



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 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 Acre, call 239-313-6201 or email:

ftmyers.quakers@gmail.com

Meeting 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

SEYM Queries & Advices

Fourth Section:

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

11. Care of the Natural World

Queries:

- *Do we live in harmony with nature? Do we live in keeping with the spirit of the unity, sacredness, and integrity of all creation?*
- *Do we seek to minimize our consumption of the earth's resources? Do we encourage equitable and sustainable use of those resources?*
- *Do we walk gently over the earth, seeing that of God in all of nature?*
- *Do we seek to educate ourselves, our children, our meeting, and our community about how our lives can be more in harmony with the earth?*
- *Does the meeting strive to bring all its practices in harmony with the natural world?*

Advices:

- *Maintain in ourselves and encourage in others a sense of responsibility for the environment, both for the present and for future generations.*
- *Avoid amusements that stimulate destructive emotions, are detrimental to the health or tranquility of others, or are damaging to the natural environment.*
- *Show a loving consideration for all creatures, cherishing the beauty and wonder of all God's creation.*
- *Share our sense of reverence and stewardship for the earth.*

**Fort Myers Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of
Friends
Meeting for Worship for Business
Minutes of 11th Month 12, 2023**

The Fort Myers Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends met for Business in hybrid format on 11th month, 12th day with 14 Friends present. The Meeting opened with a period of silent centering. Clerk Richard Frechette read from SEYM's Queries & Advices for 11th Month on Care Of The Natural World:

- Do we live in harmony with nature? Do we live in keeping with the spirit of unity, sacredness, and integrity of all creation?
- Do we seek to minimize our consumption of the earth's resources? Do we encourage equitable and sustainable use of those resources?
- Do we walk gently over the earth, seeing that of God in all of nature?

Several responses:

- My first thought is to take this advice personally and try to pass through this world with a smaller footprint. Voting for leaders that have wisdom in that area would probably do even more good. Not that you can't do both.
- "Gently" to me could be interpreted as awareness and sensitivity, recognizing the natural world around us and honoring it.
- This morning someone sent a photo of a snake to a neighborhood email group, asking if she should kill it. Several people responded, "Why kill it, why not just live with it? Eventually it will move on." In fact, a lot of

people said that, and I chimed in with that. I would give it the peace sign and go my own way. You should make room for other creatures in your path, rather than destroy them just because you're afraid of them. I know friends who are terrified of spiders. Why? I leave spiders alone because they've done me a lot of good over the years.

- As a corporate group we're trying to honor the natural world with the design of the new Meetinghouse, keeping our footprint small, surrounding it with nature.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Paul Davis shared the following report for October:

FMMM Funds Report 10/31/2023

General Funds

Checking	6,724
Gen Fund Savings	42,323
Gen Fund Fr Fiduciary	27,937

Total General Fund **76,984**
Meeting House Funds

Savings	453,018
MH Funds Fr Fiduciary	13,000

Total Meeting House Funds **466,018**

FMMM Total Funds **543,002**

October 2023 Income vs Expenses	
October Income	\$ 1,420
October Expenses	\$ 13,165*
* Architect & Engineering for Meeting House, County Permit fees	

Ministry & Counsel Report

Clerk Nancy Murvine reported that a new Spiritual Formation group has been established with five members. If there is more interest, Friends should contact Nancy Murvine. M&C is gathering information for our Spiritual State of the Meeting report. Questions to help us think about this can be found in the October newsletter. We don't need to answer all (or any) of the questions.

Peace and Social Concerns Report

Clerk Carolyn Stanley reported: PSC hopes Friends will stay after Meeting next week with their thoughts about in what direction PSC should head next year.

Nominating Committee Report

Clerk Deb White reported: Each fall the Nominating Committee studies the list of responsibilities needed for the Fort Myers Friends Meeting to run smoothly financially, practically, and according to our Quaker Faith. We ask members and attenders to consider their strengths and decide how they are led to help care for the Fort Myers Friends Meeting. The Nominating Report is presented at the November Meeting with attention to Business for discussion and a final report is presented in December for approval.

The following committees are open to all members and attenders. Each committee chooses their own Clerk. The first meeting of the year should be called by the first member listed, who shall serve as Convener until a Clerk is selected. Friends are welcome to join any of these committees throughout the year.

Current Conveners are underlined:

Finance Committee - Paul Davis, Denise Runyon, Helen Snodgrass

Peace and Social Concerns Committee – Carolyn Stanley, Helen Fox, Susan Oehl, Hugh Pettigrew, Chris McBride, Karin Gelotte

Religious Education Committee -- Denise Runyon, Jeannette Botha, SheilanaMassey, Susan Oehl, Deb White

Technology Committee – Pat Iyer, Paul Davis, Richard Frechette, Vicki Scott

Nominating Committee - Deb White, Carolyn Stanley, Chris McBride

Ministry and Counsel Committee (appointment expires at the end of the year listed.)

