PM
Clerk of Worcester Friends Monthly Meeting .....	Daron Barnard
Recording Clerk .....	Karen Sargent
Treasurer.....	Mark Sullivan
Recording Clerk/Corresponding Secretary .....	Clarence Burley
First Day School .....	Katie Green and Katherine Barnard
Newsletter Editor.....	Katie Green

Deadline for the next newsletter is flexible. Friends interested in editing, please contact Katie at [info@worcesterfriendsmeeting.org](mailto:info@worcesterfriendsmeeting.org)

### Voluntary Set-up

Worcester Friends Meeting: The Meeting for Eating

Each First Day, Worcester Friends share a pot luck lunch at the rise of Meeting for Worship. The offering vary from week to week, but there is always enough to go around. Watch the newsletter for occasional recipes that are printed when Mmmm's and Oooo's and Ahhh's are uttered.

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](mailto:paulgallagherG@gmail.com)