



# FORT MYERS MONTHLY MEETING OF THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

Newsletter, Tenth Month, 2020

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## Meeting for Worship Opportunities During the Pandemic

Friends are meeting for worship via **Zoom Conference** every 1<sup>st</sup> day at 10:30AM. Every week (usually on late Friday) an invitation to this Zoom worship is sent to our entire e-mail list, identifying the hyperlink and meeting number.

Other Friends are meeting over phone or computer for worship, spiritual support activities and friendship at various times during the week. And some are meeting physically in smaller groups outside. Anyone from the Meeting family is welcome to gather under the roof of a chickeehut on the Orange River in Buckingham on Fridays at 10:30 AM for socially distanced worship outdoors (weather permitting). Call 239-313-6201 or e-mail the e-mail address above for directions.

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## **QUERIES & ADVICES** *from Faith & Practice of Southeastern Yearly Meeting*

### How do Friends meet our responsibilities to the community and the world?

#### 10. Social and Economic Justice

##### Queries:

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|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Do we seek to transform the world with our loving spirit?</li><li>• Do we take an active interest in the social and economic conditions of our community?</li><li>• Have we objectively considered the causes of discrimination, and are we ready to abandon old prejudices and think anew?</li><li>• Do we as individuals and as a meeting do all in our power to end governmental, social, economic, and educational injustices in our</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>community and to create equal opportunity for all?</li><li>• How do we as individuals and as a meeting promote the welfare of those in need and work to secure a just distribution of the world's resources?</li><li>• What are we doing as individuals and as a meeting to understand and remove the causes of war and violence and to develop the conditions and institutions of peace?</li></ul> |
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## Advices:

- Seek to understand the causes of social ills, and work toward their removal.
  - Be not content to accept things as they are, but keep an alert, sensitive, and questioning mind.
  - Understand and maintain Friends' witness for truth, simplicity, and nonviolence, holding up your personal life to these testimonies.
  - Encourage inclusiveness, and discourage discrimination.
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- Friends' belief in that of God in everyone should lead to reverence for all life and to personal integrity.
  - Encourage all efforts to overcome prejudices and antagonisms.
  - Cherish diversity.
  - Aid and comfort those afflicted or in prison that they may rebuild their lives.
  - Work for the abolition of the death penalty.
  - Let the way that we live contribute to the realization of a peaceable kingdom on earth.

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## Fort Myers Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends Minutes of 10th Month 11, 2020

The Fort Myers Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends met online on the 10th month 11th day via Zoom conference with 22 Friends present. The Meeting opened with a period of silent centering.

Richard Frechette, Clerk, read the following Query and Advice from SEYM's Faith & Practice: "How do we as individuals and as a meeting promote the welfare of those in need and work to secure a just distribution of the world's resources?" "Let the way that we live contribute to the realization of a peaceable kingdom on earth." In response, a Friend who attended the Memorial Meeting in Atlanta for Friend Woody Woodall said that Woody and his friend Ann were models to her of the kind of heartfelt social activism that we so admire in Friends who live their faith.

### Clerk's Report:

The Clerk explained that he had erred in not asking for the formal approval of the Action Minutes at the September Meeting for Business. Accordingly, the Action Minutes of 9<sup>th</sup> Month, 13<sup>th</sup> Day, 2020 were read and approved, and the following Minute was adopted:

- ❖ **Minute 2020-MM18:** FMMM agrees to approve the wording of Action Minutes during the Meeting in which they are proposed. The Clerk and Recording Clerk will then work together on the Narrative Minutes, and the full minutes will be posted in the Newsletter. Any errors in the Narrative Minutes may be brought forward to the next Meeting for Business to be corrected.

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## Ministry and Council Committee Report

Convener Nancy Fennell gave the following report:

“We continue to weigh all possibilities for worshipping together. At this time, a return to Iona House raises too many health concerns to be a viable alternative to what we currently have in our Zoom First Day Meetings and our in-person Friday worship at Buckingham. A hybrid version of in-person and Zoom may be possible and will be explored. We offer money from this year’s Ministry and Counsel Committee’s budget for technology needs if it is so determined.

