



FORT MYERS MONTHLY MEETING

OF THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

Newsletter, Tenth 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.

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*

Fourth Section:

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

10. Social & Economic Justice

Queries:

- *Do we seek to transform the world with our loving spirit?*
- *Do we take an active interest in the social and economic conditions of our community?*
- *Have we objectively considered the causes of discrimination, and are we ready to abandon old prejudices and think anew?*
- *Do we as individuals and as a meeting do all in our power to end governmental, social, economic, and educational injustices in our community and to create equal opportunity for all?*
- *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?

- *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?

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.*
- *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.*

Fort Myers Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends Minutes of 10th Month 10, 2021

The Fort Myers Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends met online on the 10th month 10th day via Zoom conference with 14 Friends present. The Meeting opened with a period of silent centering. Richard Frechette, Clerk, read these Queries from New England Yearly Meeting's Faith & Practice: *Do you seek to understand where a person's words come from when those words are strange or disturbing to you? Do you listen patiently and seek the truth that other people's thoughts may contain for you? As you learn from others, are you willing to share with them what you in turn have learned?*

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Paul Davis reports that our finances are in good shape. The Peace and Social Concerns Committee sent \$1,000 in hurricane relief for a family recommended by the Baton Rouge Friends, and we paid a legal bill for a land lease document for the negotiations with the Unitarians, for which we will be reimbursed. We submitted an additional \$275 for our 501c3 determination, which will be reimbursed since we mistakenly applied twice. Our balance at Friends Fiduciary has decreased a bit due to the recent decline in the stock market, but we continue to earn well with these investments.

- Jim Koopman talked with several engineering companies about the location of the wetlands within the two acres. The current map indicates that this consists of only a small strip at the very north end of the parcel, though the exact location would need to be confirmed on the date of the sale.
- An ecologist Jim consulted says that a proper wetlands survey is needed. The determination of what is designated wetlands is not based on the amount of standing water at certain times of year, but on the kinds of trees growing on the property: cypress typically grows in wetlands and can be found only on the northern extremes of the property, while oaks and pines, which grow throughout the rest, indicate uplands.
- If the county insists that the northern half of the property must be designated wetlands, keeping this section as a preserve could be a bonus for us, as it would ensure the uniqueness of the property as a whole.
- Buying these two acres would allow us to take advantage of the facilities we'd be sharing with the UUs, as it is just north of Hobart Hall, the screened room, and the child care room and playground.
- Paul met with the UUs' treasurer, who told him that the entire UU property is worth \$2.6 million. They are looking at paying \$120,000/yr for a minister. They have no debt. While it's true that they're struggling as a congregation there is no urgency for them to sell their property at this point. They have leased some of their land to the orchestra, which suffered financially under COVID. This is expected to improve.
- The UU Board meets this month to discuss whether or not they are interested in selling us this two-acre parcel.

Discussion:

- The original survey of what Friends might want in a new spiritual space indicated that we value light, nature, affordability, simplicity and beauty. We have a once-in-a-lifetime chance of meeting all these needs. We don't know if the offer of a \$300,000 contribution could be applied to another alternative. At present, we have the money for the preparation of the site and the outbuilding (which would include storage, bathrooms, food preparation, and a covered walkway).
- Buying, rather than renting land would create a legacy for the Quaker community.
- The UUs would probably only require a small down payment, as they are more interested in a cash flow over a number of years than a huge amount up front. We could not get a bank loan on these terms.
- The extra acre already has trails and giant trees, and could be an incredible spot for future Quaker gatherings. The UU's would want to rent the yurt when we aren't using it, so we have the potential to earn money from it. In fact, they want to be the agent that handles these rentals. And if worse comes to worst we can always sell the property without losing too much, financially, as land is appreciating in Fort Myers.
- The property has the potential to be especially beautiful, not only regarding the natural setting but in its connection with the UUs and their buildings. It's going to take a lot of work and more donations than we have at the moment. We hope Friends will contribute generously to the project.
- Being in a position as owner is infinitely better than being a renter, as you have much more control.

Clerk Richard Frechette asked if Friends would allow the sub-committee to go forward with the idea of purchasing the land from the UUs, not the purchase itself. Assuming the county and the UUs' Board would approve, they would come back to the Meeting with a price tag.

