



WFM NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2022

Worcester Friends Meeting (Religious Society of Friends)

WFM acknowledges that our Meetinghouse sits on the traditional territory of the Nipmuc Nation.

901 Pleasant Street, Worcester, MA 01602

508-754-3887

www.WorcesterFriendsMeeting.org

Worcester Friends Meeting offers hybrid (combination of both in-person and virtual worship options). We continue to monitor safety of in-person worship as related to fluctuating community COVID risk. The CDC's color-coded community risk levels provide a guide to respond flexibly and appropriately to changes in COVID prevalence.

- Green = low risk: We will continue hybrid worship, requesting that in-person worshippers mask, and using air purifier in the Meeting room
- Yellow = medium risk: As above, plus noting that higher risk individuals may wish to choose virtual worship
- Orange = high risk: We will suspend in-person worship and continue virtual worship until risk level falls.

Spiritual Life committee members will monitor the CDC site on a weekly basis and provide updates for the Weekly Reminders as to whether our community risk level allows for in-person indoor worship. Friends may also choose to monitor community risk levels individually as well and make decisions about their personal attendance. We will try to broadcast any changes in status that may arise between Wednesdays and Sundays, but people may also choose to individually monitor the COVID community risk level using the CDC weblink:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/covid-by-county.html>

Sunday Meeting for Worship 11:00 am.

<https://zoom.us/j/93581663579?pwd=eDFxUjVyL2lISTI2NkxsZWlFUTE0QT09>

Meeting ID: 935 8166 3579

Passcode: 661048

If attending via Zoom, please enter worship in silence and keep audio muted until moved to speak.

Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business is held on the second Sunday of the month at 9:00 am. Please contact Daron at daronbarnard@yahoo.com with items for Business.

Zoom Link for Business Meeting:

<https://zoom.us/j/92774446613?pwd=M2lyeWJjZVpqTHB4bTJNdWRyRnlhZz09>

Meeting ID: 927 7444 6613

Passcode: 253544

Saturday Worship of Worcester Friends Meeting meets on **Saturday Mornings at 11:00 am.**

<https://zoom.us/j/98621922427?pwd=S1hKZ1hZQmp0MW5hRW9XMjN3TzdHQT09>

Meeting ID: 986 2192 2427

Passcode: 983394

Friendly Bible Study continues on **Wednesdays 9am-10am.**

<https://zoom.us/j/99835123902?pwd=dGVPRnFCWit4RIUzMUN4c09xc0FLQT09>

Meeting ID: 998 3512 3902

Passcode: 436310

Please contact mjchenaille@yahoo.com for more information.

FRIENDS YOUNG AND OLD, SAVE THE DATES:

New England Yearly Meeting intends to hold Annual Sessions in person at Castleton University in Castleton, Vermont in August 5-11 with an option to participate in some portions via Zoom. NEYM is in discernment about the current Covid conditions and how things might unfold between now and the summer. Further information will be posted in March on the NEYM website.

NEYM Resource Sheet for Right Relationship with Native Americans

As communicated in the Minutes below, the NEYM mandate for establishing right relationship with Native Americans goes beyond PASCO to the entire Meeting. A resource list of sources to help in our discernment can be found at the link below:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Jk9-ZVmP9CaGOXFrlunjPZPgZ0pxDA2n2VxAnRS3X14/edit?usp=sharing>

Worcester Friends Meeting State of Society Report, March 2022

Members and attenders of Worcester Friends Meeting met on March 6, 2022, to consider State of Society of our Meeting. As always, we treasure the time spent together in reflection and appreciation.

Worship has continued to be a meaningful anchor for our community during the pandemic — and maybe especially because of the pandemic. We continue to work to navigate hybrid meetings and worship, and still are searching for optimal technology to support connection and inclusion. Not having the right technology is a source of frustration. Our worship is sometimes quiet of vocal ministry, but what is shared is meaningful. In balance, we have developed a robust go-around after worship as a means of fellowship. People often share what they have experienced or wrestled with in worship, and this deepens our spiritual community. Our Saturday worship group continues to meet for Christ-centered worship, and having this option is valued by both those who participate and those who choose not to. Offering a Saturday worship option means that it is open to Friends from around the Yearly Meeting who wish to also attend their home Meetings on Sundays.

We appreciate our consistent, long-term members and attenders and also feel great joy in having multiple new attenders and four new members join during the past year. The new members have brought energy and enthusiasm to committee work, especially to Peace, Social Concerns and Outreach, and especially in activities that involve putting our Meeting forward in the community. One new member commented that Worcester Friends have been generous in not only welcoming but also extending a sense of confidence in new members, which helps invite them in to the work of the Meeting. We are in an ebb regarding families with children, and miss having young Friends in the Meeting.

