



FORT MYERS MONTHLY MEETING OF THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

Newsletter, First Month, 2022

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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

What is the state of our meetings for worship and business?

1st Month: Meeting for Worship

Queries:

- Are our meetings for worship held in expectant waiting for divine guidance, with a living silence in which we feel drawn together in the Light by the presence of God?
- Do we respond to the Spirit's prompting to minister, whether in silence, through the spoken word, or through action after the meeting for worship?
- Are we sensitive to one another's needs in meeting for worship?
- Are the spiritual gifts within the meeting fostered and encouraged?
- Are our meetings accessible and welcoming to everyone?
- Are our meetings a source of strength and guidance for daily living?
- Is the vocal ministry in our meetings exercised under the leading of the Spirit?

Advices:

- *Be prompt and diligent in attendance at meetings.*
- *Come to meeting with expectant hearts and minds prepared for communion with God.*
- *Be faithful, be patient, and persevere in our service as messengers of truth.*
- *To everyone is given a share of the responsibility for the meeting for worship, whether through silence or through the spoken word.*
- *Quiet our hearts and minds for worship prior to entering the meeting room, so the whole group can be knit together in spiritual fellowship.*
- *Do not assume that vocal ministry is never to be our part.*
- *Be ready to speak under the leading of the Light. Learn to recognize when a message felt within is from God and if it is a message intended for the group to hear.*
- *Pray that our ministry may arise from deep experience of the Divine.*
- *Let our spoken ministry be audible and free from unnecessary words.*
- *Avoid speaking in a manner that brings a sense of discussion or debate.*
- *Allow for a period of silence after a message has been spoken, so the group can reflect on what has been said and continue to be grounded in silent worship. Overly long or too-frequent messages can hinder the worship of others present.*
- *Receive the ministry of others in a tender spirit.*
- *Treat every newcomer as one sent by God.*

Fort Myers Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends Minutes of 1st Month 9, 2022

The Fort Myers Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends met in hybrid fashion on the 1st month 9th day with 13 Friends present. The Meeting opened with a period of silent centering. Richard Frechette, Clerk read the following Queries from SEYM's Faith & Practice:

- Are our Meetings accessible and welcoming to everyone?
- Are we sensitive to one another's needs in Meeting for Worship?
- Are our Meetings a source of strength and guidance for daily living?

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Paul Davis reported that we are very blessed. In December, we received over \$90,000 from a number of Friends. If we compare 2021 to 2022, all our accounts are greater, especially the Meetinghouse fund. We had some unbudgeted expenses that we've met. We paid for a lawyer to help draft a lease. We paid an engineer to advise us on where on the Unitarian Universalist site we might build our new Meetinghouse.

In July, we paid Southeast Yearly Meeting for the entire year, rather than half a year, knowing we will have more expenses this year for the new Meetinghouse. We hired some web help, and once we get our 501c3 status, we'll get back the \$500 that the government owes us. Overall, we are in excellent financial shape.

**Ft Myers Monthly Meeting of Friends
Funds Report 12/31/2021**

General Funds

Checking	8,817
Gen Fund Savings	40,403
Gen Fund Fr Fiduciary	33,467

Total General Fund 82,687

Meeting House Funds

Savings	183,407
MH Funds Fr Fiduciary	15,575

Total Meeting House Funds 198,982

FMMM Total Funds 281,669

Dec 2021 Income vs Expenses

Dec Income	\$ 93,270*
Dec Expenses	\$ 1,578**

* meeting house \$90,000

** \$1,000 (engineering study)
\$405 (computer)

2021 compared to 2020

2021 General Fund	\$82,687
2021 Meeting House	\$198,982

2020 General Fund	\$81,511
2020 Meeting House	\$103,774

Details: Budget vs Actual 1/1/21 – 12/31/21

Name	Budget	Actual
BUDGETED EXPENSES		
Calusa Nature Center-Membership	\$250.00	\$250.00
Peace & Social Concerns-Cultivate Abundance	\$100.00	\$100.00
Peace & Social Concerns-H. Chapin Foodbank	\$3,500.00	\$3,500.00
Peace & Social Concerns-AFSC	\$600.00	\$600.00
Peace & Social Concerns-Quaker Vol. Services	\$200.00	\$200.00
Technology Committee	\$1,500.00	\$999.00
Meetinghouse Reserve	\$3,000.00	\$0.00
SEYM	\$2,700.00	\$5,613.50