- ❖ **Minute 2021-MM-19:** Friends wish the sub-committee to move forward with the idea of buying some of the wooded acreage on the north side of the UU property, assuming that the county will allow construction on that land. The Meeting authorizes the sub-committee to expend funds for surveys and engineering costs, assuming that the county will allow construction on that land.

Ministry & Counsel Committee

Clerk Nancy Fennell reported: After considering our current annual budget, we agreed on requesting the same budget for 2022. We currently are allotted \$1200 for Friends General Council and \$1500 for Spiritual Nourishment of the Meeting, which hasn't been used in recent years, but can be used by individuals wishing to attend conferences and other kinds of group meetings. We spent \$1000 for care of individuals within the Meeting, the entire amount allotted.

We reviewed the recent change in the process to transition from social time to worship on Zoom. Some Friends are unhappy that the social time now follows worship, rather than precedes it, as was our custom. As the change did not originate from Ministry and Counsel, the issue is referred back to Meeting for Worship for Business, where the change was requested, discussed and approved by the community.

In the discussion that followed, Friends expressed the following thoughts:

- I personally need that socializing time to put me in the framework for the silence. I feel very unsure, insecure, and unhappy with the current arrangements. I expressed this when the new social time was adopted but feel so much more strongly about it now. If some Friends prefer to enter directly into the silence, they could just sign onto zoom at 10:30. That would make a huge difference for me.
- A complication with having social time before Meeting has arisen with hybrid worship. The in-person group at the Chickeehut can stay outside to socialize before the Meeting begins. But those who prefer to settle into silence as soon as they enter the chickeehut would hear the group socializing over zoom. While the volume could be turned down, we couldn't turn it completely off because we then couldn't hear the worship elder announcing the beginning of the formal worship period.
- One option might be for the online group who wish to socialize before 10:30 to enter a "breakout room" which can be set up with the zoom technology. Anyone signing onto zoom would be directed by a "share screen" message either to go to the breakout room or enter into the silence in the main room.
- One of the problems is with the message that appeared on screen today when friends entered the Zoom session. Although it was meant to be simply informative, it felt more like a barrier than an invitation.

- Another issue with social time on-line before Meeting is the difficulty interrupting an engaging discussion. If we wait for a break in the conversation, we sometimes don't get started until 10:35.
- Instead of interrupting, we could use a nice bell, or soft online music to indicate that the Meeting for Worship will soon begin. This would work the same way dimming the lights did at Iona House.

We agreed that Friends are welcome to join online and socialize from 10:00AM as before. At the Chickeehut, Friends who want to socialize can do so outside the worship space, while those who want to enter into the silence upon their arrival can do so inside the space. Richard will try to turn down the audio in the Chickee prior to the Meeting so the online socializing doesn't interrupt the silence. At our next Meeting, Friend Paul will ask Friends in the online group to settle into silence at around 10:25. Thereafter, someone from Ministry and Counsel will make this announcement. We will have introductions at the end of worship.

Nominating Committee

Friend Deb White reported that the Clerk has sent an email to everyone with two documents from Nominating Committee. Friends are requested to read these, and after spiritually discerning what they can offer, reply to Deb, Nancy Howell, or Carolyn Stanley, indicating their wishes to remain, join, or be removed from the various committees. The finance, technology, and nominating committees especially need new members. The hospitality and Meetinghouse committees have been put on hold until we have a permanent place to worship. In the meantime, the 2022 budget should provide funds for the monthly pot-luck and volunteers will be asked to help set-up and take down after the potluck (and any other Friend-sponsored events held there)

Peace & Social Concerns Committee

Friend Helen Fox shared a note from the Baton Rouge Friends Meeting, thanking Fort Myers Friends Meeting for our donation of \$1000 for hurricane relief. They have given it to a needy family in their area.

We closed in silent worship at 2:30 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Helen Fox
Recording Clerk

SEYM Peace and Social Concerns

The next SEYM Peace and Social Concerns Committee meeting will be on Saturday, October 23rd at 10AM. We will open the Zoom call at 9.30 for socializing and resolution of tech issues, and then will meet from 10 AM until noon. Please mark your Calendars, and send me your items for inclusion on the Agenda by Sunday October 17th.

Our committee meetings are open to all Friends, and attenders. Please announce our meeting through your Monthly Meeting's Newsletter.

