

Worcester Friends Newsletter

March 2019



Stephen Aldrich Fund

The impact of contemporary economic change and the need of individuals and families is all around us. We sense the need, but often ask, “What can I do?”

Much as we ask this question today, Stephen Aldrich asked and responded in the 1800’s by bequeathing a large portion of his estate to the [RI-Smithfield} Quarterly Meeting to provide emergency funding for Friends in need. This bequeath continues today as the Stephen Aldrich Fund and is available to all members of the Meeting community seeking one-time emergency financial assistance.

Individuals needing assistance or those who would like further information regarding the Fund should contact our Meeting’s representative, **Paul Gallagher**. All contact is held strictly in confidence.

Calendar

Sunday Meeting for Worship: 11 A.M.

Children’s 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

Upcoming Events:

Friday, March 22, 5:30 pm. Facing Race Book Group, *Becoming* by Michelle Obama.

Sunday, March 31, 1 pm Debby Irving, author of *Waking Up White*, presentation at First Unitarian Church, 90 Main St., Worcester, co-sponsored by WFM. Free and open to all (see page 3).

Monday, April 1, 7:00 pm, Death with Dignity: Should MA Pass the End of Life Options Act?, First Baptist Church, 111 Park Ave., more information at <http://www.westernmassdeathwithdignity.org/>.

Friday, April 5, 7:00-9:00 pm., Chris Crass, Unitarian Church of Marborough and Hudson, 80 Main St., Hudson (see inside).

Sunday, April 6, 8:45 am.-4:00 pm., Living Faith Gathering, “LIVING FAITH”—WHAT’S THIS ALL ABOUT?, Friends Academy outside New Bedford, MA. Information and registration <https://neym.org/living-faith-gatherings> (more information inside).

Monday, April 8, 6:00 pm. LGBT Dinner at Hadwen Park Church (see story page 2).

Worcester LGBT Asylum

Did you know that in 37 of 53 former British Commonwealth countries it is illegal to be gay/homosexual or that in 10 countries, homosexual acts are punishable by death under Sharia law? People fleeing persecution because of their sexual orientation in their own countries may seek asylum in other countries. Ten years ago, a member of the Hadwen Park Congregational Church in Worcester welcomed a homeless Jamaican man and offered him food and shelter. The man was seeking safety from persecution in Jamaica. Thus began a process of involving the whole congregation in learning about and reaching out to over 200 LGBT asylum seekers over the course of the past 10 years. Because US law does not allow asylum seekers to work or receive any government benefits until at least 150 days after their asylum paperwork is submitted, those persons seeking asylum are dependent on the goodwill of others for food, clothing, and shelter. Daily necessities, like money for travel and telephone, are also needed until an asylum seeker receives government authorization to work. The Hadwen Park Church is now supporting over 30 individuals--costing about \$30,000 a month--while they await permission to work.

The church established a formal task force for LGBT asylum seekers and has raised money to buy a house to be outfitted as a group residence for them. In January, Lucy Candib and Richard Schmitt held an open house/fundraiser for the Task Force where various Friends and others joined us in learning more about the Task Force.

The LGBT Task Force meets monthly on the second Monday for a dinner meeting at the Hadwen Park Church and has invited other community groups to offer support by providing dinner for these occasions.

On February 11, 2019, members of the Peace and Social Concerns and Outreach Committee provided a chicken dinner for about 40 people at the LGBT Task Force monthly meeting. We wore our Worcester Friends Meeting T-shirts and got to meet and talk with asylum seekers, task force members, and other activists about asylum issues. Our culinary efforts were much appreciated, and we expect we will be asked to return! Friends who are open to short-term hosting of an asylum seeker in their homes should contact Al Green, Ministry Director of the task force, at 508-371-0463. More information at LGBTasylum.org

—Lucy Candib

Living Faith Gathering

Whether you've been to every **Living Faith Gathering** or it's your first chance to attend, all are warmly welcomed to this lovely one-day event held each spring and fall. The upcoming Living Faith will be on **Saturday, April 6, 2019 at Friends Academy just outside of New Bedford, MA**. This is a chance for Friends new and old – and from across New England and beyond - to get to know one another, worship together, share the different ways we experience and live our faith, and build community. **Living Faith registration is open and you can register by clicking here:** <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/living-faith-gathering-april-6-2019-registration-55239240054>. Please come if you can - your presence will enrich us all!

