

FORT MYERS MONTHLY MEETING OF THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

NEWSLETTER, FOURTH MONTH, 2020

Worship: Iona House at the Calusa Nature Center, 3450 Ortiz Ave, FtM

Mailing Address: 117 East Mariana Ave. North Fort Myers FL 33927

Telephone: (239) 318-0538 ❖ **Website:** fortmyersquakers.org ❖ **e-mail:** ftmyers.quakers@gmail.com

Clerk:	Joan Culver (joanculver@gmail.com)	● 1 st Sunday of the Month: Pot Luck Lunch
Recording Clerks:	Kathy Hale / Richard Frechette	● 2 nd Sunday of Month: Meeting for Worship
Treasurer:	Paul Davis	with Attention to Business

During this period of uncertainty about COVID-19, the Fort Myers Monthly Meeting will not formally meet for worship or other activities at the Calusa Nature Center until further notice

Meeting for Worship On & Off-line

Friends are meeting for worship via **Zoom Conference** on each 1st day at 10:30AM. Each week (usually on Friday or Saturday) an invitation to this Zoom worship is sent to our e-mail entire list, identifying the hyperlink, the meeting number and the password.

Other Friends are meeting over phone or computer for worship, spiritual support activities and friendship at various times during the week.

If you do not have the Meeting's contact list, just e-mail ftmyers.quakers@gmail.com and one will be sent to you.

Religious Education Committee to Sponsor Zoom Book Discussion

Jeannette Botha, Clerk of Religious Education, invites F/ Friends to discuss the Pendle Hill pamphlet #447, Living in Dark Times, by Rex Ambler.

This pamphlet is very appropriate for what we are going through today. The author encourages us to 'trust the Light' and reminds us of Paul the Apostle's words, 'you have a better spirit than your own, in reserve for a time of need'.

Our clerk Joan Culver, has ordered pamphlets for those who are interested, or it can be sent to your computer, I-Pad or phone if you wish. No time has been scheduled as yet. Please contact me with your email address and contact Joan requesting a pamphlet. Our discussion will be conducted on Zoom.

How do Friends care for one another?

4. Mutual Care

Queries:

- How do we foster a spirit of community among the meeting's members and attenders?
- How does the meeting keep in contact with all of the meeting's members and attenders?
- How does the meeting assist couples and families to communicate, grow together, and rear children in a loving environment?
- Does the meeting community nurture the meeting's children?
- How does the meeting care for those who live alone, the sick, the aging, the widowed, the separated or divorced, and others with families affected by disruption?
- Do we assist Friends in need as their circumstances require?
- How do we labor with and care for those whose conduct or manner of living gives grounds for concern?
- How are visitors to our meeting made to feel welcome?

- Do we respect that of God in each person, though it may be expressed in unfamiliar ways or may be difficult for us to discern?

Advices:

- Be truthful and sincere, and thus encourage these qualities in others.
- Through example and education, help each other to recognize and follow the voice of God both in our spiritual lives and in joyful and willing service.
- Watch with tenderness over the opening minds of children. Seek to awaken in them the love and understanding of the life and teachings of Jesus and a sense of security in the love of God.
- Remember that there is a unique potential in each human being as a beloved child of God and that the Holy Spirit may lead children to give wise counsel to listening adults.
- Young people, too, have responsibility to care for the meeting and to participate in meetings both for worship and for business. Faith is needed as a vital part of our living.

“The soul is dyed the color of its thoughts. Think only on those things that are in line with your principles and can bear the light of day. The content of your character is your choice. Day by day, what you do is who you become. Your integrity is your destiny - it is the light that guides your way.”

Attributed to Heraclitus - Shared by Theron White at worship

Fort Myers Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends

Minutes of 4th Month 19, 2020

The Fort Myers Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends met online on the 4th month 19th day via Zoom conference with ten Friends present. The Meeting opened with a period of silent centering. Out of the silence, Friends shared how they are coping with the COVID-19 pandemic. It was clear from the sharing that there were some hardships, but also many opportunities. Friends also shared their concerns about the impact of the pandemic on the greater community, especially in Florida.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Paul Davis presented the Financial Report. He noted that we are fairly well off financially at this time. The Friends Fiduciary Fund has dropped by 13.2%, due to the current economic climate. He has paid off our full annual budget commitment to both LIFE and the Food Bank to assist them in this period.

