



FORT MYERS MONTHLY MEETING OF THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

Newsletter, Ninth Month, 2021

Mailing Address: 138 Pinebrook Dr. Fort Myers FL 33907
Telephone: (239) 318-0538 ❖ Website: fortmyersquakers.org
E-mail: ftmyers.quakers@gmail.com
Newsletter Editor: Deb White: debwhitenfl@gmail.com

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. Informal social conversation in the hybrid format will follow upon rise of worship.

Midweek worship, in person only, is held at the Chickee hut, each Wednesday morning, at 10:30 a.m.

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*

SEYM Queries & Advices **Third Section:**

To what extent is our personal life in accord with Quaker principles?

9. Witness

Queries:

- *Do our lives reflect Quaker testimonies?*
- *Are we open and responsive to continuing revelation, and do we incorporate it into our spiritual life?*
- *Is our Quaker witness characterized by humility and a willingness to learn from others?*
- *Do we recognize that the Spirit works in the world through us?*
- *Does our witness lead us to the condition in which we “walk cheerfully over the earth answering that of God in everyone”?*

- *Do we as a meeting try to share in the religious life of our wider community, availing ourselves of opportunities for worship and service with other local religious groups?*

Advices:

- *Strive to keep true to the testimonies of integrity and simplicity.*
- *Try to keep before us the essential truths, and test our life by them.*
- *Endeavor to make our lives consistent with the high principles we profess. This involves the often-difficult discernment not only between good and evil but also between the better and the best.*
- *Live adventurously. Let not failure discourage us.*
- *Witness so that others can perceive the presence of God within us.*
- *“Be as good as people think you are.” E. St. John (Jack) Catchpool*

Fort Myers Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends Minutes of 9th Month 12, 2021

The Fort Myers Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends met online on the 9th month 12th day via Zoom conference with 14 Friends present. The Meeting opened with a period of silent centering. Richard Frechette, Clerk, read the following Queries from Southeast Yearly Meeting’s Faith & Practice: Do our lives reflect Quaker Testimonies? Is our Quaker witness characterized by humility and a willingness to learn from others?

Ministry & Counsel Report

Clerk Nancy Fennell reported that the committee has reviewed the transition from social time to Meeting for Worship, and has found it is working more smoothly. To make the transition more apparent, they proposed the following Minute:

Ministry and Counsel recommends that, prior to Meeting for Worship, all participants in our social time on Zoom stop video and mute themselves around 10:20, to allow a smooth transition into silence.

During the discussion that followed, these points were raised:

- One of the most valuable parts of the silence is our relationship with each other. The half hour of social time before worship strengthens our relationships and makes the silence more meaningful. Asking people to stop their videos ten minutes before worship seems like an interruption of this process.
- What we are trying to replicate in hybrid worship is a Meeting space that is silent, worshipful, and sanctified, and another, separate space that is dedicated to socializing with others. At the Chickee hut this can be done by having people socialize while strolling around the garden or sitting in the air-conditioned tiny house, and having silence reign when entering the Chickee space. Over Zoom, this could be done in various ways, such signaling the end of social time with

music, either live or recorded, or opening the Zoom nearer 10:30 and encouraging people who are online to socialize afterwards.

- Why make rules that everyone must follow? Couldn't people who want to enter the Zoom room in silence log on at 10:30 when worship "officially" begins? I wouldn't want to have to cut off any vibrant communication that might be happening at 10:20. Maybe Richard could play some quiet music around that time as a signal for everyone to finish their thoughts and begin to enter into the silence.
- Personally, I felt relieved this morning at the Chickee that I didn't have to stay outside and try to find someone to talk to; instead, I could have a normal conversation with people sitting under the Chickee until the Meeting began. Having to enter the Chickee in silence would feel artificial to me. I'm uncomfortable with it.
- Once we have our new Meetinghouse, we will be able to more easily differentiate between a conversation space that might be on the porch, from the worship space inside the circular building.
- Since our Meeting will probably be hybrid for some time, or even permanently, it would be good to experiment with different ways of dividing social time from worship.
- Rather than breaking up people's conversations before worship, we could announce that social time will be after Meeting, and open the Zoom worship a few minutes before 10:30 in silence.
- If we decide to ask people to begin the silence before 10:30, maybe a message could appear on the screen that explains the protocol to newcomers.

