

Worcester Friends Newsletter

April 2018



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

Mark your calendars for upcoming special events:

Saturday, 5/12-Sunday, 5/13, BBQ and Campout at Framingham Friends Meeting. Friends of all ages invited.

Wednesday, May 16, Community Dialogue about Energy and the Environment, Belmont AME Zion Church, 6:30-8 pm. Register at chandlerstownhall.eventbrite.com

Wednesday, May 23, SURJ at YWCA, 6:30 pm

June date (tbd) Facing Race Reading Group will meet to discuss *The Roundhouse* by Louise Erdrich. Contact Lucy Candib, lcandib@massmed.org for finalized date.

June 16 Market Day, 9am-3pm, contact Karen Sargent, kegs_mail@verizon.net to volunteer.

Sunday, 7/1-Saturday, 7/7, Univ. of Toledo, OH, FGC Gathering.

Saturday, 8/4—Thursday, 8/9, Castleton University, Castleton, VT, NEYM Sessions.

A group of Worcester Friends met at **Mary Bennett's** home on April 21 to discuss the state of the community as it relates to our current home and future goals. Prayerfully led by **Noah Baker-Merrill** and held in loving presence by Friend **Kathleen Wooten**, Friends distilled the following principles:

- **The meeting is not the building**
- **Be clear about what our process is for discernment, and then trust the decision**
- **Keep paying attention to justice and peace**
- **Talking about money and how we relate to it is an essential task**
- **Whatever we do, we need to hold each other tenderly in love**
- **Look for ways to deepen our faith**
- **The building is not the meeting**

We have everything we need

Gathered Friends took up the difficult process of trying to determine what we, as a loving community, must do to authentically live our testimonies together. (See page 3)

Monthly Meeting for Business, Worcester Friends Meeting

Date: April 8, 2018

Present: Daron Barnard, Katharine Barnard, Tom Brenner, Clarence Burley, Karen Sargent, Richard Schmitt, Jessica Seem, Matthew Shorten, Mark Sullivan, Kevin Walsh

Clerking: Matthew Shorten

The meeting opened with silent worship and reading from Celtic Benediction by J Phillip Newell.

1. **Treasurers Report:** The treasurer reports that there has been more income from renters and attenders than anticipated. Additionally, our expenses have been less than budgeted, resulting in less deficit than anticipated. It is noted that the expenses for meals for Hotel Grace have been listed under "Support for Worcester Organizations", as that work is not restricted to one committee. There was discussion about managing the building's heat to save money and energy. This has been challenging due to the length of time for the building's heat to respond to alterations in thermostat settings, and the variable schedule of building usage. Practical committee will take up consideration of space heaters for next winter so as to avoid thermostat manipulations and provide adequate heat for groups.
2. **Committee Reports:**
 - a. **Practical.** Karen Sargent reports that vendors are being recruited for Market Day which will be held Saturday June 16. Other projects are moving forwards steadily.
 - b. **Spiritual Life.** The committee met this month, holding members and attenders in the Light. The committee discussed plans for State of Society threshing session and for the upcoming Meeting retreat.
 - c. **Peace Social Concerns and Outreach.** The committee reports that it has been an active time. A number of Friends attended the "March for Life" and experienced it as a positive and hopeful event. Meeting members participated in various of the REC-sponsored Earth Day cleanups yesterday. The Meeting has provided 4 meals (including tonight's) for 70 recipients at the cold-weather shelter Grace Hotel. This has been a very positive experience. While a core group of Meeting members has been involved in planning, preparing and serving the meals, it is hoped that for future projects, the broader Meeting community can be involved in sharing the work. The committee will be considering options for community work in warmer months when Grace Hotel is closed. The committee has discussed our desire to connect with and support various other faith groups doing community work. The committee would like to be more visible when participating in community events. To that end, First Day School is working on T-shirt designs.
3. **Business Items:**
 - a. **State of Society.** NEYM requests that the report be done in accordance with "Faith and Practice" guidelines for State of Society report: a "corporate self-examination", considering the spiritual life of the meeting and involvement in the community. The Clerk asks all who are available to please attend the threshing session to be held April 15, 2018, at 9am, and suggests that attendees give forethought to what is important in the life of our Meeting.
 - b. **Quarterly Meeting** was held in Worcester on March 18. It was well attended by members of other Meetings. Providence Meeting shared their recent growth in attendance, resulting in need to expand their meetinghouse; this expansion in turn has led to further growth of the Meeting. Quarterly Meeting will review the allowed uses of the Aldrich Fund. There was discussion about Worcester Friends Meeting's sense of belonging in the Quarter. There was an offer from the Quarter to change the name to be more inclusive of Worcester, but there was not a sense of urgency to make that change.

