

Worcester Friends Newsletter April 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 4: The Meeting Community

Do you love one another as becomes the followers of Christ? Do you share each other's joys and burdens?

When conflicts arise, do you seek in mutual forgiveness and tenderness to resolve them speedily?

Are you careful of the reputation of others? Do you seek beyond all differences of opinion and circumstance for unity in the divine life?



Take a moment to go upstairs to see the First Day Tree which Young Friends have created in the FDS classroom

Upcoming Special Events

Sunday 5/7, 1 pm-4pm, *Meet Your Muslim Neighbor*, Worcester Islamic Center

Wednesday 5/17, 6:30-8pm, *SURf Monthly Meeting*, Worcester YWCA

Sunday 5/21, 9:30 am, *Bible Study* with Geoff Knowlton

Saturday 6/10, 9am-3pm, *WFM Market Day*

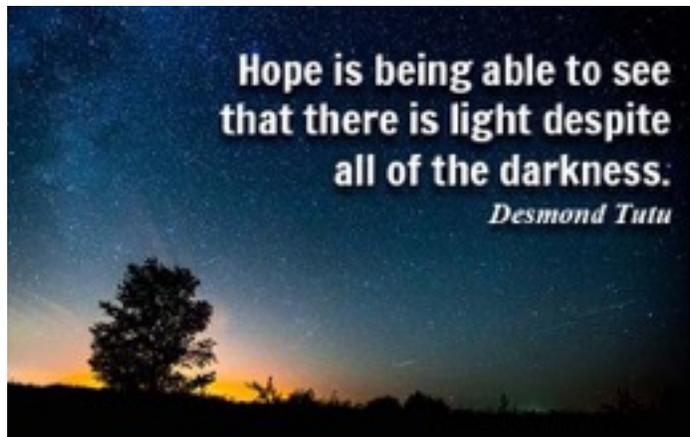
Saturday 6/17, *Mikkelsen Going Away Party*, See within

7/2-7/8, *FGC Gathering*, Niagara Falls, NY

8/5-8/10, *NEYM Annual Sessions*, Castleton, VT

**Hope is being able to see
that there is light despite
all of the darkness.**

Desmond Tutu



Monthly Meeting for Business, Worcester Friends Meeting

Date: April 9, 2017

Present: Daron Barnard, Katharine Barnard, Tom Brenner, Clarence Burley, Mary Chenaille, Jane Cutting, Fred Mikkelson, Whitney Mikkelson, Karen Sargent, Jessica Seem, Matthew Shorten, Mark Sullivan

Clerking: Daron Barnard

The meeting opened with silent worship and reading of NEYM Query 4: The Meeting Community, on loving and caring for one other.

