



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

Second Section:

How do Friends care for one another?

4. Mutual Care

Queries:

- *How do we foster a spirit of community among the meeting's members and attenders?*
- *How does the meeting keep in contact with all of the meeting's members and attenders?*
- *How does the meeting assist couples and families to communicate, grow together, and rear children in a loving environment?*
- *Does the meeting community nurture the meeting's children?*
- *How does the meeting care for those who live alone, the sick, the aging, the widowed, the separated or divorced, and others with families affected by disruption?*
- *Do we assist Friends in need as their circumstances require?*

Meeting Directory Available

A pdf file of the Ft. Myers Quaker Meeting Directory is available to our Meeting family.

Ask Richard Frechette (Rich.Frechette@gmail.com) to e-mail you a copy. Or, if you are unable to open up or print down a pdf file, ask Richard to make a paper copy for you.

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

- *How do we labor with and care for those whose conduct or manner of living gives grounds for concern?*
- *How are visitors to our meeting made to feel welcome?*

Advices:

- *Be truthful and sincere, and thus encourage these qualities in others.*
- *Through example and education, help each other to recognize and follow the voice of God both in our spiritual lives and in joyful and willing service.*
- *Watch with tenderness over the opening minds of children. Seek to awaken in them the love and understanding of the life and teachings of Jesus and a sense of security in the love of God.*
- *Remember that there is a unique potential in each human being as a beloved child of God and that the Holy Spirit may lead children to give wise counsel to listening adults.*
- *Young people, too, have responsibility to care for the meeting and to participate in meetings both for worship and for business. Faith is needed as a vital part of our living.*

Fort Myers Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends Minutes of 4th Month 14, 2024

The Fort Myers Monthly Meeting with Attention to Business met in hybrid format on the fourth month, fourteenth day, 2024, with 14 F/friends present.

Clerk Richard Frechette read from SEYM's Queries and Advices on Mutual Care:

- How do we foster a spirit of community among the Meeting's members and attenders?
- Do we assist Friends in need as their circumstances require?
- How are visitors to our meeting made to feel welcome?

Treasurer’s Report

Treasurer Paul Davis reported that we received the \$4,000 donation from Friends General Conference to help us build the handicap parking at the new Meeting House. We also received a very generous \$3,000 donation toward the Meeting House from a Friend.

We have submitted all the paperwork to the Southwest Florida Water Management District through our Engineers (Morris Depew) and our Environmental Consultant (Owens). Shortly, Morris Depew will submit these documents to the County. We are getting closer and closer to when we will be able to actually start construction.

In April, our former architect, Jeff Mudgett, very generously returned his \$10,000 fee to FtMMM and gave his design to our new architect/engineers (Cook and Case). He realized that he had unintentionally underestimated our site preparation costs, which seemed to suggest that the project was do-able within our agreed-upon budget. (In fact, the cost over-run for the entire project totaled about \$200k).

Friends agreed to send a formal letter of thanks to Jeff for his donation.

Our only large expenses not related to the Meeting House for this year will be the renewal of our Zoom contract (around \$600) and our remaining pledge to SEYM (about \$3,300). Our finances remain strong.

FMMM Funds Report 3/31/2024

General Funds

Checking	4,822
Gen Fund Savings	38,365
Gen Fund Fr Fiduciary	33,461

Total General Fund 76,648

Meeting House Funds

Savings	471,297
MH Funds Fr Fiduciary	15,570

Total Meeting House Funds 486,867

FMMM Total Funds 563,515

March 2024 Income vs Expenses

March Income \$7,980*

March Expenses \$9,043*

- * Income
- * \$7,000 Meeting House
- * \$980 General Fund
- * Expenses
- * \$3,500 Owens Env.
- * \$2,677 Morris DePew
- * \$1,500 Bob Case
- * \$1,200 SWF Water Management
- * \$151 Pettigrew
- * \$15 Web Hosting

Report of Peace & Social Concerns Committee

Clerk Carolyn Stanley reported that the Committee is asking Friends to accept as our own the St. Petersburg Monthly Meeting's Minute calling for an end to the Israel-Palestine conflict. The Minute has already been approved or adopted by FtMMM's PSCC, SEYM's PSCC, and Yearly Meeting as a whole. It was noted that the St. Petersburg Meeting's minute was previously approved by Tallahassee Meeting.

