

Worcester Friends Newsletter

April 2019



Stephen Aldrich Fund

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

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

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

Calendar

Sunday Meeting for Worship: 11 A.M.

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

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

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

The Meetinghouse is Handicapped Accessible

Upcoming Events:

Easter Sunday, 4/21/19 Meeting for Worship at 11:00 am followed by potluck.

YWCA Stand Against Racism 2019 No Hate. No Fear. Community Breakfast: Friday, April 26, 7:30-9:30 am join in a conversation about immigrant rights. Enjoy a scrumptious breakfast while learning about some of the many challenges faced by immigrants of color in light of heightened anti-immigration efforts, emboldened xenophobia and openly racist behavior and violence, and how you can make a difference. One Salem Sq., Worcester **Space is limited. Click here to register.**

Saturday, 4/27/19 The Regional Environmental Council pick up day www.recworchester.org/earthday2019. Bags and gloves can be picked up at 9 Castle Street, Worcester. People may pick a location to pick up trash (the reservoir, school playgrounds, or your neighborhood). 508-799-9139 for further information.

Saturday, 5/4/19 12:00 noon Memorial Service for Betty Poynton at the Congregational Church, on the West Brookfield common. Lunch will follow.

Saturday, 6/15/19 Spring Market Day



Worcester Friends Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business - April 14, 2019

Present: Katharine Barnard, Daron Barnard, Mary Bennett, Tom Brenner, Clarence Burley, Mary Chenaille, Lucy Candib, Michael Mallory, Ellen Perry, Karen Sargent, Richard Schmitt, Matt Shorten, Mark Sullivan
Clerking: Matt Shorten

The meeting opened with silence and a reading from Celtic Benediction by J Philip Newell, the “Opening Prayer” on the springing forth of life.

Business Items:

1. Review of talk by Debby Irving: Debby Irving, the author of Waking up White and Finding Myself in the Story of Race, presented a moving and thought-provoking presentation on March 31, 2019, at First Unitarian Church. The presentation was very well-attended, well organized by Friends, and the presenter was effective and engaging. Mary Chenaille will write a report for the Legacy Gift Fund. Anyone with photos or contributions to the report can contact Mary.
2. State of Society Report: Out of a discussion on March 3, the State of Society Report has been written. There have been two passes at editing and today further clarifications were suggested. After incorporating those edits, the report was approved to forward to the Quarterly and Yearly Meetings.
3. Betty Poynton’s Memorial Minute: Matthew Shorten read out our Meeting’s portion of Betty Poynton’s memorial minute, which is approved and will be forwarded to our Quarterly and Yearly Meetings as well as Friendship Friends Meeting in Greensboro NC. The family is organizing a memorial service on May 4 in West Brookfield, and has asked for estimated numbers of Friends who will attend.
4. The Meeting received an email with greetings from Michael True who has relocated to Minneapolis and is getting settled. Friends who wish to share blessings or well-wishes as he navigates his move, can contact him at: mtrue@assumption.edu.
5. Center for Nonviolent Solutions will discontinue keeping an office after June of this year. They hope to continue their activities without the overhead. We will need to adjust our budget accordingly and consider alternative use of the space, and this concern will be referred to Practical Committee. Anyone with ideas about potential renters can contact the Committee. In a related note, Daron Barnard has offered to work on organizing and cleaning up the Meeting files which are in storage on the 3rd floor.

Treasurer’s Report: The treasurer reports that income is ahead of expected. The Annual Appeal has thus far generated \$1025 in donations. The \$2700 in interest from our Wells Fargo account has been deposited into our checking account. The NEYM Legacy Gift Fund awarded the meeting \$3000 to cover the cost of the invited presentation by Debby Irving. The treasurer is in need of all receipts related to the talk to accurately tally the expenses. Additionally, there was income related to book sales and donations which needs to be accurately determined. Once the accounting is complete, the treasurer will present this information for the Meeting to consider how to manage any excess.

The treasurer additionally presented the balance sheet for the Meeting’s accounts. Our assets are fairly stable other than the NEYM Pooled Income Trust which lost value this quarter. We withdrew \$4000 from savings to help pay for the window replacements.