Although the Meeting did not come to unity on the issue, the Clerk felt that there was a general sense that:

- We will be in a hybrid setting for a long time with a larger number on Zoom.
- Our social gathering would be better after than before worship.
- At the Chickee hut, the separation between social space and worship space can be addressed by having the Chickee hut as a place for silence. Individuals will enter the silence upon entering the Chickee hut. People who want to socialize with each other beforehand can do so elsewhere on the grounds.
- In the case of Zoom attenders, we will post a notice that you are entering into silence as we prepare for worship, and that the social period will begin after worship has concluded.
- We will experiment with different options. The email invitation to worship will include what will happen on the upcoming First Day.

M&C Clerk Nancy Fennell then proposed a second Minute:

Ministry and Counsel recommends that the member tasked with opening meeting will simply welcome all to worship and to settle into silence and expectant waiting. We will not ask for people to begin by asking for the names of others to hold in the Light and instead wait for those requests to arise naturally during the hour of silence.

The committee also expressed the desire for all in attendance, either at the Chickeehut or via Zoom, to introduce themselves because of limitations on both ends to see each

other clearly. If we eliminate social time before worship, introductions would take place at the end, before announcements, as usual.

To streamline introductions and still make it feel personal, the committee suggests that new attenders be asked first to introduce themselves and tell us a little about themselves and how they found us. Then the M&C member closing worship would call out names of those attending via Zoom. Each of these individuals will say hello/wave so we are aware of their presence on the screen. To keep this on a more intimate level, those individuals will be encouraged to say something further if they wish. Those attending in person at the Chickee hut can introduce themselves by coming to the mike.

The following thoughts were expressed during the discussion:

- I like the idea of introducing everyone, newcomers or not. Since the Zoom attendees can be hard for the Chickee hut group to recognize (and vice versa) this will help everyone know who is there virtually or in person.
- Wouldn't it be better to introduce everyone before worship begins? That way, we can focus on specific people and hold them in the light during the silence.
- It seems logistically difficult to have introductions at the beginning, especially if we begin with silence rather than social time.

M&C Clerk Nancy Fennell emphasized that these are suggestions, not rules, and that we need to try them out so we know what works best for everyone.

Although the M&C presented the above as proposed minutes, the response suggested a continuing experiment rather than a minuted statement.

Nancy concluded her report by saying that the committee has agreed to give financial support from their budget to a member of the Meeting in need.

Treasurer's Report

General Funds

Checking	7,164
Gen Fund Savings	40,396
Gen Fund Fr Fiduciary	32,812
Total General Fund	80,372

Aug 2021 Income vs Expenses	
Aug Income	\$830
Aug Expenses	\$1465*
* Major expenses--- M&C \$1,000, Lawyer \$266	

Meeting House Funds

Savings	93,355
MH Funds Fr Fiduciary	15,268

Total Meeting House Funds **108,623**

FMMM Total Funds **188,995**

Clerk Paul Davis reported that the Meeting continues to be in great financial shape. We did experience a bit of negative cash flow from our donations vs our expenses for August, but it was nothing to worry about.

We received our first legal bill in August helping us draft a land lease agreement for our potential building at the Unitarian Universalist property on Shire Lane. We will eventually be reimbursed by the generous donors who directed that their gift be used to find competent legal advice.

Richard and Paul met with our Credit Union to make sure that Richard has access to our debit card, checking account, and account passwords so we have someone in Florida with access. However, Paul continues to pay the bills and make deposits on-line from Colorado so this is just to give us flexibility and not to add more work for Richard.

