

January Worcester Friends Newsletter 2017



Calendar

Sunday Meeting for Worship: 11 A.M.

Childrens' Program: 11 A.M.
(childcare year-round, First Day School program during school year)

Potluck Lunch: 12.15 P.M. every Sunday. Stay for fellowship.

Business Meeting: 2nd Sunday each month at 9 A.M.

The Meetinghouse is Handicapped Accessible

NEYM Query 1 Spiritual Life

Do you live in thankful awareness of God's constant presence in your life?

Are you sensitive and obedient to leadings of the Holy Spirit?

Do you seek to follow Jesus, who shows us the way?

Do you nurture your spiritual life with prayer and silent waiting and with regular study of the Bible and other devotional literature?



A Few Ways to Participate in Black History Month - February 1-28, 2017

1. Read some books. Check out Michelle Alexander's, *The New Jim Crow* or *White Rage: The Unspoken Truth of Our Racial Divide* by Carol Anderson.
2. See a movie. *I Am Not Your Negro*, *Fences*, *Hidden Figures*, *13th*, *Moonlight*, *Loving*. Watch at home. *Blackish*, *Empire*, *Insecure*
3. Listen. Tuesday, 2/7, 7:00 pm. Hogan Ballroom, Holy Cross College, **Shaun King**, Senior Justice Writer at the New York Daily News, on *The New Civil Rights Movement!* Keynoting Black History Month. Sponsored by: Black Student Union or Thursday, 2/16, 7:00 pm. Rehm Library, Holy Cross College, Stanford University Prof. **John Rickford** will speak on *Fighting Prejudice in the Courtroom and Beyond*. Both events are free and open to public.
4. Visit the Museum of African American History in Boston and/or Nantucket or the new Smithsonian Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, DC. Both museums have great websites.
5. Follow the Black Lives Movement <http://blacklivesmatter.com/>

Try to be aware of your White privilege daily throughout the month.



First Day School students pose proudly in front of their new blackboard painted wall. Members and Attenders are invited to share their talents with these amazing Young Friends. See **Katharine Barnard** if you have a leading to share with them.

2017 Worcester Friends Meeting Committees

Officers

Clerk of Meeting	Daron Barnard
Treasurer	Mark Sullivan
Recording Clerk	Katherine Barnard
Corresponding Clerk	Clarence Burley
Aldrich Fund Rep.	Fred Mikkelsen

Spiritual Life

Katherine Barnard
Mary Bennett
Tom Brenner
Clarence Burley
Katie Green
Geoff Knowlton
Whitney Mikkelsen
Matthew Shorten

First Day School

Katharine Barnard
Sheila Brenner
Katie Green
Tyler Green

Gifts and Leadings

Mary Chenaille
Jane Cutting
Matthew Shorten

Peace, Social Concerns and Outreach

Nicole Belanger
Clarence Burley
Lucy Barnard
Tom Brenner
Mary Chenaille
Jane Cutting
Katie Green
Carol Goodenow
Davide Maciewski
Xzika Mikkelsen
Karen Sargent
Jessica Seem
Phil Stone
Martha Yeager

Newsletter

Sheila Brenner

Practical

Andreana Brenner
Mary Chenaille
Paul Gallagher
David Legg
Fred Mikkelsen
Karen Sargent
Mark Sullivan
Elliot Walsh
Kevin Walsh

Some 150 souls from various Christian, Jewish and Muslim traditions gathered on January 19th in the Wesley United Methodist Church gymnasium for an interfaith prayer service. It was titled “From Many, One,” very reminiscent of E Pluribus Unum. On presidential inauguration eve, the three Abrahamic faiths found a unity in their traditions for mutual support against injustice. Rabbi Valerie Cohen of Temple Emanuel- Sinai, Rev. José Encarnación of Christian Community Church and a layman of the Islamic Society of Greater Worcester spoke of their traditions and offered a prayer for spiritual unity. Then the pastor of Wesley, Rev. Shandirai Mawokomatanda, led a responsive reading where the gathering gave G-d praise and thanksgiving while praying for hope, strength and peace.

After benediction, the gathering broke out into an impromptu rendition of “We Shall Overcome.” This provided validation that the meeting fulfilled its purpose.

A period of fellowship followed with refreshments on three end to end tables. The first two tables were marked “Kosher” (Pure) and “Halal” (Permissible); the third was unmarked.

Oh, yes, there was an elephant in the gym that nobody mentioned.