This spring we are also trying something new and adding **an option for young adults (ages 18-35) to make a weekend of it** by gathering early and staying late for some young-adult only time - and time with Friends of all ages during the day on Saturday. Come connect with others, visit new meetings, and join in a bit of an adventure! **More information & registration for the Young Adult Friends retreat** [here](#). Space is limited & registration is required by March 31. If you are only interested in the Saturday events and are not planning to stay overnight, use the Living Faith registration [here](#). Questions? Ask Nia (Nia@neym.org)

**WORCESTER FRIENDS MEETING's LEGACY GIFT GRANT
Brings Social Justice Activist/Writer Debby Irving to Worcester**

The Peace and Social Concerns/Outreach Committee (PSC/O) was awarded a \$3,500 grant from the Legacy Gift Fund to bring Debby Irving, author of *Waking Up White and Finding Myself in the Story of Race*, to Worcester. Worcester Friends Meeting is sponsoring the presentation which takes place on Sunday, March 31, 2019 from 1-4 pm. at the First Unitarian Church, 90 Main Street, Worcester. The format includes a 50 minute presentation followed by a more intimate roundtable discussion.

Peggy McIntosh, Associate Director, Wellesley Centers for Women, says that *Waking Up White* is a "...A jolting and continuing journey from white oblivion to white awareness described in an honest way that may inspire others to do such transformational work themselves..."

Publicized widely, we are expecting a crowd larger than the forty person capacity of our meeting room. Sarah Stewart, pastor at First Unitarian Church was kind enough to offer us their facilities. There is ample off street parking.

Friends are encouraged to wear their Worcester Friends Meeting T-Shirts for better visibility among participants. There are extra shirts in the Library, various sizes, \$10.

The (PSC/O) Committee needs your help with refreshments. We need finger foods, beverages (hot and cold), and paper goods. The afternoon's program is FREE and open to the public. Please invite family and friends.



Listen to a brief introduction to **Debby Irving** at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wpBW4IR8dkg>

From *Waking Up White*:

I can think of no bigger misstep in American history than the invention and perpetuation of the idea of white superiority. It allows white children to believe they are exceptional and entitled while allowing children of color to believe they are inferior and less deserving. Neither is true; both distort and stunt development. Racism crushes spirits, incites divisiveness, and justifies the estrangement of entire groups of individuals who, like all humans, come into the world full of goodness, with a desire to connect, and with boundless capacity to learn and grow. Unless adults understand racism, they will, as I did, unknowingly teach it to their children.

No one alive today created this mess, but everyone alive today has the power to work on undoing it. Four hundred years since its inception, American racism is all twisted up in our cultural fabric. But there's a loophole: people are not born racist. Racism is taught, and racism is learned. Understanding how and why our beliefs developed along racial lines holds the promise of healing, liberation, and the unleashing of America's vast human potential.

Friends Camp in South China, Maine is registering for Summer 2019 at <https://www.friendscamp.org/>

In the meantime, get a preview of camp at one of these Spring Events:

Sunday, April 7th, 4:30 pm: A Winter Reunion at Friends Meeting at Cambridge

A Friends Camp winter reunion with Friends from the Meeting! Join us for games and pizza, and a general good time. More details and a chance to register will be posted on the Friends Camp website! [Email Anna](#) with questions.

May 17th- 19th: Volunteer Work Weekend at Friends Camp

Save the date for our annual volunteer work weekend at Friends Camp! Come to give back to your favorite camp, and stay for the fellowship and yummy food. We will take on projects such as raking, mowing, cleaning, organizing, and light carpentry. [Learn more and sign up here!](#)

Saturday, May 18th @ 1 pm: Open House at Friends Camp

Stop by Friends Camp for a tour and a little Q & A session. A great time for first-time campers to meet other campers and families and see where they will be having adventures this summer! If you'd like to come, please RSVP to Anna at director@friendscamp.org.

**Money &
Spirit
Integrating
Faith and
Finances**

**March 30, 2019
9:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m**

**Gonic Meeting
41 Pickering Road
Gonic, NH 03839**

A consultation for monthly and quarterly meeting finance committees, treasurers and clerks. All with an interest in finance are invited.