“We continue to look for ways to connect with each other outside the hour of worship. To that end, we will open Meeting at 10 a.m. to allow for more social interactions before settling in for worship at 10:30. We suggested to Deb White, the new newsletter editor, that a section of the newsletter could be used for a readers’ and writers’ corner where we could share personal writing or reviews of books that personally touched us. We are grateful to Nico Ashe for offering to start a Facebook page for us and the larger Quaker community. Thanks to Mark Mackay for offering his help with oversight.

“Because we are called to care for the spiritual health of our Meeting, we encourage our community to explore on-line and Zoom courses and lectures that enhance spiritual life. Ministry & Council reminds Friends that we offer scholarships for purposes of spiritual nourishment.”

A discussion ensued regarding the necessity for formally confirming with the Calusa Nature Center that we are not planning to resume our in-person meetings at Iona House until conditions are safe for us to do so, since predicted deaths from the pandemic are expected to double within a matter of months. However, we do want to maintain our lease, which expires in 2022, and will continue to pay the \$100 a month rent even though we’re not using the space. This will keep our options open and contribute to the welfare of the building and of the Calusa Nature Center itself. It is also important to renew our corporate membership and provide a liaison to the CNC from the Meeting.

❖ **Minute 2020-MM19.** Fort Myers Monthly Meeting is not in a position to resume physical First Day worship at Iona House at this time and probably will not be until there is a radical improvement in the pandemic situation. We will continue to pay our lease until it expires in April 2022. We also agree to renew our corporate membership in the Calusa Nature Center.

The Clerk will notify the Calusa Nature Center of our decision.

Consistent with the M&C Committee recommendation, Clerk Richard Frechette suggested that we might want to begin working toward a hybrid form of worship and to establish a group of individuals to pull together a plan. The required equipment is not that expensive and fairly portable, so the location of the hybrid Meeting could vary, depending on our needs and circumstances. The Frechettes’ property in Buckingham, which is currently hosting a Friday morning in-person Meeting, could be used, as could Iona House or any other location. A Friend mentioned that, as we age and become less

mobile, the hybrid idea could work well beyond the pandemic. However, some F/friends don't have adequate technology or access to it.

Friend Carolyn Stanley shared that Nominating Committee has discussed forming a technology committee with the following description: "This newest committee is being established to oversee electronic communication within the Fort Myers Monthly Meeting community. They manage the website and the Facebook page and assist with Zoom meetings when needed. Members of this committee will also be available to consult with individuals concerning technology related to Monthly Meeting participation."

After more discussion, the following Minute was approved:

- ❖ **Minute 2020-MM20.** The FMMM wishes to move toward the establishment of a hybrid physical and zoom-based worship and we will establish a committee to work out the logistics.

### Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Paul Davis told us that the Meeting is in good financial shape for this point in the year. He offered the following report for 9/30/2020:

#### General Funds

Checking	7,123
Gen Fund Savings	40,378
Gen Fund Fr Fiduciary	25,941
<b>Total General</b>	<b>73,442</b>

#### Fund Meeting

85,155

#### House Funds

Savings

MH Funds Fr  
Fiduciary 12,071

**Total Meeting House  
Funds 97,226**

**FMMM Total Funds 170,668**

Sept 2020 Income vs Expense		
Sept	Income	310
Sept	Expenses	140

### Peace & Social Concerns Committee

Convener Carolyn Stanley offered the following report:

"Peace and Social Concerns thanks Friend Helen Fox for sending our Statement on Police Violence and Accountability to 35 religious congregations in SW Florida, FCNL, 3

AFSC offices, Mission Peniel and the Coalition of Immokalee Workers. She will send the statement to elected officials after the elections and is looking to having the statement translated into Spanish to send to some Spanish speaking churches in the area. Other members of the P&SCC have sent the statement to friends and to Monthly Meetings they know or used to attend.