Committee Reports:

1. Practical Committee: The committee is moving forwards with estimates for work that would prevent ice dams on the roof. There is consensus on a need to insulate the eaves, complete window replacement, and seal leaks. Regarding re-siding the building, the committee asks for assistance from the Meeting in discerning whether to prioritize maintaining architectural integrity of the building (ie. shingled wood siding and trim) versus replacing with artificial material that would be simpler for maintenance. There was not clarity on this issue today and discussion will continue.
2. Spiritual Life Committee: The committee met this month and considered the interest in sharing our spiritual journeys which surfaced at State of Society Discussion, and how to move this initiative forward. The committee has suggestions of possible venues, which can be considered in future discussions of the Visioning Committee and Business Meeting. Spiritual Life will forward to Gifts and Leadings a request to find a First Day School coordinator to take over for Katharine at the end of this school year. After receiving our letter of transfer, Katie Green has been accepted into membership at Clearwater Friends Meeting (FL).
3. Peace, Social Concerns and Outreach: The main event this month was organizing and supporting Debby Irving's talk on white privilege, which was quite successful by all accounts. The committee reminds us that Regional Environmental Council's Earth Day cleanup will be held on April 27, and interested people can coordinate with REC to pick up bags at their office on Castle Street. The Facing Race reading group will next read Fit for Freedom, not for Friendship, and will meet in May to discuss this book. The Meeting has been asked to endorse Worcester Interfaith Coalition's statement against racism in the Worcester Public Schools. While we agree that the Public Schools are best in the hands of leadership that is ready to acknowledge and work against racism, we are not ready to sign on to a request to remove certain individual people from their posts. We agree that, for many reasons, it is important that the Meeting support anti-racism work in the Public Schools.
4. Gifts and Leadings: The committee will continue to work with the treasurer around the anticipated upcoming transition, which could be in a 6-month timeframe.

Announcements: Market Day is coming up on June 15 and Karen Sargent will announce what is needed for the event.

Respectfully Submitted,
Katharine Barnard, Recording Clerk

From February Quaker calendar:

¹⁰ Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received. ¹¹ Whoever speaks must do so as one speaking the very words of God; whoever serves must do so with the strength that God supplies, so that God may be glorified..."

1 Peter 4:10-11 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

"Did Peter envision a Quaker Meeting?" asks Clarence Burley.

State of Society Report Worcester Friends Meeting 2019

Members and attenders of Worcester Friends Meeting gathered on March 3, 2019, to discern the state of our Monthly Meeting. The worshipful spirit of the gathering fostered deep listening and sharing, which was appreciated by all present as an opportunity to deepen our sense of connection.

We recognized, with appreciation, that our community has grown in its ability to discuss and make decisions on issues of importance to our Meeting community. We attribute this in part to well-structured committees with consistent leadership, but also to a move to tie practical issues to spiritual concerns. For example, decisions about care of our building feel simultaneously more meaningful and also easier to discern when they are linked to our concerns about climate change and our vision of who we are in our broader community.

We appreciate that who we are as activists and actors in the world is a reflection of who we are spiritually. We celebrate the diverse and meaningful work of members of our community. In particular, the issues of racism and white supremacy have been taken up in a heartfelt manner and permeate multiple activities of the Meeting, and this has provided a sense of community and direction. We enjoy the ways that we have increasingly connected with Worcester Interfaith activities and other local groups active in social change.

Support for individual leadings is an area of continued growth. When the Meeting is asked to provide support, support is given. However, our community would benefit if the Meeting were more explicit about the ways in which support could be provided. The Meeting could offer support without being asked. We are also reminded that “support” has different meaning to different people. The Meeting should clarify what is being sought: is “support” joining on to an action, or providing nurture for the soul and Spirit?

Our discussion uncovered a yearning to know one another more deeply on a personal and spiritual level. Coming together in discussion on issues of importance may help to buffer our despair over current world events, and cultivate action. We seek ways to share our “spiritual autobiographies”: every opportunity to hear another’s story builds connections, enriches the tapestry of our community, supports our seeking, and feeds our personal journeys. We seek to deepen our understanding of Quakerism and Quaker process, and recognize that there are resources within and outside our Meeting to accomplish this.

