

Worcester Friends Meeting

Religious Society of Friends (Quaker)

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February/March/April 2015

QUERIES

What calls us into a Religious Society? Do we grow together in faithfulness? Do you listen for the Spirit even when the words are foreign to you? Is your own understanding of God enriched by other people's experiences of the Divine? Do you use your time, energy, resources, gifts, and material possessions in the service of God's love? Are you ready to respond to any concern God may lay upon you, large or small? Do you maintain an appropriate balance among work, service, worship, family, and recreation? Are you ready to rest if God asks it of you? What does love require of you?

From Interim Faith and Practice, NEYM, 2014

Letter From the Editor

by Katie Green

Here I am in the desert area of Southern California, and I feel like I am on a different planet. My Quaker values and the testimonies by which I strive to live are irrelevant here. My friend lives in a gated community with several swimming pools, golf courses, and tennis courts – in the desert! Grass is watered with recycled water through underground sprinklers every night, and teams of workers maintain the beautifully manicured grounds. Mercedes and BMWs replace the Toyotas and Hondas that I am accustomed to seeing. Women, and men too, attempt to remain youthful with cosmetic surgery and hair coloring. The friend that I am visiting has a wonderful sense of humor, with a marked dislike of anything that whispers of religion. I love her and value her friendship, at the same time I am aware that we live vastly different lives. I am aware of making a conscious effort to walk in the Light without being self-righteous or judgmental.

Feeling the need to make contact with people who share my values, I turn to FGC's Quaker Finder on the internet. I learn that the nearest Quaker Meeting is 50 miles away in Riverside, CA. It is unprogrammed, and several members attended the FGC Gathering last summer. I read their history on their website, and find that it is quite similar to ours with one exciting difference. These Quakers appear to be looking at the possibility of building a community that is "within the context of Nature" as they respond to a query from the Pacific Yearly Meeting. They state that they have a goal of working with a developer to develop 35 affordable housing units and a Meeting House which will be "used as a Community center during the week." Their hope is that the Meeting House will provide a spiritual basis and will also be a place from which they can reach out to and be a part of the community around them.

I send an email to the clerk, and just making that effort to connect grounds me and gives me hope. If I return to the area, I will make the effort to worship with these Friends.

ktg

March 31, 2015

In the tiny Central American country of Costa Rica, the national motto is “Pura Vida!”, meaning “life is good”. Recently retired, my wife Bonnie and I set out in January to get a taste of the good life for ourselves, as part of a Road Scholar Tour.

Costa Rica is the most bio-diverse place on the planet, having more species of plants and animals per square mile than anywhere else. Especially notable are the myriad varieties of orchids, hummingbirds, exotic birds and bats that can be found nowhere else. And it’s evident that the government and environmental leaders intend to implement vigorous “green” practices with sustainable development policies.

One such ambitious effort is the public/ private partnership plan to re-create a “Pan-American Green Corridor” throughout the isthmus to facilitate traditional patterns of animal migration and mating. The challenge becomes setting limits on large plantations using monoculture practices and reversing deforestation.

Part of Costa Rica’s appeal to Quakers is their national prohibition against a standing army. In 1951 a group of American Quaker pacifists intent upon avoiding military service or prison pooled their resources, packed their belongings onto a few trucks, and emigrated to a remote part of the cloud forest to be called Monteverde. They bought enough land to start a community with a few homes and a dairy farm. As their endeavors prospered, they built a meeting house and a cheese factory. The community now has a K-12 school (fully bi-lingual) and a pig farm as well. We were warmly hosted by

Marvin Rockwell, one of the original founders from Alabama. His family served a traditional meal of black beans and rice for the entire group, followed by a video presentation of the story of the Monteverde Friends community. They now have about 90 members attending weekly meeting for worship!

A stable democracy with good schools and modern (universal) health care, the country is a shining example for other developing countries. The economy is increasingly diversified, as it transitions from a cash crop export model toward a thriving eco-tourist trade. With something for everyone, Costa Rica is a wonderful place to visit, whether you enjoy warm beaches, exotic flora and fauna, river rafting, or zip lining through the rain forest canopy. Pura Vida!



News

Sandy Kocher shares news of Leonard Goodwin, who was a frequent attender of Worcester Meeting for years before he moved away. Leonard writes that he has been successfully battling cancer, and reports that a CT scan recently indicates that all signs of cancer have disappeared. He has received a lot of support from friends during this difficult period. Leonard has rejoined his writing group and a singing group. Long time members and attenders fondly remember Leonard. He may be reached at 113 Old Towne Drive, Mount Juliet, TN 37122.

