



FORT MYERS MONTHLY MEETING

Of the Religious Society of Friends

Meeting for Worship

Friends are meeting for hybrid worship every 1st day at 10:30 A.M. Friends may meet physically outdoors (weather permitting) under the roof of the chickee hut on the Orange River in Buckingham. (aka Peace Acre). 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

Midweek worship, in person only, is held at the chickee on Peace Acre each Wednesday morning at 10:30 a.m. For directions to Peace Acres, call 239-313-6201 or email the e-mail address above for directions.

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SEYM Queries & Advices

First Section:

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

2nd Month: Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business

Queries:

- Are meetings for business held in the spirit of meetings for worship?
- In decision-making, do we promote a spirit of love, understanding, and patience as we seek unity on an appropriate course of action?
- Do we keep our remarks simple and speak only as the Spirit leads?
- Are we able to unite in good grace with the sense of the meeting when our personal desires tend in another direction?
- Do we maintain respect for others, however strongly our opinions may differ?
- Are meetings for business seen as positive opportunities for testing and practicing our spiritual life?

Advices:

- As members, attend the business meetings and extend our support to the meeting's affairs so that the burden will not rest upon a few.
- In meetings for business and in all duties connected with them, seek the leadings of the Light.
- Avoid undue persistence. As we release our attachment to our ideas, the Light may reveal solutions none of us has considered.
- Be willing to admit the possibility of being in error.
- Remember that the foundation of a lasting decision lies in the search for unity—that is, a corporate seeking of the Light in an atmosphere of love, trust, and mutual forbearance.
- Attenders are warmly invited to attend and participate in meeting for worship with a concern for business.
- Have a sense of when to continue to labor on or to lay aside an issue.

Fort Myers Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends Minutes of 2nd Month 12, 2023

The Fort Myers Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends met on the 2nd month 12th day in hybrid worship online and at Peace Acre in Buckingham with a total of 12 Friends present. The Meeting opened with a period of silent centering.

Richard Frechette, Clerk, read Queries Advices from Faith & Practice on Meeting for Worship With a Concern for Business: Advice: Have a sense of when to continue to labor on or to lay aside an issue. Query: Are we able to unite in good grace with the sense of the Meeting when our personal desires tend in another direction?

Responses:

- There was a time when I was new to Quakers when I strongly disagreed with the way things were going in Meeting for Business. However, the Clerk decided that the sense of the Meeting was contrary to my opinion. I was angry and hurt; I thought, they don't practice what they preach. However, a weighty Friend talked to me and brought me back, and I am so grateful that he did. I love the Meeting, including the people I so strongly disagreed with.

- It can be very challenging for a Clerk to discern the sense of the Meeting, which is not the same as consensus. It takes experience to know the difference between the two. It is challenging enough to grasp the sense of the Meeting when people are in the same room. But at a distance, without body language or eye contact, it may challenge the whole nature of clerking for Meeting.
- I like that phrase, “Willing to step aside.” Growing up, I never heard anything at school about it, only in Quaker meetings: “I don’t agree but I’m willing to step aside.” Having a clerk who can ask if a dissenter is willing to step aside brings us together and keeps us together. This is quite different from the governing systems of most groups.
- At another small meeting, we were asked to give permission for the marriage of a couple of the same sex. One of our members was absolutely opposed to this. We might never have come to consensus, but the sense of the Meeting was very strong; it was clear that we had been given a leading. What we did as a Meeting was to have several “weighty Quakers” talk personally to the dissenter about being able to step aside. But that individual felt so strongly, they decided to leave the Meeting, which is another way to step aside. I felt grateful that option was there.

Treasurer’s Report

Treasurer Paul Davis reported that FtMMM received the final amount of the \$300,000 pledge toward the Meeting House. Also, with the generous contributions to the General Fund at the end of last year he was able to write the checks to all the Quaker organizations and charities we budgeted for in 2023 so that they will have access to the donations now instead of later in the year.

Our tradition is to not report who made contributions unless the contributor gives permission. Nancy Weber wanted us to know she had given a substantial sum to the Meeting House fund in honor of her mother, who was one of our founding members.

