

Worcester Friends Newsletter

October



Calendar Meetinghouse is open for Sunday Meeting for Worship at 11:00am. See page 8 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 Meeting for Worship on Zoom
Meeting ID: 935 8166 3579
Passcode: 661048

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 30th at 7:30 pm. to discuss *Sula* by Toni Morrison. Contact Lucy at lcandib@massmed.org for more info.

**SE Quarterly Friends Meeting for Business and Worship
Sunday, Oct 18, 2020 09:00 AM Eastern Time (US and Canada)
Agenda on page 6 of this newsletter**

Join Zoom Meeting
<https://zoom.us/j/93696732858?pwd=eTNZbnNpaUk5d0haa0Z0ZEIUdGswdz09>
Meeting ID: 936 9673 2858
Passcode: 274078

Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business
November 11, 2020

Meeting called to order at 9:11 am.

Clerk: reading of letter from from Plum Village Buddhist community world peace leader Thich Nhat Hanh.

Treasurer's report

Open Hearts and Hands balance \$2250

A number of checks have come in to the meeting, in response to appeal letter from PASCO, \$200 total currently, in addition to the \$800 from the original appeal (currently frozen in PayPal).

PayPal account set up for said appeal has been frozen because of a mismatch in employment ID account numbers when account was set up. Aaron will coordinate with Kevin Walsh.

An extended discussion commenced about the complexity of routing funds from the Meeting to the individual groups we are supporting and ways of making it easier for members to contribute to multiple organizations. It was agreed that sending checks to the Meeting is the best and most direct course for making contributions to this fund.

Movement of funds out of Well Fargo accounts for socially responsible reasons, and into a black-owned bank is much more complex than anticipated. There are a number of investment accounts and several people would need to be involved in approving the transfer..

The Buddhist group that uses the meetinghouse continues to pay in spite of not using it. They have asked to reduce payment to \$50. Practical Committee has proposed that we tell them that no payment should be collected while the pandemic continues and the meeting members agreed.

A discussion of the source for funds to support mailing of appeal letter. Should it come from the general fund or PASCO? Agreed that it should (ideally) come from Support for Worcester Organizations in PASCO budget, but the \$10k that was paid out earlier this year was never included in PASCO budget as it was agreed to by the Business Meeting.

The treasurer does not agree that the approx. \$150 being spent for mailing appeal letter represent a sufficient return on investment based on funds collected so far but will stand aside on this issue.

Quarterly Meeting for Southeast Quarter will be next Sunday November 18 at 9:30am

Practical Committee report

Requests for use of the cemetery - In general, any requests related to paranormal interest will be denied. Practical Committee will handle future requests related to cemetery usage.

A large tree limb has come down in the cemetery. From pictures provided, it's difficult to tell whether it can be removed easily or if a tree service will be required.

An industrial-strength dehumidifier has been recommended as an option to painting basement walls with a sealing material; sealing around doors also recommended. \$3154 estimated for dehumidifier. According to a person consulted about this, moisture from the basement is a significant contributor to the failure of paint on the outside. The meeting agreed to the expenditure for the dehumidifier.

A tree in back of the meetinghouse needs to be dealt with. Even though there is a National Grid power line running through it, National Grid will not come out to deal with it. Taking off the branch may kill the tree and without National Grid cooperation, the the meeting agreed that the best course is to pay to remove the tree before it has a chance to cause damage.

The woman who has done landscaping for the Meeting has requested that we allow her to use a space in the meetinghouse for fiddle practice and to pay as led. The meeting agreed to allow this.

Peace and Social Concerns

PASCO will be sending out appeal letter by mail.

Regular quarterly donation to FUST may be diverted to Bulungi Tree Shade meeting. Future contributions to FUST will become more sporadic and based on periodic needs.

Other Items from PASCO report:

ANTI-RACIST Work:

We are pursuing work on anti-racism through linking with Worcester Interfaith who are organizing a virtual meeting this week with legislators from Worcester districts about legislative action on police brutality and racial profiling. Through Interfaith we may also be able to connect with the Black Ministerial Alliance who might talk to us about the experience of being black in Worcester.

From Interfaith:

"Our zoom meeting will be held on Tuesday, October 13th from 5-7pm via zoom. We have confirmations from almost all but 1 of the state delegation. We will also have Rahsaan Hall, Racial Justice Director from the ACLU, MA join us.

ACLU, MA - "Massachusetts lawmakers are working to produce a final police reform bill in the coming weeks, and we need them to pass the strongest possible language to hold police accountable. Police misconduct happens here too, and it's time for lawmakers to stop ignoring that fact."

Please let Devra know if you are available to attend this meeting. If so we will send you a link to participate. Devra@worcester-interfaith.org 215-764-9895

From the ACLU

More ways to support the police reform bill:

It's time for solidarity with Black community leaders on the Policing Reform Bill — H.4886/S.2820 in the legislature.