Leonard sends the following poem, through Sandy:

Each of us
is a walking miracle
Made from
The stuff of stars
Our bodies
grounded in the Earth
While our minds
roam the Universe
Who would
hurt maim or kill
a walking miracle

Quakerism: A School Assignment

by Lucy Barnard

I am a Quaker. I would like to tell you some things about Quakers (or Friends), so I am writing this essay.

Quakerism started in the 1600's in England with a man named George Fox. George Fox believed that everyone had an "Inner Light" or that "Jesus is inside of everyone". Even though he was punished for his beliefs, he continued to spread his ideas. His jailors were often convinced by him, and always impressed with him. He gained many loyal followers, but when lots of Christians became Quakers, the ministers and priests went to court and started suing any Quakers that stopped paying tithes to them. Quakers were also persecuted because they would not take off their hats or swear an oath in court. Between 1660 and 1685, around 15,000 Quakers were in jail and were often brutally treated. Some Quakers immigrated to the New World. Today there are Quakers around the globe, especially in Africa.

To explain what Quakers believe, I will tell you about the testimonies. Testimonies are things you believe in, and are guidelines on how to treat other people. The acronym for the Quaker testimonies is S.P.I.C.E.S. It stands for Simplicity, Peace, Integrity, Community, Equality and Stewardship. There are 2 other basic beliefs also: Everyone has "That of God" inside them, and that God can communicate with anyone, anytime.

Because of our belief that God is within each of us, we don't need a certain person to communicate with God. Therefore, there is no minister in our Meeting. Anyone can share what the Spirit has told them. When we wor-

ship in Meeting we gather quietly and wait for the Spirit to call on us. Sometimes when you are waiting quietly in Meeting, you might "Hold someone in the Light", which means to think about them in a loving way and about what they might need. People might think about a choice they have to make and the different sides to that choice. Meeting ends with a handshake, and people greet each other. Then there's time for announcements and sharing our names, and then there's potluck!

Quaker children are called Young Friends. It is special to be a Young Friend. Quaker children participate in all the activities of the Meeting. Another good thing about being a Quaker kid is that you get to go to Quaker Youth Retreats. Everyone there is so friendly and everyone is Quaker, so you can share stories and people understand each other. If I did not go to Youth Retreats, I would probably find it harder to be a Young Friend. This would be because the Youth Retreats (or JYM,) teach the basics about being a Young Friend. For example, JYM Retreats teach you to sit still in Meeting. Sitting still in Meeting teaches you to be patient and to be able to sit and wait. Being talked to by adults in the Meeting as an equal is another reason why I enjoy being a Young Friend. Adults in the Meeting are interested in our ideas and opinions. Once we wrote to the senator, and she wrote back! I think being a Quaker will teach me important life skills.

Being a Young Friend is an important part of me.

Ida Stone

by Katie Green

Ida Stone passed away on January 28th at her home in Worcester. Ida was a beloved member of our Meeting. She was born on April 24, 1917. A meeting for worship to celebrate Ida's life and commemorate her transition was held at our meetinghouse on February 16th. Many F/friends and members of Ida's family were present.

Everyone was welcome in her home, and Ida Stone's presence always enhanced our Meeting. At the close of meeting for worship, Ida would greet every person present. Her genuine love of people was clear. Ida's daughter Susan lives in Atlanta, and attended meeting for worship with Ida when she was in Worcester. Margos, Ida's son, often brought Ida to meeting in her later years.

Ida loved the children who attended First Day School, and she was always a cheerful presence at Sunday pot-lucks and at our semi-annual Market Days. Some

of us have spent many hours standing out at peace vigils with Ida. I have always been impressed with her good humor and kind, even disposition. I treasure the memory of dancing with Ida at my 70th birthday party.

I first met Ida and her husband Cliff over thirty years ago; we were members of the Community Stomach Food Co-op. I remember the pot-luck food-co-op suppers at her home, where a canoe greeted us in her hallway. Ida and Cliff were active members of the Green Mountain Club and Appalachian Mountain Club. Cliff Stone passed away in 1995. They were married for 50 years.

The family has arranged a Memorial Service for Ida at their church, the Universalist Unitarian Church on Holden Street in Worcester. The Memorial Service will be at 11 AM, Friday, April 24th.

First Friday Film Series

On February 6th, we kicked off the First Friday film series sponsored by the Peace & Social Concerns/Outreach Committee with *Where Should the Birds Fly*. Thanks to the many Friends who helped make this happen! Between 25-30 people attended and stayed for discussion afterwards.

Where Should the Birds Fly, by Palestinian film maker Fida Qishta, is the first film about the one and a half million Palestinians living under Israel's siege and blockade of the Gaza Strip.

The heart-wrenching story told by 13 year old Mona, who witnessed the deaths of her mother, father, sister-in law, and many other family members during Israel's 2008 attack on Gaza, and the graphic images of the injured civilians, shocked our audience, which spontaneously settled into silence at the movie's end.