Paul will find out if there's a way to send donations to the Meeting directly to bank for deposit.

Peace & Social Concerns Report

Clerk Carolyn Stanley reported on a request from the Coalition of Immokalee Workers asking faith leaders to sign a letter they've written to the Collier County Sheriff's Office protesting the police killing of an Immokalee farm worker experiencing a mental health crisis.

Carolyn said, "The Peace and Social Concerns Committee believes this is one way to put our year of studying police violence into action. As a Quaker Meeting, we support four Immokalee organizations financially: the Coalition of Immokalee Workers, Misión Peniel, Cultivate Abundance and the Immokalee Fair Housing Alliance. We have also had volunteers donate and work at Misión Peniel. This is one more way we can support the Immokalee Community and support rebuilding trust between the Immokalee Community and the Collier County Sheriff's Department. We urge Friends to approve the signing of this letter."

Carolyn then read the Faith Leaders' letter, which can be found in full in the FtMMM Newsletter. She mentioned that the letter with all its signatures will be presented to the Collier County Sheriff at a big event, and she assumes the press will be there.

The Meeting then approved the following Minute:

- ❖ **Minute 2021-MM-18:** The Fort Myers Monthly Meeting approves the signing of the CIW Faith Leaders' Letter declaring support for improving justice, equity and compassion in human relations between law enforcement and the Immokalee community following the tragic, preventable death of Nicolas Morales.

Clerk Carolyn informed the Meeting that PSC has decided to use \$1000 from their 'Initiatives That May Arise' budget to support an initiative in the Baton Rouge area following the devastation they suffered from Hurricane Ida. Carolyn contacted Pam Arnold of the Baton Rouge Friends Meeting, explaining our desire to "pay forward" a gift FtMMM received from a Friends Meeting up north after Hurricane Irma caused considerable damage to communities in southwest Florida. Pam replied that one particularly tragic situation has come to their attention: a family of their acquaintance has lost their home and all personal belongings in Hurricane Ida, and the Baton Rouge Friends Meeting is feeling led to shore them up. They will "eagerly and with glad hearts" accept any gifts our Meeting might be led to send their way.

The full text of the letter from Pam Arnold will appear in the newsletter.
Treasurer Paul Davis will send the check.

Covenant Committee

The Committee charged with negotiating terms for the rent of land on which to build our new Meetinghouse has responded to the Unitarians' proposal. They prepared an alternative draft and sent it to the UU's representative. It will be reviewed by their Board of Directors on September 16th, followed by a joint Zoom session with the Quaker committee.

We closed in silent worship.

Respectfully Submitted,
Helen Fox
Recording Clerk

Look not out, but within... Remember it is a still voice that speaks to us in this day, and that it is not to be heard in the noises and hurries of the mind; but it is distinctly understood in a retired frame.

~ William Penn, 1644-1718

**Southwest Florida 14th Annual
Peace Day**



Sunday, September 19, 2021
10 AM - 5 PM FREE
At the Wa-Ke Hatchee Park
16760 Bass Road, Fort Myers, FL

Fort Myers Monthly Meeting of the
Religious Society of Friends will have a booth.
Stop by and visit.

We also need volunteers at the booth. Contact Carolyn at 740-827-1800
carolyn2020stanley@gmail.com

**Southeastern Yearly Meeting to Hold its Fall Interim
Business Meeting**

SEYM will hold Fall Interim Business Meeting on Saturday, October 2. The entire session will be held via Zoom. It begins at 8:30 AM. The various SEYM Committees will meet in the morning via break-out rooms (all Friends are welcome to attend any of the committee meetings). The full community's meeting for business begins at 1:00 PM. Pre-registration is required. Click on this hyperlink for more information: [SEYM-FIBM](#). If the hyperlink doesn't work, contact Richard Frechette.