1. Business Items

- a. **Living Faith Gathering.** Nine Worcester Friends attended the NEYM gathering in Providence RI yesterday to enjoy worship, workshops and community-building.
- b. **Meeting community transitions.** Friendship Friends Meeting in Greensboro NC has sent us their acceptance of the transfer of membership of Elizabeth and Brian Poynton to that Meeting. We also are anticipating the Mikkelson family's move to Florida and are planning a send-off potluck for them.
- c. **Leadings on Climate Change.** Spiritual Life Committee proposes a listening session on our spiritual connection to climate change. This would be an opportunity to share our spiritual journeys, deepen our fellowship, and also to build on the activities of last November's Meeting retreat. This is the spiritual companion to the practical work of Practical Committee on the building. It's recommended that those interested also view the TED Talk by Jay O'Hara on his deeply spiritual leadings on climate change and how they have translated into action. After a discussion, we have planned our **listening session for April 23, 2017** (the day after Earth Day) following worship (during potluck time and extending as needed). Those who plan to attend are asked to consider in advance their leadings on climate change, and be prepared to speak for 5 minutes or less on their spiritual feelings on the matter. Mary Bennett is taking leadership for this event.
- d. **Signage at Meetinghouse and Cemetery.** Practical Committee brings concerns about the state of the signs both in front of the Meetinghouse as well as at the Cemetery. The committee is collecting estimates for replacement of the Meetinghouse signs which are in poor repair. The Cemetery sign has repeatedly been vandalized, and consideration was given to either continuing to clean it versus removing it altogether. It is unclear that the sign has any effect on the behavior of those who use the property inappropriately, yet some like the sign as a marker of place. Another suggestion was made for etching "Friends Cemetery" into one of the wall stones. Practical Committee will collect estimates for different options and return the consideration to Business Meeting.
- e. **Proposal for outside group's use of Meetinghouse.** A childcare cooperative has approached the Meeting about use of the building. Two coop members, Caitlin and Irena, presented information on the group, which is comprised of 6 families with infant to preschool age children, who collectively sharecare of children Monday-Friday mornings. They are seeking a classroom space for the collective to use 3 days per week from 8:30-1. They would use one large room (such as the worship room), and would need access to the kitchen and bathroom, as well as storage space for their materials and child furniture items. Their current use would be mornings but they may expand to school hours in 1-2 years. In exchange for use of the space, they offer to make a monthly financial donation. There is support from Meeting about this proposal but as next steps, Daron will discuss logistics of shared use with our current tenants, and Mark Sullivan will discuss with our insurance company about liability concerns. **Treasurers Report:** As is usual this time of year, utilities and expenses have been high thus far. ACH donations are less than expected, but donations from different groups who use the building has been a positive source of revenue. In the balance, we are running over budget but with less of a deficit than expected.

2. Committee Reports:

- a. **Practical.** In addition to items above, the committee reports that Red Rooster Movers have removed the piano and various other unwanted furniture items. Further minutes are appended.
- b. **Spiritual Life.** Business items as noted above.
- c. **Peace Social Concerns and Outreach.** Friends continue to be involved in social justice activities including attendance at SURJ meetings and being active in that group's activities. Potential involvement of the Meeting in Worcester's sanctuary network was considered in detail at last Business Meeting and arrangements have now been made for Gabe Camacho from AFSC Cambridge to visit the Meeting and provide information. The committee asks for suggested dates that the Meeting could host the Rwandan peace activist, Dvorak Bucura, for a talk on Mediation and AVP in Central Africa; we propose May 14

after potluck and Karen Sargent will see if that date works for him. Further committee minutes are appended.

3. Announcement

- a. Women's Leadership in Ministry conference will be held at Woolman Hill on the weekend of April 28-30. Attendance is encouraged and in fact further participants needed to run the session.
- b. Our childcare helper, Maye Walsh-Costello, has moved on and we will have a thank you card and monetary gift for her. Her friend Julia Traiger and her sister Kayla Traiger will take her place.
- c. Spring Market Day will be held on June 10, 2017.

The meeting closed with silence.

Respectfully submitted,
Katharine Barnard

Worcester Friends Meeting - Practical Committee Minutes - April 2, 2017

Attending: Mark Sullivan, Karen Sargent, Mary Chenaille (clerk), Elliot Walsh, Kevin Walsh (recorder)

The meeting began with a time of silence.

Members provided updates on various ongoing renovations and repairs. The Piano has been removed under Mary's coordination. The cost was \$300, plus \$200 for removing items from basement.

The driveway evaluation and welding work needed for the ramp railings is waiting for snow to melt.

Susan, a friend of Karen's, will do pruning as needed in the yard.

Carlos Runao will provide landscaping services for \$80 per mowing, plus additional cost for spring and fall cleanup. The committee approved this arrangement. Carlos also provided an estimate of \$1500 for painting the kitchen walls and ceiling, adjoining closets and nooks, and minor repairs to the walls as needed. The committee has not yet made a motion to approve Carlos to perform this painting work, but agreed that major wall repairs would be inadvisable due to the age of the walls.

Bill Zambarano provided an estimate of \$2500 to repair the signs in the front of the building, including painting, replacing rotten trim and woodwork, and possibly modifying the plexiglass door for easier access. The meeting discussed whether the cemetery sign should be removed, repaired, or replaced, but did not reach a conclusion.