In the discussion afterwards, there was a clearly stated desire by many present "to do something." More than one person spoke of the connections between poverty and militarism.

On March 6th, the Peace & Social Concerns/Outreach committee hosted the second film in its First Friday Film Series. *Broken on All Sides*, by filmmaker and public defender Matthew Pillischer, is about the Philadelphia court and jail system. The film focuses on issues of race, poverty and the effects of mass incarceration, not only on the defendants – many of whom are held for months in deplorable conditions awaiting trial – and on their families and communities.

Over 30 people attended the film showing; more than 80% were not members or attenders of the Meeting. Discussion followed, and those in attendance left their names and email addresses in order to stay in touch. A Google group has been created, End Mass Incarceration - Central Massachusetts, to encourage communication and collaboration in the future among people concerned about the issues of mass incarceration. Contact Phil Stone for more information (pstonelaw@rcn.com)

The First Friday Film Series will show *The Real Dirt on Farmer John* on April 3 at 7pm. This film shows the epic tale of a maverick Midwestern farmer. Farmer John bravely stands amidst a failing economy, vicious rumors, and violence. This powerful story of transformation and renewal heralds a resurrection of farming in America.

The Gatekeepers, shown on May 1 at 7pm is the last film in this series. It sheds a new light on the Israeli Occupation in the aftermath of the Six Day War. For the first time ever, six former heads of the Shin Bet, Israel's secret service agency, reflect publicly on their actions and decisions on the controversy. (In Hebrew with English sub-titles).

"Potent enough to alter how you see the world. Riveting from beginning to end, it's the autobiography of a country, if you will, told by ultimate insiders."

~ Kenneth Turan, Los Angeles Times

Happy Birthday!



Friend Clarence Burley celebrates his 85th birthday at potluck with cake. In this photo, Clarence is holding one of the T-shirts that he gifted the children of our First Day School. (Tolkien's Hobbits had a custom of giving gifts on their birthdays, rather than receiving them.)

First Day folks proudly wear the lovely purple T-shirts. There are still some left in adult sizes. Five dollars of the \$15

cost of a shirt will be a contribution to the meeting. Checks should be made out to Clarence Burley. Thank you, Clarence, for your contributions to our meeting.



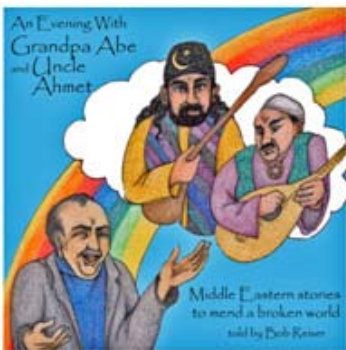
Third Friday Spoken Word Series

A spoken word series at the Meetinghouse was partially funded by the Worcester Arts Council, as administered by the Massachusetts Cultural Council. The first event at 7:30 pm on February 20th was a performance by Katie Green of her one-person play, *Meet Mrs. Mary Rowlandson*. In spite of a snowstorm which resulted in a parking ban, the program was well attended.

Our second scheduled event was to be a performance by Stephen Collins, a spoken word artist who has delighted Friends in the past with his persona of Walt Whitman and his presentation of Robert Frost's poetry. His newest program, *A Search for Justice*, examines issues of social, political and religious justice. Stephen quotes Abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison, Thomas Hardy and others, as they comment on war and religion. Unfortunately bitter cold and unexpected snow kept people from venturing out. Stephen graciously offered to present this program next September.

There are four remaining spoken word programs, all on Third Fridays at 7.30 P.M. Join Friends for an evening of reading original or favorite works of poetry and prose, music and song at 7:30 PM on April 17th.

On May 15th, Bob Reiser will present his program, *An*



Evening with Grandpa Abe and Uncle Ahmet. This program asks if stories can mend a wounded world as a Muslim and a Jewish storyteller duel to become the chief tale-spinner for their Middle East city.

The series is completed with two storytelling performances by Gwen Prescutti. On Friday, June 19 at 7:30 PM, Gwen Prescutti will perform *Rhetoric of Survival*, a program that broadens insight into the inspirational heroism, perseverance and individual willpower of women of color. An inter-generational program with Gwen will delight us on

Saturday, June 20 at 11 AM. We will hear a blend of personal anecdotes, tales of Br'er Rabbit and other African American stories.

Price: Donation, please.

Join us for refreshments afterwards!

info@worcesterfriendsmeeting.org

Thanks to the Worcester Arts Council for making these programs possible.