- c. **Retreat:** A Meeting retreat will be held April 21, 2018, from 9am-2pm, at Mary Bennett's home. Noah Baker-Merrill will facilitate discussion. We anticipate time for reflection about our sense of ourselves and our role in the Worcester community, as well as consideration of how our finances and location affect our sense of purpose. The hope is that we will move beyond the points in which we have previously been "stuck" in this conversation. Mary Bennett will make soup and others are welcomed to bring vegetarian potluck items. The Treasurer is asked to bring copies of the annual balance sheet for reference.

4. Announcements:

- a. Center for Nonviolent Solutions held its annual meeting, which included a presentation by Claremont Academy's peer mediators and presentation of an award to Ricci Hall as a community peacemaker.
- b. Karen Sargent continues to be involved with pipeline protests and announces that there will likely be upcoming protests to the planned pipeline that would service a luxury condo in Back Bay.
- c. The Facing Race book group met and discussed several essays from Jessamyn Ward's collection, "The Fire This Time". Next meeting will be April 27, reading "Black Water Rising", a detective story that brings in issues of race.
- d. We will have a visit from the minister of the Pakachoag Community Church (UCC) who is interested in learning more about Quakers and Quakerism, and community involvement.
- e. Upcoming community events:
 - i. Worcester Area Mission Society will meet Tuesday April 24 at 11:30am, and Clarence Burley will attend.
 - ii. Tuesday April 10, at 5:30pm, there will be a presentation on "Moral Injury" at the Worcester Historical Museum.
 - iii. On April 26, YWCA will hold a Stand Against Racism event.
- f. First Day school events:
 - i. Framingham Friends Meeting will be hosting a BBQ/Campout on May 12-13, and Friends of all ages are welcome to attend. Those who sleep over can camp or sleep in the meetinghouse. Before Meeting for worship on Sunday there will be a special Mother's Day breakfast.
 - ii. Framingham First Day also announces that on June 10, they will be traveling Dartmouth Monthly Meeting in Smith Neck, MA, to experience programmed Quaker worship. Worcester Friends are welcome to join in the visit.
 - iii. A Sunday school class from the First Unitarian Church will visit Meeting on Sunday April 29 to experience Quaker worship, as part of their Sunday school curriculum.

The meeting closed with silent worship.

Respectfully submitted,
Katharine Barnard

Peace and Social Concerns News

PASCO has been busy. Since the Grace Hotel is closed for the season, the committee is researching other ways to serve the Worcester homeless community. With Young Friends providing a design, they hope to order T-shirts/polo shirts which will identify Worcester Friends at public events. A date (May 25) has been scheduled for **Karen Sargent** and **Elliot Walsh** to represent WFM on the Hank Stolz Experience on local CharterTV 3. The committee also hopes to initiate an experimental Saturday Fellowship/worship/food sharing as outreach to the wider community and for those who can't make it on Sundays. On behalf of the committee and the Meeting, **Richard Schmitt** sent the following letter which was printed in the Worcester Telegram in April:

Many members and attenders of the Worcester Friends Meeting (Quakers) participated in the March for our Lives on Saturday, March 24. We did so in keeping with our Peace Testimony, which guides us in seeking alternatives to the violence of guns and indeed, all weapons.

This pacifist approach is based on the core belief that there is something of God in everyone. Faithful to this belief, we oppose assault weapons - whose sole purpose is to harm other humans. We assert that all of us deserve the protection of personal safety as a basic right, and join our voices with the outspoken students here and around the planet in calling for sensible and meaningful gun controls.

To learn more about Quakers, go to worcesterfriendsmeeting.com

Richard Schmitt,

For the Peace and Social Concerns Committee of Worcester Friends Meeting

April 2018 WFM Retreat: Who are We and Where Do We Want to Go?

The recent retreat began with an exercise where Friends anonymously dictated spiritual “want ads” where similar word choices appeared: seeking, gospel, learning, challenge, change, loving, peaceful, nonviolence, connection with others, shared, and, of course, FOOD.

We talked about the stumbling blocks to moving forward: our individual perceptions of money and how that relates to the Meeting’s money, the perception that our Meeting is small (powerless), how the fear of offending translates into inaction at times and the confusion between unity and unanimity in making decisions.

