



Tony Hale
Calusa Nature Center

FORT MYERS MONTHLY MEETING OF THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

Newsletter, Fifth Month, 2018

Worship: In the Iona House at the Calusa Nature Center
Mailing Address: 117 East Mariana Ave. North Fort Myers FL 33927
E-mail: ftmyers.quakers@gmail.com **Website:** www.fortmyersquakers.org

Clerk: Joan Culver (joanculver@gmail.com)
Recording Clerks: Kathy Hale / Richard Frechette
Treasurer: John Battin

- 1st Sunday of the Month: Pot Luck Lunch
 - 2nd Sunday of Month: Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business
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QUERIES & ADVICES *from Faith & Practice of Southeastern Yearly Meeting*

Education

Queries:

- Do we share our deepest beliefs and values with each other and with our children, while leaving them free to develop as the Spirit may lead them?
- Does the meeting give the children loving care and promote their spiritual life through religious education and other activities?
- Do we encourage our children's participation in the meeting's work and cultivate their desire for service to others?
- How do we educate our members and attenders about the Bible (especially the teachings of Jesus), other spiritual literature, and the history, principles, and practices of Friends?

Advices:

- Seek for ourselves and for our children the full development of God's gifts, which is true education.
- Realize that education should continue throughout life and that all should share its opportunities and privileges.
- Make time for regular personal prayer and worship and for reading the Bible, Friends literature, Faith and Practice, the queries and advices, and other sources of spiritual value.
- Seek truth together in our families and among Friends in shared worship and discussion.
- Teach by being teachable. Be open to new ideas and approaches.
- Reach out to that of God in everyone, and endeavor to live out the testimonies of Friends in all the expected and unexpected circum-stances of daily life

**MINUTES OF THE FORT MYERS MONTHLY MEETING
OF THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS
5th Month 13, 2018**

The Fort Myers Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends met in Iona House on 5th Month 13 with 17 Friends present. The meeting opened with a period of silent centering. Out of the silence, Clerk Joan Culver read queries and advices on education.

Treasurer's Report: Treasurer John Battin provided the following report for the period ended April 30, 2018:

	2017	2018
Contributions	\$ 5,864	\$ 9,294
Outlays	\$ (1,872)	\$ (4,966)
Difference	\$ 3,992	\$ 4,328
General Fund Cash on Hand April 1 ,2018		\$ 4,496
General Fund Contributions April, 2018		\$ 2,325
Budgeted Outlays April 2018		\$ (2,493)
Cash on Hand April 30,2018		\$ 4,328
	#####	
General Funds Savings April 1 2018		\$ 32,909
Interest Earned 4/2018		\$ 10
General Funds Savings April 30,2018		\$ 32,919
Meeting House Savings April 1,2018		\$ 72,492
Contribution		\$ 5,000
Interest Earned 4/18		\$ 15
Meetinghouse Savings April 30,2018		\$ 77,507
Notes:		
A generous contribution of \$5,000 was made to our Meeting House funds in April 2018		
SEYM sent us a notice of our 2018-2019 apportionment. The total is \$5,173, which is much higher than the \$4,300 amount in our 2018 budget. As we have in the past, 1/2 of the apportionment will be paid in June with the balance in the fall		

John provided an explanation of SEYM's method for calculating the apportionment for each Monthly Meeting. A question was asked about the cost to the meeting for members and attendees. The Finance Committee along with Treasurer John Battin and Clerk Joan Culver will clarify the apportionment process and will report back to the meeting.

Ministry & Counsel: Richard Frechette noted that, for the last 6 or seven weeks, a statement prepared by Ministry & Council regarding children in meeting for worship was read at the beginning of worship. The Committee feels it may be time for the Meeting as a whole to consider uniting with that statement. After discussion, Friends approved the following minute.

- ❖ **2018MM4:** You will notice that we have small children who remain with us during the meeting for worship. We take seriously our role in supporting these children in their growth within the Friends' community. We welcome them and accept their soft sounds as vocal ministry.

Religious Education:

The Committee met last Sunday and determined that it would sponsor a post-worship session on May 27 using the booklet "Quality and Depth of Worship and Ministry" which will be facilitated by Roxy Jacobs. Also, the Committee will sponsor a retreat session in November which will be led by Beverly Ward, SEYM Secretary for Earth-care. It was noted that the Committee is now down to two (Roxy & Connie) and needs a few more members. This matter has been referred to Nominating Committee to address.