—Clarence Burley



A Closer look at Worcester Friends: Karen Sargent

1. How long have you been a Friend? How long on Peace and Social Concerns Outreach Committee? I started attending Meeting in North Carolina in 1975, joined the Rochester NY Meeting in 1977 (I think). I don't remember a PSC in Rochester, but I was active in the group that visited Attica Prison. I have been on and off the PSCO in Worcester and am not sure how long I've served, maybe 10-15 years?

2. Was there a particular issue that got you interested in PSCO? In Worcester it was the demonstrations against the cruise missiles and nuclear weapons being made in Westboro at the time.

- 3. What do you see as the "mission" of the Worcester PSCO committee? Is there anything unique to the Worcester area that the PSCO addresses?** We are trying to discern the current mission of PSCO with Phil and Katie not providing the same talents in education and outreach as we have had before. Worcester is a very diverse community and more working class, I see more possible support for sanctuary and religious freedom issues. With the West Boylston lateral pipeline coming, there may be more local support for alternatives to fossil fuels and keeping them in the ground. Worcester has a long history of activism, from Abby Kelly Foster to Abby Hoffman and others Mike True recorded.
- 4. What is the most difficult part of your position as convener?** The difficult part of being convener is trying to fit in all the diverse views and actions that we as individuals take part in and seeing how they can fit into the PSCO and the meeting.
- 5. What is the most rewarding part of your position as convener?** The most rewarding part is when the PSCO, and sometimes the meeting, can come together to make a statement or support a group or action and we work together. The ongoing clothing drive for the Syrian refugees, supported by many in the meeting has given me a bit of satisfaction in the face of the horrible tragedy.
- 6. What are your personal special interests in PSCO?** My personal interests include the clothing drive for the Syrian refugees, and climate change actions.
- 7. What would you like others in Meeting to understand about the work of the PSCO? Can they help? What, in particular, would you like Young Friends to know?** Others in the meeting should know that they can bring their causes and issues to PSCO to see whether we can join in supporting them. We certainly can't do it all, but sometimes we can help. Others can help by joining actions we plan or by bringing their causes to PSCO to see how we can join them. Young Friends can help by joining actions, writing letters to the editor of newspapers and finding the social actions that they can be passionate about.

2016 Annual Business Meeting, Worcester Friends Meeting

Date: January 15, 2017

Present: Daron Barnard, Katharine Barnard, Mary Bennett, Andreana Brenner, Sheila Brenner, Tom Brenner, Clarence Burley, Mary Chenaille, Jane Cutting, Geoff Knowlton, Matthew Shorten, Mark Sullivan, Karen Sargent, Laura Sturgill
Clerking: Daron Barnard

After opening monthly business meeting with silent worship and reading of NEYM Query 1: Spiritual Life, the meeting was transitioned to Annual Business Meeting.

1. **Gifts and Leadings Committee.** The slate of nominees was presented by Matt Shorten on behalf of the committee, noting that the Meeting's committees are flush with members. Committee clerks will be decided by the committees individually and so are not designated on the slate of nominees. There are nominations for all of the officers of the Meeting, with the exception of the position of "Recorder" which is complicated by our electronic record-keeping systems needing attention; the position will be filled in the interim by Clarence Burley. The slate is approved in its entirety, and the list is attached (see page 2 of this Newsletter). The Clerk reminds us that Gifts and Leadings Committee itself is off cycle from the calendar year, forming in the late summer and running through the following summer.
2. **Annual Budget.**
 - a. The Treasurer reported 2016 income and expenses. The Meeting finished the year with a positive balance of \$3552, thanks in a large part to a donation from a Cape Cod Friend and also no major expenses on our building.
 - b. The Treasurer presented the draft of the budget for 2017. Estimated income includes an anticipated Annual Appeal which is planned for this year. Other income is anticipated to be stable. Anticipated committee expenses include an increase for the newsletter due to increase in printing costs, and Spiritual Life to cover First Day School expenses. The budget for Meetinghouse maintenance includes the cost of repairs to which we have already committed, leaving additional budget for yet-unplanned expenses. The new telephone system will result in savings this year. The meeting approved the draft 2017 budget.
3. **Committee Reports:**
 - a. **Practical.** Highlights from 2016 include tree maintenance, reorganization of office and First Day school space, and planning for building improvements (windows, siding, and lighting) and driveway reconfiguration. The committee was very involved in the cemetery, including repairs after vandalism and responding to news stories that were discordant with the spiritual nature of the space. We appreciated the thoughtful and positive response of Channel 3 News to our concerns, who in turn offered us the opportunity to highlight the work of the Meeting. We also considered our new-found responsibility for the Quaker cemetery in Richmond NH and are in the process of turning ownership over to the town. Young Friends helped with yard cleanup in the Fall and with the space reorganization. Looking ahead to 2017 we have engaged a new lawn maintenance group, and will be enacting some of the above plans. We anticipate deep discussion about the "greening" of the building.
 - b. **Spiritual Life.** The committee notes the vibrancy of First Day school and expresses gratitude for the teachers. Also the committee is grateful for the work of Gifts and Leadings. The Meeting welcomed the Brenners in transfer of membership. Spiritual committee has supported several members in clearness and support committees and continues to be open to those needing support for leadings or struggles. Study groups are meaningful and well attended. The Meeting retreat in the Fall was a success, and will lead to future discussions. Our worship continues at the center of our faith community and we are grateful for spoken ministry that arises from our centered silence.
 - c. **Peace Social Concerns and Outreach.** This has been a year of transition as members have joined and others moved away. Despite this, Meeting members have continued to be actively involved in multiple community and political events near and far including support for the Standing Rock Legal Defense Fund. This has

