



FORT MYERS MONTHLY MEETING

OF THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

Newsletter, Sixth Month, 2021

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Meeting for Worship During the Pandemic

Friends are now meeting for hybrid worship every 1st day at 10:30AM. Friends may meet physically outdoors (weather permitting) under the roof of the Chickee Hut on the Orange River in Buckingham.

Friends who prefer to meet via Zoom instead may do so. Each Friday an invitation to Zoom worship is sent to our entire e-mail list, identifying the hyperlink and meeting number. People may join early either physically or via Zoom at 10:00 a.m. for conversation and fellowship.

For directions to the Chickee Hut, call 239-313-6201 or e-mail the e-mail address above for directions.

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

How do Friends care for one another?

6. Home, Family, & Relationships

Queries:

- Do we make our home a place where love, peace, happiness, friendship, and refreshment of spirit are found and where the presence of God is experienced?
- Do all members of our family receive our affection and understanding?
- Do we take care that responsibilities outside the home do not encroach upon the time and loving attention our family needs?
- Do we acknowledge and support all relationships and families, whether conventional or not, that are based on love and commitment?
- Does our family set aside First Day and other times for worship, service, rest, and refreshment of spirit?

Advices:

- Live in love, and learn from one another. Try to live simply.
 - In our family life, encourage reliance upon God's guidance and help for each day's needs.
 - Remember the value of beauty in all its forms.
 - God's gifts are for all to enjoy; learn to use them wisely.
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Fort Myers Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends Minutes of 6th month 13, 2021

The Fort Myers Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends met on the 6th month 13th day via Zoom conference with 19 Friends present. The Meeting opened with a period of silent centering. Richard Frechette, Clerk read Queries and Advices from SEYM Faith & Practice on Care For One Another.

Query: Do we make our home a place where love, peace, happiness, friendship, and refreshment of spirit are found and where the presence of God is experienced? **Advice:** Live in love and learn from one another. Try to live simply.

In response, a Friend was reminded of the common phrase, “Live life to the fullest,” and thought it could be changed to say, “Love to the fullest.”

Treasurer’s Report

FMMM Funds Report 4/30/2021

General Funds

Checking	6,251
Gen Fund Savings	40,389
Gen Fund Fr Fiduciary	30,929
Total General Fund	77,569

Meeting House Funds

Savings	93,309
MH Funds Fr Fiduciary	14,392
Total Meeting House Funds	\$107,701

FMMM Total Funds \$185,270

April 2021 Income vs Expenses

April Income \$639
April Expenses \$1,185 *

*LIFE \$500, Friends Peace Teams \$300,
501c application \$275

Treasurer Paul Davis mentioned that he filed our federal tax-exempt status in April, but we won’t hear back for a while because of the current backlog. We did receive our state exemption for sales tax. This is new for us and should not be treated like a reimbursement. If a committee or individual has a large expense it should be run through Paul or the Clerk.

Friend Paul explained how Southeastern Yearly Meeting (our largest line item) calculates our assessment for the year. Regular attenders are assessed at half the amount as members, and children are assessed as “children of attenders” and “children of members.” Since SEYM’s fiscal year runs from July to July, rather than by FtMMM’s calendar year (January to December), our assessment has come due.

- **Minute 2021-MM14:** Friends agreed that our yearly assessment from SEYM can be paid immediately.

Ministry & Counsel Committee Report

Friend Nancy Murvine read the following report: Nancy Fennell was announced at SEYM as the speaker for the 2022 Michener Lecture. A Clearness Committee and a Care Committee have been formed to help her through the process.

Nancy Murvine read a draft memorial Memorial Minute for Thomas Dudley Fennell, noting that the Memorial Service for Tom Dudley was held on Saturday, April 24 over Zoom.

A Friend remarked that the memorial minute was beautiful and that it touched our hearts.

- **Minute 2021-MM15:** Friends approved the following memorial Minute for Tom Dudley Fennell. It will be sent on to SEYM and Friends Journal and will be kept in perpetuity by our Meeting.