DAWN

NOT MANY PEOPLE KNOW WHO I AM
BUT I AM EVERYWHERE
I PAINT THE PICTURE OUT YOUR WINDOW
A FEW OF YOU WILL NOTICE AND FEWER
WILL CARE
I AM THE LIGHT OF THE SUN
I AM THE SHADOW OF THE MOON
I'VE HELD YOUR HAND YOUR WHOLE LIFE
YOU'RE BOUND TO RECOGNIZE SOMEDAY SOON

I AM THE SOUND OF THE MUSIC
YOU HEAR IN THE LAUGHTER OF A CHILD
I'M IN THE BEAUTY OF THE MOMENT
COMBINE A TEAR WITH A SMILE
I'M IN THE MOMENT OF CHANGE
I AM THE CONSTANT TRUTH
I'M IN THE STRENGTH OF THE OLD
I'M IN THE FRAILTY OF YOUTH

I'M IN THE CORAL OF THE SUNRISE
I'M IN THE MOMENT OF ITS BREAKTHROUGH
I'M IN THE MYSTERY AND ITS DEMISE
I AM WE AND WE ARE YOU

Tyler Green

Inform to Reform: How you can end mass incarceration in MASS.

Phil Stone attended a forum, **Inform to Reform: Ending Mass Incarceration**, in Amherst on Saturday, March 28. This meeting, attended by more than 40 people, was held at the First Congregational Church UCC in Amherst. Activists and state legislators were present. We are encouraged to see the groundswell of interest in issues of incarceration, racism and poverty.

Phil has been instrumental in organizing around social and economic issues for decades. He and Katie Green are looking forward to participating in the conference, Working to End Mass Incarceration, at Pendle Hill (in Philadelphia) from April 29 through May 3. Michelle Alexander will be the keynote speaker. Michelle Alexander's best-selling book, *Mass Incarceration and The New Jim Crow*, provides an analysis of the current system of policing, law enforcement, and criminal justice. She will address the "why" questions and discuss how a sustained mass social movement is critical to changing this situation. The Conference will include Workshops and Interest Groups led by invited speakers and workshop leaders. You can register at: http://www.pendlehill.org/learn/conferences-institutes/pendle-hill-conference/#.VMD7YtLF_mc

Since attending the Friends General Conference Gathering last summer, Phil has been actively involved in a networking group which is planning the Pendle Hill conference and developing web site with assistance from AFSC.

The working group has identified many areas in which Friends are involved in issues of mass incarceration: documenting/ending discriminatory sentencing; diversion/treatment for mental illness and substance abuse; changes in sentencing for nonviolent crimes, including some drug use; alternatives to incarceration; solitary confinement and conditions of confinement; fair consideration for parole when eligible; access to jobs; abolishing the death penalty; restoring voting rights for ex-offenders; offering and improving educational opportunities in prison; preventing homelessness on re-entry; criminal record expungement; and ending the school to prison pipeline with programs and support for at-risk youth, including conflict resolution training.

Friends who are interested in attending this conference may find more information at the Pendle Hill website or call 610-566-4507 to register.

First Day School

This past Sunday [March 29th] was 5th Sunday, so we had Intergenerational Worship. In First Day School, we have been working on a mandala, which is a circular pattern that is beautiful to look at. Ours was like a color wheel with a sun in the middle. We made the colors by cutting out bits of magazine pictures and then glueing them on.

For Intergenerational Worship, we wanted to use the mandala as a focus for worship sharing, so we made queries about the mandala and what it means. First we talked about what a query is, and how to use it. We put the queries on slips of paper and put them in a basket, and passed them out to the adults to read them out loud. After each query, we waited for a little while for people to speak about the query if they wanted to.

The queries that we came up with were:

"The mandala could be any shape. Why is it round?"

"Why is the sun in the middle?"

"When you look at the mandala, what do you think?"

"When you look up close, you can see the individual bits of paper, but when you blur your eyes, you see the

by Lucy and Malcolm Barnard

rainbow. What does this mean to you?"

After Meeting, we hung the mandala up on the bulletin board in the entryway, so everyone can see it.



Casey Seems displays the mandala that was created in First Day School.

Notes from Permanent Board Meeting on February 21, 2015, or A Guide to the New England Yearly Meeting's Structure

by Phil Stone

This past fall I began serving my second five-year term on the New England Yearly Meeting's Permanent Board. The name is a bit of a misnomer; when the two Yearly Meetings in New England came together after World War II, appointments were made for life, sort of like the U.S. Supreme Court. These days, it's a five-year appointment with a maximum of 10 years of consecutive service.

The Permanent Board serves as the Yearly Meeting's decision-making body between Yearly Meeting Sessions; it implements decisions and policy made by Sessions. It also acts upon matters where, in the opinion of the Board, a decision cannot await Sessions. Otherwise, its role is to "season" issues which come to its attention, presenting recommendations to Sessions if appropriate.

Up to 50 Friends nominated from throughout New England carry this work through prayerful discernment. It meets four or five times a year, in different Monthly Meeting locations around New England, and the meetings are always open to all Friends. Much of the work is done by committees, some of which are "standing", such as Finance or Personnel, and others are created and laid down as the need arises.