For additional information contact Bob Murray, FC Clerk
rmurray@outlook.com
617-990-2622

**The Unitarian Church of Marlborough
and Hudson is pleased
to invite you and your congregation
to a special event:
Let's Rise for Justice:
Building Collective Power and
Healthy Culture for Social Justice
with Chris Crass
Friday, April 5, 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm**

The outrages and injustices are all around us, the divisions of racism and sexism are in society and among those of us who want social justice as well. For those who are newer to social justice, how do we plug in? For those who have been involved, how can we stay effective when there's so much we're up against and it can be demoralizing? How can we create healthy culture that sustains those already involved and helps galvanize and bring in more people? How can we build and be part of coalitions and support national efforts for racial, gender, economic, environmental and social justice?

Chris Crass is one of the leading voices in the country calling for and supporting white people to work for racial justice. He's a social justice educator who writes and speaks widely on courage for racial justice, feminism for men, lessons from past movements, and creating healthy culture and leadership for progressive activism. He works with community groups, schools and faith communities to develop leadership and momentum for social justice action.

Chris was a founder of the anti-racist movement building center, the Catalyst Project, and helped launch the national white anti-racist network, SURJ (Showing Up For Racial Justice). Rooted in his Unitarian Universalist faith, he works with congregations, seminaries, and religious activists to build the Spiritual Left.

He also is the author of ***Towards Collective Liberation: anti-racist organizing, feminist praxis, and movement building strategy*** and ***Towards the "Other America": Anti-Racist Resources for White People Taking Action for Black Lives Matter.***

You can learn more about his work at www.chriscrass.org.

Beacon Hill Friends March Events

Wednesday, March 27, 6:30-8:30pm

**[SURJ Legal Observer Training
with the National Lawyers Guild](#)**

A training that will enable participants to serve as volunteer legal observers with the NLG at rallies, marches, and other direct actions. You do not have to be a lawyer or legal professional to participate in the training! Learn to be the eyes and ears of the legal team at a direct action, observing and recording incidents and the activities of law enforcement in relation to demonstrators **Space is limited; advance registration required.** Childcare will be provided. Sliding scale (\$5 to \$25) admission. [Click for details & RSVP link.](#)

**Saturday, March 30, 1-4pm (BYO bag lunch
12:30pm)**

**[How We Win: A Guide to Nonviolent Direct Action
Campaigning](#)**

[A Workshop with George Lahey In this interactive workshop led by social movement veteran George Lahey, participants will explore how to use direct action campaigns strategically, including:](#)

- choosing the right target
- designing a creative campaign
- avoiding burnout within your group
- building a movement of movements to achieve real progressive victories.

Advance registration required. Sliding scale admission; no one turned away for lack of funds. Email program@bhfh.org to request a scholarship. Childcare available by advance request. [Click for details & RSVP link.](#)

**Sunday, March 31, 1-4pm (BYO bag lunch
12:30pm)**

**[Advocacy for the Long Haul:
An FCNL Workshop & Team Launch](#)**

What can we do to change what's happening in this country? For over 75 years, the Friends Committee on National Legislation - our Quaker lobby group in Washington DC - has shown that our voices can make an impact on federal policy.

Join Sarah Freeman-Woolpert of FCNL for an inspiring workshop that will provide concrete strategies for effective advocacy and a structure for next steps. Learn how to join FCNL's 2019 campaign to stop endless wars by urging Congress to reassert its constitutional authority and repeal the AUMF. Free and open to the public. Childcare available by advance request. Advance registration requested. [Click for details & RSVP link.](#)



HUBBARDSTON COMMUNITY THEATRE presents NEWSIES!

with WFM's own Casey Seem (see left)

March 15 at 7 pm, March 16 at 1 pm & 7 pm, March 17 at 1 pm.

Tickets \$12 adults, \$10 seniors and children. Hubbardston Center School Gymnasium Directed by Amanda Schuster, co-director Rebecca Gleason, Music Director Ethel Howard. For more info, see our website Set in turn-of-the-century New York City, Newsies is the rousing tale of Jack Kelly, a charismatic newsboy and leader of a band of teenaged "newsies." When titans of publishing raise distribution prices at the newsboys' expense, Jack rallies newsies from across the city to strike against the unfair conditions and fight for what's right! More info at [http://](http://www.hubbardstoncommunitytheatre.com/)

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Hospice Volunteers Needed

JHC Hospice of Worcester is seeking applicants for its April 2019 volunteer training program. Graduates of this 16-hour training provide caring and compassionate support to terminally ill patients of all faiths, for as little as one hour per week. For more information or to apply, call Susan Mack, JHC Hospice Volunteer Coordinator, at 508-713-0564, email smack@jhchospice.com, or visit www.jhchospice.com.