We have in the past struggled with how to balance shared action and support individual leadings. At the present time, we feel we have found a good balance. There are issues to which the entire Meeting feels committed - racial justice, for example - and multiple actions have been undertaken and supported by the whole Meeting. These activities and issues feel vibrant and alive, and benefit from the amplification that comes from corporate action. There are other issues which particular members have taken up in response to leadings, and those members are spiritually supported by the Meeting.

Our Meeting continues to wrestle, year after year, with how to manage our financial resources. We struggle with whether to spend our savings supporting causes that we find important, or upgrading our Meetinghouse (for example, improving accessibility or “greening” the building), or whether to save our money for future needs. The latter feels more in line with the Quaker value of “stewardship” but the former with our social conscience. We trust that we will continue to meet in discernment of the best way forward with this perennially difficult issue.

We recognize that our contributions to Meeting and to our broader community are not just monetary but that we also give of ourselves - our time, our attention, and our care for one another. We value our community, and, despite the challenges of the past two years, we are grateful in so many ways.

Worcester Friends Meeting
Meeting for Business
April 10, 2022

Clerking: Daron Barnard

Present: Daron and Katharine Barnard, Mary Chenaille, Jim Gleaton, Mike Shell, Ellen Perry, Mike Mallory, Karen Sargent, Matt Shorten, Tom Brenner, Lucy Candib, Richard Schmitt

The Meeting gathered with silence and a reading from NEYM Faith and Practice, Advices and Queries: Do you allow the Inward Teacher to work in you? Are you teachable?

Business Items:

1. **State of Society Report.** Worcester Friends met March 6, 2022, to consider the State of Society. Notes from that session were converted into a report which was edited by attenders and the final version read out today. The report was approved and will be forwarded to the Quarter and the Yearly Meeting. Friends express appreciation to Katharine Barnard for writing up the report.
2. **Memorial for Clarence Burley.** We are sorely missing Clarence Burley, who passed away last month. Plans for honoring Clarence:
 1. Memorial Service: We will hold a memorial service for Clarence, aligned with his written wishes which we have in hand, which include selected readings and poetry. Spiritual Life Committee will take the service under its care. Others who are interested in helping with logistics are welcomed to volunteer. We propose Saturday, May 7, 2022, at 11am for the service. We will advertise this within the Yearly Meeting, and plan a hybrid service to allow people attend from farther away.
 2. Memorial Minute: The process for memorial minutes is that the Meeting will gather information and write up the minute, which will then be forwarded to the Quarter and then the Yearly Meeting. We realize that the timing is such that this will not be ready for NEYM sessions 2022. Karen Sargent and Katharine Barnard offer to work on writing the minute. Daron will seek input from people in the Yearly Meeting who knew and corresponded with Clarence.
 3. Physical memorial at the Meetinghouse: We would like to plant a beautiful blooming tree or bush in Clarence's memory. Friends remember his enjoyment of the Friends Cemetery and also of the blooming azaleas and rhododendrons of Moore State Park. We also note his commitment to right relationship and thus would favor planting native species. After discussion, we decided that we would like to plant a dogwood tree at the Meetinghouse and a rhododendron or azalea at the cemetery (near its gates). Practical Committee will take this project under their care.
3. **In person gathering at the Meetinghouse with respect to COVID.** Spiritual Life Committee proposes a way forward with gathering for indoor worship in light of ongoing, fluctuating COVID prevalence in the community. We have been offering hybrid worship (virtual and in person). The question is how to evaluate safety of in-person gathering. Spiritual Life proposes using the CDC's system of community risk stratification to guide our decision-making. The following guidance will be included in the Weekly Reminders. Members of Spiritual Life Committee will monitor the CDC

website on a weekly basis and provide information to Sheila for the week's email. Following are details of the text:

The CDC's color-coded community risk levels provide a guide to respond flexibly and appropriately to changes in COVID prevalence.

- Green = low risk: We will continue hybrid worship, requesting that in-person worshippers mask, and using air purifier in the Meeting room

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Spiritual Life committee members will monitor the CDC site on a weekly basis and provide updates for the Weekly Reminders as to whether our community risk level allows for in-person indoor worship. Friends may also choose to monitor community risk levels individually as well and make decisions about their personal attendance.