included support for refugees and for the local Muslim community, weekly vigils for peace and against gun violence, and demonstrations on specific issues. Some of this work has been carried out in collaboration with other organizations including AFSC-SNE, Worcester Interfaith, Catholic Workers, and the Worcester Human Rights Commission. Several members continue to be involved in the Alternatives to Violence Project. The Meeting hosted multiple films, spoken word events, and discussions. The committee is grateful to work that has been done to update the website, and that work is ongoing.

The meeting closed with silence and then transitioned to monthly meeting for business.

Respectfully submitted,
Katharine Barnard

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Monthly Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business

Date: January 15, 2017

Present: Daron Barnard, Katharine Barnard, Mary Bennett, Andreana Brenner, Sheila Brenner, Tom Brenner, Clarence Burley, Mary Chenaille, Jane Cutting, Geoff Knowlton, Aaron Sakulich, Karen Sargent, Matthew Shorten, Laura Sturgill, Mark Sullivan
Clerking: Daron Barnard

The meeting opened with silence and reading from NEYM Faith and Practice, Query 1: Spiritual Life, and then was adjourned for the Annual Business Meeting. After reconvening the monthly business meeting, the following items were presented:

Treasurer’s Report: The Treasurer presented a year-end Balance Sheet showing the Meeting’s assets and liabilities as of December 2016. Assets include checking accounts (one designated for building renovations), savings accounts, and the Meetinghouse itself. The Cemetery Funds are available for maintenance of that space but are considered a liability as the fund is restricted and not available for liquidation. The Meeting has no other liabilities. The Meeting would like to ensure social responsibility in

our investing and the Treasurer will look into the possibility of transferring of funds away from Wells Fargo due to their support of the Dakota Access Pipeline.

Items for consideration:

Special donation. Ms Rachel Carey-Harper, a Friend from Barnstable Friends Meeting (Preparative, Cape Cod MA), has gifted \$2000 to our Meeting and all other Meetings of NEYM to support work for social justice. The Clerk read her letter describing her generous donation as a spiritually-grounded response to the current political climate. She calls us to take the donation into our care and use it appropriately in like-minded work. Suggestions for use of this donation include passing money on to social justice organizations (Quaker or otherwise), or using the funds to support direct work of the Meeting in support of those suffering oppression. We express deep appreciation of this gift and will season our thoughts on how we could best use the opportunity. A thank you letter has been written and mailed to Rachel in recognition of her gift. Rachel’s letter will be separately published in the newsletter for all to read and take under consideration.

1. Meeting’s role in support of our community. In coming months the Meeting will consider how to support immigrants and refugees in need, which will encompass outreach, spiritual, and practical aspects. Jane Cutting and Mary Chenaille have collected information and resources and will bring this to PSCO committee meeting. We anticipate further conversation in committee and in full meeting for business.
2. Library. Clarence Burley has been working to reduce the physical collection and encourages others to do the same.

The meeting closed with silence.
Respectfully submitted,
Katharine Barnard

Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business occurs every second Sunday of the month. Members and Attenders are encouraged to attend.

Letters from Rachel Carey-Harper (Barnstable Friends Meeting)

Worcester Friends Meeting,

12.24.2016

I suspect that most of us are working very hard to come to terms with the new political reality in our country. As indicated in the enclosed letter, for myself, as a Quaker, it is important to step up to the challenge of doing something spiritually grounded, positive and effective.