Elliot and Andrea evaluated refrigerators and freezers, selecting a 17.5 cu.ft. GE white model for the kitchen (\$540 from Home Depot, with delivery and installation) and a small chest freezer for the basement. Members decided an "apartment size" refrigerator may be more appropriate for the basement.

Mark will call a contractor for attic insulation estimates. Various storm doors may need repairs. The committee will ask the business committee if the front storm door can be removed rather than repaired. Kevin will evaluate the feasibility of replacing the French doors to the porch.

The committee discussed an email forwarded by Clarence from Patricia Kirkpatrick, daughter-in-law of Scott and Claire Schaeffer-Duffy. Patricia asks about the feasibility of renting a portion of the meeting house for 3 days per week for a small children day-care co-op. The committee did not come to a conclusion on this matter but will seek out additional information, including input from existing tenants and insurance considerations.

Additional items were held to be discussed in future meetings, including: swing set repairs, special appeal letter, scholarship funding for Woolman Hill, and a request for \$700 for a Christian community church well project.

The meeting concluded with a time of silence.

Peace, Social Concerns & Outreach Committee - March 26, 2017

Attending: Karen Sargent, Mary Chenaille, Clarence Burley, Tom Brenner, Xyzika Mikkelsen, Whitney Mikkelsen, Fred Mikkelsen, Sandy Kocher, Carol Goodenow, and Jane Cutting.

1. Channel 3 Outreach- Xyzika and Tom are on the committee to move forward re: ideas for our spot on Channel 3. They are looking for volunteers to join them on the committee. Xyzika suggested members sharing what Quakerism means to them. This will be taken to business meeting. We need to contact Channel 3 to let them know we are moving forward.
2. Bystander training - There were about two dozen attending the bystander training last Saturday led by Martha Yager. Six people remained for the 'train the trainer' session in the afternoon. Tom will write about the training for the newsletter.
3. Movies - SURJ (Showing up for Racial Justice) will be showing movies. We can promote that. Young Friends will still have a movie night with a date to be determined. *Zootopia* was a suggestion.
4. Sanctuary update - There will a meeting on April 22nd at Community Christian Church regarding sanctuary. We should have someone attend. Mary is in contact with Gabe Camacho from AFSC who has indicated that he will come and speak with Worcester Friends to share legal aspects and questions we may have. Mary reported that Ascentria is not resettling new refugees because of the new laws. They have had to lay off some employees. There is still a need for volunteers for ESOL as well as a need for donations. Furniture is not being accepted at this time but some household goods are. Mary will post those needs and contact information.
5. SURJ update - There was excellent representation of Friends at the recent SURJ meeting. The group divided into smaller groups which include direct action, outreach fundraising, technology, and education which had subgroups of movies and books/resources. Tom reported that he was able to get involved in direct action right away. He and his son helped deliver meal packages to the community provided by the Mosque. The next SURJ meeting is May 17. Newcomers are welcome and encouraged to come at 6:15 to learn about SURJ. Meeting starts at 6:30 at Worcester YWCA.
6. Climate information- Karen shared that the West Boylston pipeline is being stalled because the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, FERC, does not have enough members. Representatives of Shrewsbury will be bringing this up at their town meeting. Some communities have passed resolutions that they don't want the pipeline. NEYM formed an action committee to bring a climate resolution to Sessions.
7. Rwanda Peace Activist offer to speak to meeting - Dvorak Bucura will be in Boston May 13-17 and has offered to speak to Worcester Friends about his work. Speaking topics include The Impact of Healing and Rebuilding Our Communities, The Impact of Transformative Meditation and AVP in Central Africa, and The Impact of Children's Peace Libraries in Rwanda. Karen will contact Minga about an available date.
8. Living Faith - There will be a carpooling sign up sheet in the hallway for those planning to attend the Living Faith workshop in Providence on April 8th.
9. Market Day is June 10th. Xyzika and Whitney have volunteered to do the publicity. Books, plants, and food donations welcome.
10. Mary passed out business cards for Meeting outreach. More are available on the shelf in the library.

