

Worcester Friends Newsletter May/June 2017



NEYM Query 5: Outreach

Do you welcome inquirers and visitors to your meeting?

Do you encourage their continued attendance and participation?

Do you seek to share and to interpret the faith of Friends and to cooperate with others in spreading the Christian message?

Are you patterns, examples; do your lives preach among all sorts of people, and to them?

Do you walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in every one?

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.)No Business Mtg. in June, July TBD.

The Meetinghouse is Handicapped Accessible

Market Day is Saturday

June 10th, 9 am-3 pm

Upcoming Special Events

Friday 6/9, *Piemaking*, 4:30 pm at the Meetinghouse. Help make pies for the next day's Market Day.

Saturday 6/10, 9am-3pm, *WFM Market Day*. Volunteer/shop at our fundraiser.

Sunday, 6/11, 2pm. *Prayers for the Planet: Reverence and Resistance*, Outdoor Festival celebrating the earth. B'Nai Israel, 263 Prospect St., Northampton

Friday, 6/16, 4-6 pm. *World Refugee Day Celebration*, Ethnic music, dancing, etc., Trinity Lutheran Church, Worcester

Saturday, 6/17, *Mikkelsen Going Away Party*, 4:30 pm at Mary Bennett's house. Come celebrate a potluck as we prepare for the Mikkelsens move to FL.

Sunday, 6/18, 7 pm.25, *RI-Smithfield Quarterly Meeting*, Woonsocket, RI

Wednesday, 6/28, 6:30-8 pm. *Standing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ) meeting*, Worcester YWCA

7/2-7/8, *FGC Gathering*, Ripples start where spirit moves, Niagara Falls, NY

8/5-8/10, *NEYM Annual Sessions*, "Living into Transformation", Castleton, VT

Monthly Meeting for Business, Worcester Friends Meeting

Date: May 14, 2017

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

Clerking: Daron Barnard

The meeting opened with silent worship and reading of NEYM Query 5: Outreach, which encourages us to live our Quaker faith as well as to welcome seekers and visitors.

1. Business Items

- a. **Minute from Hanover Friends Meeting.** Hanover Friends Meeting has written a minute (Minute 16.169) expressing support for diverse peoples who have in particular been the subject of recent discriminatory policies and practices. The minute ties the importance of justice for all humanity to our Quaker beliefs. Hanover's minute was read out today (text below) and our meeting supports the sentiment expressed therein. Westerly Meeting plans to bring Hanover's minute to Quarterly Meeting this June, and our meeting supports that plan and would endorse adoption of the minute by our Quarter.
- b. **NEYM minute against white supremacy.** Meeting members are recommended to view NEYM's minute which is available on their website. Spiritual Life committee will consider this in detail and bring it to a future Business Meeting.
- c. **Use of Meetinghouse for playgroup.** A local group of families has approached the Meeting about use of the Meetinghouse for their cooperative playgroup, and they visited April's Business Meeting to present their request. Meeting members were supportive but made practical recommendations for followup. Subsequently, the proposal has been presented to our other tenants who do not have objections or conflicts. Practical Committee has taken physical site issues under consideration and some minor issues can be addressed. Insurance and liability issues were discussed; we recognize that our Meetinghouse is used by multi-age groups of differing physical abilities and that we regularly work to reduce any safety problems. Mark is awaiting response from our insurance company as to any concerns they may have. Assuming that their response does not raise significant concerns, the Meeting feels comfortable proceeding with the playgroup's use of the Meetinghouse. We would plan a walk-through with the parents prior to their start date to identify and address any small physical space concerns.
- d. **Phone Directory.** With the goal of improving our ability to contact one another, we recently offered the opportunity for members and attenders to "opt in" to a directory. The information provided has now been compiled into a simple printed contact list, with a phone tree and list of committee membership also attached. These will be available for distribution on First Day for the next few weeks. It will not be distributed electronically or left out in the lobby so as to protect personal information. Plan is to update the contact information on an annual basis. It is noted that this contact list exists in parallel to the larger database of members and the newsletter mailing list. It is also noted that the position of Recorder for the Meeting is currently vacant and needs filling.

