

# Worcester Friends Newsletter Oct/Nov 2017



## 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.**

**The Meetinghouse is Handicapped Accessible**

**Clarence Burley** said the prayer of blessing on the offering to the Worcester County Food Bank at the Worcester Interfaith Thanksgiving Gathering. Clarence was joined by Rabbi Aviva Fellman (and daughter) who read the 100th Psalm, Pastor Daniel Gregoire of the Grafton and Upton UU Church and other local faith leaders. More information about the organization can be found at <http://www.worcesterinterfaith.net>.

## **First Facing Race Reading Group will be held 12/1/2017**

**6:30 pm at the Meetinghouse**

**Lucy Candib and Richard Schmitt** invite all to the first meeting of a Reading Group dedicated to addressing white privilege and race in our Quaker community and in our country. The group will begin with the reading of two articles. The first is a magazine article written by Ta-Nehisi Coates and the second is a review of Coates' latest book, *We Were Eight Years in Power* by Melvin Rogers, an Associate Professor of Political Science at Brown University. Both articles can be accessed through the links below.

<https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2014/06/the-case-for-reparations/361631/>

<http://bostonreview.net/race/melvin-rogers-keeping-faith>

Please consider joining us, in community, to examine our thinkings and feelings about race. Bring a F/friend.

## Monthly Meeting for Business, Worcester Friends Meeting

Date: October 8, 2017

Present: Matt Shorten (acting clerk), Tom Brenner (acting recording clerk), Clarence Burley, Karen Sargent, Kevin Walsh, Jane Cutting

The meeting opened with a reading by the clerk, followed by a period of silence.

### 1. Treasurer's report:

- a. The report was presented by Karen Sargent for Mark Sullivan who was not able to attend. Augmenting the usual detailed report, it was noted that the income from the two Market Days in 2017 nearly compensated for the shortfall in budgeted contributions for the year which are down from the previous year. The report was accepted with gratitude.
- b. Disbursement of \$2000 Contribution – One half of the contribution from a Friend received earlier this year has been sent to the Student Immigration Movement to help in their efforts to educate and assist their members in their efforts to avoid deportation. In light of recent national events, it is especially important to provide financial support to those whose immigration status is threatened by the expiration and/or renewal requirements for DACA. It was agreed that the remaining funds should be sent to an organization that can provide disaster relief for Puerto Rico since the U.S. government response has been lukewarm at best and thus the need exceeds even that of Texas and Florida. Worcester Interfaith is participating in a local chapter of "Love for Puerto Rico". It was suggested that the funds could be divided between the United Way of Massachusetts and Oxfam.

### 2. Committee Reports:

- a. **Practical.** Although they have not met in recent weeks, evidence of the committee's work shows in the form of installation of 2 ceiling fans with dimmers in the meeting room and new windows on the remainder of the first floor. The windows are currently being painted or stained, depending on their location. Thanks to the committee for implementing these very nice improvements. Phil Stone has drafted an annual appeal letter which will be sent out soon.
- b. **Peace and Social Concerns + Outreach.** This committee has been quite active in a number of areas. Several have been regular participants in SURJ meetings, including the special meeting organized for "allies" of the Student Immigration Movement. In the last MfB, we approved use of the Meetinghouse for SIM training, meetings and other gatherings as the schedule permits. SIM has scheduled a training at the Meetinghouse on November 4 from 9am - 6pm. They inquired about the availability of a projector. Although the meeting does not own one, we would ask if anyone has one that they can use that day. We would like to provide them with sandwiches and snacks if anyone would like to take that on. Fifteen to twenty people are expected to attend this event. Business meeting confirmed its support of the committee's suggestion to display a Black Lives Matter sign or banner on the meetinghouse. P&SC will follow up on this item. We will need to decide soon who will represent the meeting in a taping of a public affairs show on Channel 3. They are still seeking "volunteers".

### 3. Announcements:

- a. A new ad hoc committee addressing racial justice/reconciliation has been formed. Lucy Candib and Richard Schmitt are co-conveners. The committee has been meeting every other Sunday after potluck. The next meeting is scheduled on October 22. The ad hoc committee has been seeking involvement with a black congregation in order to pursue its desire to have a direct impact on addressing the problem of white supremacy. A number of options were discussed and will be taken up by the ad hoc committee.