Peace & Social Concerns:

Carolyn Stanley, Clerk of P&SC, reported that the committee has prepared a letter to the CEO and Board President of the Wendy's Corporation, and asks that the meeting approve the letter.

- ❖ **2018MM5:** We approve the following letter to the Wendy's Corporation in the name of our Meeting.

*Mr. Todd Penegor, CEO
Mr. Nelson Peltz, Board Chairman
The Wendy's Company
One Day Thomas Blvd.
Dublin, OH. 43017*

Dear Mr. Penegor and Mr. Peltz,

We are writing to inform you that we pledge to boycott Wendy's until the company joins all of its major competitors in working with the Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW) to guarantee farmworkers' fundamental human rights in its supply chain.

Wendy's has abandoned its longtime suppliers in Florida — because of the implementation of the CIW's Presidential Medal-winning Fair Food Program there — and moved its purchases to Mexico, where wage theft, sexual violence, forced labor and other human rights violations are endemic and go largely unchecked. To turn your back on long-overdue progress for this country's farmworkers, and seek out instead suppliers overseas where workers are brutally exploited and have no hope of real labor protection like those provided under the Fair Food Program is contemptible.

Your company's supplier code of conduct and inadequate promises of monitoring do nothing to change that harsh reality.

Until Wendy's commits to joining the Fair Food Program, more and more consumers nationwide will join us in pledging to boycott your restaurants.

Sincerely,

Members of the Fort Myers Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends

Both the Outreach Committee and Peace and Social Concerns have approved the idea of a Quaker T-shirt and P&SC has tentatively approved a design specific to Fort Myers Meeting developed by David Jossi. We discussed the design as well as the question of whether it is best to have a generic Quaker T-shirt or one labeled Fort Myers Religious Society of Friends. We thank David for his work in developing a sample shirt. The Committees will take the suggestions under advisement and will welcome additional suggestions.

Several Friends attended the L.I.F.E. celebration in the prior week. We exceeded our goal for financial support of the organization.

Hospitality: The Committee has put together a detailed list of 1st day hospitality duties. During the summer, Nancy Howell will procure supplies (coffee, paper goods, etc. Friends are encouraged to notify her of any needed supplies.

Properties: Tom Jacobs has prepared signs indicating "Iona House" and "Quaker Meeting" which can be easily placed over the "no trespassing signs" during First Day worship. The Meeting is grateful for Tom's work in creating such clear and well made signs.

CNCP Fees: We discussed the fee structure for special events we hold at the Nature Center.

The Minutes were read and approved. We ended in silent worship.

Respectfully submitted,
Richard Frechette
Co-Recording Clerk

Informational Trip to Immokalee, Florida

On Monday, April 16, 6 representatives from Fort Myers Monthly Meeting went to Immokalee, Florida to meet with leaders from three different organizations. Our purpose was to learn more about the farmworker community there. In the morning we met with Rev. Miguel Estrada, pastor of Mission Peniel (www.misionpeniel.com) and Rick and Ellen Burnette, directors of Cultivate Abundance (www.cultivateabundance.org). Mission Peniel began as an extension of Beth-El Farmworker Ministries in 2006 with the goal of connecting migrant farmworkers in Immokalee to faith communities around the world. It is located across the street from the lot where buses pick up and drop off the farm workers. Every Friday they serve an average of 700 hot meals to the farmworkers as they return from work. They also provide clothes and food to the farmworkers and their families. Throughout the week they provide counseling and opportunities for worship and Bible study. Recently they have started using the building as a clinic on Saturdays. Miguel graciously and articulately spoke with us about Misión Piniel's history and the living and working conditions of the migrant farmworkers. Slumlord housing and high food prices were two concerns that were brought to our attention.

Unlike many growers in the country who offer temporary housing to their migrant farmworkers, in Immokalee farmworkers must rent their own housing. We learned that about 4 families/companies own most of the land in Immokalee and charge very high rents. Often the rent is about \$60 per week per person (child or adult) for poorly maintained housing (often trailers without heat or AC).

Rick and Ellen Burnette started their organization, Cultivate Abundance, after getting to know Miguel Estrada and learning that food

prices in the grocery stores within walking distance of the farmworkers are about 20% higher than prices in stores farther away in middle-class neighborhoods. Even though there is a huge market on the other side of town selling luscious fruits and vegetables to restauranteurs, grocery chains, middle class residents and tourists, the farmworkers don't have access to it. They do not have vehicles to get to the market. They work such long hours (often 7 days a week) they don't have time and they don't have the refrigeration for keeping food bought in bulk. Rick and Ellen have a dream of starting a large community garden in back of Mission Peniel where fresh fruits and vegetables could be obtained by farmworkers as needed on their way home from work. They are also working on finding ways to get the abundance of food that is often thrown away transported to where it can be accessed free or at low cost by the farmworkers.

