

Worcester Friends Newsletter

May 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:

Friday, June 15 4 – 6 pm, Trinity Lutheran Church, 73 Lancaster Street, World Refugee Day, Ethnic fellowship, food, music

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

Wednesday, June 20, SURJ at YWCA, 6:30 pm

Sunday, June 24, 10:00 am. Providence Friends Meetinghouse, Worship, Potluck and Quarterly Meeting.

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

Saturday, 7/14, 6:00 pm. Worcester Friends Meeting's Pot-Luck Supper. Come at 4:00 to help set up.

Friday, July 20 Facing Race Reading Group will meet to discuss *Just Mercy* by Bryan Stevenson. 5:30 pm for potluck, 6:30 pm for discussion at the Meetinghouse.

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



Happy Birthday to Richard Schmitt (90 years young)

Monthly Meeting for Business, Worcester Friends Meeting
Date: May 13, 2018

Present: Daron Barnard, Katharine Barnard, Clarence Burley, Jane Cutting, Paul Gallagher, Richard Schmitt, Matthew Shorten, Mark Sullivan
Clerking: Matthew Shorten

The meeting opened with silent worship and reading from Rufus Jones.

1. Treasurers Report:

- a. **Monthly Report:** The treasurer reports that income is running ahead of budget, mostly thanks to contributions from members and attenders. Annual Appeal is planned for June. Lawn maintenance has begun, so payments have started for that service. The lawn maintenance service will include groundskeeping at the cemetery, and the Treasurer will clarify with the groundkeeper what is entailed. The Treasurer notes that electricity usage was very high in April; even after discussion, it is not clear what was the cause of the increased usage, though more usage of electric heat may have contributed. It is noted that there have been no Buildings expenses yet this year.
- b. **Cemetery Fund:** Treasurer proposes moving the Cemetery Fund away from Wells Fargo, who currently manages the fund's investment in the Pax Fund. The Treasurer will look into options for other investment venues, with or without a funds manager, and any fees or penalties that would be incurred by making the change.

2. Committee Reports:

- a. **Spiritual Life.** The committee met, with discussion focused on followup from the retreat held on April 21. The retreat led to a clear sense that "the Meeting is not the building" - what is important is our community of people and how we act in our community at large. It is recommended that a small committee be formed who would consider what is important to us as a Meeting, and what kind of physical space will be ideal. They may look at alternative properties to gain perspective, though any decision-making would be brought back to the Meeting. It is acknowledged that the purpose of the committee is more of visioning and information-gathering rather than seeking to move. The Business Meeting approves of this plan and the clarity of process it will provide. Today, Daron Barnard, Mary Chenaille, Jane Cutting, Matt Shorten, and Mark Sullivan offered to sit on this committee, and other volunteers will be solicited. Mary Chenaille will convene the group. Noah Baker-Merrill has offered to help with followup discussion if the group would like. Other helpful resources include the architectural designs drawn up several years ago for renovation of the current building, and the notes from the retreat which are in the recent newsletter. State of Society Report has been written and brought to Business Meeting today for approval. Spiritual Life is asked to follow up on a suggestion for mentorship of Young Friends to support their spiritual development.
- b. **Peace Social Concerns and Outreach.** The committee met and brings items for consideration. The Meeting is asked if it would join as a supporter of PFLAG (Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays), a national organization of families and allies of people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer with a mission for support, education and advocacy. After hearing about this, the Business Meeting asked that Richard Schmitt and Lucy Candib, who are connected with the Worcester chapter, add Worcester Friends Meeting to the list of supporting congregations, and also inquire whether there are other ways in which the Meeting can be supportive.

Lucy attended a recent SURJ meeting with presentation about DACA recipients in Worcester Public Schools. The committee continues looking into venues for providing food or other comfort to homeless in the city. PSCO committee members helped with trash cleanup near the reservoir in honor of Earth Day, and are looking into other environmentally-friendly activities. The Meeting was well-represented at a recent community forum regarding inequities in health care, specifically UMass's decision to close Plumley Village Health Services serving Plumley and Bell Hill neighborhoods.