Thomas Dudley Boggess Fennell was born July 4, 1930 in Miami, Florida. Because of his father's work with the United States Department of Agriculture, Tom spent much of his early boyhood in Haiti and Puerto Rico. His attachment to the people of Haiti remained strong throughout his life, so much so that he requested donations to AFSC Haiti Project in lieu of flowers upon his passing. Later, his family orchid business in Florida would give him a lifelong love and deep knowledge of these beauties which he shared freely to the benefit and gratitude of many of us.

Tom Dudley graduated from Harvard and attended Duke University medical school. He practiced general medicine for several years before returning to school for training in psychiatry. Tom loved mental health work and always said, "My parents grew orchids, and I grew people." His sons attest that his drive was always to help people. He retired professionally in 2000.

Tom Dudley was a committed Quaker, becoming a member of Fort Myers Friends Monthly Meeting in 1997. His natural bent toward care, guidance, and nurturing made him an invaluable member of the Quaker Community. He served Fort Myers Friends Meeting in many capacities, including work on the Finance and Ministry and Counsel committees as well as clearness committees. He also served on Worship and Ministry for Southeastern Yearly Meeting. Those who worked with him remember him for his wise counsel and his eldering role as a guide for individuals along their spiritual journeys. As one SEYM member said, you could always trust Tom's discernment.

Perhaps some of Tom Dudley's greatest impacts came in areas beyond his committee work, in the simpler form of human contact. Many have spoken over

the decades about how Tom and Nancy, his wife of more than 45 years, made them feel welcome in Meeting. Many stayed with the Fort Myers community because of them. Tom Dudley's stories and humor were widely known. Both put people at ease, but as one Tampa Friend remembered, you came for his humor, but you stayed for his depth. A long-time personal F/friend said that in his presence you could feel a larger presence, Tom Dudley's connection to a higher power. Another Friend who attended midweek worship at the Fennell's home remarked that she could feel his presence for each person in the room because he saw God in each of us. No one left a personal encounter with Tom Dudley without feeling welcomed, heard, understood, accepted and often gently guided.

Tom's eldest son eloquently shared a metaphor of his father as a wave in the ocean. In paraphrase: you can see the wave forming, gathering force and growing as it rolls toward the shore. But when it reaches the shore, it is absorbed in the sand and what is left flows back, becoming one again with the ocean. For those of us whose shoreline Tom Dudley touched, we understand the power and the depth of his wisdom and the gentle way he imparted it. And beyond that we can see the source he came from and returned to. His faith was strong.

Tom Dudley Fennell passed away on March 26, 2021. He will be deeply missed.

Peace & Social Concerns Committee Report

Friend Carolyn Stanley read the following report: The P&SC Committee recently reviewed our year following the murder of George Floyd and the political unrest that occurred last year. We have begun discussion about "What's Next" for our committee. Ideas from all are welcome and may be sent to Carolyn via email, phone, or text.

P&SC has received an application form for a 'spot' at this year's Southwest Florida Peace Day Festival at the Alliance for the Arts in Fort Myers on September 19. We ask for the support of the Meeting to participate this year. Volunteers will be needed for shifts throughout the day. The \$50 fee will be paid out of 'as needed' funds allotted to the Peace and Social Concerns Committee.

- **Minute 2021-MM 16** Friends approved the Meeting's participation in annual Southwest Florida Peace Day Festival.

Covenant Committee Report

The Covenant Committee is an ad hoc group whose concern is the agreement being negotiated between FtMMM and the Unitarian Universalist Church of Fort Myers about building a new Quaker Meeting House on their property. Friend Paul Davis gave the following report:

FtMMM has retained an attorney, Alexandre Mestdagh of the firm Mestdagh, Wall, & Hamilton. Mr. Mestdagh agrees with the committee's concerns regarding the initial document drawn up by the attorney for the Unitarians. The terms in dispute are: that 5% of the ownership of the Meetinghouse would be transferred to the UUs each year, resulting in the UUs owning the building in 20 years; and that FtMMM would still pay each year to

lease the land even after the shift in equity. The attorney will assist the Covenant Committee to develop alternative language for us to negotiate.