After lunch at the restaurant next door to Misión Peniel and a tour of the market on the other side of town, we went to the offices of the Coalition of Immokalee Workers. There 2 gentlemen spoke with us about the terrible abuse and disrespect of the farmworkers that led to the formation of the CIW and the great strides they have made since they began their Fair Food Program. After years of unsuccessfully trying to get the growers to 'sit at the table' and negotiate with representative of the farmworkers, the CIW went to the buyers. They have convinced (often through boycotts) many fast food companies to pay a little more for their tomatoes and sign an agreement that they would only buy their tomatoes from growers who sign agreements to respect farmworkers' human rights. The CIW acts as monitors to make sure the agreements are carried out. This has been a success. Farmworker abuse has been reduced and

working conditions have improved. Unfortunately these agreements have not resulted in pay increases. Currently the Fair Food Program is targeting Wendy's, one of the last fast food chains that has refused to join the Fair Food Program.

We returned to Fort Myers with a list of suggested ways to help:

1. Make monetary donations to all or any of the three organizations. (P&SC has donated to Cultivate Abundance)
2. Donate items to Misión Peniel that are on their Donation Needs List. (A storage tub is at meeting on Sundays to collect donations. Copies of the Donations Needed list are in the tub.)

3. Volunteer to work at Misión Peniel on a Friday.
4. Support the CIW's Fair Food Program by writing to Wendy's CEO and boycotting Wendy's. (We made this our April/May letter writing issue.)
5. Volunteer to help Cultivate Abundance grow food or transport food.
6. Continue to educate ourselves and the Meeting about the ways Immokalee farm workers and their families are exploited, especially concerning housing and nutrition issues.

Carolyn Stanley,
Clerk of FMMM P&SC

Mission to Immokalee

April, 2018

When we first arrived we had no building
Land here's pricey
Rent's high too.
Four families have always controlled this town
They charge what they like
even though it's not much to look at.
vacant lots, chickens running around,
trailer parks
Haitians over here, Guatemalans there, Mexicans
All immigrants. We don't ask who's legal.
Just think: there's never been a raid. These guys are too valuable.
And there's quite a lobby in Tallahassee.

Our mission started with an RV
serving hot coffee and bread at 4 AM
Enough to sustain them until maybe a couple tortillas at lunchtime
They line up over there, across the street
Pile into the bus

Drive off with the sun in their eyes
Maybe doze a little
Or sit silent.
Stoic.
Not thinking of home.

That first day we cooked a ton of beans
Gallons of rice
Topped it off with some canned meat, a little cheese.
Anyway, we had dinner ready for them when they returned from the fields.
We do it every Friday now.
That first day
We served 750 meals.
It's a kind of luxury for them
Maybe the only hot meal they'll get the whole week.

Why, you're wondering?
his voice rising
his smile fading

Let me tell you why.
When 18 guys share a trailer
Come back dog tired at 7, 8 o'clock at night
Maybe \$50 in their pocket
No one wants to fight over their turn at the
stove
It doesn't work right anyway.
So they stop off at the tienda
That little store you see over there
Buy a sandwich, a bottle of beer
Crawl into their sleeping space for the night

After the hurricane
Folks like you came down to Immokalee
knowing we took a hit
wanting to help out.
Oh, they were shocked when they saw the
trailers
Roofs hanging halfway off
Mold everywhere, raw sewage
 he laughs silently
 looking around our little circle
They thought it was Irma that did it
But that's the way the trailers always were.

This here bucket holds 32 pounds of toma-
toes
Imagine: you're picking as fast as you can
You run behind the truck moving slowly
down the row
You throw your 32 pound bucket up to the
guy on top of the truck
He dumps the tomatoes, drops a plastic coin
in the bucket
Tosses it back down
You grab it

Pocket your coin (it'll get you 35 or 40
cents at the end of the day)
Run back to your place in the row
Pick some more.

The ag industry in Florida is special
In other states they provide free housing
Here, not so much.

Remember those four families?
 he leans forward
 his eyes piercing ours

They own all the trailer camps
Charge \$60 a week for each spot in an 18-
person trailer
Even for families -- every baby, another 60
bucks.