Because of the storm on March 3, 2019, no Meeting for Business with Attention to Business occurred this month. Anyone with business that needs attention before the April Meeting should contact Clerk Matt Shorten or the appropriate committee Clerk.



Regarding the founding of this country, David Lewis Schaefer, in his Feb. 28 letter, focuses on the lofty rhetoric of the Declaration and Constitution to claim that all citizens have been given equal rights. And so all have had access to equal opportunity. Because Jefferson and other founders were high-minded men, white supremacy wasn't a problem.

He never acknowledges the vast gap between the ideals of these founding documents and the harsh reality of life for so many, especially women, people of color and the poor. This gap has never been a small thing, nor a mere technicality. It has been, and remains, an integral systemic crack in the very foundation of this country. In his "I Have a Dream" Speech, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. referred to this gap as a "promissory note," a check that remains unredeemable.

As a professor of history at Holy Cross College, Mr. Schaefer should know better than to promote such phony patriotic pabulum. When I was a student there (1970-74), such weak scholarship would have been met with derision. Perhaps he should come down from the ivory tower of Mt. St. James and spend time in a truly diverse, multi-ethnic community like downtown Worcester. One such opportunity is arising soon: an open and free presentation by Debby Irving, author of "Waking Up White" at the First Unitarian Church on Main Street on March 31.

Matthew Shorten, 3/9/19, Worcester Friend

Prof. David L. Schaefer's response to an article by Emily Wax-Thibodeaux about explaining blackface to a 5-year-old is a supreme example of the very critique that he lambasts in his letter. To suggest that Thomas Jefferson, a slaveholder himself, is unambiguous about his condemnation of slavery is laughable at best.

Furthermore, I can only surmise that his defense of America as a land of unlimited opportunities is demonstrative of a willful ignorance on his part concerning the systemic nature of systems of oppression that continue to play out in this country related to the treatment of black and brown people, including historic and continuing disparities in employment, income, housing, education, health care, and incarceration.

I would recommend that he read Michelle Alexander's "The New Jim Crow" and watch the PBS series "Race - The Power of an Illusion" to broaden his perspective on the issues upon which he has expressed himself in his letter.

Rev. Aaron R. Payson, 3/10/19

Minister, The Unitarian Universalist Church of Worcester

David Lewis Schaefer, in his letter of Feb. 28, states that "It is nonsensical to maintain that America's 'foundation' lay in 'white supremacy.'" He bases his argument on his opinion that "all men" named in the Declaration of Independence covers all persons no matter "race, class, sex, or age."

This is the history that has been taught in American schools since the founding of the United States. Unfortunately, women, slaves, Native Americans and non-landowners were not protected by his idealized version of the Founders' vision.

Our country's foundation rests firmly on the extermination of the indigenous people who lived here, the continuing theft of their land and the labor of slaves bought and sold here. Until we face these facts about the founding of our country we will not heal the racial division that permeates our society. The "unlimited opportunities" of which Schaefer speaks are still out of the reach of many due to a national tradition of stacking the deck in favor of those of us who happen to be born white.

I suggest, as African-American History month ends, that Mr. Schaefer look at the writings of American black writers, living and dead, to find other viewpoints. I also would like to personally invite him to come to hear Debby Irving, author of "Waking Up White" who will be speaking at the Unitarian Church on Main Street on March 31.

Sheila Brenner, 3/6/19, Worcester Friend

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, Daron Barnard & Mary Bennett-----	Fourth Sunday, 9:30 AM
Practical Committee, Kevin Walsh-----	First Sunday, 9:30 AM
Peace/Social Concerns/Outreach, Tom Brenner-----	Fourth Saturday, 9:30 AM
Clerk of Worcester Friends Meeting-----	Matthew Shorten
Recording Clerk-----	Katharine Barnard
Corresponding Clerk-----	Sheila Brenner, Mary Chenaille
First Day School-----	Katharine Barnard, Sheila Brenner,
Michelle Flint, Matt Shorten	
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 or dropped off at MeetingHouse.