In early October a group of Black community leaders issued a letter to the legislature, calling for limits to qualified immunity, restrictions on use of force, a strong officer licensing program, expanded expungement, and more. They are looking for signatures on line and calls to legislators on the bill.

<https://www.change.org/p/black-leaders-of-the-commonwealth-of-massachusetts-police-reform-letter>

Here's how to email the conference committee and call your legislators:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1B_qBWghWHhXgxe3KEKBULs2shYb5PekAvkF9Uy104RU/edit

Mary has had some difficulty in finding labels and making the printer work with them. She and Sheila and others will be at the meetinghouse on Monday the 12th to assemble letters with envelopes and hopefully figure out the label printing regimen.

Respectfully submitted,
Tom Brenner

Presiding Clerk's Message to Monthly Meetings

September 2020

To Friends around New England:

We are all wrestling with what our faith and the Divine require of us in this strange time when the pandemic has upset our usual patterns and helped to reveal the atrocities of life in New England, in the U.S., and in the world. During this summer's NEYM business sessions, we turned the agenda over to allow Friends to hear how some among us are engaged in social justice work. We explored ways that Friends might engage more deeply in addressing racism and the climate crisis.

The gathered body approved forwarding two items to monthly meetings for wider discernment and engagement. For each of these initiatives, a small resource group has been appointed to shepherd and support this work. I hope that your monthly meeting will take up this work, engage with these documents and, as helpful, make use of the support provided.

Right Relationship with Indigenous Peoples

The first of these concerns came to the Yearly Meeting from the Reparations Working Group of the Permanent Board, established in 2017 when the Legacy Gift Committee observed that a number of Friends in New England were engaged with concerns relating to right relationship with the indigenous peoples of our region, and asked the Yearly Meeting to consider how to further support this work.

These concerns included both learning about the history of how Native people have been treated by the dominant white culture, and learning about and supporting current concerns of Native Americans in the Northeast. Much of this work grew out of the Yearly Meeting's repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery in 2013, and much work by many Friends across New England over many years.

Attached you will find a Letter of Apology to Native Americans and a set of recommendations intended to help monthly meetings learn about the history and current concerns of Native peoples. The Letter of Apology is intended to spark reflection this year and inspire your meeting to engage with the recommendations. As presiding clerk, I expect to bring the Apology back to Sessions 2021 for Friends to consider adopting and sharing it on behalf of Quakers in New England.

In order for approval to have integrity at that point, it has to be heartfelt and backed by action—not just action we say we'll take in the future, but steps we've already made toward change. For this reason we ask, "How do we live into this Apology?"

Engaging with the injustices inflicted on indigenous peoples, and our spiritual forebears' involvement, will be challenging for many of us. Be tender with yourselves and each other, but remember that this grief is ours, and is small compared to the pain and injustice experienced by Native Americans over 400 years. Those of us with European ancestry cannot expect Native people to assuage our pain.

The Letter of Apology and the Recommendations are also posted on the New England Yearly Meeting website <https://neym.org/right-relationship-indigenous-peoples-resources-engagement> Resources will be posted there, and will also be accessible through the “Strengthen Your Local Meeting” section of the website. A Right Relationship Resource Group has been appointed by the Permanent Board to shepherd this work of consultation and support. If you have questions, need some support around this work, or would like to report some activity or discernment of your monthly meeting, please contact the resource group at rightrelationship@neym.org.

Call to Urgent, Loving Action

The second document Friends gathered for Sessions heard and approved forwarding for monthly meeting consideration is the Call to Urgent, Loving Action for the Earth and Her Inhabitants, which was brought to us by the Earthcare Ministries and the Racial, Social, and Economic Justice committees of the Yearly Meeting. This Call, naming the interconnected nature of “systemic problems of racism, social injustice, violence, greed, and failure to act on the climate crisis,” asks Friends in New England to engage in discernment and action over the coming year. How are individuals, monthly meetings, and quarterly meetings called to respond to these multiple, interconnected crises?

The world needs our minds, hearts, and bodies. Friends have something to share; the world needs all the gifts we have to offer. My hope, in turning this summer’s agenda over to reflecting on injustice, was that more Friends would move from the phase of education and awareness, to a phase of direct engagement with the causes that need our attention. The Call encourages us to this movement. Some may be drawn to the streets, some to writing, some to prayer, and some to behind-the-scenes support.

The Call is attached, and can be found on the website at <https://neym.org/right-relationship-indigenous-peoples-resources-engagement> Resources to support your meeting’s engagement can also be accessed through the “Strengthen your Local Meeting” section of neym.org. If helpful, a group of Friends is available to accompany your meeting in this engagement. If you have questions, need some support, or would like to share your activities or the discernment of your monthly meeting, please contact them at calltoaction@neym.org.