Name	Budget	Actual
Finance Committee-Banking & Corporate Fees	\$100.00	\$631.25
Religious Education-Retreats/Speakers	\$800.00	\$0.00
Peace & Social Concerns-Fair Housing	\$300.00	\$300.00
Religious Education-Books/Misc	\$500.00	\$0.00
Property Committee	\$150.00	\$0.00
Nominating Committee	\$100.00	\$0.00
Newsletter	\$300.00	\$0.00
Peace & Social Concerns-Lee Interfaith	\$500.00	\$500.00
Peace & Social Concerns-Peace Day	\$100.00	\$60.00
Peace & Social Concerns-Quality Life Center	\$500.00	\$500.00
Ministry & Counsel-Friends General Conference	\$1,200.00	\$1,200.00
Peace & Social Concerns-Educ. Concerns for Hunger	\$200.00	\$200.00
Ministry & Counsel-Care	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00
Peace & Social Concerns-Quaker House	\$300.00	\$300.00
Ministry & Counsel-General/Misc	\$300.00	\$0.00
Calusa Nature Center-Utility Payments	\$1,200.00	\$1,100.00
Hospitality Committee	\$450.00	\$74.98
Finance Committee-Gifts/Contingency	\$100.00	\$0.00
Outreach Committee	\$0.00	\$0.00
Outreach Committee: Friends Journal Listing	\$80.00	\$48.00
Outreach Committee: Web Hosting	\$150.00	\$293.75
Outreach Committee: Phone	\$130.00	\$125.89
Outreach Committee: Zoom	\$650.00	\$637.08
Peace & Social Concerns-FCNL	\$600.00	\$600.00
Ministry & Counsel-Spiritual/Scholarships	\$1,500.00	\$0.00
Peace & Social Concerns-CIW	\$300.00	\$300.00
Peace & Social Concerns-Env Working Grp	\$100.00	\$0.00
Peace & Social Concerns-Friends Peace Teams	\$300.00	\$300.00
Peace & Social Concerns-Mission Peniel	\$300.00	\$300.00
Peace & Social Concerns-Initiatives that may arise	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00
Religious Education-1st Day School	\$50.00	\$0.00

Name	Budget	Actual
BUDGETED INCOME		
Donations	\$23,910.00	\$115,655.22
UNBUDGETED EXPENSES		
Meeting House	\$0.00	\$4,953.00
UNBUDGETED INCOME		
Interest Earned	\$0.00	\$160.18

Ministry & Counsel Committee Report

Friend Nancy Murvine reported on their December meeting. The Committee thanked Friend Nancy Howell for her years of service to the committee. The following Minute was approved by those present at MFB:

- ❖ **Minute 2022-MM-01:** Friends would like to thank Nancy Howell for her many years of service on Ministry and Counsel and her dedication to her Quaker Community, past, present, and future.

Friend Helen Fox was asked to be a member of M&C. She has accepted. Her term will end in 2024. Friend Nancy Murvine offered to clerk M&C and is hoping for a co-clerk. The yearly review of the membership roll of FtMMM determined we have 29 members and 10 active attenders.

- ❖ **Minute 2022-MM-02:** Friends approved the naming of Helen Fox to the Ministry and Counsel Committee.

Changes suggested to the Spiritual State of the Meeting document were made by the Committee as needed. Friend Nancy Murvine read the revised document.

- ❖ **Minute 2022-MM-03:** Friends approved the Following 2021 Spiritual State of the Meeting :

Resilience of our Meeting and our faith reflects most deeply the Spiritual State of our Meeting. In these challenging times, hope grounds us, and Spirit guides us.

In Meeting for Worship, messages began to reflect the anxieties of the current turbulent political atmosphere and the disquiet of COVID. Still, members have commented at times on their sense of Divine Presence among us or the feeling of a covered Meeting. Aware of a shift in vocal ministry, Ministry and Counsel worked with the Religious Education Committee to present programs to renew our focus on more Spirit-guided ministry. In the spring a presentation on ministry was held using the pamphlet On Vocal Ministry by Barry Crossno and J. Brent Bill. In the fall, another presentation on silence, using the book Holy Silence by J. Brent Bill began the Religious Education's series on Quakerism 101.