Respectfully submitted,
Jane Cutting

Save the Date:

The Mikkelsens are moving to sunny Florida and we will miss them! Keep **June 17th** open to celebrate our Friends and all they have added to our lives.



A Visit to Cambridge England Meeting

A few weeks ago I went to England with my mother and brother. We stayed with my aunt and uncle at their house in the suburbs of Cambridge for a week (flying in on Monday and leaving the next Monday). On Saturday, I was walking through the city of Cambridge and got a bit lost, ending up in part of the city I hadn't seen before. Looking for the bus station I passed by a tan colored brick building labeled "Frinds Meeting House" (the 'e' had fallen off). When I got home later that evening, I looked up the meeting house and learned that there were actually two meetinghouses in Cambridge. I decided to attend meeting for worship the next day. The buses to the other meetinghouse were too slow, so I decided to go to the one I had originally found.



The next day (Sunday), I took the bus in to the city and got to the meetinghouse around 10:15, a bit early for their meeting which started at 10:30. When I got there however, everyone was already sitting in meeting. It turned out I had forgotten to set my watch back for daylight savings time which starts a week or two later in England than it does in the U.S., meaning I was actually 45 minutes late. I sat in for the remainder of meeting for worship (they had helpfully marked a bench by the door as "for latecomers"). At the rise of meeting I introduced myself as a visitor from Worcester Friends Meeting (in Massachusetts, since there is also a Worcester England not too far from Cambridge).

After meeting was over everyone went downstairs for refreshments. They served coffee, tea, and "biscuits," as they referred to cookies. During this time I talked to a member of the meeting about the various differences between Quakerism in the U.S. and Quakerism in the UK. He said that much like here, the various local meetings in a geographical area are all under the jurisdiction of a yearly meeting – there is one for the entire UK, for example. The UK yearly meeting meets in a week-long residential gathering every three years, like what NEYM does every year. There is one coming up this summer, in fact. Unlike in New England, there is also an in-between level in the hierarchy: regional meetings. Each regional meeting covers a handful of local meetings over a smaller area than a yearly meeting would. He said that the purpose they existed mainly for the purpose of instilling a sense of community in small meetings that might themselves only have four or five attenders.

The structure of the local meetings, or at least the one I visited, was much the same as it is here. There is a clerk, but the position only changes every three years in order to give them time to get used to clerking and be able to clerk efficiently. There are various committees as well, that serve similar purposes to our committees at WFM. One major difference at the local level as compared to New England was the number youth who attended the meetings. Jesus Lane Meeting only had one young person, a toddler, attending on the day I visited, and I was given the impression that it would be unusual to have any more. I was told that while there are sometimes toddlers who come, and there is a day care program for during meeting for worship, they tend to stop attending after a few years because there is no first day school program so they would have to sit through meeting for worship every Sunday at the age of 6. The situation is similar throughout the rest of the UK, and there are no programs like the NEYM youth retreats there because there just aren't enough people for them to serve. In that way, it's kind of a self-reinforcing problem – there are no activities or programs for young people to participate in, so they don't attend the meetings, so no programs are set up because there aren't any people who would participate in them.

—Elliot Walsh

Reflections on the Living Faith Gathering, April 8, 2017

About two weeks ago, my family went to the Living Faith Gathering in Providence. I was in the Young Friends Group. Some of us made care packages for homeless people, especially women, and some helped make bags containing school supplies for children who had just come to the country. I did a little of both. We also watched a video about Costa Rican Quakers who drove all the way from the states to Costa Rica! I really liked the presentations some people gave at Intergenerational Worship, and I would go back if I were given the choice.

—Malcolm Barnard

When we went to the Living Faith Gathering in Providence, I was in a two workshops. The first was organizing school supplies and products for care packages. Then the Young Friends Group came along and helped us make the bags. The next was Activism through Art. It was interesting learning about all the famous artists who made political designs. We got to carve and then print our own messages on postal stamps. I think that it was a fantastic experience to be around a bunch of people who thought about the current political situation the same for a day! I would definitely go to the Living Faith Gathering again.