“P&SCC agreed to send \$200 from our emergency fund (“Initiatives that May Arise”) to the National Temporary Protected Status (TPS) Alliance to support a bus tour organized by Friend Paul Andre Mondesir as Carolyn has announced over email. On the National TPS Alliance website there is an option to sign up to show support for these workers in our country either as individuals or as a group. We ask the FMMM if they would support this organization. TPS is a status afforded people from certain countries that have experienced extreme events such as earthquakes, hurricanes, or other “acts of God.” People with this status are allowed to stay and work in the U.S. until their country is no longer experiencing the emergency. However, their status must be renewed and approved by Congress, and is currently at risk. Thousands of people may face deportation, including children who have known no other homeland than the U.S.”

After a brief discussion, the following Minute was approved:

- ❖ **Minute 2020-MM21.** The FMMM supports the work of the National Temporary Protected Status Alliance and we urge the United States government to continue to allow the continuation of this protected status.

We ask that the Peace and Social Concerns Committee take appropriate action to relay this corporate concern.

The P&SCC was asked to look into the NTPSA’s possible need for funding and take it under consideration at an upcoming meeting.

Friend Hugh Pettigrew of the Peace and Social Concerns Committee shared that he has asked the advice of Lis-Marie Alvarado from the Miami AFSC Office about possible actions our Meeting might take regarding our concern about police violence and accountability. Lis-Marie suggested that we work with their office on the school-to-prison pipeline, that is, the practice of having police, rather than school counselors, deal with the problem of school misbehavior, especially in communities of color. Ms. Alvarado offered to present AFSC’s project to our Meeting in an after-worship discussion. Friends approved the following Minute:

- ❖ **Minute 2020-MM22.** Friends ask that the FMMM Peace and Social Concerns Committee arrange for a presentation via zoom by Lis-Marie Alvarado from Miami Friends Meeting and the AFSC Miami Office about AFSC’s efforts to address the school to prison pipeline.

### **Threshing Session on Future Meetinghouse:**

Clerk Richard Frechette said that the Threshing Session that was scheduled for October will have to be delayed because more time is needed to gather informational materials.

## **Nominating Committee:**

Friend Carolyn Stanley shared the following report:

The Committee has found candidates for many of the individual responsibilities and is now working on stage two, the committees. We will send out a list of all committees and what they do and ask people to volunteer. We hope to have a full nominating committee report next month.”

We closed in silent worship at 1:45PM

Respectfully Submitted,  
Helen Fox  
Interim Recording Clerk

## **FORT MYERS MEETING FACEBOOK PAGE!**

To our Meeting family: We are creating a (private) group on Facebook and are hoping you will join. This group will allow f/Friends to post thoughts, photos and videos.

The Facebook group will provide a new way to be in community when we aren't meeting in person, when folks are at their 2nd home, in times of Covid, etc. If you would like to join this group, please let Nico Ashe know by phone, text or email and she will send you an invite. (You do need a Facebook account to join.)

239 239 3636 or [capecoralnico@gmail.com](mailto:capecoralnico@gmail.com)

## On the Road to Justice

The Peace and Social Concerns committee has agreed to share the following information sent to FMMM from Paul Andre Mondesir. Several years ago he visited Fort Myers Monthly Meeting when he worked for the American Friends Service Committee Miami, FL office. He worked with the late Dee Hohimer, a member of FMMM. Paul Mondesir is now a National TPS Lead Organizer.

On Friday, October 16, 2020 a group representing the National Temporary Protected Status Alliance will be stopping in Fort Myers. They are traveling by bus for 7 weeks and stopping at 45 cities to encourage the Senate to pass a bill to provide all TPS holders a permanent residency, and motivate voters to vote to support immigrant families. TPS or Temporary Protected Status is a temporary status given to eligible immigrants/refugees of designated countries. Over 350,000 people are affected by possible TPS protection terminations. Over 273,000 children born in the US have at least one parent with Temporary Protected Status from El Salvador, Haiti, and Honduras. Only Congress has the power to guarantee the future of these families.