After a brief discussion, the Minute below was approved. The title will be changed to reflect our affirmation, and the Meetings and other Quaker organizations that created or contributed to the wording will be credited. This was followed by a discussion of where to send our Minute: Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL), our senators and representatives in the U.S. Congress, the U.S. President, and like-minded churches were mentioned, including the Shire Lane UU's.

❖ Minute 2024-MM-04:

We are heartbroken by the terror, violence, and devastation in Israel and Palestine. War is never the answer. War does not address the root causes of a conflict or resolve injustices; it only settles which nation can mobilize its fighting forces best. It makes enemies more entrenched in 'us vs. them' and revenge narratives. It deepens hatred and increases enmities and violence, making all people less safe. War is a betrayal of our humanity, and of what is most sacred.

Our Quaker faith reminds us that there is that of God within every person, without exception. And that every person has the capacity to experience and respond to the love and guidance of God. We unconditionally oppose bigotry against Jews, Palestinians and other Arabs and Muslims that has led to the rise in hateful rhetoric and actions targeting these communities in the United States and worldwide.

We unite with the calls of people across the world for:

- 1. an immediate lasting ceasefire and a total end to hostilities on the way to a genuine effort towards peaceful and just solutions,*
- 2. immediate release of all hostages and prisoners held under administrative detention without charges or trial,*
- 3. provision of urgent humanitarian aid to Gaza including resumption of funding for United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).*

The government of the United States has a responsibility to think with greater vision rather than contributing to the further militarizing of a tragic situation. We urge the President and Congress to join with other nations to address the roots of war, to work for a lasting solution that provides for security, justice, and dignity for all Palestinians and Israelis.

Our faith challenges us to resist the escalating pressures throughout our human family that attempt to justify atrocities against other human beings, and to remember that we are each capable of evil, even in the name of good. We take up the commitment to turn from our own hostile impulses, from amplifying division within our local communities, and from the cycles of vengeful action in conflicts worldwide, so we can move toward the courageous work of peacebuilding.

Let us seek paths to work for peace, to act in faith and love, with persistence, patience, and courage. We ask everyone, including those in power, to learn from and work with the peacebuilders, who have labored long and hard. May they lead us all in creating an enduring peace built on justice and reconciliation that provides safety, sovereignty, and a future free of war as Palestinians, Israelis and all people of the region become partners pursuing the sacred goal of Peace, Shalom, Salaam.

Meetinghouse Committee Report

Clerk Helen Fox and Friend Suzanne Frechette reviewed last month's progress:

- As mentioned in the Finance Report, a \$10,000 check was received from Jeff Mudgett's architectural firm. Treasurer Paul and Meeting Clerk Richard will collaborate on the thank you note to Jeff.
- All the paperwork for the Development Order and the environmental study has been submitted by our engineers to Lee County and the South Florida Water Management Board for approval. If they have no more questions, we should be able to move forward in 4 to 6 weeks.
- Our general contractor, Tommy Lee Cook, has been working with Bob Case on some of the modifications to Jeff Mudgett's architectural plan to bring our costs down without changing the overall design.
- We are considering not air conditioning the separate bathrooms and pantry area, which could result in substantial cost savings. Jeff's design had a large air conditioner in the center of the outside porch with pipes going to the Meeting room and to the bathroom/pantry area. A new design would put an HVAC system in the Meetingroom only.
- Several fresh air exchange systems were suggested to Cook/Case for incorporation into the new design. Friend Jim Koopman added that during the last pandemic, new scientific studies showed the overwhelming influence of SARS: just one virus particle can cause a COVID infection. This means that air flow to and from the outdoors is much superior to simply re-circulating indoor air.

SEYM Report of the 2024 Gathering in Parish, FL Mar 27-31

Friend Suzanne read the following report:

Suzanne & Richard Frechette served as Ft. Myers Meeting delegates to the gathering. Chris Ruhnke also attended and volunteered as a golf cart driver who assisted transporting Friends with mobility challenges.