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 news-letter page) that witness to the testimonies of Quaker life. Please email: debwhitenfl@gmail.com

Pieces of Peace

I once heard a staff member describe Pendle Hill as “a place held for the Presence of God.”

I was struck by that phrase and made a note of it in my “favorite one-liners” file. I recently stumbled on to it again and it still has power for me. The phrase is packed full of meaning. The word “held” indicates that an active effort is being made to keep and care for a place open to God, specifically. It clearly implies that this is not a place for not-God. Someone, or several people, are making an enduring effort to take care of this task in a gracious, wordless manner. No wonder that Pendle Hill, a place of Quaker retreat and study, is such a beautiful place to worship, to learn, to listen, to befriend—all in the Presence of God.

I think of the places in my life that I hold for the Presence of God. There is the squeaky, wooden swing under the peaceful, giant oak tree in my front yard. The serene, green upon green view out my study window. My computer chair where I join a daily worship *via* Zoom every morning. My reading chair where I quietly absorb spiritual writings and teachings, after the morning chores.

Clearly I see that it's not so much a *place* that I hold for the Presence of God, but, rather, the *time* I hold. Time held specifically to be aware of the Presence of God. It is time to which I am committed. Time to make an enduring effort to worship, pray, listen, and learn in the Presence of God.

May we all have such places, such time, such experiences.

Nancy Fennell

08/02/21

(The following "What Fort Myers Friends are Reading" is a little addition I plan to include each month to our newsletter, as part of our Reader's/Writer's Corner. If you are reading something you think might be of interest to members of our meeting, please share with 1 or 2 sentences of your impressions. Send to newsletter editor : debwhitenfl@gmail.com)

What Fort Myers Friends are Reading:

Helen Fox: "I've become enamored of a novel called "Klara and the Sun," by Kazuo Ishiguro, who also wrote the highly acclaimed novel (and then film) "Remains of the Day." Klara is an "AF" or "Artificial Friend," a humanoid robot, whose duty is to befriend humans, who are said to fear loneliness above all else. Interesting complications follow."

Susan Oehl:

"I am continuing to read "The Other Slavery" by Andres Resendez. Not only does it examine the Caribbean natives slavery, but it goes into great detail about the American Indian slavery by the Spanish in the Mexican-Texas-California area until well into the 1840s in spite of an anti-slavery decree by the Spanish Queen in 1600s, but also how the Comanches and Apaches, etc., took Mexican slaves and white slaves and sold them."

Theron White:

'Costa Ricans Live Longer Than Us. What's the Secret?' In the August 30 *The New Yorker*. How a system of public health delivers medical care to everyone, even in the most remote reaches of Costa Rica.

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2021/08/30/costa-ricans-live-longer-than-us-whats-the-secret>

DAY OF THE WEEK CHANGED FOR MID-WEEK WORSHIP UNDER THE CHICKEE HUT

Following a poll of regular and occasional attenders at mid-week worship, it has been decided to make it truly mid-week - moving it from Fridays to Wednesdays. The time will remain the same - 10:30AM. All are welcome to come join in worship. This is in-person only.

Paying it Forward

(After Hurricane Irma hit our area (2017) a meeting from up north provided a financial donation to assist us in dealing with the damage. Peace & Social Concerns determined to Pay it Forward and recently Carolyn Stanley, clerk of P&SC reached out to the Baton Rouge Friends Meeting. This was the kind response to Carolyn from Pam Arnold.)

Good morning, Carolyn.

What a pleasant concern to have...what to do with financial gifts from Quakers we don't know for problems that aren't in their back yard! Your email warms our hearts, Carolyn, and we are seasoning the concern to be able to properly pay forward anything that might come to Baton Rouge Friends Meeting (BRFM) as a result of Hurricane Ida.