One of the committees is a body known as Coordinating & Advisory. This small committee consists of the Yearly Meeting clerk, the clerk of Permanent Board, the clerk of Ministry & Counsel, either the treasurer or the clerk of the Finance Committee, and the Yearly Meeting secretary.

The Coordinating & Advisory Committee coordinates the work of Yearly Meeting committees and nurtures the clerks of Yearly Meeting committees and of monthly and quarterly meetings. It conducts meetings or retreats for clerks at least once a year.

Coordinating & Advisory Committee is also responsible for supervising and evaluating the work of the Yearly Meeting secretary, Noah Baker-Merrill, including the secretary's development and implementation of an annual work plan and a priorities budget for the coming fiscal year. More information about the work of Yearly Meeting committees can be found on the web at: <http://neym.org/committees>

At our February meeting, we heard from multiple committees (Structural Review, Legacy Gift, and Long Term Financial Planning) that the Yearly Meeting needs to

have and articulate a long-term vision of what we want to do in order for these committees to go forward with their important work.

A number of recommendations were made by the Coordinating & Advisory Committee, which were approved by the Permanent Board.

When you attend next summer's annual Sessions, be prepared to consider, "a set of integrated, specific and concrete priorities with which we can align the work of the yearly meeting committee and staff going forward".

In the meantime, I encourage you to visit the new, and after several years of hard work, the incredible, Yearly Meeting website at: <http://neym.org/>. Here you will find Calendars of Events, Resources, and much, much more.

What's Happening at Woolman Hill?

Woolman Hill offers a variety of programs related to faith, self-awareness, creativity and Quaker practice. In a welcoming and peaceful environment, participants explore program topics as well as the natural beauty of the hill. Most programs have a sliding scale, and scholarship funds are available. More information about the following programs is available on the Upcoming Programs page of the Woolman Hill website. <http://www.woolmanhill.org>

- Knitting for Others, April 17-19
- Photography as Contemplative Practice, April 17-19
- The Mystic's Experience, May 1-3

Some Friends may be aware that the Tennessee Gas Pipeline Company is proposing a gas pipeline to run from Pennsylvania through New York and across Massachusetts. The pipeline would carry fracked natural gas from the Marcellus Shale to New England and beyond. The proposed route would run along the northern boundary of Woolman Hill's property. Any Friends who might want more information about the pipeline and the efforts of oppose it can visit the Woolman Hill website and follow links that are there. Woolman Hill is a special place for Friends, and the staff there will appreciate your support.

Contact info: 413-774-3431 • info@woolmanhill.org

Young Adult Friends by Aaron Sakulich

In January, I attended the three day retreat organized by the Young Adults Friends (YAFs) of the New England Yearly Meeting at Woolman Hill. Everyone involved had an excellent time catching up with old friends or meeting new ones. It was my first YAF retreat, and I found it personally rejuvenating to be among such a diverse group outside of my normal work-home-meeting bubble.

The focus of the Meeting for Worship with attention to Business was one that many Quaker organizations are struggling with: the staffing of committees. In the past, the YAF committees struggled to find people who felt led to commit to a full year of service. In response to this, all of the committees were laid down at the end of the last year. This change did not, however, work out well, as necessary work went undone and the vast potential and energy of the YAF community went untapped.

During the final section of the Meeting for Worship with attention to Business (which carried on for the better part of two days) it was decided to form a single committee to be called the "Standing Committee". (The YAFs, unfortunately, did not find clearness to accept the name that I had proposed - the "Sitting Committee" or, better yet, the "Lounging Committee".) This committee is composed of YAFs who felt they were able to commit to service for a full year, and each individual accepted the position only after much introspection.

The Standing Committee's goal is to act something like a super-nominating committee; it will identify areas where work needs to be done and contact individuals that may be willing to participate. Without asking Friends to commit for a full year, but rather for just an individual project, it is hoped that they will be more likely to participate. Alternatively, the committee may identify particular subjects for which the community has a particular interest, and form working groups around those interests even if their work is not critical to the functioning of the YAF structure. The committee will also provide institutional memory and continuity to the YAFs while holding the group as a whole in the light. The first concerns to be tackled included seriously reconsidering the YAF clerking structure, and arranging a working group to help organize the Spring Retreat in April.

Spring Outburst: Forsythia

Enroute to town
this April day when trees have yet to leaf out
forsythia claims my attention
Luminous in sun brilliant
yellow against blue sky
Small young shrubs appear
around new homes, large older
ones elsewhere
Their masses of yellow branches
arc out in wild abandon
like hair not brushed or combed
Then occasional rounded shapes
and long hedges – well trimmed shrubs
formed by a controlling hand
They're okay – but I prefer
the wild untamed look
of so much yellow forsythia
joyously proclaiming SPRING!

