



# 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](mailto:ftmyers.quakers@gmail.com)

Meeting Mailing Address: 138 Pinebrook Dr.

Fort Myers FL 33907

Telephone: (239) 318-0538 ♦ Website: [fortmyersquakers.org](http://fortmyersquakers.org)

E-mail: [ftmyers.quakers@gmail.com](mailto:ftmyers.quakers@gmail.com)

Newsletter Editor: Deb White: [debwhitenfl@gmail.com](mailto:debwhitenfl@gmail.com)

## SEYM Queries & Advices

### Fourth Section:

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

## 12. Peace Testimony & Nonviolence Queries:

- *Do we work for peace in the world? Do we nurture peace within ourselves?*
- *Do we "live in the virtue of that life and power which takes away the occasion of all wars"?*
- *Do we seek consistently to carry out this testimony for peace in all our relationships, including family, community, and work life?*
- *Do we as individuals and as members of a meeting seek to take part in the ministry of reconciliation between individuals, groups, and nations?*
- *Do we faithfully maintain our peace testimony?*
- *Do we reject military training, preparation for war, and participation in war as inconsistent with the spirit of Christ's teachings?*
- *Do we as a meeting take a stand and do all we can to remove the causes of war and violence?*

### Advices:

- *War is contrary to the life and teaching of Jesus. Seek through God's power and grace to overcome in our hearts the emotions that lie at the root of conflict.*
- *Strive for nonviolent approaches to conflicts in all aspects of our lives.*
- *Every human being is a beloved child of God and has that divine spark which claims our reverence. War is a denial of this truth.*
- *Friends' peace testimony is the positive exercise of good will calling us to lend our influence to all that strengthens the growth of international friendships and understanding.*
- *Cultivate an active spirit of love and peace.*
- ***The first step to peace is to stand still in the Light...*** .George Fox, 1653

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## Fort Myers Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business 12<sup>th</sup> Month 10, 2023

The Fort Myers Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends met at noon on the 12th month 10th day in hybrid worship online and at Peace Acre in Buckingham with 16 F/friends present. The Meeting opened with a period of silent centering.

Richard Frechette, Clerk, read Queries and Advices from SEYM's Faith & Practice, 12<sup>th</sup> month, on Peace Testimonies and Nonviolence.

- Do we seek consistently to carry out this testimony for peace in all our relationships, including family, community, and work life?
- Do we as individuals and as members of a Meeting seek to take part in the ministry of reconciliation between individuals, groups, and nations?
- Do we as a meeting take a stand and do all we can to remove the causes of war and violence?

### Treasurer's Report

Paul Davis presented the 11/30 statement

**FMMM Funds Report 11/30/2023**

**General Funds**

|                       |        |
|-----------------------|--------|
| Checking              | 6,096  |
| Gen Fund Savings      | 42,332 |
| Gen Fund Fr Fiduciary | 29,903 |

**Total General Fund 78,331**  
**Meeting House Funds**

|                       |         |
|-----------------------|---------|
| Savings               | 453,939 |
| MH Funds Fr Fiduciary | 13,914  |

**Total Meeting House Funds 467,853**

**FMMM Total Funds 546,184**

|  |                  |
|--|------------------|
| <b>November 2023 Income vs Expenses</b>  |                  |
| <b>November Income</b>                   | <b>\$ 1,360</b>  |
| <b>November Expenses</b>                 | <b>\$ 1,988*</b> |
| * Engineering for Meeting House, Storage |                  |

Treasurer Paul also presented a proposed 2024 budget. He explained that this budget is only a rough estimate. However, it's a conservative budget, much like last year's, because committee chairs were asked to stay close to their previous budget, and they all did so. Because of prospective changes expected in the Meetinghouse lines, this budget will likely need to be updated during the 2024 year.