So far, no one in either BRFM or Friends Meeting of New Orleans (FMNO) has need of any storm-related financial aid. However, in our extended family of work places, one particularly tragic situation has come to our attention and we are feeling led to shore them up. Which is to say, we will eagerly and with glad hearts accept any gifts your meeting might be led to send our way. This family has lost their home and all personal belongings in Hurricane Ida. They have a direct connection (fellow employee) to a member of BRFM so we are confident that the need is real. Please share these details with your folks.

We will not set up a separate fund, as we did after Hurricane Katrina, so please simply make a check out to "Baton Rouge Friends Meeting." We will collect any contributions over the next few weeks and then issue our check to the recipient. My address is: 24985 Merchant RD, Denham Springs LA 70726-6834.

Personally, my husband and I are experiencing the 13th day without electricity since Ida hit late on Sunday night, August 29. We have a full-house generator so we've had air conditioning and hot water for showers and even an occasional Netflix movie but keeping the propane fuel tank filled has been an anxious concern. To date, we've had to get it refilled twice (250 gallons at a time!) and delivery has taken 3-4 days from placing the order. Only once have we had to resort to using small bottles of propane to carry over until the truck got here. We have three refrigerators, one upright freezer and one chest freezer (LONG story as to why folks aiming for Simplicity have so many of these appliances...) all loaded with food from the neighbors so keeping the power going is a responsibility not usual to our household.

Living on the coast of Florida, I imagine your lives are quite familiar to hurricane aftermath. We are being enriched by the sense of community just on our road that is resulting from our combined needs. Where we live is on the outskirts of Denham Springs in an area that lies somewhere between urban and farmland. We aren't a neighborhood of folks who come over regularly for coffee and cookies or even get together for shared meals but, in times like these...we are there for each other. It feels good. And it feels good to be cared about by y'all.

Thanks again for being here for us.

Peace.

Pam

(Here's another example of "paying it forward". FtMMM attender, Will Noel recently inquired about specific Quaker responses to Irma and how he might donate toward such. Here is the result of his diligent inquires at AFSC....I share this with you as many of you may also wish to donate to these efforts. Thank you Will for your research.)

Greetings Will,

My apologies for replying after the close of business just ahead of the weekend. I really appreciate your interest in supporting disaster relief efforts in Louisiana. I am back in New Orleans and dealing with some of Hurricane Ida's aftermath myself. I'm going to share a little about AFSC's New Orleans program, Peace by Piece New Orleans, in the way of links that highlight our program efforts. I'll also share our social media so you can take a closer look at our local work. I'm happy to chat or send more info next week when I'm back online full-time. Have a great weekend!

<https://www.afsc.org/blogs/news-and-commentary/building-sustainable-and-equitable-black-communities>

<https://www.afsc.org/blogs/news-and-commentary/responding-to-covid-and-working-racial-justice-new-orleans>

<https://www.afsc.org/story/building-sustainable-communities-one-summer-time>

<https://www.afsc.org/story/katrina-x-new-orleans-decade-after-storm>

<https://www.vice.com/en/article/xgzka/meet-the-musicians-and-strippers-who-beat-facial-recognition-in-new-orleans>

<https://www.facebook.com/peacebypiecenola>

https://www.instagram.com/pxp_nola/?hl=en

<https://eyeonsurveillance.org/>

Dee Dee Green

Area Program Director

Peace by Piece New Orleans/AFSC

(504) 565-3596 office

(504) 418-5070 mobile

vgreen@afsc.org

Letter of Support for the Coalition of Immokalee Workers'

"Justice for Nicolas" demand

Sheriff Kevin Rambosk
Collier County Sheriff's Office,
3319 Tamiami Trail East,
Naples, FL 34112

Dear Collier County Sheriff Rambosk,

As Florida clergy representing a wide range of denominations and faith traditions, we are grateful for the bounty of rights and freedoms we enjoy as citizens of this great nation and understand the importance of law enforcement to serve those freedoms and protect the citizenry when one of us steps beyond the rules established for the common good. We recognize your leadership in working to build an agency that strives to reflect a more progressive approach to the role of law enforcement, such as the adoption of the widely-respected crisis intervention training known as the "Memphis Model." Given your unique position, we'd like to bring an important issue for our Collier County community to your attention.