- c. **Practical.** The committee considered several items which are large expenses: re-siding the building, finishing all of the windows, and expanding the driveway/off-street parking. They have been given a rough estimate of \$100,000 for the three projects together. Decision about how to prioritize these projects is contingent on the decision about our ongoing use of the building, but if we continue to occupy the building then these projects are certainly needed and money will be needed from our savings to cover the cost. The Practical Committee will wait, for now, on the work of the ad-hoc building committee for a decision of how to proceed.

2. Business Items:

- a. **State of Society Report.** The report has been formed from a threshing session held April 15, and subsequently vetted by attenders of that session and by Spiritual Life Committee. The report, in its edited form, was read out today and approved, and will be forwarded to the Quarterly Meeting and to NEYM Ministry and Counsel as well as published in the newsletter.
- b. **Spot in the Worcester Telegram.** On Saturdays *Telegram and Gazette* features a spot on different faith organizations. Volunteers are solicited who might like to contribute a column. Clarence Burley knows the details.
- c. **Meeting T-Shirts.** The Young Friends have finalized a TShirt design and preference of color scheme. PSCO committee will take up the specifics of TShirt printing and ordering, so Young Friends will be asked to forward the design to Mary Chenaille who will take the next steps.
- d. **Discussion Groups.** There was a request for a regularly scheduled time for discussion or study groups, which would contribute to community-building and adult religious education. Third Sundays before worship are offered as a possible time. Alternatively, we could alter our Sunday schedule to allow for more regular fellowship with discussion. Spiritual Life is asked to consider this question.

3. Announcements:

- a. **Permanent Board:** Clarence Burley attended the meeting of Permanent Board yesterday, held at Moses Brown School in Providence RI. There was discussion of the NEYM budgeting program, and management of cash reserves (including the income from sale of the historic book *The Bloody Tenant*). The Yearly Meeting plans to solicit more input from Monthly Meetings on fiduciary affairs in the future. Friends Camp reports enrollment almost at 100% of capacity.
- b. **Quarterly Meeting:** The Clerk of the Quarter has suggested moving June's Quarterly Meeting to the 4th Sunday of the month so as not to conflict with Father's Day. Clarence Burley and Matt Shorten will plan to attend the Quarterly Meeting which will be convened in Providence. Our Monthly Meeting committees can consider moving those meetings regularly scheduled for the 4th Sunday so as not to conflict, if this is an issue.
- c. **Walk for the Homeless.** It is announced that this will be held at Elm Park next Sunday, May 20.

Respectfully submitted,
Katharine Barnard

State of Society Report, Worcester Friends Meeting

A small but engaged group of Worcester Friends met April 15, 2018, to discern the state of our Society.

We are grateful for our Meeting and look forward to coming together each week. We are spiritually nourished by communal worship (holding each others' "spiritual hand"). Weekly potluck nourishes our bodies and allows us to extend care for one another. Individual leadings are heard and supported.

In these elements we also have a sense of want. While the silence is rich, our vocal ministry is modest; we wish for more "from the heart" messages that would bring forward the richness of our philosophically diverse community. While we appreciate that our community is free of pointless argument, we also see that sometimes we avoid saying what is necessary and true in order to avoid conflict.

We miss the robust weekly attendance by Young Friends that we have experienced in the past, as their presence brings us joy. While several of our Young Friends may not regularly attend Meeting, we are grateful for the wonderful NEYM Young Friends programs in which they continue to be active. Our Young Friends feel prepared to speak as Friends in their larger community. Adult Friends, too, find it valuable to identify themselves as Quakers and be visible in the community. We feel we have much to offer to the society at large.