2024 - Nancy Fennell, Helen Fox

2025 - Nancy Murvine, Karin Gelotte

2026 - Deb White, Mara Fallon

Hospitality Committee - Richard and Suzanne Frechette, Nancy Howell, Susan Oehl, Chris Ruhnke, Vicki Scott

Ad-Hoc Meeting House Committee - Helen Fox, Jim Koopman, Paul Davis, Pat Iyer, Suzanne Frechette, Richard Frechette and Tom Miller as ADA advisor.

This committee has been functioning as an ad-hoc committee dealing with the planning and construction of our future Meetinghouse. Once the Meetinghouse is built, the committee will be disbanded and another committee will be created to take care of management of the building and surrounding property.

In addition to the committees, there are a few individual responsibilities. Most of these volunteers have agreed to continue in their position for the 2024 year.

Annual corporate report: “Fort Myers Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, Inc., a Florida Non-profit Corporation” (eligible for tax-deductible gifts)

Current Mailing Address: c/o Richard Frechette, 138 Pinebrook Drive, Fort Myers, FL 33907

FEI Number: 65-0607361 Certificate of Status Desired: No

The Officers/Directors of this Corporation are:

1. Current Registered Agent: Paul Davis, 5530 Harborage Dr. Fort Myers, FL 33908-4545
 2. Director Richard Frechette, 138 Pinebrook Drive, Fort Myers, FL 33907-5988
 3. Director Chris McBride, 12567 Summerwood Dr., Fort Myers, FL 33908-1630
 4. Director Carolyn Stanley, 14093 Mystic Seaport Way, Fort Myers, FL 33818-7700
 5. Director Helen Fox, 206 Pinebrook Dr., Fort Myers 33907-5988
- (These directors have no duties; they just fill the legal requirements of the corporation.)

II. Fort Myers Monthly Meeting Individual Jobs.

Clerk (3 year commitment) - Richard Frechette (until end of 2026)

Recording Clerk (3 year commitment) - Helen Fox (until end of 2026)

Treasurer - Paul Davis (2nd term ends 2025)

Asst. Treasurer - Denise Runyon

Membership Recorder - Richard Frechette

Newsletter Editor - Deb White

Assistant Newsletter Editor for Circulation - Mary Smiley

Librarian - Susan Oehl

It was agreed that these positions will be formally approved at the December meeting.

Meetinghouse Committee Report

Meetinghouse Committee Clerk Helen Fox reported on the progress of the construction of the new building:

We expected to break ground this month. Unfortunately, there have been slowdowns at the level of the County, which is backlogged with requests for permits after Hurricane Ian. But in addition, the architect and the prospective contractor, both strong, colorful personalities, have sharp differences of opinion about the design of the interior. We are continuing to try to mediate.

SEYM Meeting for Business Report

Richard & Suzanne Frechette had attended SEYM Fall Interim Business Meeting in Sarasota last month, representing Ft. Myers Meeting. Friend Suzanne reported.

There was much discussion of the “Apportionment” methodology relating to support for the Yearly Meeting by Monthly Meetings and Worship Groups.

The current standard is to determine the budget requirement for Yearly Meeting for the year, then divide by the total number of members and attenders (with attenders being identified as .5 unit) to determine the unit cost. The apportionment for each MM/WG is then determined by multiplying the unit cost by 1 for each reported member and .5 for each reported attender.

It was noted that the formula is a suggestion, but that MMs determine what they feel is a fair amount to contribute. Currently, 10 Meetings contribute according to the formula, 9 Meetings do not contribute, and

the balance contribute according to their own formula. Discussion included whether formally reported “members” who are no longer actively involved with the Meeting should be counted, and whether active attenders should perhaps be given the same value as members.

The Winter Interim Business Meeting and Mitchner Lecture will not occur on Martin Luther King Day weekend but on the following weekend (Jan 20-21) at the Orlando Meetinghouse. The Lecture, tentatively titled “Let It Burn,” will be given by Ann Jerome of the Deland Worship Group, who is currently a Friend in Residence at Pendle Hill.

Yearly Meeting Sessions will be held once again at the Dayspring Retreat Center (between Sarasota & St. Petersburg) on March 27-31 (ending on Easter Sunday). The theme will be “The Friends we are becoming; embracing our longings and leadings.”

The position of youth coordinator is currently vacant. We approved the search to fill the position.

Friends shared a concern that there has been neither a merit increase nor a cost-of-living increase in SEYM staff salaries in the past 3 years.

There was a brief presentation and discussion about a potential Florida Constitutional “Amendment to Limit Government Interference with Abortion,” whose summary states, “No law shall prohibit, penalize, delay, or restrict abortion before viability or when necessary to protect the patient’s health, as determined by the patient’s healthcare provider.”

The Ad Hoc Florida Retirement Community Committee was laid down after the committee found inadequate interest on the part of monthly Meetings. Other ideas are being explored.