The Zoom link is here:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88241410113?pwd=WFgyQXYvZ0VQN2lmOHduSUt-EaFFGdz09>

Meeting ID: 882 4141 0113

Passcode: 739948

In the Light

Phil Stone, Clerk

Peace & Social Concerns Committee

Southeast Yearly Meeting (SEYM) of the Religious Society of Friends
(Quakers)

Clearwater Friends Meeting

Cell: 413.992.7991

Reminder: Please let the Nominating Committee know of your requests regarding committee service for 2022 by the end of this month! A description of the committees was sent out via email to everyone the first week of October. Please let us know if you need a copy.

Nominating committee: Carolyn Stanley, carolyn2020stanley@gmail.com,
Nancy Howell, howell@chass.utoronto.ca; and Deb White,
debwhitenfl@gmail.com



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

Letters



In the faces of men and women I see God, and in my own face in the glass, I find letters from God dropt in the street, and every one is sign'd by God's name, And I leave them where they are, for I know that wheresoe'er I go, Others will punctually come for ever and ever.

Some moments in my life were letters from God,
But embarrassed to say, I didn't read all of them,
Hasty feet missed the way. But
Opened letters require a reply to the Sender —
Our correspondence can't be one-sided.

— Whitman, "Song of
Myself"

There is nothing literally true — Tibetan
Prayer wheels return answers to the cosmos
With every turn in the wind. But it is true.
The intent makes it so.

I might not be conscious of every message I write.
My mind is a turning wheel.

Every turn of memory, of waves of Kansas wheat
Rolling even beyond the horizon, and the wonderment I relive
With each revolution,

Is my repeated reply to a Letter.

The wafted aroma of cooked squash
In my Quaker grandma's kitchen
Is a preserved Letter with pages dogeared
From all the re-readings. My replies are
As uncountable as the breaths I take.

And so, too, are recollections of my lover's gaze
That told me for the first time
Just as plainly as a billboard on Times Square —
And only I could read it —

I love you.

My answer to that Letter is, always,
O Lord,

I love You.

A Letter has forever in it.
As Wordsworth put it,
It is "apparelled in celestial light."

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What Fort Myers Friends are Reading

Bond Perry: “I am reading *Christian Meditation*, Experiencing the Presence of God by James Finley. (Publisher HarperOne) The title's emphasis on ‘Christian’ was an obstacle for me--I am so glad I overcame that obstacle. It is exactly the book I need to be reading at this point on my spiritual journey. I heartily recommend it.”

Hugh Pettigrew: “*My Monticello* by Jocelyn Nicole Johnson I just finished it yesterday. Had a very unsettling ending. A new book about potential civil war in America”.

FMMM Quaker Peace Day booth; part of the annual Southwest Florida Peace Day Festival held at the Wa-Ka-Hatchee Park on Bass Road in South Fort Myers on Sunday, September 19, 2021

Hands for Peace



Religious Education

The Religious Education committee will be offering its own version of “Quakerism 101” for the next few months. The sessions will take place at 1:00 on the third Sunday of each month.

1. **October 17, 2021** The Importance of Silence to Quakers.
Led by Jeanette Botha. Background material J. Brent Bill’s *Holy Silence*.
2. **November 21, 2021** Context, History, Leaders, and Events of Early Friends
Led by Susan Oehl. Background materials from Friends General Conference, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting and Durham Friends Meeting pp. 1 – 7.
3. **December 19, 2021.** Friends’ Special, Curious, Clear, Peculiar Terminology
Facilitated by Donna Anderton. Background materials from Friends Central Meeting and Friends General Conference.
4. **January 16, 2022.** The Inner Light, division of Friends, modern beliefs and actions, leadership in peace, racial concerns, and other matters.
Led by Tom Miller. Background materials from Melbourne Meeting, pages 7 – 15, and Durham Meeting, pages 7 – 15.
5. **February 20, 2022** Interests, Challenges , and Contemporary Issues for Friends Ranging from Spirituality to Racial Concerns to the Environment and others. Led by Nancy Howell, Susan Oehl and Religious Education Committee members. Background materials from Berkeley Friends and others.
6. **March 20, 2022.** Southeastern Yearly Meeting Faith and Practice. Led by Donna Anderton and Religious Education Committee members.
7. Brief Evaluation of this Quakerism 101 and Looking to the Future:
Quakerism 101 participants.

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 chickeehut. This is in-person only.</i>	10:30 am
<i>10/17/21</i>	<i>Religious Ed. Committee discussion of Holy Silence by J. Brant Bill</i>	1:00 p.m.
<i>11/7/21</i>	<i>Pot luck at the chickeehut</i>	Following worship

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