We seek to find the right balance between support for individual leadings versus engaging with a single purpose. This year has seen a focus on issues of racial justice, which unifies many efforts previously underway and has opened the door to still others. This sense of unity is welcomed. We find that when we are drawn to multiple issues at once, it can be paralyzing.

We still struggle with how to move beyond "concern" into true meaningful action. The projects which are easiest to mobilize around are tangible and finite. Coming together to do "good work" has value in itself for others, and for ourselves as community. However, we wish to effect more fundamental change.

Worcester Friends continue to experience an underlying dissatisfaction in how we participate in the community. Again and again, we come back to the question of whether our building (location, size, physical shortcomings) or the small size of our Meeting are the limiting factors. Much time, thought and discussion have gone into these debates. Perhaps, however, these issues are actually proxies for a deeper uncertainty about who we are in our community. Next week we will hold a Meeting retreat to explore this unsettledness, and seek to move beyond.

We look forward to continuing to grow and care for one another in body and Spirit in this current year.

Respectfully submitted,
Katharine Barnard
Recording Clerk

Monthly Meeting for Business, Worcester Friends Meeting

Date: **June 10, 2018**

Present: Katharine Barnard, Clarence Burley, Mary Chenaille, Jane Cutting, Karen Sargent, Richard Schmitt, Matthew Shorten, Mark Sullivan, Kevin Walsh

Clerking: Matthew Shorten

The meeting opened with silent worship and reading of a quote from Diane Randall, Executive Secretary of FCNL.

1. Business Items

- a. **Market Day.** Karen Sargent reported on plans and needs. What are needed are volunteers for the day of the event, June 16, as well as for pie making the night before. Other specific tasks have been assigned. There are 4 vendors confirmed.
 - b. **NEYM Request for Financial Assistance.** Despite the newly-instated “Pay As You Are Led” policy, the Yearly Meeting still needs additional funds to cover the expense of Sessions. We received a letter from NEYM stating that the Yearly Meeting used approximately \$20,000 from their General Funds last year to cover the costs, and estimating our Meeting members’ collective draw from the fund as approximately \$1600. It is unknown exactly how this estimate was calculated, so difficult to know how to respond specifically to this number. The Treasurer will send an inquiry to Yearly Meeting to find out how the number was calculated, and then the Meeting will determine how we would like to respond. We do feel called to support our Meeting members in their attendance at Quaker conferences and educational events, so supporting Sessions would be consistent with this desire.
 - c. **Meeting T-Shirts.** Mary Chenaille has been working with Masterman printing in Auburn, who also prints the Abby's House shirts. They will be producing 100% cotton, navy blue T-Shirts. They will use the design that the Young Friends created for the back and large print wording for the front (“QUAKER” and Worcester Friends Meeting logo). These may be available as soon as later June. The total cost for the 50 shirts is approximately \$460 including the set-up and the shirts. Friends will be asked to pay as led, with a recommended cost of \$10 per shirt.
 - d. **Support for graduating high school senior.** The Meeting would like to offer a gift for Andreana Brenner who will be starting at University of Illinois in the fall. The Meeting would like to give \$500. The Clerk will write a card to accompany the check.
2. **Treasurers Report:** Income is running ahead of budget due to greater than expected donations from members and attenders. On the expense side, it is noted that the gas bill is running substantially ahead of last year and therefore ahead of what was budgeted. This month there was a payment for the balance on the windows installed last year, though overall our building expenses have been less than budgeted for the year. In the balance, we are running a deficit though less than expected.