There were 86 adults and 9 children (2 were “wee Friends”) in attendance in person, and 8 participating via Zoom. The roll call seemed to indicate that many Meetings for Worship and Worship Groups were not represented either in person or via Zoom.

The budget committee recommendation for suggested apportionment contributions for the next fiscal year is \$220 per “Member” per year and \$110 per “Attender” per year. This is an increase over the 2024 apportionment. We (Meetings) are all expected to contribute relative to our attendance.

It was recognized that a *minority* of Meetings and Worship Groups contribute financially to SEYM or follow apportionment guidelines. Some contribute less and some do not contribute or participate at all. Contributions support staffing as well as contributions to other organizations, some of which are also made individually by Monthly Meetings.

While the goal of SEYM is to encourage attendance at the gathering by suggesting that people pay as they can, and although many contribute beyond the suggested actual costs of attendance, the Gathering this year was underfunded by “thousands” of dollars. No actual figure was available by the final plenary session. This cost over-run is not unusual. The facilities of the Episcopal Retreat Center are expensive, and staffing is also a costly factor.

One of the goals of Monthly Meetings and Worship Groups is to increase active attendance, Friendly activity, and positive testimony. Given the dominance (in society) of politically-based positions and actions that are contrary to Quaker values, Friends are called to speak and act to encourage and manifest values and views that support fair distribution of resources, the need for diversity, equity, inclusion, and self-determination. Some Friends - the Deland Worship Group for example - are active and visible in their communities and beyond with projects like banned book giveaways that have drawn nationwide attention and contributions. They have recently purchased message T-shirts that they proudly wear as they work. They do not hide their Light.

The Walton Lecturer was Hilary Burgin, who is currently the Boston-based Executive Director for Quaker Voluntary Services. Hillary also led two retreat /workshop sessions during the Gathering. The focus was on deep, heart-centered listening. The topic of the lecture (which was more of a sharing) was “Longing at Every Age.” She queried: “Are you actively practicing generosity and vulnerability in order to make connections?” She proposed that “when a leading moves through a person, we ALL need to nurture it as our own—some people happen to be the vessel.”

Among SEYM’s Meeting for Business decisions:

- Friends agreed to search for and hire a SEYM youth/young adult coordinator at least ½ time. This will be a replacement for Kody Hersh, who served in this role for several years (much gratitude to Kody was expressed). This includes an increase in time and compensation package that is significantly beyond the budget submitted and approved

for 2025. Friends are encouraged to make designated contributions to this expenditure. A search committee has been assigned to call someone to this important work.

- Friends agreed to add \$1,000 of unbudgeted support for international Quaker work, especially directed to AVP (Alternatives to Violence Project) training and Friends Peacebuilding efforts in Havana, Cuba.

The Gathering has contracted to return to Dayspring retreat center in Parrish, FL next year. It was announced that a Gathering Coordinator will be hired for next year's Gathering, which will begin on April 20, 2025.

A Friend remarked that once our Meetinghouse is built, we should get a young adult friends group going, and reach out to young families with children. Perhaps we could organize a work study event here during the winter or spring breaks for Quaker college students.

Other Business

Friends agreed that a Fort Myers Friends Meeting t-shirt be made available online that could be ordered individually. Friends Suzanne and Sue Oehl agreed to work on a design (possibly similar to that of the Deland Meeting t-shirts) and work out the logistics for ordering.

The Meeting closed in silent worship.

Photo taken the last First Day of March includes some of our winter Friends (a.k.a. known as SnowBirds) as well as all year attenders and members. Taken at the Chickee Hut, "Peace Acre,"!

Photo contributed by New Jersey Friends (Crosswick Meeting) Lauren and Don Czehut.

Sadly this photo does not include the many Zoomers we have each First Day.



From Ministry and Counsel

What is a Clearness Committee?