We discussed dynamics of thriving Meetings: worshipping together, loving one another, exploring our living tradition, supporting each other to live our faith in the rest of our lives, discerning together and acting on those decisions. We also discussed how we nourish our worship through deep, shared silence, sharing of our spiritual lives, visiting other meetings intentionally and welcoming exuberance to worship. We talked about how we get to know each other in small groups and outside of Meeting, how intergenerational sharing helps our religious education and how an openness to bring leadings to Meeting could be followed up within the Meeting.

With each others’ help, we reconstructed the history of Worcester Friends Meeting:

The beginning, which centered on the continuous blessed presence of Betty Jones but also the Chatham Street Meeting’s “ugly” split where a conflict between two pastors felt like a family argument about power and personality. This disagreement resulted in the move to the present Meetinghouse.

Adrift, where anger and other strong feelings arose in memories of one personality who long dominated the life within this “Grandma’s” house while also doing many wonderful things like managing a clothing program for the needy from the house’s basement.

Healing and strengthening, where some more recent experiences of disruptive behavior resulted in a reckoning between the needs of individuals and the Meeting community as a whole. We spoke of the continuing need to preserve and grow in tenderness for each other so that these past feelings of loss and pain will not reoccur.

With Noah and Kathleen’s help, we distilled our sharing to the principles listed on page one of the Newsletter. In order to worship, love, explore and live as a healthy community, we now must choose to act upon our continuing discernment.



Young Friends **Lucy Barnard** and **Rory Chambers** visited the Mikkelsen family in Florida recently. The Mikkelsens are doing well in their new home. **Olivia** (Xyzika) sailed to First Place with her Sea Scout team and **JoAnna** advanced to Athens, GA for a Regional Gymnastics Meet.



Did you know?

Congratulations to **Geoff Knowlton** for his poem published in the April *Friends Journal*.

Andreana Brenner looks forward to entering college at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in the fall thanks to a much prized IL DCFS scholarship.

Aaron Sakulich (and his column) returns home soon after supervising WPI students in Namibia.

Congratulations to **Kevin Walsh** (seen at right with son, **Casey** and **Matt Shorten** at March for Life in Worcester) who is now a tenured professor at Holy Cross College.

Katharine Barnard recently participated in a public forum about the neighborhood repercussions which will follow the closing of the U Mass Memorial Plumley Village Clinic in July. Thanks to Katharine for speaking truth to power. See more at: <http://www.telegram.com/news/20180502/umass-containing-costs-on-backs-of-most-vulnerable>

Rumor has it that we will see the whole Mikkelsen family at NEYM Sessions in August!



Murder on Mott Street

Scott Schaeffer-Duffy's new historical novel, sub-titled *A Catholic Worker Mystery*, is best read for the mystery of the Catholic Worker movement's foundation, operation and survival than as a who-done-it. Dorothy Day's life as a single mom of her daughter, Tamara, and her mission of food and shelter for New York's indigent is a thriller. She did get support from like-minded volunteers and spiritual/philosophical support from Peter Maurin, but Scott makes it clear that the energy was hers.

The eighty-one page novel-ette is prefaced by Scott's story of personal involvement and has an interestingly illustrated afterword of the "Catholic Worker Personalities" for a total of 120 pages, so it is a nice afternoon's read. There are two copies in our library.

Oh, yes, the murders—there are three and a threat to Dorothy Day. Tamara and Peter resolve them, but that story and the story of the perpetrator's escape would be revealed by the merest hint.

—Clarence Burley

Soul on Earth by Dr. Thomas Yeoman

"American Culture is no longer working." This judgment about the state of affairs in this country has become the representative response by cultural commentators and other thoughtful peoples. Donald Trump has made such a mess of things in one year, some of them fear that we may not be able to escape the consequences of his domestic and foreign blunders.

The most insightful discussion of this crisis, perhaps, is Dr. Thomas Yeoman's, *Soul on Earth: Readings in Spiritual Psychology*, which analyzes the implications of this judgment and suggests ways to help people regain their equilibrium. In his professional judgments and reflections as a psychotherapist, he reminds us that "soul" is a major, yet neglected, source of knowledge accessible to everyone.

Formerly at the Concord Institute, now living in western Massachusetts, Dr. Yeoman relies on his 25 years as a scholar and teacher to integrate insights from various psychological disciplines in order to "heal" the soul and enable a patient to regain a sense of equilibrium.

His research was provoked, in part, by his judgment that the dominant culture is a kind of hallucination which ignores the essential human task of integrating body and soul (sometimes referred to as "heart"). Regarding the soul as a natural rather than a supernatural entity, Dr. Yeoman offers "a new perspective based upon a synthesis of many ideas and practices about human development and its relationship to a spiritual psychological/global framework".