Sandra Kocher 4/15/2010



Forsythia: shrub of genus *Forsythia*
Named after William Forsyth (1737-1804)
English horticulturist

Worcester Interfaith Summit Minutes for March 16, 2015

The purpose for meeting was to continue researching the four Priority Issues:

- Families Struggling for the Basics
- New Immigrants and Refugees
- Good Jobs
- Concerns for Youth Including Mental Health Services and Jobs

Frank started the meeting by talking about the Community Organizing Wheel and how we want to move from big messy problems to issues that are specific, winnable, concrete and we can hold a decision maker accountable.

Rather Than meet in Issue Groups, we agreed to meet as one group and focus on Families Struggling with the Basics, as our last meeting raised concerns for New Immigrants and Refugees. Jose facilitated the conversation.

Families Struggling for the Basics

The first question was, What are the basics?

Affordable housing, Food, Utilities, Employment/Good paying jobs, Education, Transportation, Safety, ESL/ Native Language Literacy

It was a lively, wide-ranging conversation and as you can see it raised a lot more issues than it settled, and led to what I would call some Healthy Tensions:

1. How to move on an issue in a timely way, and go deeper into systemic change,
2. How to focus on an issue, while recognizing that all issues are connected,
3. Is there a barrier we can research that can impact a number of challenges.

We then highlighted the barriers families and individuals face accessing the basics:

- Education/higher education, legal, cultural, lack of parental support, insensitivity of service providers.

A couple of proposals were brought forward as a way to cut through a number of issues:

- Community Schools, Help Navigating the Social Service System.

Raul asked for questions he could put to his members to stimulate feedback and discussion within the congregation.

Next Meeting

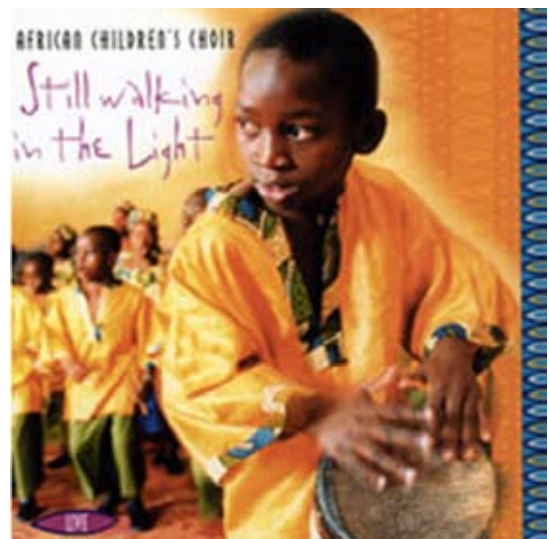
We agreed to meet on April 13, 2015 from 6:30-8:00pm at the Pleasant St. Neighborhood Network Center, 301 Pleasant St, Worcester (next to the Pickle Barrel) to continue the conversation.

Thanks go to Clarence Burley for attending this meeting and sending us his notes. – Editor.

The African Children's Choir

The African Children's Choir sang and danced at a fundraiser on Sunday, April 5 at the Worcester Crossroad Community Church on Belmont Street. Eight people from Worcester Friends Meeting were counted among the amazed audience. What a beautiful event!

<http://www.africanchildrenschoir.com>



Worcester Friends Meeting • 2nd month, 8th day, 2015

Present: Daron Barnard, clerk; Karen Sargent recording clerk; Mark Sullivan, treasurer; Katie Green, Jessica Seem, Matt Shorten, Phil Stone, Kevin Walsh, Tyler Green, and Jane Cutting.

Meeting began with a period of silence. The clerk read Query 2 on Meeting for Worship from New England yearly Meeting Faith and Practice. The treasurer gave the first monthly report for 2015. There is a deficit for 1st and 2nd Months of \$5336.95. This is expected because the insurance bill, \$3.916 is paid 1st Month, while income is usually down 1st and 2nd Months. Other larger than usual expenses included the Practical Committee providing help to a member of the meeting, \$650; gas for the furnace, \$552.81, possibly due to very cold weather lately; electricity, \$155.66, the rates have gone up; plumbing, the bill for the 6 burst pipes in the basement at \$274; and the roof repair of a leak, \$455.72. Mark is talking to Vanco about how to put a 'donate to the Meeting' link onto the Meeting's website. The Meeting currently has 4 accounts; the regular checking acct., the cemetery acct. in a mutual fund, a building fund and a savings account. All the accounts are at the same bank. The Meeting also has a safety deposit box at a different bank. The treasurer plans to look into the safety deposit box to see if it can be discontinued.

