

Worcester Friends Newsletter

September 2020



Calendar Meetinghouse is open for Sunday Meeting for Worship at 11:00am. See page 5 for attendance policy and please check weekly Friendly Reminders for updates.

Virtual Zoom Worship will also continue: Sunday 11:00am-12:00pm with worship sharing (joys and concerns) from 11:45-12:00.

We gather in silence so ask that attenders enter worship muted; please unmute your microphone only when speaking.

Announcements follow at 12:00pm

Join Zoom Meeting
<https://zoom.us/j/96200126171>
Meeting ID: 962 0012 6171

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.

Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business is held on the second Sunday of the month at 9:00 am. Any business items should be sent to Clerk Matt Shorten at 978-503-8225 or mattshorten@yahoo.com

The Facing Race reading group will meet virtually through Zoom on Friday, October 2nd at 7:30 pm. to discuss *Born a Crime* by Trevor Noah. Contact Lucy at lcandib@massmed.org for more info.

"To all those interested in immigrant rights and supporting our undocumented siblings:

James Rider, an organizer with the Friends Committee on National Legislation and member of Mattapoissett Monthly Meeting sojourning here in Worcester, is looking for members of the Quaker community to support his work in trying to pass the Dream and Promise Act. The Dream and Promise Act (HR 6) would provide a path to citizenship for over 3 million undocumented people in this country, both immigrant youth and TPS recipients without increasing border militarization or immigrant policing. James is hoping to work with attendees and members of the meeting, as well as the wider Worcester community to compel our members of Congress to take action on the law, through raising awareness and performing effective constituent lobbying. All support is welcomed. Please contact jrider@clarku.edu or 774-328-2737 if interested.

**Worcester Friends Meeting
Minutes of Business Meeting
September 13, 2020**

Present: Daron Barnard, Katharine Barnard, Sheila Brenner, Tom Brenner, Clarence Burley, Mary Chenaille, Richie MacKoul, Mike Mallory, Aaron Sakulitch, Karen Sargent, Keith Williamson, Karen Sargent, Matthew Shorten

Clerking: Matthew Shorten

We gathered on Zoom and greeted one another. The opening reading from Pendle Hills' pamphlet "On Vocal Ministry" reminds us of the way that gathering together and sharing vocal ministry deepens our spiritual connection and our connection as a community.

Treasurer's Report: Aaron reported that there were no major deviations from budget during the month of August. Our annual contribution of \$6500 has been sent in bulk to NEYM. The second quarterly donation of \$250 to FUST (Friends Uganda Safe Transport) was sent. It is noted that the budget does not reflect the \$20,000 for the windows, which was paid by a special donation. It also does not reflect the \$10,000 of charitable donations that were given to local organizations this Spring, as those were on-time donations rather than budget line-items.

Our housekeeper arrived on Tuesday to do her regular cleaning, and found the Meetinghouse unlocked and the door open. There does not seem to be any adverse consequence, however, we are all reminded to lock the front door when we are the last one out of the building. We agreed that the housekeeper, who did not feel comfortable staying to clean in light of the unsecured building, should be paid for her services as she arrived to do her scheduled work.

Spiritual Life Committee: Daron reports that the committee met at the end of August. In recent months, the committee has held the question of our quality and connectedness of worship. We have continued to offer both Zoom and in-person worship. Meeting members and attenders have expressed that they have found both types of worship valuable. It is important to the quality of in-person worship that we have a Greeter. Daron will send a signup sheet for in-person Greeter. Those who are serving as Greeter are reminded that the function of Greeter, in addition to welcoming and orienting attenders, is to direct people to appropriate worship spaces and keep the attendance log for contact tracing, if needed.

The committee would like to ensure that all are aware of how to access the Open Hearts, Open Hands Fund. The Fund has a current balance of about \$2000. This money can be accessed for the benefit of any Meeting member or attender with a financial need by contacting the Clerk of the Meeting.

A community member has contacted the meeting with a request to hold her marriage ceremony in our cemetery in October 2021. After discussion of concerns on this query, the sense of the Meeting is that we do not feel comfortable with the idea. Daron will communicate back to the person in question.

Peace, Social Concerns and Outreach: Tom reports that the committee has interest in continuing support for organizations that we feel a longstanding commitment to. One of these is Cosecha, a local organization supporting immigrants who cannot access government support services, and others are the Bulongi Tree Shade Friends Meeting (Uganda) and FUST. Our Meeting's budget does not have funds to support significant ongoing donations. The PSCO committee, therefore, has sent out a special appeal to raise funds for these organizations. Money raised through the appeal would provide financial support above and beyond our already-planned quarterly contribution to FUST. The

appeal went out by email with a PayPal link; the PSCO committee is recommended to also consider mailing a paper copy of the appeal with an option for donors to mail in a check. Daron and Aaron both have digital copies of Worcester Friends Meeting letterhead and will send this out for the committee to use, or for others to use for correspondence on behalf of the Meeting.