Friends wishing to learn more about the CDC's system and view the US county-specific COVID risk map, including the up-to-date Worcester County risk level can use this link:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/covid-by-county.html>

- 4. Fellowship Hour.** Friends miss food and fellowship as a means of sustaining our community. As we consider gathering in person, we would like to consider how to restart this tradition. Friends feel comfortable with sharing food and drink if it were conducted outdoors. It would be ideal to have an overhead shelter (non-enclosed tent). Practical committee is asked to take up the question of what a shelter could entail. For the time being, we will plan to start with drinks and finger foods, to be taken outdoors, after worship next First Day.

- 5. Mandate from NEYM to address the letter of apology for Native Americans.** Richard and Lucy ask that the whole Meeting take up consideration of this item as it goes beyond PSCO, and is truly a spiritual and corporate consideration. Richard also provides that in conversation with Nipmuc people, we have heard that they would value education more than apology — ie that it is not a matter of apologizing, but of others showing an interest in learning about Native history. Working together on shared projects is also a meaningful way forward. Friends contribute that offering burial space in our cemetery might be something tangible that we could share. We would like to build relationships in a way that is not burdensome for Nipmuc people but that opens communication and builds collaboration. Lucy and Richard, who are working on building a relationship with local Nipmuc people, can ask if there are actions or projects that we could show up to in a way that is amplifying, supportive, and collaborative. There is interest in the broader Meeting for participation, and Lucy and Richard will keep us apprised of what they find out.

Committee reports:

- 1. Practical Committee:** Matt reports that he will Clerk the Practical Committee this year. The committee has purchased the new laptop computer. They are determining a secure place to store it, and also optimal microphone and speaker hook-ups. The furnace is an ongoing problem, and the committee is looking for a plumber to replace it. Mary plans to meet with two plumbers tomorrow to discuss what's needed. Karen and Mike Mallory are also supporting Mary in working

on this. Karen offered to address the bittersweet vine that is a problem in the yard, and there is approval for her to do this. The committee asks for Meeting's approval to rehire Carlos to do landscaping at the Meetinghouse and the cemetery. Carlos has proposed a \$200 increase in price for this year. The Meeting approves hiring him for \$2900 for this season. We would plan to pay him half up front and half mid-way through the season as we have in the past. There are painting projects that are needed, and the committee will look into painting the stained area of the ceiling of the Meeting room, the floors of the NEYM offices (where the rug was ripped up), and the ceiling of the 2nd floor bathroom. It is pointed out that the ramp to the front entrance is also in need of attention as the finish is peeled off.

2. **Spiritual Life Committee:** The committee also reports on care and communication with the Saturday Worship Group. There was consideration of a name change for the group, but they have decided to continue to use that name for the time being. There will also be consideration of changing the meeting time from 11:00am if it would help with attendance.
3. **Peace, Social Concerns and Outreach:** PSCO Clerks report planning a June dinner with LGBT Asylum Task Force. They also report working on making connection with local Nipmuc people, including Cheryl Toney Holly, and continued work on the land acknowledgement monument.

The meeting closed with minutes of silence and transition to meeting for worship.

In the Light,
Katharine Barnard, Recording Clerk

On May 2nd at 7:30 p.m., Mary Norman and Wendy Sanford, co-creators of *These Walls Between Us: A Memoir of Friendship Across Race and Class*, will talk with K. Melchor Quick Hall about the book's themes and possibilities. They invite you to reflect with them on how Quaker values might lead us to break down the institutional and cultural walls that continue to separate racial groups in the US. This online event is free of charge. [Register with Pendle Hill.](#)



Announcing the next NEYM Children and Family Ministries Coordinator:

Dear Friends,

As vital members of the community of our youth ministries, we're writing to let you know that, after a loving, grounded and care-filled search process by the yearly meeting, Kara Price has been invited to serve as the next Children and Family Ministries Coordinator.

Kara has been part of our youth programs for most of her life—as an attender, a JYM and JHYM staffer, a JHYM Sessions coordinator, and a parent. She brings a longstanding Call to ministry, a degree and work experience in education, and youth ministry leadership experience both within Friends and in a large, diverse congregational context in another denomination. She is known to most of the youth program volunteers in our yearly meeting and to many of our JYM and JHYM youth. She's firmly rooted and grounded in Friends faith communities, including in her local meeting in Storrs, Connecticut. She's also a musician, songwriter, and lover of games and silliness. We are deeply grateful for Kara's clear YES to carrying on the beloved ministry of this yearly meeting.