Friend Nancy Howell has spoken to the architect Maynard Houston, who is assisting us on a pro bono basis in drawing up sketches for the walkway and utilities buildings that would accompany the circular Meeting House. He has some ideas and concerns and would like to meet with the Spiritual Space Committee soon.

Discussion

Clerk Richard Frechette asked that we discuss the following question: “Recognizing our intention to eventually build a new Meetinghouse, potentially on land shared with the Unitarian Universalists of Fort Myers, and recognizing the modest improvements in the COVID-19 pandemic situation, where and in what way should Friends worship in the meantime?”

Background: FtMMM has been meeting over Zoom since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in March, 2020, rather than at Iona House, a building owned by the Calusa Nature Center (CNC) of Fort Myers, where we had been meeting for many years but is now in poor repair, and that we have shared, somewhat awkwardly, with a Montessori school that meets there during the week.

HYBRID WORSHIP at the CHICKEE HUT: In December 2020 we established hybrid worship at the Chickee Hut on the Frechette’s riverside property in Buckingham, which accommodates in-person outdoor worship and has the technology to connect those at the Chickee Hut with online worshipers over Zoom. These hybrid meetings have been suspended for several weeks due to the Frechettes’ absence but could be re-started when they return next Sunday. The Meeting has already approved the purchase of new technology to make hybrid worship work more smoothly.

POSSIBILITIES FOR MEETING SPACE for the next year: Now that most of our worshipers are vaccinated, we could potentially resume in-person meetings at Iona House until the new Meetinghouse would hopefully be built (May 2022 or later). Alternatively, we could continue our hybrid meetings in Buckingham, or possibly ask the UUs if we could worship in one of their buildings: either the large, screened porch (with no air conditioning) or their large indoor space, Hobart Hall. Neither of these are available on Sunday mornings.

IONA HOUSE: During the pandemic we have continued to pay the CNC \$100/month for the use of two storage spaces at Iona House for our tables, our library, and assorted materials. Our contract runs until April, 2022. If we move out of Iona House before our new buildings are ready, we would need to find humidity-controlled storage for our library elsewhere.

Because of a miscommunication, the CNC has rented the Iona House space on Sunday mornings between now and the end of August, so if we chose to meet there, we would start in September. Setting up the technology for a hybrid meeting at Iona House would require more purchases: a projector and screen or a large TV screen and possibly, blackout curtains for some of the windows. Since Iona House is rented to the Montes-

sori school during the week, the school would need to put their materials in storage every weekend. Our technology would also need to be put away, as much as possible, during the week. The set-up and take-down of our chairs and tables each weekend involves time and heavy lifting; we would need more volunteers to help with this.

Decision: RETURN TO IONA HOUSE FOR THE NEXT YEAR. During the discussion, Friends generally agreed that our best option would be to return to Iona House for the next year or so, starting in September 2021. We miss each other. Iona House is more centrally located and easier to access than the Chickee Hut. It is also air-conditioned. It has storage space, and a kitchen. We could resume our potlucks! Many of us have an attachment to Iona House: it is a place where we have felt ourselves to be religious community; it will be important to re-establish these connections during this post-pandemic time and say goodbye to Iona House together. Also, since we are in the midst of negotiations with the Unitarians, it would be wise to indicate that we are willing to walk away from the table (as Friend Paul put it) by not asking to rent any of their spaces while the agreement is still in question. Since Iona House is not available to us until September, we would continue hybrid worship at the Chickee Hut during the summer.