A meeting with speaker Zena Link, an educator in the Worcester Public Schools and a long time racial justice activist, was scheduled after potluck on the day of this MfB. She has contacts with other educators and social action organizations including the NAACP. A separate report on that meeting may follow.

- b. Matt Shorten, Paul Gallagher and Daron Barnard recently viewed a house at 915 Pleasant St. with a realtor. This house, which is 3 doors west of our meetinghouse, was used as a retreat-type facility and the seller would like for it to be acquired by another non-profit. The condition is excellent with recent electrical, insulation, HVAC and other upgrades. Some minor modifications would be required to create a suitable meeting space and handicap access would need to be addressed. The grounds and garage would lend themselves to other uses. The meeting would need to determine the level of interest, the funding and willingness to undertake the moving effort, not to mention disposition of the current meetinghouse. A live-in caretaker/maintenance person might be required at this new location. Some at MfB and no doubt other Friends find the current meetinghouse acceptable in light of improvements that have already been undertaken and others that have been planned. Others see the possibility to use the retreat and housing facilities as a way to expand our outreach to the community and to pursue other activities that are limited by the current house. Clearly further consideration, discussion and clarity would be required to arrive at a consensus, or preferably unity on this topic.

Respectfully submitted,  
Tom Brenner

#### National Day of Mourning: A Reminder

Since 1970, Native Americans and our supporters have gathered at noon on Cole's Hill in Plymouth to commemorate a National Day of Mourning on the US thanksgiving holiday. Many Native Americans do not celebrate the arrival of the Pilgrims and other European settlers. Thanksgiving day is a reminder of the genocide of millions of Native people, the theft of Native lands, and the relentless assault on Native culture. Participants in National Day of Mourning honor Native ancestors and the struggles of Native peoples to survive today. It is a day of remembrance and spiritual connection as well as a protest of the racism and oppression which

### Monthly Meeting for Business, Worcester Friends Meeting

**Date: November 12, 2017**

Present: Daron Barnard, Katharine Barnard, Mary Bennett, Clarence Burley, Tom Brenner, Mary Chenaille, Jane Cutting, Paul Gallagher, Jessica Seem, Matthew Shorten, Mark Sullivan, Phil Stone, Kevin Walsh  
Clerking: Daron Barnard

The meeting opened with silent worship and reading of NEYM Query 11: Social Responsibility.

#### 1. Business Items

- a. Childcare. We have not recently had young children at meeting and so have not had a regular childcare provider. After discussion, it is decided to restart weekly childcare. This would provide coverage for visitors with small children, assistance for the First Day School teacher, and also support for younger elementary age children. Katharine will contact the childcare provider and also clarify terms of the agreement (\$15/hour, also coverage for business meeting).
- b. The Meeting is in acceptance of a proposed change to First Day School schedule, such that children will be in First Day School for the first 45 min of worship and enter Meeting for the end of worship.

## 1. Treasurer's Report

- a. The Treasurer presented the monthly balance report. Income lags by \$1000 from projected, as the donor pool (Meeting members & attenders) has diminished. Expenses are higher for building maintenance due to new windows and other improvements.
- b. The Treasurer requests contact information for the donations we are allocating to natural disaster relief.
- c. The Treasurer presented the quarterly balance sheet for the Meeting. This sparked discussion about the use versus protection of our assets. Our Meeting's expenses (especially in house maintenance) have in recent years exceeded our income (fundraising), requiring use of the interest income from our savings account. There are differing opinions within the Meeting as to whether this practice is advisable. It is recognized that many of the building expenditures that we are incurring now are for maintenance projects that had been postponed for many years, and also that building expenses are anticipated to be ongoing. If we wish to invest in environmentally conscious renovations of the Meetinghouse, that will also represent a cost. We recognize that decisions about how we manage our assets is not just a financial question but also a spiritual concern. To better consider the multifaceted concerns on this issue, we planned to convene a 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday discussion on November 19 at 9:30am, so as to occur prior to Practical Committee's consideration of the annual budget. The Treasurer will bring the draft of 2018 budget.
- d. We recognize that our diminished membership size may reflect a need for outreach, and we feel that Quakers have much to offer in response to current societal concerns. It is important to those gathered, however, to note that our motivation for outreach is in sharing of our spiritual selves rather than out of concern for the Meeting's finances.