This group of about 20 representatives from the National TPS Alliance and led by **Paul Andre Mondesir** will hold a press conference at **1:00 PM in front of Senator Marco Rubio's office at 2120 Main Street in Fort Myers on October 16**. Their goal is to send a strong message to the Senate asking for residency now for TPS holders.

You can show support for these residents who contribute nearly 4.6 billion dollars in federal, state and local taxes each year yet are always living with the fear that their temporary status will be denied and they and their families will be deported.



- Attend the press conference **in front of Senator Marco Rubio's office at 2120 Main Street in Fort Myers at 1:00 PM on October 16**.
- Share this information.
- Donate to the National TPS Alliance to help pay for food, hotel, and transportation. The budget for this National TPS Tour is about \$294,000. <https://www.nationaltpsalliance.org> Also at this website you can sign to show your or your groups support.

## Reader's/Writer's Corner

Most of us are avid readers, and some of us are writers, as well. Beginning this month, the newsletter will include this section for a book review from anyone in the FMMM. In addition, poetry or other writings from Friends are welcome. If you have a review or writing to contribute, please email [debwhitenfl@gmail.com](mailto:debwhitenfl@gmail.com)

This month is a book review from the editor.

### ***Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents*** **by Pulitzer Prize winner Isabel Wilkerson.**

Drawing upon research on the caste systems in India and Nazi Germany, this book outlines the basic infrastructure of our systemic racial inequalities using eight "Pillars of Caste". Some of it is difficult reading for its highly descriptive accounts of the actual cruelty of such a system. Her superior narration and storytelling coupled with much research over the decades is a must read especially for those who have been blessed to be born in the "dominant caste", i.e. recipients of white privilege. I will never look at racial injustice in quite the same way again,

*Submitted by Deb White*

## USEFUL WEBSITES FOR FRIENDS

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

## Save Our Democracy!

If you are concerned about keeping our democracy especially during this year's election there are three websites shared by a f/Friend. While this information was sent out earlier in an email, it merits mentioning again in this newsletter.

[www.choosedemocracy.us](http://www.choosedemocracy.us)

[www.wagingnonviolence.org](http://www.wagingnonviolence.org)

[www.holdtheline.live](http://www.holdtheline.live)

### Let America Be America Again

Let America be America again.  
Let it be the dream it used to be.  
Let it be the pioneer on the plain  
Seeking a home where he himself is free.  
(America never was America to me.)  
Let America be the dream the dreamers dreamed—  
Let it be that great strong land of love  
Where never kings connive nor tyrants scheme  
That any man be crushed by one above.  
(It never was America to me.)  
O, let my land be a land where Liberty  
Is crowned with no false patriotic wreath,  
But opportunity is real, and life is free,  
Equality is in the air we breathe.  
(There's never been equality for me,  
Nor freedom in this "homeland of the free.")  
Say, who are you that mumbles in the dark?  
And who are you that draws your veil across the stars?  
I am the poor white, fooled and pushed apart,  
I am the Negro bearing slavery's scars.  
I am the red man driven from the land,  
I am the immigrant clutching the hope I seek—  
And finding only the same old stupid plan  
Of dog eat dog, of mighty crush the weak

~ Langston Hughes



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

Address Correction Requested

## MEETING CALENDAR

1 <sup>st</sup> Days (Sundays)	Meeting for Worship (via Zoom)	10:30 am
6 <sup>th</sup> Days (Fridays)	Outdoor worship in Buckingham (at the Orange River)	10:30 am
Tues. 10/13	LIFE House Meeting via Zoom	10:00 am
Thu. 10/15	LIFE House Meeting via Zoom	6:30 pm
Sun 11/1	Religious Education discussion via Zoom: <i>What do Jesus' Teachings Mean to You?</i>	At rise of Worship
Tues. 11/3	<b>VOTE!</b>	
Sun 11/8	Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business via Zoom	At rise of Worship