Friend Paul has been in contact with Herb Haigh who is a member of the Saint Petersburg Meeting and a Board Member of the Friends General Conference. He is advising us on how to potentially apply for a mortgage (if needed) and small grants for Meeting House expenses (like handicap parking). Paul is preparing a variety of financial reports for him. He has asked for a budget for the Meeting House, both construction and ongoing once it is built. He expects to have an insurance estimate any day now from the Theiss Agency who specialize in

Commercial/Church insurance needs. He will then advise us on the most appropriate way to move forward.

FMMM Funds Report 1/31/2023

General Funds

Checking	8,679
Gen Fund Savings	40,445
Gen Fund Fr Fiduciary	29,405

Total General Fund 78,529

Meeting House Funds

Savings	438,754
MH Funds Fr Fiduciary	13,684

Total Meeting House Funds 452,438

FMMM Total Funds 530,967

Jan 2023 Income vs Expenses	
Jan Income	111,380*
* \$1,380 General Fund	
* \$110,000 Meeting House	
Jan Expenses \$ 7,346*	
* Engineers \$972	
* Echo, Fair housing, LIFE, Ian Relief, AFSC, Food Bank, Quaker House, FCNL, FGC, Quality Life Center, Cultivate Abundance, Friends Peace Teams	

Ministry & Counsel Committee Report:

Clerk Nancy Murvine reported that Nancy Fennell has announced her resignation from the committee. She will remain with the group until replacements are found for her and for Jeannette Botha. We expressed our gratitude and our sense of loss for her wisdom and guidance for so many years.

M&C has asked that the Nominating Committee seek these replacements in the future, beginning now. This is a change from Ft. Myers Monthly Meeting’s process of having M&C replace their members.

Meetinghouse Committee Report

The Meetinghouse committee, consisting of Richard and Suzanne Frechette, Paul Davis, Pat Iyer, Tom Miller, Jim Koopman and Helen Fox, met this week and discussed the following items:

Engineering costs. It seems we need to provide 12 new parking spaces, including 2 handicapped, with 6 on pavement and 6 on grass. What is not clear is whether this calculation by our engineer, Jack Morris, is based on the parking needs of the entire UU complex, as we believe is correct, or if he is treating the new Meetinghouse as a separate, free-standing building. Friend Paul will contact Jack about this and ask him to give us a cost estimate for the engineering part of

the project, including the driveway, sidewalk, parking spaces, tie-in to the existing drainfield, and fill. Friend Suzanne asked if the engineer could also recommend low-cost, permeable pavement for the parking spaces.

UPDATE: Jack Morris responded that the calculation of 23 parking spaces is based on the needs of the entire complex.

Contractor. Jeff Mudgett, our architect, will soon provide us with names of several contractors he has worked with that have the capacity to do a project of our type.

Funding. Friend Paul updated us on the current funds available for the project.

- Current Meeting House Fund \$452,438
- Current Meeting General Funds \$78,529
- Total Funds Available \$530,957
- Estimated Project Total \$551,420 (per Jeff Mudgett, architect)
- Of this estimated total, \$58,620 has been designated by Jeff as “contingency funds.” Jeff’s estimated costs for the new parking spaces is \$46,000 (however, this is before the engineer’s cost estimate gives us a true picture of those costs).
- Total Project Costs including estimated parking and all of the contingency are \$597,420.
- The difference between the total funds available and the estimated project costs is \$66,463.

However, we don’t want to use up all the Meeting’s funds, as we have other needs and wishes for some of those funds, such as contributions to various causes and charities, our yearly payment to SEYM and other Quaker organizations, the personal needs of our members, etc.

In addition, the new Meeting House yearly operating budget is estimated to be about \$14,000, including as main line items: \$5000 in building insurance, \$900 in liability insurance, and our \$4800 land lease from the UUs.

It is clear that we need to raise a considerable amount of money to complete our new Meetinghouse project. Friend Paul will put together a fundraising appeal to FtMMM members and attenders, look into a possible mortgage with a Mennonite group that works with FGC, and look into grants for specialized items such as a handicap ramp or parking. Our architect will provide Paul and the UU's with a 3D drawing of the building for fundraising and informational purposes at no extra charge.