The prolonged pandemic and on-going consideration for the health of our aging population have awakened a concern for staying connected to each other and to the larger community in which we live. We have become more flexible and creative in ways to achieve this. We are grateful for the use of a member's private property to hold outdoor Meetings for those who feel comfortable gathering in person, offering both First Day and midweek Meetings. Monthly potlucks have begun at the same location, bringing back a much-needed sense of the old norm of fellowship. Zoom continues as the alternative for those who cannot attend in person. Hybrid worship, thanks to the technological wonder of the Owl video conferencing app, allows us to blend both in-person and on-line worship groups, avoiding the sense of two Meetings. A social time prior to Meeting for worship through the hybrid format needs further fine tuning but offers the possibility of more fellowship and interaction. And we cannot forget the benefits, sometimes unforeseen, that this forced hybrid has brought. First, our attendance in both Zoom and in-person have remained stable throughout the year. New attenders have found us because of the technology. We have even gained a new member who began worship through Zoom. Members who live out of state for part of the year or who reside far away and those with health issues that prevent travel have been able to join us. Committee work and one spiritual formation group continue, in great part, because of Zoom.

Regardless of our method for coming together for worship, our loving support for each other holds us tight. We try to keep in contact with members, to identify needs for care and support, and to extend financial assistance as we can. We recognize gifts of members, offering help with discernment through clearness committees and encouraging them to pursue leadings. Our Religious Education Committee encourages interactions among us through learning opportunities to keep us in touch with our Quaker roots or to enlighten us on the foundations of others' spiritual paths.

That same loving support reaches out into our community. We contribute more both financially and with our time than our small numbers might predict. We support community and Quaker organizations which make a positive impact on issues of justice, environment, equity and more in the world. Our Peace and Social Concerns Committee's work included:

- This year, we continued to educate ourselves about racial and economic justice. We recommended books, videos, and actions to the Meeting, and held thoughtful discussions with others in the Meeting on these topics. For instance, in conjunction with Religious Education, we hosted a discussion of the book, *White Fragility*, by Robin DiAngelo.*
- With help from Bobby Trice of Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL), we learned how to hold discussions with legislators and their aides who may not agree with our positions, and how to write letters to the editor that persuade with personal stories rather than arguments.*

- *After the January 6th insurrection at the U.S. Capitol, we wrote a “Statement in the Light of Recent Public Violence” that affirms Quaker conscience in the face of injustice.*
- *We supported charitable and activist organizations whose clients live in poverty, including farm workers in Immokalee. These organizations include the Harry Chapin Food Bank, and four organizations in Immokalee: The Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW), Misión Peniel, Cultivate Abundance, and the Immokalee Fair Housing Alliance.*
- *We worked to ensure a strong Quaker presence at meetings of Lee Interfaith For Empowerment (L.I.F.E.), who are working on affordable housing and mental health this year.*
- *In September, we participated in the Annual Southwest Florida Peace Day event, held at Wa-Ke-Hatchee Park in Fort Myers.*
- *We distributed bilingual flyers developed by the Pine Island Pandemic Task Force (headed by member Jim Koopman) to local food banks, encouraging residents to get vaccinated.*
- *We recommended that The Fort Myers Monthly Meeting approve the signing of the CIW Faith Leaders’ Letter following the death of Nicolas Morales, a mentally ill farm worker. The letter, with signatures from the local Faith community (including Fort Myers Quakers) was presented to the Collier County Sheriff at a rally.*
- *Following a hurricane that devastated the Louisiana area, the P&SC Committee sent \$1000 we had budgeted for “Needs that May Arise” to Baton Rouge Friends Meeting to use at their discretion. They passed our donation to a family that had lost everything in the hurricane.*
- *In October and November P&SC members began consideration of a request from SEYM to write letters to legislators to protest proposed Florida legislation hurtful to transgender youth and their doctors.*
- *We are currently looking at a request to join a network of anti-death penalty organizations, and another that would shut down the Glades County Immigrant Detention Center, which has been cited for abusive practices.*

Perhaps the biggest challenge and on-going uncertainty has been finding unity about where we may worship as an entire group again. For some time, Friends have been considering the need to find a better place to worship and build community. With the renewal of our lease coming up in 2022 and with the advent of COVID, the search took on more importance. COVID forced us to recognize that the Calusa Nature Center, the place we have gathered for more than 30 years, was no longer a place that could meet the challenges of a clean, safe environment for us to worship in the long term. That led

to consideration of a new place to meet which led to consideration of building our own Meeting House. We are appreciative of the groups and subgroups working to find a solution. We are also grateful for the generous, anonymous donation to fund a Meeting House if that is the direction we ultimately take. This, along with a fund begun years ago for this purpose, will help keep us fiscally sound so that we may continue to do Quakerly work within and outside of our Quaker community. The process has not always been easy, and at times, some felt there was not a clear discernment or unity in the decisions before us. Still, we have tried to remain loving and faithful in our search for understanding of what is Spirit-led and what is best for our faith community as we move forward.