SOME CONCERNS:

- Some of us have become comfortable staying home when the Zoom option was available. Would enough people commit to coming to Iona House to make it worth the time and energy to set up every week? Some are away for the summer; some no longer are able to drive; others who have come weekly by Zoom live outside the area full time. There is concern that Zoom could become the norm.
- It was mentioned that in the future, Zoom could be a fallback for people not feeling well, or who are far away, etc. It should not be our primary option. But we can't turn our back on those who have been joining us on zoom.
- We should talk about Zoom as an "augmentation" of in-person worship, not as a "fallback."
- It is sad that so few of us have been able to experience meeting at the Chickee Hut in person. Friend Bond Perry wrote: "I am reminded of the biblical teaching in Matthew 18:20" "Wherever two or three of you are gathered in my name, I am with you." The small remnant of the Fort Myers Quaker Meeting that gathers at the Chickee Hut, has been a blessing to me. Meeting in real time even if in very small numbers, creates a worshipful setting and experience. However, [those of us who gather there] greatly miss the presence, guidance, and support of the whole Meeting. We worry about the long-term future of the Fort Myers Monthly Meeting. The time between the present and the building of a new Meeting House is a formidable obstacle to growth and to a real sense of togetherness."

After considering these concerns, Friends approved the following Minute:

- **Minute 2021-MM16:** Friends have determined that we will re-initiate and continue with hybrid worship in the foreseeable future, starting next Sunday at the Chickee Hut in Buckingham. On Sept 5th we will relocate to Iona House, where we will continue our hybrid meetings. Meanwhile, we will continue our dialogue with the Unitarians about building a new Meetinghouse on their property.

We closed in silent worship.

Respectfully Submitted,
Helen Fox
Recording Clerk

Hybrid Worship Returns

Hybrid Worship will return as of this coming 1st Day, June 20. Friends are welcome to come to the ChickeeHut in Buckingham for in-person gathering, which will be connected to the Zoom worship.

Resources for Parents

In keeping with the theme of this month's queries and advices on family, parents who are parenting young children and youth might find it useful to explore the Quaker Parenting Initiative on the following website: www.quakerparenting.org. Find conversations, resources and events (some virtual) that will give parents a Quaker perspective on parenting.

Pot Luck Lunch Returns!

Friends can once again participate in pot luck lunch, an opportunity to share both food and friendship. The next lunch scheduled is on Sunday, July 4, following worship, at the Chickeehut in Buckingham (weather permitting). We expect this will be a monthly 1st Sunday event. A charcoal grill is available for those who wish to utilize it. For more information, contact Suzanne Frechette (401-744-6097; suzanne.Frechette@gmail.com).

Afterthoughts

Blessed are the seekers, who open their hearts and minds to the elusive Spirit
Blessed are the babies, who teach us patience and lovingkindness, and remind us that joy can be found in every moment

Blessed are the dreamers and creative thinkers who shake up our world

Blessed are the strivers, who inspire us with their persistence, their focus, and their sense of duty

Blessed are the animals, who offer their presence and comfort to those in need

Blessed are the Quakers, who seek a peaceful center in the heart of conflict



*submitted by Helen Fox
photo by Deb White*

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



Reader's/Writer's Corner

Most of us are avid readers, and some of us are writers, as well. Submit any essays, poetry or book reviews (400 words or less—about one newsletter page) that witness to the testimonies of Quaker life. Please email: debwhitenfl@gmail.com

Beams of Light



Whether they be beams of light
From high windows in the Vatican
Or beams through holes
In the roof of an old barn,
They stop and tug on something in you.
Beneath Saint Peter's dome,
Rise souls of saints like motes of dust.
Under once fancy caved-in cupolas
And lightning rods with glass spheres,
Stir ghosts of livestock waiting to pull plows,
To foal, to be fed and to be milked.
The farmer that rose before daybreak
Is long gone, and soon, too,
His monument to dreams and hard work.
Pyramids will become sand in the Sahara;
St. Peter's another layer of future civilization; but
Sunbeams breaking through clouds,
Will make the child in you believe
They are rays from heaven.

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*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

<i>1st Days (Sundays)</i>	<i>Meeting for worship in a hybrid format: in person at Buckingham Chickee Hut or via Zoom. An informal conversation time begins at 10:00 a.m.</i>	10:30 am
<i>July 04, 2021</i>	<i>Potluck Lunch at the ChickeeHut</i>	After worship
<i>July 11, 2021</i>	<i>Meeting for worship with attention to business via Zoom.</i>	1:00 p.m.