The committee has continued communication with the co-pastor of Bulongi Tree Shade Friends Meeting, the one open and welcoming Meeting in Uganda. It is noted that the Bulongi Tree Shade Friends Meeting is not recognized by Uganda Yearly Meeting, and Matt has forwarded a query to FWCC on this matter. The committee is looking into what would be involved in becoming sister Meetings. Friends would like more information about the history, work, and mission of the Bulongi Tree Shade Friends Meeting. *Attached below is a report forwarded from David Albert of Olympia Friends Meeting that provides such information.

The committee reports continued involvement in bringing forward conversation on racism within the Worcester Police Department.

We have donated three antique items from our Meetinghouse for the LGBT Asylum Task Force's annual gala fundraiser (which this year will be an online auction). It is noted with joy that the Task Force has been able to purchase a house that will serve as office space as well as housing for asylum-seekers.

Jane Cutting has continued to attend Worcester Interfaith meetings and report on their activities. These include volunteering for the Census, and supporting local people without documents.

Practical Committee: Karen reports that the committee is looking into waterproofing the basement. Francis Morgan has been gathering estimates for this work, and the committee's recommendations will be forthcoming.

The committee is also considering the health and safety of the trees on the property, especially one tree that was damaged by recent storms and another that appears to be in poor health. An estimate for taking down the two trees in question is \$4000. The committee is considering other options that would address the problems without sacrificing the trees. Another consideration is clearing branches that have grown up near the electric lines, and Karen can speak to National Grid on this.

Mary Chenaille will clear and treat the drawers in the kitchen that have evidence of mice.

Announcements:

All can find the link for Zoom Meeting for Worship weekly in the emailed "Weekly Reminders".

The meeting closed to transition to worship.

In the Light,

Katharine Barnard, Recording Clerk

***Information on the history and work of Bulongi Tree Shade Friends Meeting:**

David Albert of the Olympia Friends Meeting forwards this message to our meeting from Hellen Tanyinga, co-pastor of the BTSFM:

"Bulongi Tree Shade Friends' Meeting was founded in 2016 by elder Hellen Lunkuse W. Tanyinga having appreciated the teaching of Quakers as explained in simpler terms by David H. Albert. Hellen shared the message with colleagues, survivors, clients and other partner organizations in and around Jinja. Hellen's explanation made sense to several people and most agreed to join the BTSFM. The name comes from a big mango tree in Kamuli where the meetings were held every Sunday. Over the years David H. Albert has helped the meeting to grow in beliefs, since it's the only open and welcoming meeting in Uganda. Since the end of last year, the meeting has suffered a few setbacks when there was a renewed call by the Ugandan government to crack down on sexual minorities. Nevertheless Aluta Continua!!!* We set up structures and committees to ensure that BTSFM runs effectively and serves its intended purposes. When we moved to Jinja at a secret location where over 48 friends turned up every Sunday from 9AM to 1PM, peace and hopes are renewed among the friends, that sense of belonging, acceptance and love of humanity has made sense to many and a reason for our growth, at one point we were over 75 members attending the meeting but times changed. [The BTSFM is now meeting in secret in small groups.] Among the community works we are involved in, we are responsible for 19 children who we care for and provide for on a daily basis, we are the only family they know, and we are also looking after 48 single mothers/ widows and victims of Gender Based Violence, Human Trafficking and Modern Day Slavery. So any help will be much appreciated."

*"The struggle continues" a phrase from African liberation movements: <https://youtu.be/KBfyLoqkoHU?t=89>

From David: "The 19 children under the care of the Meeting were rescued from a child trafficking ring-- sadly, many had been sold by their own families. Some were sex trafficked; others were slated for child sacrifice; still others to be sold into other countries. The police uncovered the ring, but after doing so, they had no place to send the children, and no institution would take them. Kathleen O'Shaunessy and I met many of these children, and Kathleen worked with them some in a professional capacity. [Kathleen is a therapist from Olympia who has travelled to Jinja several times.] I'm sure Hellen would answer more questions. She was so excited to receive my call - and not so much that there might be money, but that there is another Meeting thinking about them."

We Hold the Earth

We hold brothers and sisters who suffer from storms and droughts intensified by climate change.

We hold all species that suffer.

We hold world leaders delegated to make decisions for life.

We pray that the web of life may be mended through courageous actions to limit carbon emissions.

We pray for right actions for adaptation and mitigation to help our already suffering earth community.