## 2. Committee Reports:

- a. **Practical.** The snow removal crew proposes to renew this year's contract with a \$500 increase over last year. They propose a total of \$3000 for this winter, half to be paid now and the remainder in February. This will include driveway, sidewalk, and building entry and ramps. The Meeting agrees to this proposal and Mary Chenaille will make arrangements including a simple contract.
- b. **Spiritual Life.** Geoff Knowlton is taking a leave as Clerk and Mary Bennett will fill the role. Mary Bennett will provide the "Carbon Calculator" for the building. She also notes her participation in NEYM committee on climate change, and the overlap of their work with the *Faith and Practice* revisions work with respect to the importance of language. It is noted that the revisions committee welcomes any comments on the *Faith and Practice* draft, which is accessible on line through NEYM website and also via hard copy in our library. Outreach to those affected by recent natural disasters includes several Friends' individual donations to Monteverde Friends School (Costa Rica) and a letter of support to Friend Jean Johnson in Santa Rosa CA. Mention is made of Richard Schmidt's well-written letter on the theme of white supremacy to the editor of the *Worcester Telegram and Gazette*.
- c. **Gifts and Leadings** The committee's work continues and they plan to meet next on November 19. The committee solicits members' reflections on roles they may contribute to the Meeting.
- d. **Peace Social Concerns and Outreach.** The group continues to prioritize race issues and social justice work. They recognize the importance of Catherine Wooten's social outreach work and the tools she makes available on line. The Meeting provided a meeting place for the Student Immigrant Movement and wishes to continue to provide support for that group. There is opportunity to lobby for criminal justice reform and Phil Stone will make that information available to the Meeting. Friends continue to be involved in SURJ. Worcester Interfaith has

sponsored petitions in support of increased minimum wage and family leave, and these are available in the lobby for signature. Note is made of a recent ordinance passed in Providence to limit racial profiling by police, and Friends can read more about this in Martha Yeager's article in *Quaker Action*.

#### 4. Announcements

- a. Memorial service for Friend Edward Baker will be held Saturday November 18 at 4pm in Westerly, RI. Directions and information are available through the NEYM web page.
- b. Framingham Friends Meeting extends an invitation to hear Kenyan Quaker pastor Moses Morenga Simiyu during his visit to Framingham on Sunday November 26. Friends can also meet with him during a conversation hour at Beacon Hill Friends House on Monday November 27.
- c. NEYM Permanent Board will next meet on Saturday November 17 in Westerly RI, wrapping up in time to attend Ed Baker's memorial service in the afternoon.
- d. The Meeting newsletter, as always, solicits submissions.

The meeting closed with silence.

Respectfully submitted,  
Katharine Barnard

#### Racial Justice Course Offered Spring 2018: Letter from NEYM's Lisa Graustein

At Sessions this summer, I heard many Friends wanting to deepen their understanding of and ability to challenge white supremacy. I also heard a longing to do this work in distinctly Quaker ways while also unpacking the ways white supremacy is a part of our current Quaker culture. For me, the lens of racial justice is more inclusive, creative, and effective than just challenging white supremacy. Identifying and dismantling white supremacy is critically important work, particularly for those of us who are white. But it is only part of the larger work we are called to. Racial justice is the work of dismantling racist and oppressive systems within ourselves and our organizations and replacing those systems with new ways of being that are just and work to heal the wounds that racism causes. For me, racial justice is about fully realizing the world and relationships God intends for us. I will be offering a 3-month racial justice course for Friends this spring. We will meet for a day retreat at the beginning and end, and then meet virtually as a whole group and in person, locally/via phone, in smaller groups, over the 3 months.

The three goals are:

To grow our individual and collective understanding of racial justice and our part in racism and racial justice.

To build transformational skills through worship, learning, action, and companionship.

To make tangible, justice-based change in our communities.

Online meetings will be a chance to share new frameworks, material, and learning; spend time in prayer and worship; and maintain the community we build at the in-person retreat. The small group meetings of 3 to 5 people will be a chance for Friends to share about their experiences, worship together, and support each other in the racial justice work each person is undertaking. If this sounds like something you might be interested in, I would be grateful for your input via this Google form on this page <https://neym.org/news/racial-justice-course-offered-spring-2018> and you are welcome to e-mail me [lisa@neym.org](mailto:lisa@neym.org) I want to design the course to be both effective and accessible to Friends from throughout New England.

Please feel free to share this with Friends who might be interested but are not on the NEYM mailing list.