A major problem is that the dominant culture separates mind and soul, Yeoman says. As a consequence, he calls for a transformation of values on how we conceive of ourselves, our lives, and the systems we live by. As a psychotherapist, he offers a remedy to our loss of the soul by asking us to examine our individual experience, our relationships with each other, with Nature and the world as a whole, then to seek a more holistic way of being in the world.

Dr. Yeoman's analysis is corroborated by other psychotherapists, scholars, and professionals. David Leonhardt in a NY Times column (12/31/17) writes, "Future historians will look back on 2017 as one of the darker non-war years (Aren't we still at war?) in the nation's history," reflecting the decline in U.S. global influence, Congress's using its mighty powers to enrich the wealthy while endangering the health of millions, including children, alienating allies, discriminating against minorities, etc.

In *Soul on Earth*, Dr. Yeomans attributes the present decline to the culture's separation of mind and soul which deprives us of its knowledge and insights. In an extended discussion, he then suggests ways, including therapy, through which we might heal and recover "the person, that is, ourselves - psyche, personality, and soul."

Citing this crisis of the person, Dr. Yeomans refers to a quotation from his grandfather's writing which summarizes the son's perspective: "What is good for us is what enhances our life. But by the very nature of it, what enhances our life can never injure any other life." As another psychologist recently responded specifically to a patient's complaint about the burden of stress in 2017, " You're a sentient being and this is a stressful time to be a sentient being."

Dr. Yeomans regards our culture as an Hallucination that tolerates cruelties and destructiveness that alienate us from our full humanity as victims of nuclear arms race, murderous drones, wealth disparity, inadequate medical care for millions of adults and children, discrimination against minorities and a \$50 billion annual military budget (larger than most of the military budgets in the world combined).

Dr. Yeomans, however, offers not only an analysis of people's feelings of disenfranchisement but also a healing process to help them regain their sense of self. The soul and mind working together does require a quieting of the mind - that jumble of monkeys, as Buddhists say, to heal the soul and recover the person. Only by balancing mind and soul as sources of knowledge and wisdom are we capable of psychological health, sanity and personhood.

Soul on Earth helps one acknowledge the distortions, and emptiness, that validate cultural practices and places based upon violence, cruelty and greed and to achieve some perspective on other moral issues. Although not a new field of psychology, as Dr. Yeomans cautions, it offers insights to help us understand and perhaps improve our way of being in the world, with other people, and the planet, "in an effort to find ways of living that will sustain rather than deplete Life on earth."

Dr. Yeomans is not doctrinaire in his approach to healing but is reflective and thoughtful. He brings together insights from other psychologist, including Carl Rogers, who are attentive to psyche, personality (the initial focus of psychology) and soul.

-Michael True

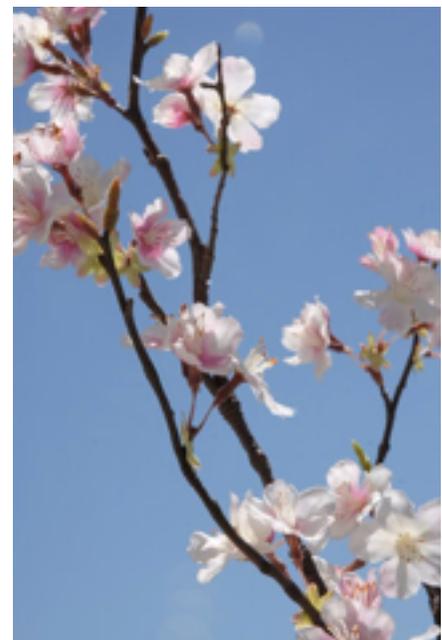
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Nothing is so beautiful as Spring –  
When weeds, in wheels, shoot long and lovely and lush;  
Thrush's eggs look little low heavens, and thrush  
Through the echoing timber does so rinse and wring  
The ear, it strikes like lightnings to hear him sing;  
The glassy peartree leaves and blooms, they brush  
The descending blue; that blue is all in a rush  
With richness; the racing lambs too have fair their fling.

What is all this juice and all this joy?  
A strain of the earth's sweet being in the beginning  
In Eden garden. – Have, get, before it cloy,  
Before it cloud, Christ, lord, and sour with sinning,  
Innocent mind and Mayday in girl and boy,  
Most, O maid's child, thy choice and worthy the winning.

## Spring

by  
Gerard  
Manley  
Hopkins



**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-----                                    | Clarence Burley                    |
| First Day School-----                                       | Katharine Barnard, Sheila Brenner, |
| Tyler Green, Matt Shorten                                   |                                    |
| 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) or dropped off at MeetingHouse.***