At this point, a Worcester policeman was seen out the window getting ready to issue tickets to cars parked along Pleasant St. Meeting adjourned briefly while cars were relocated to the driveway. No tickets were issued. The policeman said that there is a winter parking ban in effect, so there is no parking allowed on major streets such as Pleasant Street, at any time of the day or day of the week until the ban is lifted. To see if the ban is still in effect, please go to this site: < ? Worcester declared ban >. It was suggested that the corresponding clerk send out this information in an email.

The Practical Committee did not meet 2nd month so that the Meeting could have a discussion on how much money, time and effort to spend on the meetinghouse. The Meeting clerk reported on a number of specific items that the Practical Committee will be asked to work on, in order of priority: expanding the off street parking area; re-siding the meetinghouse so it does not need painting; upgrading the furnace; increasing the mobility of the piano so that more room can be made for meeting for worship; cleaning out the porch on the west side of the Meetinghouse; fixing the basement; including floors, windows and doors; replacing or repairing the signs in front of the Meetinghouse. Two more items were added during discussion: removal of more of the large trees behind the Meetinghouse, and removing clutter in the 2nd floor hallway.

Spiritual Life Committee met on First Month, 25th. They discussed the best way to provide financial aid for those in the community who call in need of help. Singing between Meeting for Worship and potluck may be proposed. The State of Society discussion will be held on 2nd Month, 15th at 9am. There are a set of queries on how the Meeting works as a covenant community available in paper or electronic form for F/friends to review before the discussion. These queries come from the New England Yearly Meeting theme 'Living in Covenant Community'. A memorial for Ida Stone, a beloved long time attender, will be held on Monday, February 16th at 4pm at the Meetinghouse. The Meeting will provide coffee, tea and any other beverages, and Ida's family will provide flowers and cookies. 3 people volunteered to help with set up and closing for the memorial service. There is be a leaflet with the words to the hymn 'Simple Gifts' to be sung at the closing of the service as it was Ida's favorite hymn. A memorial minute for the Meeting is proposed, to be written by Katie Green, Mary Chenaille, and Kathryn Barnard. This minute is for the Worcester Friends Meeting only, not for the Quarter or Yearly Meeting, as Ida was not active in these larger meetings. Clarence's report on the Worcester Interfaith meeting was read. They agreed to focus on the causes of issues, not specific symptoms. Local issues include immigrants' rights, basic needs such as hunger and homelessness, jobs, education, and so on.

Peace and Social Concerns Committee reported that the first movie in the film series was held on Friday, Feb.6. 'Where Should the Birds Fly' about Gaza and the Palestinians living there is a powerful, moving film which was viewed by 25 to 30 people, most of whom stayed for the discussion afterward. Many people on the P & SCC helped to make the evening work, from setting up the new system to show the movie, providing refreshments, to coming out on a very cold night to attend. People wanted to DO something after seeing the film, but it was difficult to provide that, perhaps after future films a list of names and contacts will be generated for those who are moved to act so they can stay in touch. The next presentation will be Katie Green as 'Mary Rowlandson' about a settler captured during King Philip's War. Katie Green and Martha Yager said they would attend the next meeting of Worcester Interfaith; Jane Cutting also volunteered to attend a meeting. Their next meeting for Monday evening may be canceled due to snow. The Meeting Clerk encourages all who attend outside meetings of interest to Friends to report back to the Meeting.

The pastor of St. Luke's Church, Warren Hicks, will be leaving that church to become the executive director of the Worcester Fellowship to expand their ministry to the homeless and others in need in the community. The clerk will send a note to Warren wishing him good luck in his new position.

It was suggested that a laptop computer to complete the equipment for showing films be acquired. One member said he could provide used laptops. Another member remarked how unless a laptop is used almost every day, the time for the maintenance of the software becomes time consuming. This was referred to the Practical Committee. (one sentence about the laptop will do)

Meeting closed intending to meet again 3rd Month, 8th.

Worcester Friends Meeting • 3rd month, 8th day, 2015

Present: Daron Barnard, clerk; Karen Sargent, recording clerk; Clarence Burley, corresponding clerk; Mark Sullivan, treasurer; Katie Green, Kevin Walsh, Phil Stone, Kathryn Barnard, Matt Shorten, Tyler Green, Whitney Mikkelsen, Fred Mikkelsen.

The meeting opened with a period of silence. The clerk read Query 3 on Meeting Business from New England Yearly Meeting Faith and Practice.