This year has reaffirmed lessons of sorrow and joy and faith. We experienced a deep loss in March with the passing of Dudley Fennell, a longtime, wise member of Fort Myers Monthly Meeting. We also witnessed new seekers finding their way to our Meeting, including a few children whose presence, though rare, is always a delight. We were humbled by the announcement by SEYM that a member of our small Meeting, Nancy Fennell, would be the speaker for the 2022 Michener Lecture. Above all, this year has taught us with certainty that our faith is not place-based but driven wherever we are by expectant waiting for ever-present Spirit to lead us.

Meetinghouse Committees

The Sacred Space Committee and the Covenant Committee are planning to meet jointly at the end of the week to talk about next steps. Friend Jim Koopman shared a preliminary report from the engineering firm, Morris & DePew, commenting that the engineers took a 25 ft easement from what they visually saw as an apparent boundary to the conservation easement area. He has asked that they take another look to see if our building could be placed nearer the wetland area as we expected.

Friend Helen Fox reported that she found the name of the architectural firm that designed the Randell Research Center, the Pine Island library, and the innovative, green building at the Archbold Biological Station. When we explore the possibility of hiring this firm for our new Meetinghouse, we need to give them a general outline of the features that are most important to us. Friends are invited to email Friend Helen (hfox@umich.edu) with their thoughts by Thursday 1/13.

Clerk Richard Frechette reminded us that our lease at IONA House at the Calusa Nature Center ends on 4/30/22. We need to notify the CNCP as soon as possible if we do not intend to request a new lease beyond that date. However, we have items in storage there that need to be secured. After discussion, Friends agreed to spend funds to purchase watertight containers to hold library and other materials that are currently stored at IONA House. Friends agreed that an ad hoc committee be formed consisting of Friend Paul Davis and Clerk Richard Frechette to investigate various options for climate controlled, secure storage, including IONA House, the UU buildings, public storage facilities, etc. Friends agreed that a second ad hoc committee be formed, consisting of Suzanne Frechette, Deb White, Debbie Van Swol, Paul Davis, and Susie Oehl to sort through our kitchen equipment and library books in storage, separate out the books that are most likely to be requested, and secure the rest.

Peace & Social Concerns Committee

Friend Carolyn Stanley reported that P&SC began 2022 with nine active members and Carolyn agreeing to continue as Clerk. Most recently they have been responding to initiatives and requests from other organizations.

PSC received a request from the SEYM Committee for Ministry on Racism to report the actions that have been taken to end racism within our Meeting. At our recent meeting they missed the December 31st deadline but decided to contact Susan Taylor who is on that committee to report our anti-racist activities over the past several years and see if they have any interest in a recommended reading list. PSC also discussed having another Sunday afternoon session for our own Meeting.

PSC has become aware that there is an immigration detention center in Glades County that has had reports of racial incidents, medical neglect, threats and other abuse. The ACLU is calling for its closure. The committee will be discussing whether to join the ACLU's letter writing action to Glades County officials and President Biden to push for its closure.

AT L.I.F.E., this is the time when there is a strong push to find out how many people will attend the Nehemiah Action, scheduled for March 15 at an outdoor venue. This decision was made before the surge of the Omicron virus so Carolyn will keep the Meeting posted if there are changes. Meanwhile L.I.F.E.'s work on the Affordable Housing Trust Fund and exploring mental health issues continues.

Finally, many may remember Helen Fox leading the FtMMM in a priorities process for FCNL before the pandemic. Once again FCNL has asked us to participate in setting their priorities for the next two years, but after some discussion the committee decided not to participate this year. They are feeling a bit overwhelmed wondering how such a procedure would work with our hybrid system, dealing with the new surge in the pandemic, and knowing that we need time and energy to focus on plans for a new home for Meeting for Worship. On behalf of the committee, Carolyn wrote to FCNL declining the invitation and mentioned that we look forward to seeing the new priorities and using them to help guide our committee in the future. FCNL responded, thanking us for our support.

Religious Education Committee:

The January session of Quakerism-101 has been postponed due to conflict with SEYM Michener Lecture. A revised date has not been set at this time.

Technology Committee:

Clerk Richard reported that the committee has purchased a computer for the Meeting (primarily for hybrid worship) costing \$404. Friends Pat Iyer and Paul Davis have stepped forward to fill in for the set-up of hybrid worship in the event Richard Frechette is not available. Other volunteers, especially persons who might be available during the Summer months for occasional fill-in, would be most welcome.

We closed in silent worship.

Respectfully Submitted,
Helen Fox
Recording Clerk

Here's a short note from Nancy Webster...