I urge monthly meetings and worship groups around New England to take up this work, and to make use of the resources provided. I expect that at next year’s Sessions we will hear reports and news of what Friends have learned, what they have done, and perhaps receive some minutes to consider. I will bring the Letter of Apology back, for us to consider whether our hearts are prepared to approve signing it and sending it to Native peoples around New England.

There is heartbreak in this work, and there is joy — when we are faithful to what we are being called to, there is a great satisfaction in the work.

Bruce Neumann

Presiding Clerk, New England Yearly Meeting

Please access the above Calls, which will be discussed at 10/18/20’s Quarterly Meeting, at <https://neym.org/right-relationship-indigenous-peoples-resources-engagement>

Southeast Quarterly Meeting
October 18, 2020

Hosted by Worcester Friends Meeting via Zoom [instructions below]

9:30 AM Meeting for Business

11:00 AM Worship

12:00 PM Close of worship and announcements

12:00 PM Fellowship and lunch (BYOF)

Agenda

1. Reading and reflection; Silent worship.
2. Review and approve minutes of June 21, 2020 [attached]
3. Treasurer's report (P. Swaszek). [attached]
 - Aldrich Fund report (B. Hansen)
4. Old business
 - Black Lives Matter, Social Justice and the Election. News on activities from each monthly on these issues.
 - Reopening
 - Statistics
 - Barb Dakota – Updates on ministry
5. New business
 - Minute from Sessions: "NEYM Apology to Native Americans and Call to Action" [attached]
 - Minute from Sessions: "Call to Urgent, Loving Action for The Earth and Her Inhabitants" [attached]
 - Additional items of business.
6. News and views from Monthly Meetings
7. Next Quarterly meeting will be March 21, 2021 in Providence.
8. Silent worship

Upcoming events at Beacon Hill Friends Meeting

Join us for one or more of these events from near or afar. If you have questions, don't hesitate to email program@bhfh.org.

- [Weekday morning meditation](#) (Monday through Friday at 8 AM on Zoom)
- [Upcoming MIDWEEKs](#): Corwynn Beals, Cai Quirk (Wednesday evenings at 7:30 PM)
- [Quaker Preparation & Response to the Election](#) - evening workshop series led by Lisa Graustein (Tuesdays in October at 7:30 PM)
- [Unknowing God](#), a workshop with Jen Higgins-Newman (Sunday, October 18, 1 PM)
- [Alumni Story Hour: Fall Edition](#) (Saturday, October 24, 2 PM)
- [Holy Disruption](#): A programmed worship experiment (Friday, Oct. 30)
- [In partnership with Woolman Hill: Walking with the Bible](#), monthly Bible Hour (First Sundays at 4 PM)
- [Art Journaling as a Spiritual Practice in Turbulent Times](#) - with LJ Boswell (Saturdays in November from 10 -

Letter from Richard Schmitt, Co-Clerk PSCO

Dear Friends,

In the middle of last night I woke up thinking that the PASCO meeting this morning should also consider how to prepare for the possible refusal of the president to leave office if the election goes against him. This is pretty scary and not something one wants to think about. But the President has mentioned this possibility repeatedly. We need to take that seriously.

As we all know this may take different forms, refusing to count ballots, refusing to accept the result of votes by claiming fraud, interfering with the voting and ballot counting process in different places, claiming massive fraud and therefore declaring a victory for the sitting president, etc.

I believe we need to prepare for those possibilities. We do not need to get into arguments about how likely any of these eventualities is. But it would be foolish to ignore this threat to the coming election.

If the president tries to impose on us a government that we did not vote for, we need to make very clear that we will not cooperate with an illegitimate government. What that will mean in detail will depend on our own inventiveness. It might mean that people go on strike, for instance teachers and police officers. City Hall might shut down and stores close.

Groups such as the Worcester Meeting of Friends or other religious congregations need to talk today about what they are going to do if the election does not proceed as it ought to proceed. How will we make it very clear that we don't accept an illegitimate government?

Here are some concrete suggestions:

1. The Worcester Meeting of Friends will have a special meeting to discuss these issues and how to prepare for an election that does not proceed as the Constitution demands.
2. We will encourage our friends in other groups – religious or otherwise – to have similar meetings so that they are prepared for possible crises in November.
3. We will send letters to the city government, the chief of police, the school department to ask them what they plan to do if our elections do not proceed as the Constitution demands.
4. To Matt--can you call such a meeting.

Richard Schmitt Co-Clerk PSCO

Watch for upcoming meeting to address the above issue and please see Clerk Matt Shorten's recommendation for reading George Lakey's thoughts at wagingnonviolence.org/2020/09/what-will-it-take-to-defend-the-election-heres-one-winning-strategy/

Hope is important because it can make the present moment less difficult to bear. If we believe that tomorrow will be better, we can bear a hardship today.

-Thich Nhat Hanh, celebrating 94 earthly years on October 11, 2020

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.

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.