1. **Treasurer's Report.** The treasurer presented a balance sheet of all Worcester Friends Meeting assets. Practical Committee is asked take our investment practices under consideration, and periodic reconsideration of the use of our savings. The year-to-date budget is reviewed, and noted that we are running as anticipated other than needing to collect quarterly rent from one tenant.
2. **Committee Reports:**
 - a. **Practical.** The committee reports the following projects completed: replacement of the refrigerator kitchen, the old refrigerator from the basement removed (and replaced by the old kitchen refrigerator), and repairs to the swingset. Replacement insulation (in the attic and crawl spaces) and outdoor building repairs are in progress. Thanks to the Walsh family for spearheading the buildings and grounds repairs. Also, Mary Chenaille has purchased cones and flags to improve pedestrian safety for Market Day.
 - b. **Spiritual Life.** The committee did not meet this month due to lack of quorum. However, the committee reports that a listening session was held on April 23 in which participants shared and listened to one another's personal relationship and response to climate change. First Day School has been discussing being a peacemaker and brought this theme to intergenerational worship. Support and clearness committees have met. Looking ahead, Bible study is planned for 3rd Sunday in May, with Geoff Knowlton leading the session.
 - c. **Peace Social Concerns and Outreach.** The committee met in April, with discussion of climate change and other social justice activities. Meeting members continue to be involved in local social justice activities including attendance at SURJ meetings. Though our Meeting was not able to host David Bucura (active with AVP, Healing and Rebuilding Our Communities, African Great Lakes Initiative, and the Rwandan Peace Library, all in East Africa), members are reminded that he is speaking today at Friends Meeting at Cambridge. It is also announced that AVP meetings will be on hiatus for the summer months due to lack of meeting space, with hopes to resume in the Fall.
3. **Announcements**
 - a. Reminder that registration for Sessions opens June 1. Those who wish to hold a pre-session workshop must submit that information to NEYM by May 30.
 - b. Quarterly Meeting next meet at Smithfield on June 25.
 - c. Wellesley Meeting will host a day of discernment and dialog on Quaker peacebuilding on Saturday May 20. The workshop runs from 8am-4:30pm. Nadine Hoover, coordinator of Friends Peace Teams Asia West Initiative, is the keynote speaker. Interested Friends should register by contacting Nancy Shippen at nancyshippen@comcast.net or 978-621-9213.
 - d. Matthew Shorten will serve as "resident fellow" at Friends Camp this summer during Dyer session (July 9-23), running workshops on conflict resolution and mindful movement.
 - e. Spring Market Day is planned for June 10, with pie-making the evening prior. Rain date is June 17.

The meeting closed with silence.

Respectfully submitted,
Katharine Barnard

Addendum:

Minute 16.169 Hanover Friends Meeting:

“As members of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), we believe that the human family is one family; that there is that of God in every member of this family; and that generosity of spirit toward all the members of the human family is of overriding importance.

As Quakers, we reaffirm our unconditional support for the wellbeing and protection of all threatened individuals in our community, including, especially at this troubled time, Muslims and undocumented immigrants.

We urge our government to reaffirm our country’s founding values, especially freedom of religion, to affirm our welcome to all peaceful refugees and immigrants, to reject bigotry and xenophobia, and to adopt laws and policies that respect the humanity and dignity of all people.

We call on our fellow community members to join us in defending human rights for all, **working** toward nonviolent religious and civic sanctuary that protects all who are vulnerable, and striving together for compassion, dignity and safety for everyone.”

Worcester Interfaith News

Nine clergy members of Worcester Interfaith, <http://www.worcesterinterfaith.net/>, are meeting separately with Sarah Lange of New Era for NonProfits consulting firm, in anticipation of Lead Organizer Frank Kartheiser's resignation in 18 months. The WI Strategic Planning Committee (Aaron Payson , Robert Ochoa, Jose Encarnacion, Jose Perez, Avila Fellman, Valerie Cohen, Nathan Piphon, TJ DeMarco and myself)are looking at Articles of Incorporation, Mission and Vision Statements, Financial etc. to examine the bigger group’s reason for existing, to whom we are accountable, what we offer member congregations and individuals, with whom we affiliate among other things. I have taken a position on this "Governance" committee because WFM is a long term, dues paying member. I will report to and bring copies of all handouts to Peace, Social Concerns/Outreach as well as Business Meeting. For more information or to pose questions for the committee, talk to me on First Day. My contact information is in the new Member Directory. The next Clergy lunch will take place on Thursday, June 8 at noon, all Members are welcome. The WI Strategic Planning Committee will meet next on June 29 at 3 pm. Both meetings will be held at All Saints Episcopal Church.

—**Mary Chenaille**

Annual Ramadan dinner:

An Invitation for members and friends to the Annual Dinner and Interfaith dialogue hosted by the Islamic Society of Greater Worcester.

Time: Sunday June 18th. Program will start at 7 pm.

Location: 57 Laurel Street, Worcester

Topic: The history of the scriptures: The Torah, The Gospels and The Holy Quran

Dinner will be provided after the sunset. Please talk to Clarence Burley if interested in attending so he can send approximate number of RSVPs

May Day Rally

Quakers holding Worcester Meeting's banner met with well over a hundred union members, student and Progressive Labor Party activists, clergy and well-wishers at the rally outside city hall on May first.