I have a simple life without computers (it was hacked 4 years ago) and no cell phone. I appreciate the newsletters, with all the information they include. I love to read.

I dream about computers that turn into evil robots. There's no deep reason - no ticking toy ever harmed me when I was young. I've never gotten an electric shock. I just don't have an aptitude for technology. I have figured out toasters and blenders and the television (with X-Finity's help). I can do a microwave, and my 14-year old car I understand.

Really, I don't blame machines. I know it's me. Technology is not going away. But I'm going to continue to embrace the simple way of life.

Nancy Webster was a member of Ft. Myers Meeting as a younger person then transferred back to this Meeting from Miami Meeting in 2013. She is a resident of Naples. Her mother, Alice Knoop, was one of the founding members of the Quaker Worship Group in Bonita Springs in the early 1980s that preceded the Fort Myers Worship Group and Monthly Meeting.

There is a vision of divine order which does not require each of us to take on everything. There is a sense that in a world under gospel order, or divine guidance, each person's appointed tasks would fit together organically, moving toward God's unknowable goals for the universe. There is a sense that we are not responsible for the outcome. We are responsible for faithfully discerning and performing our own personal parts in the process, leaving the outcome to God.

- Patricia Loring, 1992

Southeastern Yearly Meeting

Quakers in Florida, southeast Georgia, & coastal South Carolina

Winter Interim Business Meeting

Saturday, January 15th, online on Zoom

Join Friends from all over our region for committee meetings in the morning, fellowship at lunch, and business meeting in the afternoon.

SEYM Michener Lecture & Seminars

Sunday, January 16th, 1 pm ET, Online

***Do Ye Not Know That
Ye Are the Temple of God?***

will be presented by **Nancy Fennell**

What does it mean to be “the temple of God?” Nancy Fennell will lead us in examining this question asked by Paul of the Corinthians (I Cor. 3:16). The two major functions of a temple are to provide a place of worship and to serve under the leadings of God. Fennell explores the role of both individuals and the community in terms of these functions within our meetings. The voices of Quakers past and present are brought to bear on contemporary issues.

Nancy Fennell (Ft. Myers) has been a Friend for 26 years. For Southeastern Yearly Meeting she has served as a member of Worship and Ministry and as Interim Business Meeting Clerk. She is the author of *The Path of Silence: A Call to Deepen and to Live our Spirituality*.





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

My Dad Never Fought In The War

When killing Japs was patriotic
you decided not to fight
choosing instead at age eighteen
to march with a broomstick
over your shoulder

I often imagine
hundreds of duplicate soldiers
stepping and turning in unison
rifles propped stiffly
on proud shoulders
and You with your painted broomstick
the only flaw in a perfect pattern

Yellow-Boy they called you

You whose job it was to crawl
on your stomach through mud
dragging a stretcher
without the extra weight of
guns and ammunition
to slow you down

You whose job it was to stack up young bodies
like cordwood in open trucks
until the soles of their boots
formed a solid wall eight feet high
Yellow-Boy they called you

hoping to shame you
into conformity
they placed a broomstick
in your hands
already dead-sure
that neither you nor they
would ever give in

~ Bonnie Davis 1980

Book Review:

Invisible Child: Poverty, Survival & Hope in an American City, **Andrea Elliott.** (Random House, NY, 2021)

I was enticed to read this book when author, Andrea Elliott was interviewed on PBS about her most recent book. Elliott is a Pulitzer-prize winning author and an investigative reporter for the New York Times. Her book is an intimate portrayal of the life of one child, Dasani, and her family's struggle with poverty and homelessness in New York City. The author spent years researching and following the family. The book reads like a novel, but unfortunately is not. The struggles Dasani and her family encounter are very real and further evidence of the failings of a safety net which too often works against rather than on behalf of the people it was intended to help. Through detailed research and specific examples Elliott describes systemic racism's impact on generations of families. Do not expect an easy read; the book is long, and emotionally exhausting. Expect to be challenged though, to look at homelessness and poverty in a brand new light.

~ 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.quano.org.....Quaker United Nations

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

MEETING CALENDAR

1 st Days (Sundays)	Meeting for Worship in a hybrid format: in person at Buckingham chickeehut or via Zoom An informal conversation time begins at 10:00 am	10:30 am
Sat 1/15/22	SEYM Winter Interim Business Meeting via Zoom	1:00 p.m.
Sun 1/16/22	SEYM Michener Lecture by Nancy Fennell	1:00 p.m.
Sun 2/13/22	Meeting for Business	Following Worship