3. **Committee Reports:**

- a. **Practical.** The committee met last week. They report that the broken spotlight in front of the Meeting was fixed, costing only \$20. Lighting in the meeting room was again discussed, as concerns have been raised that the overhead lights are too dim for nighttime meetings. Additional floor lamps may be purchased as a solution. The committee is looking into options for trash collection. A replacement sign has been ordered for Newton Square. The committee discussed purchasing an AED (automatic electronic defibrillator) for the Meetinghouse. This seems like a prudent step for the Meeting, given the broad recommendations for use of defibrillation in basic life support, the life-saving benefits of use of defibrillation in the event of sudden cardiac arrest, and the use of the Meetinghouse by various groups. The Practical Committee will look into possible grant funding and/or an appeal letter, as well as the relative cost or value of a used versus new device. The Meeting approves this project to a ceiling of \$1500. One of our physician members may be asked to do a brief training once the device is acquired.
- b. **Spiritual Life.** The committee met last week and considered support of members and attenders. We discussed plans for the “Visioning Committee” to continue the work that was taken up at the retreat. This committee, convened by Mary Chenaille, will consider the priorities and values of the Meeting and what kind of space will be ideal. Volunteers were solicited at last Business Meeting and Mary will seek additional interest to ensure diverse opinions. The committee reviewed the minutes from last Quarterly Meeting (held March 2018, in Worcester) with appreciation for the relationship-building that the Clerk has engendered and acceptance of the decision not to change the name of the Quarter. It is felt that relationships are more important than the symbolism of the name. The Quarter will be in need of a new Clerk and Recording Clerk to start March 2019.
- c. **Peace Social Concerns and Outreach.** Channel 3 News taped Elliot Walsh and Karen Sargent in their spot on Quakers. The committee is reaching out to congregations of color to see if we could collaborate in a community service type of project. Committee members attended public meetings on police behavior and also on racial justice in the schools, which unfortunately did not paint a positive picture of awareness on the part of police or local government of racial issues. Several Meeting members attended a workshop on racial dialog at Wellesley Meeting yesterday. The committee is piloting Saturday night suppers for the purpose of interfaith fellowship and potential for a focused discussion or brief worship. These would be open to the community, and the committee plans to publicize these at least to Tatnuck area clergy if not more broadly. Attendees will be asked to RSVP if possible so that the committee can know how much food to prepare, and to pay as led for the cost of the meal. Mary Chenaille is taking the lead on this.

The meeting closed with silence, and plans for no planned Business Meeting in July or August. As always, a business meeting could be called if needed. A date for Fall Market Day is set for September 22.

Respectfully submitted,
Katharine Barnard



**A Closer Look at Worcester
Friends:
Tom Brenner**

My Spiritual Journey:

I was raised Catholic but abandoned it after high school. When Sheila and I had foster/adoptive kids many years later, we returned to the Church but became disillusioned with many aspects, including the cover up of predatory behavior by priests and the discovery that our former pastor had embezzled large sums of money from the parish to live well beyond his means. But it was really the feeling that the rigid system of beliefs and top-down structure did not align with our experiences or our need for personal growth and exploration beyond the narrow confines of beliefs that are dictated by the Church. I happened upon Friends almost by chance and consider myself an “Accidental Quaker”.

Local and global issues of concern to me:

Social injustice, especially systematic racism is a primary concern but there are many others that have come to the fore in the current political climate. We are involved with SURJ in Worcester and have attended a number of protests and rallies against gun violence, and in favor of fair immigration policies. The Peace and Social Concerns/Outreach committee has become an important focus and a mechanism to address my concerns.

What WFM is doing or can do in these areas:

The PASCO committee has actively engaged in feeding the homeless at the Hotel Grace in Worcester and has supported the Student Immigration Movement (SIM). Members of the PASCO are engaged as facilitators in the Center for Non-violent Solutions in prisons in MA. There is much to do.

Things that give me hope:

Young Friends who are active in the meeting. They recently designed our WFM T-shirts which will enhance the visibility of Friends at public events as we engage in our community.

The awareness that there are many people willing to make small and large contributions to make a difference in the world.

The Worcester Friends Meeting Newsletter will be on a short break over the summer. Please send any articles or news of interest to the editor at brennerfamily@gmail.com. Have a wonderful summer!

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. Items of note for the next Newsletter may also be sent to brennerfamily@gmail.com or dropped off at MeetingHouse.