Friends approved the establishment of the Quaker Call Committee, charging it with “the responsibility to develop creative ways and means to actively resist the frontal attack now being made in Florida and elsewhere upon our historic Quaker Testimonies and, more positively, to invigorate and strengthen our Monthly Meetings.” Dan Vaughan, the driving force behind this, shared his thoughts about the possibility of establishing a school or schools in Florida that teach Quaker values and actively resist legislation

restricting public funded education about history, science, and gender, diversity, equity and inclusion.

Suzanne noted that she is participating in this newly-formed committee. One idea being discussed is to explore tapping into the expanded Florida school voucher system, (\$8,000 per student made available to parents who choose to not send their children to public schools). In so doing, those funds might be used by parents to support educational objectives aligned with Quaker values. There has been some early discussion between Dan and administrators he knows well at Stetson University in Deland, Florida, about the possibility of the university revisiting the notion of a lab school there. Although Stetson considered establishing a lab school in the past, it never materialized. The Florida school vouchers might provide an impetus for funding and the recent ultra conservative educational mandates of the legislature may identify the need. Suzanne reported that she is participating in this newly formed SEYM Quaker Call Committee.

The Meeting closed with silence at 12:55 pm

Respectfully Submitted,
Helen Fox, Recording Clerk

USEFUL WEBSITES FOR FRIENDS

https://pendlehill.org	Pendle Hill, Quaker Retreat and Resource Center
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

From Ministry and Counsel

Queries for the annual report On The Spiritual State of the Meeting

We are in the process of gathering thoughts for our annual report to SEYM on the Spiritual State of our Meeting. Below is a list of queries offered by SEYM for consideration.

Do not attempt to address all these queries. They are simply intended to assist you in thinking about how spirit works through your Meeting. Of course, if there are other queries that are more meaningful to the spiritual state of your meeting, by all means add and use them.

We ask that you respond to those few queries that speak deeply or directly to you or add a query that does the same. Please send those thoughts responses before December 1 to the Clerk of Ministry and Counsel at nrmurvine@gmail.com to allow time to create the report and deliver it to the Meeting in early January.

1. How do we support each other as members of this beloved community?
2. How well do our meetings for worship with a concern for business lead to a corporate search for and revelation of God's truth?
3. What was our meeting's witness in the wider community in the last year?
4. How has our meeting for worship or other meeting activities nurtured our spiritual growth?
5. Has there been a deepening and strengthening of the sense of the Divine Presence in our midst during the past year? Do we feel a sense of our individual spirits fusing into an undivided group as we worship? Do we leave our meetings filled with a sense of love and peace and courage to meet the challenge of Spirit filled living?
6. Where do you find hope in the meeting and in the meeting's spiritual life?
7. How is God's presence being experienced in our meeting?
8. Are there places where the meeting isn't reaching fully for the Light?
9. Do you have other reflections on the current condition of the meeting—places where you see new life emerging or loss or sadness that you want to share?
10. How does the spirit of worship extend into our committee work and into meeting for worship with a concern for business?
11. How does love manifest in our meeting, in our community, and in the world?

Report on lobbying for peace from Helen Fox, FCNL liaison:

This year FCNL is lobbying for strong investments of federal spending in three core accounts that fund peacebuilding: Atrocities Prevention, Complex Crises Fund, and Reconciliation Programs. These will come up in the fiscal year 2024 State Department and Foreign Operations Appropriations bill (H.R. 4665/ S.2438).

Atrocities Prevention is the State Department’s only funding dedicated solely to the prevention of mass atrocities and genocide.

The Complex Crises Fund allows for the quick mobilization of funds during emergent crises, and seizes opportunities to consolidate peace.

Reconciliation programs facilitate interpersonal dialogues between conflicting groups to strengthen social cohesion and trust.

	MEETING CALENDAR	
Each First Day	Meeting for Worship in a hybrid format: in person at Peace Acre or via Zoom. An informal conversation time begins at 10:00 am.	10:30 a.m.
Each Wednesday	Mid-week Meeting for Worship at Peace Acre. This is in person only.	10:30 a.m.
11/19/2023	Peace and Social Concerns discussion of 2024 priorities. (This will be hybrid: in person, and via Zoom.)	Upon rise of meeting
11/28/2023	LIFE (Lee Interfaith Empowerment) annual “Research Kick-off” .	7:00 p.m. Place TBD

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

FMMM,
Denise Runyon
125 Pinebrook Dr,
Fort Myers, FL 33907

The Meeting's Directory has been updated and is available. If you wish to have one, please text or e-mail Richard Frechette (239-313-6201; [Rich.Frechette@gmail.co](mailto:Rich.Frechette@gmail.com))

**Friends Meeting of Fort Myers
Religious Society of Friends c/o
Richard Freche8e
138 Pinebrook Dr.
Fort Myers, FL 33907-5988
Address Correction Requested**