—Lucy Barnard

A Closer Look at Worcester Friends: Mary Chenaille



I attended my first Meeting for Worship outdoors at Farm & Wilderness summer camps in Plymouth, VT. Before my first year of grad school I cooked at Indian Brook, F&W's girls camp. Every morning before breakfast we worshiped sitting on logs formed into concentric circles. After graduating from Andover Newton theological school, I found myself house sitting in Northborough. This was 2002. Around 2005 I found my way to Worcester Friends Meeting. I started as an occasional attendee, became a regular, and a convinced Quaker sometime around 2012. I believe at the time I found WFM listed under Churches in the Worcester Telegram & Gazette

I believe in the still small voice, my life's guide. Brought up in a very religious yet turbulent household I see Christ's grace in my life at every turn. By most standards, you would say I turned out badly as a young adult. Drugs and alcohol only worsened a chronic illness. I strayed from organized religion. I found my spiritual grounding in nature. I married and lived on a dairy farm for 16 years. The continuity of years of experiencing the seasons- plowing, planting, tending, and harvest brought me stability. I came to new life.

I brought up two children, Ben and Marcie, in the Congregational Church where I was a member for many years. Ben is married to Christine, they live in Montana. Marcie and Roger are the parents of my grandsons, Ben and Andrew. They live in Lakeville, CT. My Mom is still alive living in Florida with my sister Sue. My family is a joy. Through thick and thin we've grown stronger and more loving as a family.

My passion for God keeps me grounded in Worcester Friends Meeting. I am unashamedly Christocentric yet not evangelical. I feel just right in the unprogrammed Quaker tradition. I've experienced God's great love, acceptance and guidance at WFM. From my Clearness committee for membership to individual mentoring, Worcester Friends hold me in prayer. In the Light.

My affiliation with the Practical Committee came as a direct response to my time as an old farm house owner. The committee is a place where my practical talents are expressed. I love the meeting house and the grounds and

the cemetery. They are my ties to the land and a life that brought me to health. The loving care and attention that members show towards our physical plant is a source of happiness. We've come to share our space with many people- soon I hope with more youngsters!

I count myself connected in some small way to all the folks at Worcester Friends. I'm happy and healthy and in love with God's gift of life in community. Thank you all for being my Friends.

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## **Letter from Katie Green**

Down here in the Dunedin area (just north of Clearwater and St Petersburg), there was an interfaith peace walk last month. The Clearwater Friends joined in, carrying a banner for the Meeting and some political signs. One man was offended about the signs: "What are political signs doing at a Peace Walk?" It was an opportunity for dialogue.

Two weeks ago the Mosque here held a very successful dinner for the community. This past weekend SEYM (SouthEast Yearly Meeting) held their annual sessions. I offered a workshop on looking at childhood experiences with racism. I told my original story, Pink Spit, and people spoke about their own experiences. It's interesting how we bury these events. Participants appreciated the opportunity to "mine" these memories, and asked that do another workshop next year...

It's exciting to hear about the sanctuary work that is being done by the interfaith community in Worcester. I will continue to co-ordinate the AVP program at NCCI-Gardner, and it is an honor to share this prison ministry with so many dedicated Worcester Friends. I'm looking forward to the National AVP Gathering near Boston over Memorial Day weekend. I had thought about offering a workshop at the conference, but when I heard the listing of workshops, I decided that I didn't want to take the chance of missing one!!

Like so many people today, I struggle with continuing to have faith in the political system. We will be meeting with Congressman Bilirakis's Chief of Staff on Thursday to talk about DT's proposed budget increase for the Pentagon. There are SOOOO many issues. I write letters. Sometimes I just feel like forgetting the whole thing, and just saying "it's in God's hands". That feeling, Gracefully, dissolves when I am with Friends or involved in some social action.