Over the past year, our nation's discourse around police violence in Black and Brown communities has come to a head. In case after case in America, law enforcement agencies are failing to adequately address the harm they themselves have caused, instead choosing to shield the mistakes of their own, often at the expense of the public trust, a trust which is so critical to not only to a community's sense of peace and wellbeing but also to the continued effectiveness of law enforcement.

In the case of Nicolas Morales's killing this past September in Immokalee, it is clear upon viewing police dashcam footage that avoidable mistakes were made all along the way, resulting in the unnecessary death of a fellow human being and further straining the already-fragile relationship between the Collier County Sheriff's Office (CCSO) and the Immokalee community — a relationship that has had its share of past troubles as many, if not most, Immokalee residents can readily cite incidents in which they, or their friends and family, have experienced some form of perceived abuse of power at the hands of CCSO deputies. The tragic, preventable death of Nicolas Morales has caused waves of grief within his surviving family — especially Nicolas, Jr., a 13-year-old boy who is now orphaned — and ripples of disquiet within the community. While we can't change what has happened, we believe that within every tragedy there lies the possibility of growth and change.

(cont. on page 13)

(cont. from page 12)

Writing from a tradition that recognizes our interdependence, and that holds as one of its primary tenets the affirmation and pursuit of justice, equity, and compassion in human relations — including those between law enforcement and the community — we urge the Collier County Sheriff's Office to pursue the following three requests put forth on behalf of the Morales family and the Immokalee community by the Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW), proposals that we as leaders of faith believe can begin to change the direction of the conversation:

First, cooperate with any federal investigation into the shooting of Nicolas Morales and the subsequent mauling by a police K-9.

Second, form and implement effective, accessible Crisis Response Teams, pairing police and mental health professionals, to respond to calls in Immokalee where mental health is a potential issue.

Third, break down the walls between the CCSO and the Immokalee community through aggressive transparency and genuine community participation by establishing an Immokalee-specific Citizens' Review Panel with meaningful powers.

These last two proposals, along with a sincere commitment for a dialogue between CCSO and the CIW, would go a long way towards building the kind of trust to which we all aspire, and that is so essential to a healthy relationship between a police force and the community it is sworn to protect.

As faith leaders, we believe in the power that listening and sharing hold in moving us towards reconciliation and peace. We know, too, the importance of approaching one another with compassion, of looking for the divine in every person we meet. While we understand that incorporating these ideas into everyday policing might take time, making them a priority is a choice we can make right now, at this moment, as we work to open a dialogue that can lead us to a new and positive relationship as we strive together to build a Beloved Community.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,
Richard Frechette
Presiding Clerk
Fort Myers Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)

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
https://pendlehill.org	Pendle Hill: A Quaker retreat and resource center
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

MEETING CALENDAR

<i>1st Days (Sundays)</i>	<i>Meeting for worship in a hybrid format: in person at Buckingham chickee hut or via Zoom. Conversational fellowship follows.</i>	10:30 am
<i>Each Wednesday</i>	<i>Mid-week worship at Buckingham chickee hut. This is in-person only.</i>	10:30 am
<i>9/19/21</i>	<i>14th Annual Peace Day with Friends booth Wa-Ke Hatchee Park</i>	10:00 - 5: 00 p.m.
<i>10/3/21</i>	<i>Potluck following worship at Chickee Hut</i>	upon rise of worship
<i>10/10/21</i>	<i>Meeting for worship with attention to business in a hybrid format: Chickee hut and via Zoom</i>	1:00 p.m.

Contributions to the Meeting can be made payable to Fort Myers Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, and can be sent to:

Paul Davis, Treasurer
5530 Harborage Drive
Fort Myers, FL. 33908



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

Address Correction Requested