You do the math.

Things are actually better than before
Now they get minimum wage - or a little
more if they work fast enough
Basic safety equipment
Enough time to eat
No one can pick on someone who speaks an
indigenous language
Or make vulgar jokes.
Child labor isn't tolerated
At least during the school year.

You're right, it's not nearly enough.
 he sits back and smiles
 sadly

This is America.

The system allows poverty like this.

Helen Fox

Prairie Light

Several years ago, I was returning home from a fall committee meeting of Illinois Yearly Meeting. It was late afternoon and the sun was low in the cloudless western sky. There was a nip in the air that reminded me that winter was only a month and a half away. The crops had been harvested and the land lay open ready to receive the fall rains and winter snow. There is always a special quality of light on a day like this one. To my eye everything appeared sharp and well defined. As I traveled east on route 18, a weathered farm building standing alone in a field caught the rays of the setting sun and began to glow. For decades, I had passed this humble structure and barely noticed it. It was merely a piece of the prairie landscape. On this day I truly saw it for the first time. It was an old com crib now transformed in the prairie light; it was beautiful beyond belief. I could see the grain of the wood where peeling paint had fallen away, and I saw its wonderful design and the workmanship of those who had built it. There was intentional space between the boards allowing air to circulate and dry the corn. On the top was a cupola with openings through which the harvested grain was poured and which allowed additional ventilation. I knew that inside were parallel walls that held back the grain, leaving room for equipment storage. It had stood the test of time, serving well the purpose for which it was intended.

Roxie Jacobs



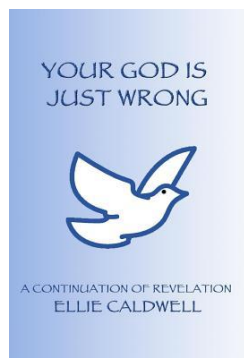
"God is all our joy, and in him our dust can become splendor."

Thomas Merton, Ash Wednesday, 1950

In Our Library...

Your God Is Just Wrong: A Continuation of Revelation

by Ellie Caldwell



Have you outgrown your ideas about God but don't know where to go now? Do the traditional definitions of God make you cringe but you still believe there must be something more? *Your God Is Just Wrong: A Continuation of Revelation* looks at what we've made God into over the centuries and suggests ideas for what our sense of God might evolve into: Spirit, Energy, Divine, Being. We are spiritual beings who just happen to be having a physical experience. We can evolve to a new understanding of the Divine that is inclusive and honors body, mind, and soul.

Ellie Caldwell is a member of the Palm Beach Meeting. Other books written by Ellie include *The Little Quaker Book of De-Clutter* and *The Little Quaker Book of Time Mis-Management: How Wasting Time is Good for The Soul*.

Friends General Conference Gathering 2018

Taste the vibrancy and the variety that is available by immersing yourself in this community of Friends for a week. FGC eagerly looks forward to welcoming you — in person — to the Gathering!

Location: University of Toledo, OH

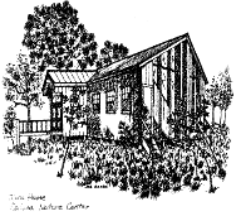
Dates: July 1-7, 2018

Theme: The Power of Truth

For More Information, go to www.fgcquaker.org/connect/gathering

USEFUL WEBSITES FOR FRIENDS

<http://seymquakers.org> Southeastern Yearly Meeting
www.fcnl.org Friends Committee for National Legislation
www.fgcquaker.org Friends General Conference
www.afsc.org American Friends Service Committee
<http://fwcc.world> Friends World Committee on Consultation
www.quakerspeak.com QuakerSpeak: A Quaker YouTube Channel.
www.quakerhouse.org Quaker House, Fayetteville
www.quakervoluntaryservice.org Quaker Voluntary Service
www.quno.org Quaker United Nations Office



Friends Meeting of Fort Myers
Religious Society of Friends
c/o Richard Frechette, Editor
138 Pinebrook Dr.
Fort Myers, FL 33907-5988

Address Correction Requested

MEETING CALENDAR

All First Days	Pre-Worship Singing	9:55 am
	Meeting for Worship:	10:30 am
Sun 5/27	Facilitated dialogue: Quality and Depth of Worship and Ministry	At rise of worship
Sun 6/3	Pot luck lunch	At rise of worship
Sun 6/10	Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business	At rise of worship
	Last Chance Book Club	