There will be much to learn, to tweak, and to step into, and we ask for your prayers, help, patience, and care. While Gretchen is committed to being a primary mentor and elder for Kara through this transition, the collective wisdom and heart of this ministry is held by the circle of youth staff, Youth Ministries Committee members, young people themselves and families. We have faith that, grounded in Spirit, prayer, gratitude, trust, and joy, this ministry and community of Friends will continue to thrive and shine.

How can we support Kara and the Youth Programs?

Please hold Kara, Gretchen, the Yearly Meeting Youth Ministries Team, and all of the staff, youth and families in much Light through this time. Listen for ways that you can help with this transition. If we all lean into trusting Spirit and each other, all shall be well.

If you have any questions about the search, the transition, or hopes and prayers for next steps, feel free to reach out to Noah at noah@neym.org, or by phone at 802-451-6931.

Please join us in expressing much gratitude and welcome to Kara! You can send messages to her at kara@neym.org. Because of the transition, she won't be able to respond to messages for a while, but we'll make sure she receives them.

With love and gratitude,
Gretchen Baker-Smith and Noah Merrill

Action Alert:

Title 42, a brutal policy initiated under Trump, strips people at the border of the right to seek asylum by expelling them to Mexico or their country of origin without any opportunity to seek protection under U.S. laws. After a recent review of the policy, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) found the policy is not necessary to protect public health and issued an order ending the policy effective May 23.

The decision to end Title 42 was a critical victory in our fight to restore the human right to seek asylum. But now, anti-immigrant lawmakers are attempting to override CDC and the Biden administration by passing legislation in Congress that mandates Title 42's continuation. **We must take action: Tell Congress to oppose any interference with CDC's decision to end the brutal, anti-immigrant Title 42 policy.**

Message Recipients: Your U.S. Senators and Representative

<https://action.aclu.org/send-message/congress-do-not-reinstate-title-42>

From Worcester Interfaith:

We have made progress in our community-led lawsuit to change the School Committee electoral structure. Now it's time to draw a map for 6 districts, 2 which will have a majority of people of color. The plaintiff group made a draft map and is seeking input from Worcester residents. If you have thoughts about what the district map should look like or want to learn more, join us next week at a virtual community meeting --

Wednesday April 20th at 6:30pm on Zoom.

WPS Superintendent Search Progress:

On Tuesday, **April 19**, the Worcester School Committee will be meeting in public session to announce the finalists (currently the meeting is posted for 5; it may get bumped back to 4). The rest of that week, Worcester School Committee members will visit the home districts of finalists.

The following week (April 25), finalists will visit the district during the day, and be interviewed in the evening by the full Worcester School Committee in public session.

The Committee will make its selection of the next Superintendent of the Worcester Public Schools, to start July 1, on April 28.



Superintendent Search
Tuesday, April 19
Finalists announced

Wednesday, April 20- Friday, April 22
Worcester School Committee visits to finalists' home districts

Monday, April 25- Thursday, April 28
Finalists' visits to Worcester and interviews with the Worcester School Committee

Selection Thursday, April 28

Scheduled Meetings

Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business Second Sunday, 9AM

All are invited via Zoom.

<https://zoom.us/j/92774446613?pwd=M2lyeWJjZVpqTHB4bTJNdWRyRnlhZz09>

Meeting ID: 927 7444 6613

Passcode: 253544

Spiritual Life Committee-Tom Brenner Third Sunday, 9:30 AM

Practical Committee-Karen Sargent

All are invited via Zoom.

First Sunday, 9:30 AM

Practical Committee

Time: This is a recurring meeting 1st Sunday at 9:30 am

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://wpi.zoom.us/j/94987779468>

Meeting ID: 949 8777 9468

Peace, Social Concerns and Outreach-Lucy Candib & Richard Schmitt

All are invited via Zoom.

Fourth Sunday, 9:30 AM

PASCO Meeting

Time: This is a recurring meeting 4th Sunday at 9:30 am

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/94128999438?pwd=NkM3TmRoQ2JZSDhtKzItSUI2eFRxdz09>

Meeting ID: 941 2899 9438

Passcode: 948220

Clerk of Worcester Friends Meeting-Daron Barnard

Recording Clerk-Katharine Barnard

Corresponding Clerk-Mary Chenaille

First Day School-Michelle Flint, Matt Shorten

Newsletter-Sheila Brenner

Please send general correspondence to info@worcesterfriendsmeeting.org.

Donations are appreciated and can be mailed to Worcester Friends Meeting

901 Pleasant St.

Worcester, MA 01602.