Therefore, I am figuring out how to share resources primarily to groups that protect, that provide something for those ignored or oppressed or threatened; places committed to service. Distributing funds all at once in a short amount of time and have it be useful is difficult. Plus I know that other's wisdom is often better than my own. So in addition to some other projects and programs I support, I am giving every NEYM Monthly Meeting \$2,000. and every Preparative Meeting \$1,000. You will find it in the enclosed check. My priorities do not have to be yours! I leave it totally up to you to decide how to use these funds to create the world to which God calls us at the tumultuous moment.

The only thing I ask in return is you send me back an acknowledgement letter. Below is a sample which you can use, change or write your own, as long as all the information is included. Really, there are no strings except for this acknowledgement.

Thank you for being part of this unfolding,

Rachel Carey-Harper

Dear Friends and Companions in the Struggle,

Since the election I've been feeling a numb, vague sense of doom, a helplessness. Everywhere I go, I see a similar sort of look in their eyes, like we all have been traumatized. I am trying various methods to counteract this including sporadic avoidance; not watching news or reading social media, focusing on the bigger picture; trying to hold myself to the belief that the arc of history can not be bent away from justice with one election and rooting myself to my faith. Writing helps... (see the poem "Broken Thankfulness" at reflectionsfromtheeaglesnest.blogspot.com). Hours and hours of daily prayer helps as does the occasional game of solitaire... These all help, but only a little.

Friends, friends, listen. Especially now we need to work extra hard at keeping ourselves grounded. Do whatever sort of intentional healing works for you; along with writing and prayer, I make soup. Even just lying in bed in meditation, that's okay too. Still, a vibration of undefined panic is in the air. Many, myself at least, are having trouble figuring out which way to turn, which way to move to be positive and effective. Things have shifted dramatically, tragically.

What comes to me during the blessed times of quietude is that there are things we can and should do. Not only will it push back the wave of intolerance and isolation but also the waves of our own despair. We can organize and most important we can support each other! For me, I am blessed to be able to do this through donations. So I've decided that for this year at least I will give away all of my business's net profits, which includes any personal compensation I have gotten for any of my work (excluding what I need to pay in taxes) and I've asked my husband to take a 20% cut. I will be giving to groups that protect, that provide something for those ignored or oppressed or threatened, places committed to service.

Would you consider joining me to whatever degrees makes sense to you?? We have the strength and courage to embrace right, ethical compassionate living, let's do it together. While we're at it, let's be gentle with ourselves and each other. None of us is perfect, we all are fabulous and flawed. We are really not in a hole but part of the whole, holy,

Sent with Hope for Understanding, Peace and Healing,

Rachel

Did You Know?

The **Mikkelsens** are traveling to Florida in anticipation of their Spring relocation and to visit **Katie Green** and **Phil Stone**.

The **Seem-Walshes** recently returned from a 3 week trip to Australia for a family wedding. Jessica reported they had a great time and had the opportunity to hike and camp as well as enjoy family.

Stop by to see **Sandy Kocher's** artwork at Express Yourself Coffeehouse at 2 Richmond Ave. in Worcester. The exhibit runs through February. Below is one of Sandy's poems, written January 16, 2017.

The Hunger Moon

Get out into the woods, search for evidence of numerous animals - their tracks, tree bark recently chewed; scent and scat; Evidence of animals fighting one another. Coyotes track deer, squirrels raid bird feeders, as do bears! Watch out!

Or, if you stay inside, look out at the sky if it is clear a big white moon may be hanging up there. It shines through my window's blinds, causing patterns on the floor.

I think of all those animals out there hunting food. No wonder the January full moon has been called "The Hunger Moon".

In cities, too, homeless may be seeking both warm shelter and food. The cold deepens, hunger multiplies.

Many Worcester Friends participated in the Womens March on January 21, 2017 in both Washington, DC and in Boston. A few are pictured below.



Many Friends also gathered on 1/31/17 at a rally in front of City Hall (pictured right) to keep Worcester a city which welcomes and protects immigrants.



Worcester Friends Meeting
 Religious Society of Friends
 (Quakers)
 901 Pleasant Street
 Worcester, MA 01602



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,	-----	First Sunday, 9:30 AM
Peace/Social Concerns/Outreach, convener Karen Sargent	-----	Fourth Saturday, 9:30 AM
Clerk of Worcester Friends Meeting	-----	Daron Barnard
Recording Clerk	-----	Katherine Barnard
Corresponding Clerk	-----	Clarence Burley
First Day School	-----	Katie Green, Katherine Barnard
Newsletter	-----	Sheila Brenner

Please send general correspondence to info@worcesterfriendsmeeting.org . Items of note for the next Newsletter may also be sent to brennerfamily@gmail.com.