Financial Report for the Period ended 3/31/2020

General Funds:

Checking	\$8,019
Gen Fund Savings	\$40,358
Gen Fund Fr Fiduciary	\$20,467
Total General Fund	68,844

Meeting House Funds

Savings	\$84,082
MH Funds Fr Fiduciary	\$9,524
Total Funds	\$162,450

March 2020 Income vs Expense

March Income	\$950
March Expenses	\$912

Plight of Immokalee residents/farmworkers during pandemic

Peace and Social Concerns Committee is concerned about the plight of residents and farmworkers in Immokalee, specifically the lack of a field hospital and aggressive testing for COVID-19. P&SC has prepared a draft letter to both Governor Ron DeSantis and Agriculture Commissioner Nikki Fried that they ask the Meeting to approve and send out immediately. P&SC Clerk Carolyn Stanley noted that the Coalition of Immokalee Workers urges such action even though the governor has stated he does not think the field hospital necessary. The letter below is ready to go by mail and email to both.

❖ 2020-MM07: Friends approve the following letter expressing the need for the state to proactively address the health needs of Immokalee workers .

Dear Governor DeSantis and Commissioner Fried:

The Executive Order 20-91 determines farmworkers to be essential. We are very concerned about their health. The Fort Myers Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends urges you to set up a field hospital in Immokalee during the Pandemic. This

will secure aggressive community testing for the Corona Virus and will treat and isolate both severe cases and workers who test positive despite being only mildly ill or symptom-free. This will prevent the spread of the virus in overcrowded homes.

These people are essential workers who are harvesting crops and riding packed buses to work. Health care when available is miles away! Currently the health centers in Immokalee are not seeing drop in patients. Lack of medical resources will exacerbate the pandemic if no emergency measures are in place. Naples hospitals are not the solution.

In spite of Collier County Dept of Health statements that the Healthcare Network of SW Florida is sufficient, we strongly encourage you to take a more proactive response to establish a field hospital immediately. We are aware the Army Corps of Engineers has plans ready to go that can be adapted to use local contractors.

Sincerely and hoping to hear about positive steps,

❖ **2020-MM08: We approve increasing our contributions to some organizations who are in the front line of aiding people during the pandemic:**

- **Mision Peniel: \$500 per month for April, May, June**
- **Harry Chapin Food Bank: \$500 per month for April, May, June**

We also approve an additional \$100 contribution to Friends Journal, who has requested emergency funds.

Friends Sense of Community During the Pandemic

Clerk Joan Culver asked for a brief discussion for ideas to have a sense of community and shared worship during our online connections. Not everyone is at ease currently with the Zoom Meetings. We all miss the sense that Meeting for Worship at Iona House provides.

Thoughts about the question of how to increase Friends' sense of involvement in the Meeting during this social distancing period:

- Perhaps we need clearer guidelines about group discussions/worship sharing
- Perhaps opening any discussion/worship sharing group should begin with sharing of observations on dealing with the current restraints.
- We also may need one-to-one outreach as a prelude to any group meeting and as a way for some to become more comfortable with the process.
- Some felt it important that Friends reach out to others in the Meeting, and then encouraging those other Friends to also reach out.

Ministry & Counsel Committee reported that the **DeOliveira/Goldey wedding**, originally scheduled for April 25, has been postponed until further notice. The couple are not anticipating moving out of the area at this time. We hold them in our thoughts.

We closed in silent worship.

Richard Frechette, Recording Clerk

USEFUL WEBSITES FOR FRIENDS

http://seymquakers.org	Southeastern Yearly Meeting
www.fcni.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

It's okay to feel overwhelmed.

It's okay to be fearful.

It's okay to have a sense of unreality.

It's okay not to be able to function normally.

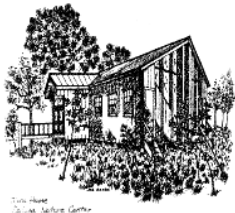
Those feelings don't have to be denied—in fact they need to be embraced. Whenever we have feelings which shake up our world, we have to be willing to enter into them. When we have the courage to do so, instead of trying to find ways around them, not only are we accompanied by Spirit every step of the way, but we are able to move through those feelings to a new sense of peace and safety, a new sense and trust in that which is unchanging.

– Maggie Edmondson, Winthrop Center (ME) Friends Church.

Southeastern Yearly Meeting News

The SEYM Virtual Mini-Gathering proved to be a wonderful way to respond to our need for spiritual renewal and community in this time of physical distancing. 112 Friends attended the sessions; Quakers from SEYM Meetings and Worship Groups, along with Friends from New England and Philadelphia Yearly Meetings and other Quaker organizations. Many were present for almost all the sessions, while others dropped in for workshops that fit their schedule or interests. Held over the five days slated for the Yearly Meeting Gathering, April 8-12, the 'VMG' offered Worship Sharing, Youth Program activities, workshops, a Young Adult 'Internet Film Festival,' and a Talent Show Saturday night. Sessions concluded with Meeting for Worship on Sunday afternoon. It was a lighter schedule than the in-person Gathering, allowing Friends to take ample time away from their computer screens.

SEYM is considering holding Plenary Sessions (that normally occurred as part of the Annual Gathering) via Zoom at some time in June. More information to follow.



**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