The Practical Committee addressed the concerns sent to it by the Business Meeting from the discussion on the Meetinghouse. They agreed that their top three projects going forward would be expanding the parking area, replacing the windows in the meeting room, and replacing the siding

before the wood needs painting again. It was brought to the meetings attention that another window will probably need replacing, the one on the third floor in the room used for First Day school, looking over the main door to the meetinghouse. Tree removal was discussed but it was uncertain in the Practical Committee exactly which trees needed to be removed. No action can be taken on this item until there is less snow on the ground. The gutter which fell off the street side of the meetinghouse needs to be removed when the snow melts enough to get to it. It was bent beyond repair by the huge ice dam which pulled it down. The porch on the side of the meeting room has been emptied of most of the items except for the tables, extra chairs and high chairs. The Yearly Meeting staff has agreed to remove their items from the second floor hallway. There are still two items belonging to Worcester Friends which need to be relocated, it was suggested that at least one could go to the basement.

The treasurer gave the report for Third Month. Unexpected income of \$1221.00 came from donations in memory of Ida Stone. In spite of this income to date is \$500 below budget. It was noted that the Center for Nonviolent Solutions has paid its March rent early. In expenses, the bill for snowplowing of \$1800 has been paid in total. It will be paid in 2 installments next season. It was agreed by all that snow removal has been good, with the sidewalk in front of the meeting also being cleared. It was suggested that a path might be cleared at the crosswalk in the future. Another expense that was high was the gas bill for heating, due to both an increase in the price of gas and the cold month.

Another item that came up in the Practical Committee was the decision to donate \$100 to Abby's House for a page in a book to honor Annette Rafferty's eighty-fifth birthday. The corresponding clerk has picked out the 85th Psalm to go on the Worcester Friends Meeting page.

The Spiritual Life Committee was not able to meet last month due to weather and school vacation, however they were active with regular support for members and attenders. They organized the memorial service for Ida Stone on February 16, about 25 people attended both family and meeting members, including one family member who was there by Skype from Africa. Friends were reminded that the discussion for the State of Society was rescheduled to March 22. The readings and questions on covenant community are still available in the hallway. RI-Smithfield Quarterly Meeting will be held next First Day. Four or five members are planning to carpool down to Westerly, RI. Next weekend there is also a retreat at Powell House under the joint care of New England Yearly Meeting and New York Yearly Meeting on 'Pastoral care – Not just for pastors'. The Junior Yearly Meeting retreat on 'What is Prayer?' was attended by several families from Worcester Friends. March having 5 First Days, there will be intergenerational worship on March 29. Katie Green and Mary Chenaille are working on a memorial minute on Ida Stone for the Worcester Friends Meeting. They welcome any thoughts that members and attenders offer for this minute.

Peace and Social Concerns/Outreach Committee presented their second film 'Broken on All Sides' about the Philadelphia jail and prison system. It was very well attended with about two dozen people from the community, including people from End Mass Incarceration, Worcester ACLU, EPICA (Ex-Prisoners for CORI Reform), and the public defender's office and Legal Services. All who attended the film showing stayed for the discussion afterward. A contact list was circulated so that film attenders could keep in touch. Coming up in the Spoken Word series, on the third Friday in March Steve Collins will present 'Voices for Peace and Justice' at 7:30pm. On the first Friday in April the film series continues with the film 'Farmer John' about a family farmer struggling to compete with agribusiness. A member of Friends Meeting at Cambridge asked if Worcester Friends could host a musician who would like to put on a fundraiser for the Alternatives to Violence Project on Saturday, April 11 at 1 pm. It was thought that this was not a good time for a fundraising concert, but that Worcester Friends would help with publicity for this musician giving a concert in Cambridge that evening.

The Practical Committee had a request for the use of the meetinghouse for yoga classes. As the person teaching is just starting, it was agreed by the committee that the fees of \$65 for profit or even \$35 for non-profit groups using the meetinghouse could be too high. It was suggested that she could pay 10% of the fees collected for the session. The classes would take place on Tuesday evenings at 6 pm. It was agreed that Friends would like to have an injury release form signed by the participants and that the instructor should come to meet with the Practical Committee before the classes start. The Practical Committee is free to allow the yoga classes in the meetinghouse after the teacher meets with the committee.

Announcements were made of the upcoming visits of Worcester Congressman James McGovern on Tuesday March 10 from 6 to 8 pm at St. Peter's Church for a talk on Immigration Executive Actions and on Wed. March 11 from 6 to 8 pm at Clark University, Jefferson Hall for 'Eyes on the Prize' with a panel discussion by the Black Clergy Alliance. A Young Adult Friends (YAF) retreat will be held April 19. A friend of a member of the meeting has donated a box of religious books for the Market Day book table. The Friday meeting at Briarwood has been discontinued until further notice.

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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

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.

04/05/15	Jess Seem	04/26/15	Katie Green	05/17/15	Fred Mikkelsen
04/12/15	Paul Gallagher	05/03/15	Sandra Kocher	05/24/15	Whitney Mikkelsen
04/19/15	Carol Goodenow	05/10/15	David Legg	05/31/15	Virginia Powell

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