| Name                                       | 2021  | 2022   | 2023    | Draft 0224 |
|--|-------|--------|---------|------------|
| <b>BUDGETED EXPENSES</b>                   |       |        |         |            |
| Environmental Working Group                | \$100 | \$100  | \$100   |            |
| Finance Committee-Banking & Corporate Fees | \$100 | \$100  | \$100   | \$100      |
| Finance Committee-Gifts/Contingency        | \$100 | \$100  | \$100   | \$100      |
| Hospitality Committee                      | \$450 | \$450  | \$450   | \$450      |
| Hurricane Ian (Clearwater)                 |       | \$2150 | \$0     |            |
| I-storage                                  |       | \$1100 | \$1,428 | \$816      |

|  |         |         |         |         |
|--|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Meetinghouse-Reserve                               | \$3,000 | \$3,000 | \$3,000 | \$3,000 |
| Meetinghouse-Land lease                            |         |         |         | \$4,800 |
| Meetinghouse-Building Insurance                    |         |         |         | \$2,550 |
| Meetinghouse-Liability Insurance                   |         |         |         | \$900   |
| Meetinghouse-Electric                              |         |         |         | \$900   |
| Meetinghouse-Water                                 |         |         |         | \$600   |
| Meetinghouse-Internet                              |         |         |         | \$480   |
| Ministry & Counsel-Care                            | \$1,000 | \$1,000 | \$1,000 | \$1,000 |
| Ministry & Counsel-Friends General Conference      | \$1,200 | \$1,200 | \$1,200 | \$1,200 |
| Ministry & Counsel-General/Misc                    | \$300   | \$300   | \$300   | \$300   |
| Ministry & Counsel-Spiritual/Scholarships          | \$1,500 | \$1,500 | \$1,500 | \$1,500 |
| Newsletter   | \$300   | \$300   | \$300   | \$300   |
| Nominating Committee                               | \$100   | \$100   | \$100   | \$100   |
| Outreach Committee: Web Hosting                    | \$150   | \$200   | \$200   | \$200   |
| Outreach Committee: Friends Journal Listing        | \$80    | \$80    | \$80    |         |
| Outreach Committee: Outreach-Phone                 | \$130   | \$130   | \$130   | \$130   |
| Outreach Committee: Zoom                           | \$650   | \$650   | \$650   | \$650   |
| Peace & Social Concerns-AFSC                       | \$600   | \$600   | \$600   | \$600   |
| Peace & Social Concerns-CIW                        | \$300   | \$300   | \$300   | \$300   |
| Peace & Social Concerns-Cultivate Abundance        | \$100   | \$100   | \$100   | \$100   |
| Peace & Social Concerns-Educ. Concerns for Hunger  | \$200   | \$200   | \$200   | \$200   |
| Peace & Social Concerns-Fair Housing               | \$300   | \$300   | \$300   | \$300   |
| Peace & Social Concerns-FCNL                       | \$600   | \$600   | \$600   | \$600   |
| Peace & Social Concerns-Friends Peace Teams        | \$300   | \$300   | \$300   | \$300   |
| Peace & Social Concerns-H. Chapin Foodbank         | \$3,500 | \$1,000 | \$1,000 | \$500   |
| Peace & Social Concerns-Initiatives that may arise | \$1,000 | \$1,000 | \$1,000 | \$1,000 |
| Peace & Social Concerns-Lee Interfaith             | \$500   | \$500   | \$500   | \$1,000 |
| Peace & Social Concerns-Mission Peniel             | \$300   | \$750   | \$750   | \$750   |
| Peace & Social Concerns-Peace Day                  | \$100   | \$100   | \$100   |         |
| Peace & Social Concerns-Quaker House               | \$300   | \$300   | \$300   | \$300   |
| Peace & Social Concerns-Quaker Vol. Services       | \$200   | \$200   | \$200   | \$200   |

|  |          |          |          |          |
|--|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| <b>Peace &amp; Social Concerns-Quality Life Center</b> | \$500    | \$500    | \$500    | \$500    |
| <b>Property Committee</b>                              | \$150    | \$0      | \$500    | \$500    |
| <b>Religious Education-1st Day School</b>              | \$50     | \$50     | \$50     | \$50     |
| <b>Religious Education-Books/Misc</b>                  | \$500    | \$500    | \$500    | \$500    |
| <b>Religious Education-Retreats/Speakers</b>           | \$800    | \$800    | \$800    | \$800    |
| <b>SEYM</b>  | \$5,400  | \$5,613  | \$6,600  | \$6,600  |
| <b>Technology Committee</b>                            | \$500    | \$500    | \$500    | \$500    |
| <b>TOTAL</b>   | \$25,360 | \$26,673 | \$26,338 | \$35,676 |