The MH Committee decided to resume a regular monthly meeting time. Our next meeting is March 10th at 7pm over zoom. Friend Paul will be away from March 22nd to April 29th. During that time, Clerk Richard will accept donations at his (the Meeting's) address and write thank you notes to contributors.

Discussion Group: Friend Sue Oehl reported that the group will meet next Sunday at 12:30 in hybrid format. The theme is "Coming Home," keeping in mind that there are many different kinds of "homes" and many different kinds of "comings." Friend Paul asked that the minutes reflect the fact that everyone thoroughly enjoyed the first discussion (on "Fear") of this new group.

We closed in silent worship.
Respectfully submitted,
Helen Fox, Recording Clerk



Friends marched on MLK, Jr. Day in Fort Myers:

Tom Miller, seated and Chris Runke, Vicki Scott accompanied by daughter and grandchildren.

Photo submitted by Paul Davis who also marched.

Last week I had mentioned a prayer from the Cherokee Nation..... I could not find it again nor the place in which I had found it. I am forwarding (in its place) a prayer written by a current day member of the Choctaw Nation, which asks Divine Spirit for strength and wisdom in the work of Justice.

Peace,

Chris McBride

Honoring Advocacy

Pixie Lighthouse is an enrolled member of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. With her prayer, we ask the Divine to give us all that we need to advocate for others:

Help me to speak out for justice with a special desire fueled by a power greater than surface comforts and outdated systems.

Let me be a troublemaker to champion those I love and care for, and for those I don't know intimately who need my help.

Hire me to be a powerful voice for the change that heals, reconciles, forgives, and improves. Help me create time and space to lend support where it is needed. Transmit to me the passion to be bothered by violations of another's rights to life, liberty, happiness, and their voice. Find me faithful and in service, riding shotgun to heart-led movements, and leading the charge when it is up to me to do so. Remove my feelings of hopelessness in what I perceive to be the opposition. Align me with action and channel my energy for others.

Bind me to the medicine of love. Let me affect the transformation that leads to needed change. Light the torch of revolution in my heart. Stand me upright on a foundation of faith while I take the next steps. Build my voice as an instrument for

defending freedoms which provide equality. Keep my motivations clean. Grant me the tools to see near and far, and find me adjusting the lens often.

Help me to give a leg up to the underdog: to root for the one who doesn't stand a chance. Help me to accept being unliked or misunderstood for positioning myself behind what I believe in.

Bolster my confidence and give me the understanding and empathy required for sustainable existence. Make tolerance my priority and give me the words and actions to fight violence with the sword of peace. Orient me to inclusivity. Help me to stop putting individuals into dualistic opposition, rather focus me on repairing broken systems, and my participation in them. Dissolve my tendencies for cliques, partisanship, judgement, righteousness, bandwagons and the damning or idolizing of those I perceive to have more than me. Help me to do my part to clang the bells of freedom.

When ten thousand are whispering, make me one who is listening.

The likeness we bear to Jesus is more essential than our notions of him.

~ Lucretia Mott, 1793-1880

MEETING CALENDAR		
Each First Day	Meeting for Worship in a hybrid format: in person at Peace Acres or via Zoom An informal conversation time begins at 10:00 am	10:30 a.m.
Each Wednesday	Meeting for Worship at Peace Acres. This is in person only.	10:30 a.m.
2/13/23	LIFE: Love in Action Gathering Covenant Presbyterian Church 2439 McGregor	6:30 p.m.- 8:30 p.m.
2/19/23	Discussion group: Coming Home facilitated by Susan Oehl on Zoom	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:

Samuel De Oliveira, Assistant Treasurer
FtMMM

USEFUL WEBSITES FOR FRIENDS

- <https://pendlehill.org>Pendle Hill, Quaker Retreat and Resource Center
- <http://seymquakers.org>Southeastern Yearly Meeting
- www.fcni.orgFriends Committee for National Legislation
- www.fgcquaker.orgFriends General Conference
- www.afsc.orgAmerican Friends Service Committee
- <http://fwcc.world>Friends World Committee on Consultation
- www.quakerspeak.comQuakerSpeak: A Quaker YouTube Channel
- www.quakerhouse.orgQuaker House, Fayetteville
- www.quakervoluntaryservice.orgQuaker Voluntary Service
- www.quno.orgQuaker United Nations

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