Commemorating the 1886 strike for an eight-hour day in Chicago that ended in a riot with several deaths and many

injuries, the rally called for passage of a \$15 per hour minimum wage, equal opportunity employment, and the employment of Worcester workers in the development projects receiving tax breaks.

Brief talks by labor leaders, organizers and clergy alternated with songs and Chinese dragon dancers accompanied by loud and skillful drumming. One member of EPOCA, (ex-prisoners and prisoners organized for community advancement) spoke to me about his appreciation of the Quakers with their AVP work helping him and others in "Shirley minimum." Another joy was meeting with our sometime attender, Simon Elliot, who was passing out flyers for another civil rights program on May second.

Joe Hill was an immigrant migrant worker, labor organizer, song writer and cartoonist, who was executed in 1915 in Utah on a trumped-up charge of murder. His final words to Big Bill Heywood of the IWW were, "Don't mourn me. Organize." and, "Move my body over the state line; I don't want to be found dead in Utah."

There's a song: I dreamed I saw Joe Hill last night

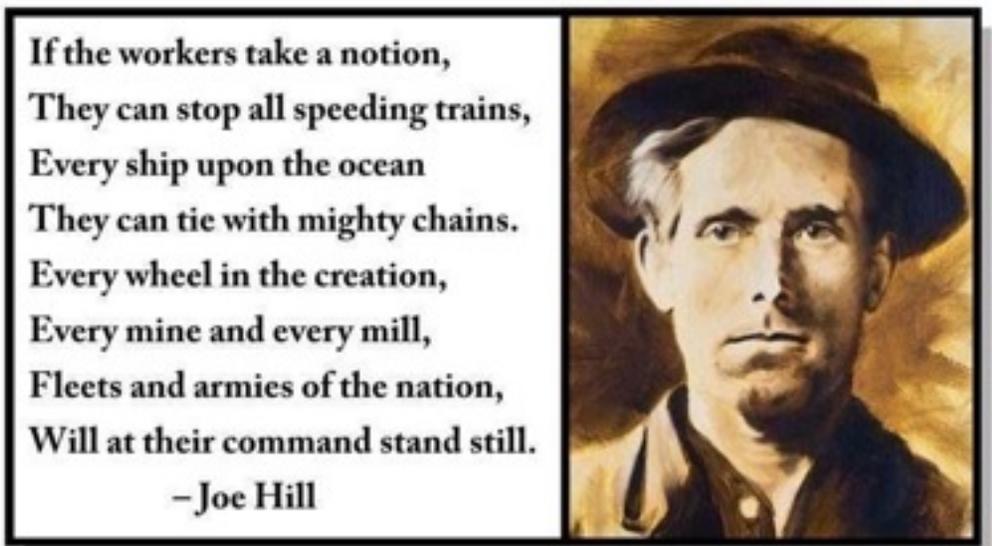
As live as live can be.

But, Joe, I said, "You're a long time dead."

"I never died," said he.

The enthusiasm of the crowd showed me that Joe Hill is alive and well and living in Worcester.

— **Clarence Burley**



A Closer Look at Worcester Friends: Matt Shorten



I've been a Quaker and member of WFM for about 35 years.

I was raised as a Roman Catholic, and attended Catholic schools from grade 1 all the way through my undergraduate program at Holy Cross College in Worcester. I grew disillusioned with the church's hierarchy and their conservatism on social issues. After a few years of wandering and seeking, my first wife and I went to search for a new spiritual home. After attending our first meeting at WFM, and discussing some Friends practices, we knew this would be the place. I was especially drawn by the peace testimony and the idea that there were no designated ministers- everyone was called to do their part. There followed a very friendly, comfortable Committee for Clearness for Membership, and we were in.

I've been a member of the Spiritual Life Committee for a number of years now, which we used to call Ministry and Counsel. For me, the calling is to serve as a discerning person for those seeking support or guidance. Our role is not to provide answers or solutions for others, but to help them find their own appropriate path. We hope Friends

view the SL Committee as a helpful place to come to whenever they could use some support.

I'm very concerned with issues of peace, justice, and tolerance at all levels, locally and globally. I'm not as active politically as I used to be, partly because I've been living in rural Barre for 20 years now. I'm opposed to fundamentalist thinking in any field - religion, philosophy or politics.

For fun, I play tennis and golf. For self-development, I've been practicing a movement art called Shintaido for 30 years, and have achieved the level of Shodan. I also facilitate AVP workshops occasionally at Gardner NCCI Prison. For 2 weeks this summer, I'll be serving as a Resident Fellow at Friends Camp, leading classes in Conflict Resolution and Mindful Movement.

I'd love to see WFM expand by adding a new room for worship. This would give us the flexibility to host a variety of community events, as well as offer more space for our First Day Meetings. Thanks for this opportunity to share my ideas with y'all.

Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ), is a national network of groups and individuals organizing White people to work together for racial justice. Worcester's chapter of SURJ meets (usually) on the third Wednesday of each month at the YWCA at 1 Salem Square. Each meeting has a new member orientation at 6:00 pm. The public meetings run from 6:30-8pm. May's meeting involved reading a copy of the Dr. King's "Beyond Vietnam" speech and discussing ways in which it connected with the May Day Rally protests for worker's and immigrant rights.

In April, Shannon Al-Wakeel, the Executive Director of the Muslim Justice League (MJL) located in Boston, spoke with passion and practicality about how to support Muslim communities against state violence and targeting. She offered 5 specific strategies for allies:

1) **Center the Leadership of Social Justice Organizations led by Directly-Impacted Communities.** Ms. Al-Wakeel stressed that even though allies may have the best intentions on their own, the best way to be supportive is to follow the lead of those directly advocating for Muslims.

2) **Unequivocally Challenge Attempts to Silence Muslim Civil Society.** Although Muslims are a test target for silencing, McCarthyist tactics may well eventually reach other groups. Allies are urged to vocally demonstrate solidarity.

3) **Help End “Countering Violent/Islamic Extremism” Campaigns.**

Under the Obama administration, a federal law enforcement campaign, CVE, which began in Boston, Minneapolis and LA and has expanded to other US locations, targets predominantly minority populations they deem “vulnerable” to extremism (such as Somalis and BLM activists). Although there has been little press about the campaign, it has resulted in false license for the surveillance and harassment of minorities exercising their 1st Amendment rights.

4) **Make Sanctuary Commitments Inclusive.**

Local institutions can assist by ensuring that their commitment to sanctuary covers all communities who are targeted for criminalization, internment, expulsion, mass violence or other abuses.

5) **Host a Workshop on Challenging Structural Targeting of Muslim Communities.**

The Muslim Justice League, info@muslimjusticeleague.org, offers workshops on how to challenge the targeting of Muslim communities.

More information about the ongoing efforts of SURJ in Worcester can be found at <https://www.facebook.com/SURJWorcester/>. The next meeting go SURJ will be 6/28/17 at the downtown YWCA.

News from the Peace and Social Concerns/Outreach Committee:

Karen Sargent attended a training at Ascentria re: refugees and immigration where legal advice was shared. Among other information shared was the fact that children are eligible for food stamps even if their parents are not. Mary Chenaille also attended the evening gathering at Ascentria and reported on legal advice about a program ‘Know your rights’. People are advised not to talk to ICE if ICE doesn’t have proper authority to do so. Tom Brenner reported that a Muslim lawyer who spoke to SURJ about these issues may be available to speak to us. We are still considering Level 2 Sanctuary support awaiting a Level 1 commitment. SURJ: The next SURJ meeting will be June 28 at the YWCA at 6:30 pm. Come at 6pm if this is your first time to learn about SURJ.

Worcester Interfaith: Mary reported that Frank Kartheiser will be retiring within the next 18 months. They have retained Sarah Lange from New Era. WI will be reorganizing. There are now 9 people on the Board. On June 8, a Clergy Caucus lunch will be held at All Saints at noon. Because all Quakers are ministers, all are welcome to attend. On June 29 the Board will meet to craft a new mission statement and discuss a strategic plan. They are looking at faith communities and individuals who might be interested. Board meeting to be held at noon at All Saints. See Mary’s report elsewhere in this Newsletter for more information.

First Day School report: Lucy Barnard asked if the Meeting would switch from using paper towels to cloth towels. There was discussion about designating towels for hand washing and for other uses. This will be brought to business meeting so that others are aware and also to practical committee. First Day School would like to have a butterfly garden. Members of PASCO were very positive about this. This will go to Practical Committee.

June 1- Worcester Interfaith is asking pp. to call in to representatives to support the Justice Reinvestment Act.

June1- 501c3 workshop held at 10 Post Office Square, Boston re: how much churches can get involved in politics. When does advocacy come lobbying?

January 2018 -There will be a multi faith mission to Israel sponsored by the rabbi at Beth Israel Congregation and an Episcopal priest.

Sandy Kocher encouraged all of us to be involved in pressing our representatives to support the Paris Climate Accord and to thank those who already do.

We will start a letter writing time starting June 4th following the meeting.

Alternatives to Violence Project - An AVP workshop was held Sat. June 3 for the Bhutanese Community here at the Meeting House. This was an opportunity to reach out to the community and invite members of the Bhutanese community to join us in worship and learn more about them through relationships. Jane Cutting attended the informative and inspiring International AVP Conference on the previous Sat. In Newton.

—Jane Cutting

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 . Items of note for the next Newsletter may also be sent to brennerfamily@gmail.com.