In response to a question, Friend Paul said that we habitually anticipate more expenses in December because of all the requests by charitable organizations for donations, but we also receive more donations from F/friends at the end of the year. Once we begin to pay expenses (rent, utilities, etc.) for the Meetinghouse, these are likely to amount to \$10,000. Meanwhile, before we break ground, we are making about \$1000 a month in interest on the Meetinghouse funds.

❖ **Minute 2023-MM-09:** Friends approved the 2024 budget, recognizing that it will need to be updated once further financial information relating to the new meetinghouse is provided.

### **Ministry & Counsel Report**

Clerk Nancy Murvine shared the following:

- M&C thanks Paul Davis and Hugh Pettigrew for their service on Ministry and Counsel for the last three years.
- M&C thanks those who responded to the queries about the Spiritual State of the Meeting. The responses greatly helped create the first draft. A final draft will be presented at the January Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business.

### **Peace and Social Concerns Committee Report**

Clerk Carolyn Stanley shared the following: The PSC Committee met on November 27. As we reviewed our 2023 budget and saw that we hadn't used our "Initiatives That May Arise" fund for this year, we decided to donate \$500 to a relief organization in Gaza: either the UNRWA (United Nations Relief and Works Agency) or the AFSC (American Friends Service Committee) to help care for the victims of Israel's war on Hamas in Gaza. After further research and discussion through email and phone, we found that the AFSC had a place on their website specifically for donating towards relief work in GAZA. We know it's a very small donation for a crisis that is so severe. But we felt strongly that we had to do something.

Friend Carolyn shared the tentative P&SC budget for 2024 (incorporated above). Aside from the donation mentioned to AFSC and some other small changes, PSC increased the amount we give to L.I.F.E to \$1000, since it is a small, local organization where our dollars really make a difference.

Regarding PSC's focus for 2024, the committee reviewed the responses that attenders recently shared. Most suggested that some aspect of nonviolence be spread throughout the community more widely, perhaps through speakers and workshops at the new Meetinghouse or on zoom before the Meetinghouse is built. Another suggestion was for PSC to work on whatever specific mental health issue/s L.I.F.E decides to focus on. A decision about our focus and actions will be on the agenda of the January PSC meeting. **Peace and Social Concerns Committee Report**

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PSC has set 1 PM on the last Monday of each month for its regular meeting time. Our next Zoom meeting will be Monday, January 29th at 1 PM. Anyone is welcome to attend. Let Carolyn know so she can send you a link to the Zoom meeting. Our agenda will include deciding on our goals and possible actions for 2024, and whether we should continue our Meeting's discussion about the hostilities in Gaza.

Recently the L.I.F.E organization has been concerned about some changes the Fort Myers City government wants to make to the Affordable Housing Trust Fund. It looks like they want to change the focus to prioritize more wealthy residents for housing assistance. To counter this, four Friends attended last Monday's City Council Meeting. There was a large turnout from the L.I.F.E member congregations and several members spoke including Helen Fox and Carolyn Stanley.

After the City Council meeting, several members of the L.I.F.E housing committee met with two city council members, Darla Bonk and Johnny Streets, as well as Mr. Belden, the director of the Community Development Department (CDD) and Beverly Reed, the head of the Affordable Housing section of the CDD. Those conversations helped both sides understand each other better.

The City Council is having a Work Session with the Affordable Housing Trust Fund on the agenda this Monday afternoon. The L.I.F.E housing committee will meet Monday morning on Zoom to plan for attending and hopefully speaking at that Work Session. If any F/friends feel called to become more involved with L.I.F.E's justice work - either Affordable Housing or exploring the New Mental Health issue, please let Carolyn know.

Chris McBride and Karin Gelotte will represent FMMM at L.I.F.E's Mental Health Meetings, and Helen Fox and Carolyn Stanley will continue their push to keep the focus of the city's Affordable Housing Trust Fund on assisting those most in need of immediate help and providing additional low cost rental housing.