We pray that love and wisdom might inspire my actions and our actions as communities. . .

so that we may, with integrity, look into the eyes of brothers and sisters and all beings and truthfully

say, we are doing our part to care for them and the future of the children.

May love transform us and our world with new steps toward life

In person Meeting for Worship attendance protocols:

- In-person worship proceeds with small groups in different locations (up to 6 people in the worship room, 4 on the back porch, 2 on the front porch, 6 in the upper yard, and up to 2 groups of 6 in the lower yard). The indoor space would be most useful for mobility-challenged people or people who have difficulty sitting outside. Those sitting outside should bring their own chairs and sun shade.
- A greeter (or two) would need to meet people and direct them to worship spaces, as well as to keep a list of attenders & locations for the purpose of contact tracing if needed.
- If someone from one of our rental groups or a meeting attender becomes ill after being present at the Meetinghouse, they must contact Matt Shorten and the Meeting would need to followup accordingly.
- Practical committee, specifically Mary Chenaille, as our Building Manager, will procure wipes and hand sanitizer. It is clarified that sanitizer should contain at least 70% ethanol.
- Our housekeeper has continued to do routine cleaning of the building. Mary Chenaille will contact her to ask that she focus on sanitizing shared areas.
- We will ask that all users of the meeting regularly check their email prior to coming to the Meetinghouse, so that they would be advised in the event that we need to close the building.
- Spiritual Life committee is asked to coordinate greeters, and also to consider advance sign-up for the indoor worship spaces which are limited. Please contact Daron Barnard to volunteer as a Greeter.

Feeling the need for some mental/emotional support? Mass Support is a statewide, anonymous, confidential, and free mental health resource program for anyone living in Massachusetts. Find out more at www.MassSupport.org.
or call: 888-215-4920 or MASSSUPPORT@RIVERSIDECC.ORG.

[MassSupport Network](#) provides free community outreach and support services to residents of all ages across the state in response to the unprecedented public health crisis, COVID-19. This Crisis Counseling Program is funded by the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) and managed in partnership between the [MA Department of Mental Health](#) and [Riverside Trauma Center](#), a program of Riverside Community Care.

[MassSupport's](#) anonymous, confidential, and free program features:

- One-to-one, short-term, confidential support for individuals (all ages) and families.
- Psycho-educational presentations on a range of topics including: common reactions to highly stressful events, helping children manage in hard times, stress management and others upon request.

Policing Reform Action Update from the Massachusetts Council of Churches:

Not much policy has changed since our last update in August. The Policing Reform Bill is STILL stuck in Conference committee, even as more Black people across the nation have been shot by police, and even as more evidence mounts at home that police departments desperately need reform gain community trust. The Boston Globe reported back on August 26 on the legislative delay. YOUR CALLS can help move this process along.

if you've read a book on racism, offered up a prayer after yet another death at the hands of police, put up a banner in front of your church or committed to do better, this is the policy change we need your help on.

Massachusetts is one of only FOUR states in the nation without a statewide police officer standards and training system (POST), so an officer can be fired for misconduct in one town and rehired in another. The Policing Reform Bill is sitting in the Conference Committee, and needs our community support for strong, anti-racist provisions before a vote to the full House and Senate. Here's what you can do:

Read and share this handy explainer.

Write, call, and email ALL Conference Committee members quickly with the sample script below. Invite someone else to join you in praying & pushing for policy change.

Conference Committee Members:

Claire.Cronin@mahouse.gov (617) 722-2396
Carlos.Gonzalez@mahouse.gov (617) 722-2080
Timothy.Whelan@mahouse.gov (617) 722-2488
William.Brownsberger@masenate.gov (617) 722-1280
Sonia.Chang-Diaz@masenate.gov (617) 722-1673
Bruce.Tarr@masenate.gov (617) 722-1600

Sample Email or Call:

Hello, my name is _____. I'm a person of faith, a member at _____ church, calling with the Mass. Council of Churches and I am your constituent. I live at <your address>. I urge you to pass strong, comprehensive policing reform that includes:

1. Peace Officer Standards & Training
2. Civil Service access reform
3. Limits on police use of force and face surveillance
4. Creating a Commission on Structural Racism
5. Qualified immunity reform

Thank you for listening. As a Christian committed to the flourishing of all God's people, I look forward to your positive vote in support of racial justice and police reform.

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	-----	First Sunday, 9:30 AM
Practical Committee, Kevin Walsh	-----	First Sunday, 9:30 AM
Peace/Social Concerns/Lucy Candib & Richard Schmitt	-----	Fourth Sunday, 9:30 AM
Clerk of Worcester Friends Meeting	-----	Matthew Shorten
Recording Clerk	-----	Katharine Barnard
Corresponding Clerk	-----	Mary Chenaille
First Day School	-----	Katharine Barnard, 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.