I love reading what Worcester Friends are doing, and I miss you all so much!! Especially the First Day School. Phil and I will be leaving Florida round mid-May to return to the Worcester area.

### ***Turning to the Indwelling Presence of the Divine at Woolman Hill***

Jane C. and I attended Marcelle Martin's Woolman Hill workshop, *Turning to the Indwelling Presence of the Divine*, on April 14-16. We were among 17 participants. Marcelle was accompanied by three elders for the weekend. I took advantage of a chance to talk with Marcelle and the elders Sunday afternoon about "*Nurturing Worship, Faith and Faithfulness*" (NWFF) a ten month program, a collaboration between New England Yearly Meeting, Woolman Hill Retreat Center & Marcelle Martin.

Our weekend consisted of reading and discussion of short passages by early Friends, experiential exercises, small group sharing, prayer, meeting for worship and Grand Silence. After dinner we maintained community silence until after breakfast the next morning. It gave me time to write in my journal, pray, and consider the day's teachings.

We read passages by George Fox, and early Quakers, Mary & Isaac Penington, and William Dewsbury among others. Marcelle's insights into the readings brought the passages to life and we were better able to share our feelings and thoughts. After each passage, Marcelle would ask, "what stands out for you," giving each person so inclined an opportunity to offer up a word or phrase that spoke to him/her. We ended each session with an experiential exercise. For example, one exercise involved asking a partner, "What does your tender heart know now?" The last exercise involved four people. One person sat in the middle while the other three prayed out loud for God's involvement in concerns they had expressed. Each in turn was asked if it was ok to lay hands on him/her. It was powerful both as a prayer and as a prayee. It required compassionate listening and powerfully brought God into the relationship and into the small gathered community.

NWFF, the ten month program, intrigues me. Meant to deepen ones' faith, each person participating is given specific guidance, practice, and support in deeply sharing her Quaker faith. As a relatively singular person, I long for the community that is a large part of this program. Each person needs a clearness committee at their monthly meeting. Each participant is expected to be in residence at Woolman Hill three times during the ten months. The program is set in place to offer support, encouragement, and accountability. I would very much like to participate.

The weekend's accommodations were first class. Jane C and I had the room off the kitchen. Hint: I said my knee was not good on stairs and we both snore! The meals were delicious. We got to say goodbye to Stephen who has taken another full time job. I even got to bring home some of his extra chai steel cut oatmeal!

Woolman Hill's work days are coming up. More information is forthcoming on their website. Do consider spending time on Woolman Hill at either a group or individual retreat. It can be life transforming.

**-Mary Chenaille**

### **Bystander Training Held at WFM**

Bystander training was hosted by the Worcester Friends Meeting Peace and Social Concerns Committee on Saturday February 18. Conducted by Martha Yager of the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), the training was held for 24+ participants at the Worcester Friends meetinghouse. The training focused on non-violent methods of intervention in situations where a person is being harassed or threatened with violence due to gender, religious or racial animus. Attendees discussed various strategies presented by Martha and participated in role-playing exercises intended to demonstrate various means to defuse a tense situation and provide support to the party being harassed. It became quite interesting and a little disturbing to switch roles and play the aggressor in this exercise. Martha offered some very interesting stories illustrating the successful use of creative means to de-escalate potentially violent scenarios that could have turned out much worse if more "conventional", i.e. physical means had been applied. After lunch, a separate training was held for individuals who were themselves interested in becoming trainers. Many thanks to Martha for conducting this valuable training.

**—Tom Brenner**

**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-----                                        | Katharine Barnard              |
| Corresponding Clerk-----                                    | Clarence Burley                |
| First Day School-----                                       | Katie Green, Katharine Barnard |
| Newsletter-----                                             | Sheila Brenner                 |

***Please send general correspondence to [info@worcesterfriendsmeeting.org](mailto:info@worcesterfriendsmeeting.org) . Items of note for the next Newsletter may also be sent to [brennerfamily@gmail.com](mailto:brennerfamily@gmail.com).***