### **Nominating Committee Report**

Clerk Richard Frechette explained that the report announcing committee membership for 2024 and the annual corporate report were submitted last month and appear in the minutes from November. There were no objections or comments about these reports since then.

❖ **Minute 2023-MM-10:** FMMM approves the annual corporate report as published in the November 2023 minutes.

❖ **Minute 2023-MM-11:** FMMM approves the Nominating Committee's report as published in the November 2023 minutes.

### **Meetinghouse Committee Report**

Clerk Helen Fox reported: Last week, Suzanne and Richard Frechette and she met with Tommy Lee Cook, our prospective contractor. Tommy has come up with an approximate cost for the building that includes many changes from Jeff's design that he believes will both save us money and provide a building that meets code and fits with our Quaker values. This part of the cost, according to Tommy, would be just shy of \$500,000.

However, Tommy has estimated that site preparation will come to an additional \$250,000, given county requirements and the materials and labor increases after Hurricane Ian. This would bring our total cost to between \$700,000 and \$800,000.

In addition, unfortunately, Tommy is not sure he will be able to be our contractor. He is near retirement age and needs to think of his health and quality of life. His decision may depend on how long it will take before we can actually break ground.

Tommy (who charged us nothing for his work) suggests that we get 2 or 3 additional estimates from other contractors. We should also see how the permitting and the tricky and expensive septic system go in order to establish a realistic timeline. Then, if we decide to do so, we would see if Tommy is willing to take on the project.

Helen then talked to our architect, Jeff Mudgett. Jeff understands that Tommy hasn't committed to be our contractor and that he did not apply for a building permit. This needs to be done soon. He suggested that we could ask Tommy to do it for us ("You could give him \$500") even if he decides not to take our project on.

Jeff would be happy to sit down with Tommy and hear all his plans for changes to the design. However, he (Jeff) feels he's done everything possible to keep our costs down and there would be very little that he could change or take out. Tommy also feels there are some aspects of the design that he would not consider changing.

The estimates for the site work vary widely; Tommy estimates \$240,000 while Jeff has estimated \$66,000. Jeff does feel that he estimated our overall costs too low. He now agrees with Tommy's estimate that the whole project, including sitework, would be around \$800,000. But that's with his design, not Tommy's.

So what's next? Jeff will call the two contractors he tried back when we started the project to find out if they're now available and interested in taking us on. We then could put Jeff's design out for "hard bids," that is, with the understanding that we will give the project to the lowest bidder.

However, Jeff says, if the building needs to be redesigned along the lines that either Tommy or Friend Suzanne were suggesting, it would take Mudgett 2 or 3 months before their office could get to it.

The Committee plus Jeff will meet on Tuesday, when we will decide where to go from here.

There were many comments and questions including:

- Concerns about the cost, which is now nearly double what we first anticipated.
- Concerns about the Meeting going into debt to finish the project.
- Suggestions that we keep looking for an old church or house to buy instead.
- Suggestion that we reconsider IONA House (our previous Meeting place).
- Concern that the entire Meeting should be involved in any decision to go forward at a higher price.
- Concern that we've already spent \$30,000 on the architect's and engineer's work and that we should consider capping the amount of money we put into further exploration of the costs and options.
- Suggestion that we get the UUs involved in negotiating the site preparation costs with the County.

Additional comments that spoke to some of these concerns were that:

- FMMM agreed when we made our original decision to go forward that we would not go into debt as a Meeting. Since we don't own the land, we are ineligible for a mortgage anyway.
- There is much in both the design of the building and the county requirements for site prep that can be modified and/or contested with the help of the UUs.



- It was Hurricane Ian and before that, COVID, that contributed to the much higher costs of materials and labor and the delays in permitting. No one could have anticipated those events.
- We have only had these numbers for a week or so. We are only at the beginning of the exploration process. Let's give it time.
- We might explore getting a certificate of occupancy before the building is completely finished.
- The Committee is thanked for all their work so far.

Having reached the end of productive discussion, the Meeting was closed in silence.