## Ending Mass Incarceration Update

At the end of September 2017, the MA Comprehensive Criminal Justice Omnibus bill Senate bill 2170 was filed. On October 26, 2017, the bill (<https://malegislature.gov/Bills/190/S2185>) passed the Senate 27 to 10. The house version of the bill (<https://malegislature.gov/Bills/190/S2200>) was passed 144 - 9 on November 17, 2017.

The House bill contains significant amendments which could lead toward a more humane criminal justice system in Massachusetts. Among the amendments are 1) provisions to reduce the wait time for expungement of certain records from 10 years in the original House bill to 7 years for felonies and 3 years for misdemeanors, 2) mandated training for police officers in bias-free policing, procedural justice, de-escalation techniques, and management of mental health emergencies, 3) no unreasonable limitations on in-person visits with someone in a correctional institution and video visits must be in addition to, not instead of, in-person visits, 4) improved medical treatment for opioid addicted inmates among other provisions. A summary overview of these amendments was compiled by Lori Kenschaft, Coordinator of the Mass Incarceration Working Group of the First Parish Unitarian Universalist of Arlington and can be seen at [https://docs.google.com/document/d/1GCZOmRnhHrlr7NtT96mKcdj5hwRB\\_L2UdDL01cF4Cq8/edit](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1GCZOmRnhHrlr7NtT96mKcdj5hwRB_L2UdDL01cF4Cq8/edit). Ms. Kenschaft's list also includes areas of concern which have not been included in the bill.

Both senate and house bills now go to conference committee where a final version is the goal. This process is expected to occur in January after which the bill will be sent to the Governor to sign so that the bill could be implemented by Spring 2018.

Although the criminal law reform bill is a step in the right direction, much public action is still needed. Timely information about mass incarceration issues can be obtained through the EMIT-MA website <https://endmassincarcerationtogether.wordpress.com/> or by speaking to Phil Stone.

Aaron's Friendly Fare:  
Monthly Culinary Column  
by Aaron Sakulich



My father just completed writing the 'first volume' of his memoirs. They are a series of reminiscences regarding his professional life. To my surprise, I feature in only one of the stories and even then, only in a tangential way. I learned a number of things from this book, namely that 70s-era chemical plants in the south were not exactly bastions of social equality; if the Chinese businessman hosting you offers you a glass of murky liquid that he swears is good for your health, it's probably fermented seahorses; and if you are ever offered the opportunity to spend the entire night driving across the State of Michigan in order to sell some fresh peaches at a farmer's market, you should take that opportunity. Speaking of peaches and other fruits, in *Some Fruits of Solitude*, William Penn wrote: "Obedience to Parents is not only our Duty, but our Interest." And what better way to show deference to my father's greater wisdom, than to share with you his recipe for Famous Michigan Cheesy Bread? Melt one stick of butter in a pan, and mix 4 oz. Parmesan cheese with enough paprika to turn it orange. Slice a loaf of French bread into one inch thick pieces, and toast the tops of the slices under a broiler until golden brown. Dip the uncoated side into the melted butter until an even coating soaks in, then dip this wet side into the cheese until an even coating sticks. Broil until warm and bubbly. I think that the first time you try this recipe, you too will agree: making it again is definitely 'our interest'.

**Mary Chenaille** writes that the Christian Community Church of Worcester is accepting donations for needy city residents. She relayed thanks to Lucy Candib and Richard Schmitt for a recent gift of blankets and towels which are in great demand for people coming to Worcester's cold climate. The Christian Community Church also distributes women's, men's, and children's clothes and shoes throughout the community. Mary is happy to receive any similar donations from Worcester Friends throughout the winter. Donations may be left in the kitchen at the Meetinghouse.

**Note from the Editor:**

The Worcester Friends Newsletter can be accessed at our website <http://worcesterfriendsmeeting.org/>

If you don't want to miss an issue, Friends may also subscribe to the monthly Newsletter on the above site (which saves the Meeting both printing and postage costs). Please let us know if you know longer wish to receive individual postal mailings.

***Leadings, comments, ideas, artwork and photos are always welcome to help make the Newsletter truly representative of the WFM community.*** Share your voice through written contributions to [brennerfamily@gmail.com](mailto:brennerfamily@gmail.com) or mail/drop off at the Meetinghouse.

**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](mailto:info@worcesterfriendsmeeting.org). Items of note for the next Newsletter may also be sent to [brennerfamily@gmail.com](mailto:brennerfamily@gmail.com).*