We concluded our discussion with a deep sense of gratitude for our community and its richness, and with a clear sense of the value of connectedness.

Matt Shorten became a grandfather for the third time! Karina (Shorten) and Alan Boyer of Union, Maine are the proud parents. Stella Rose arrived in a hurry on April 3rd, all 7lbs. 14 ozs. It’ll be a few years before she, brother Teao and sister Nova can go to nearby Friends Camp.

Do you have a leading to contribute in a more substantial way to the Meeting?

WFM is looking for both a Meeting Treasurer and a Coordinator for First Day School.

Do you know of anyone who might be looking for the rental space which CNVS has been using at the Meetinghouse?

Clerk's Corner: Prophetic Voices

When we think of prophets, we are likely to recall those Old Testament books about solitary men with long beards and sour temperaments presaging doomsday predictions. But I suggest there are many openly prophetic voices active among us today.

"Speak Truth to Power" is an iconic phrase attributed to a 1955 pamphlet by the American Friends Service Committee, as they sought "alternatives to violence" after two devastating world wars. I consider it one of the most powerful, prophetic tracts of the modern age.

Last year, we heard moving talks by Emma Gonzalez and other Parkland School students, who had survived a mass shooting, and were resilient and brave enough take a public stand on the issue of gun violence in the face of organized antagonism.

In February during a forum on climate change at the Meetinghouse, we saw a speech by 16 year old Greta Thurnberg, chiding us all to take responsibility. In her talk at the World Economic Forum, the undeterred Greta said, "The voices of prophecy are often challenging rather than reassuring. I don't want you to be hopeful. I want you to be as upset as I am every day. I don't want your hope. I want your action...Once we start acting, hope will come everywhere."

Since then, millions of students have exerted their sense of agency by organizing school boycotts to demand action on the global crisis. These are not remote or isolated voices crying in the wilderness.

These are engaged, linked-up actors from all ages and walks of life. They know in their bones the extent of our crisis, and are seizing the moment to bear witness as best they can.

They include the differently-abled, who are now advocating for themselves. They include new, young Congressional Representatives of diverse genders, colors, creeds and ethnicities. Those with non-traditional gender identities expand our understanding that the world is not binary. Those on the Autism Spectrum remind us of the privilege of being neuro-typical. Under-represented communities everywhere are finding their lever to the fulcrum of power.

A common theme of the new egalitarianism is expressed in the words of Robert G. Ingersoll "Give to every human being every right that you claim for yourself".

As we all are granted equal access to the wisdom and light of the Spirit, so we are all called to speak truth to power in our own authentic voice.

Matt Shorten, Clerk



Clarence Burley sells copies of *Waking Up White* at the 1st Unitarian Church in Worcester.



The Debby Irving presentation on 3/31/19, which was sponsored by WFM through a grant from the NEYM Legacy Fund, was a well attended and informative introduction to white privilege shared through Ms. Irving's life experience. Like many in the audience, she grew up in a middle class white Massachusetts family and took much of her privilege for granted. Using slides which echoed the overwhelmingly white cultural domination of the 60's and 70's, Ms. Irving shared her own awakening to her privilege. She helped the audience acknowledge the many systemic advantages whites have over people of color and think about how we can individually work to change this historic system of oppression.

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



Scheduled Meetings

Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business-----	Second Sunday, 9 AM
Spiritual Life Committee, Daron Barnard & Mary Bennett-----	Fourth Sunday, 9:30 AM
Practical Committee, Kevin Walsh-----	First Sunday, 9:30 AM
Peace/Social Concerns/Outreach, Tom Brenner-----	Fourth Saturday, 9:30 AM
Clerk of Worcester Friends Meeting-----	Matthew Shorten
Recording Clerk-----	Katharine Barnard
Corresponding Clerk-----	Sheila Brenner, Mary Chenaille
First Day School-----	Katharine Barnard, Sheila Brenner,
Michelle Flint, Matt Shorten	
Newsletter-----	Sheila Brenner

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