Respectfully submitted,  
Helen Fox, Recording Clerk

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### *From Ministry and Counsel committee*

Southeastern Yearly Meeting's (SEYM) *Faith and Practice* provides descriptions of the various committees that might function in monthly meetings. Because our meeting is relatively small, our Ministry and Counsel committee is actually a combination of two committees described in *Faith and Practice*: Worship and Ministry and Care and Counsel. Ministry and Counsel exhibits two basic purposes: the spiritual life of the meeting, (worship, ministry, spiritual formation groups, etc.) and the wellbeing of individual members and their relationship to the meeting.

While Ministry and Counsel has the responsibility of providing oversight, and providing support (encouragement, emotional, spiritual, and some financial support if necessary), we are also committed to leading others in the meeting to care for others. Much of that occurs naturally through spiritual formation groups and friendships in the meeting but we don't wish any of our community to be "left behind". Members of M&C aren't always aware of the specific needs of individual members. If you, your family, or someone you know from our meeting is in need of special support or counsel, we ask that Ministry and Counsel be made aware. Please know we are entrusted to maintain confidentiality.

Contact any of the following:

Clerk of M&C Nancy Murvine or members Mara Fallon, Nancy Fennell, Helen Fox, Karin Gelotte, or Deb White

**(The) isolation of spirit ... comes to most - perhaps all of us - at one time or another. There are times in our lives when the tides of faith seem far out, times of dryness, times when we do not feel the comfort and guidance of God's hand. At such times we may stay away from meeting feeling that it does not give us the spiritual help that we need; or it may be that we continue to go and are to outward appearance actively engaged on the meeting's life and business, while, within, we feel the agonies of isolation and the longing for light to lighten our darkness. I can think with thankfulness of Friends who have brought light to my darkness - perhaps a single sentence, a friendly letter, a walk on the downs: their help was perhaps given unconsciously, but it was because they were sensitive to God's leadings that they were able to do it. Do we seek to be the channels of God's love and caring? 'Caring matters most.'**

Edward H Milligan, 1951

Quaker Faith & Practice; Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends in Britain

## *Hope" is the thing with feathers*

BY EMILY DICKINSON

"Hope" is the thing with feathers -  
That perches in the soul -  
And sings the tune without the words -  
And never stops - at all -

And sweetest - in the Gale - is heard -  
And sore must be the storm -  
That could abash the little Bird  
That kept so many warm -

I've heard it in the chilliest land -  
And on the strangest Sea -  
Yet - never - in Extremity,  
It asked a crumb - of me.

*Submitted by Bond Perry*

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

| <b>MEETING CALENDAR</b>              |  |                      |
|--------------------------------------|--|----------------------|
| <b>Each First Day</b>                | 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.           |
| <b>First First Day of each month</b> | Potluck lunch at Peace Acre (Chickee Hut).   | Upon rise of worship |
| <b>Each Wednesday</b>                | Mid-week Meeting for Worship at Peace Acre. This is in person only.  | 10:30 a.m.           |
| <b>12/17/23</b>                      | Time for Singing! (This will be a hybrid activity though Zoomers will need to mute themselves)                                 | Upon rise of worship |
| <b>12/27/23</b>                      | Ministry and Counsel meets (note time change) on Zoom  | 130 p.m.             |

## USEFUL WEBSITES FOR FRIENDS

<https://pendlehill.org> .....Pendle Hill, Quaker Retreat and Resource Center  
<http://seymquakers.org>.....Southeastern Yearly Meeting  
[www.fcni.org](http://www.fcni.org).....Friends Committee for National Legislation  
[www.fgcquaker.org](http://www.fgcquaker.org).....Friends General Conference  
[www.afsc.org](http://www.afsc.org).....American Friends Service Committee  
<http://fwcc.world> .....Friends World Committee on Consultation  
[www.quakerspeak.com](http://www.quakerspeak.com) .....QuakerSpeak: A Quaker YouTube Channel  
[www.quakerhouse.org](http://www.quakerhouse.org).....Quaker House, Fayetteville  
[www.quakervoluntaryservice.org](http://www.quakervoluntaryservice.org) .....Quaker Voluntary Service