Some Meetings have a Committee on Worship and Ministry and another committee on Care and Counsel. As defined in SEYM's Faith and practice, the first committee's focus is the spiritual life of the Meeting. The second committee is concerned with the individual members -- to watch over, encourage and develop a caring relationship to each other and the Meeting. In our Meeting, these committees are combined into Ministry and Counsel. In the past two Monthly newsletters we have focused on the tasks of Counsel in Ministry and Counsel. We have talked about keeping a caring eye on each other, reaching out to members of M&C when someone has a concern for a fellow attender, and we have asked for suggestions from the community for ways to deepen our fellowship, especially with those who are not regular in-person attenders. We continue to welcome both avenues of communication from everyone. Today, we remind each of you that you have direct access to any member of M&C to seek care and counsel for yourself. What can M&C offer? We have supported travel to attend gatherings that feed the communal soul of Quakers. We have given financial assistance in times of monetary difficulty. We have offered clearness committees when individuals have sought discernment about a leading or a personal situation. What exactly is a clearness committee? What is the process?

One of the unique features of Quakerism is the use of "clearness committees" to help one come to clarity about a decision to be made or a personal concern. Clearness committees are regularly used by Quaker couples in considering marriage, or an individual considering membership within a particular meeting. But a clearness committee may also be initiated by an individual wishing clarity about a personal concern or decision being considered. The forming of a clearness committee in our meeting can be initiated by anyone in the meeting usually through the presiding clerk of the meeting, currently Richard Frechette, or any member of Ministry and Counsel. M&C has the duty of starting the process by communicating with the person seeking clarity to learn more about the nature of the concern. M&C will then select a clearness committee of varied ages, experience or particular circumstances that might be helpful to the person. Sometimes the person seeking clarity may request a person(s) that they wish to participate as part of the clearness committee. Once the committee is formed the group will meet either on-line, via Zoom, or in-person, depending on the circumstances. The committee will meet as often as needed until the person seeking help reaches clarity. If you feel the need for clearness on a given issue contact one of the members of M&C: Nancy Murvine (clerk), Mara Fallon, Nancy Fennell, Helen Fox, Karin Gelotte, and Deb White.

82nd Friends Conference on Religion & Psychology to hold training at Pendle Hill, May 2024

Friend Mara Fallon is a co-clerk of the Friends Conference on Religion & Psychology. She shared the following information regarding a renown trainer In Internal Family Systems (IFS) who will be at the FCRP this spring.

There is a growing body of clinical research showing the promise of Internal Family Systems (IFS) therapy in enhancing well-being, in addition to treating substance abuse disorders, phobias and generalized anxiety.

With this in mind, the 82nd Friends Conference on Religion & Psychology has invited one of the leading trainers in IFS modalities for a series of experienced based presentations at Pendle Hill, a Quaker Retreat Center near Media, PA over the 2024 Memorial Day weekend.

The trainer is Dr. Tom Holmes, Ph.D., a clinical psychologist with 45 years of experience in working with patients, and training mental health professionals. In addition to earning his doctorate in counseling psychology and working as a professor at Western Michigan University, Dr. Holmes was an early student of IFS founder Dr. Richard Schwartz, Ph.D., studying with him in the late 1980s.

In recent years, Dr. Holmes has instructed therapists in trauma hot spots, such as the Middle East and Ukraine, as well as numerous European locales. Moreover, he is author of the influential book “Parts Work: An Illustrated Guide to Your Inner Life” that has sold more than 100,000 copies. Dr. Holmes has added a distinctive imprint on IFS therapy as it relates to spirituality, and he is one of the most sought-after IFS speakers in the world.

As part of a small gathering of no more than 90 attendees, Dr. Holmes will lead a four-day conference – May 24 to May 27 -- that focuses on how individuals can use the IFS model to lead a centered life, relatively free of anxiety.

During Dr. Holmes’ presentations, he will outline the IFS model and explain how professionals and nonprofessionals can use it in efforts to -- calmly and effectively -- work to heal a wounded world.

To learn more about the Friends Conference on Religion & Psychology and to register for the conference, visit [TOPIC 2024 | FCRP \(fcpr-quaker.org\)](https://www.fcpr-quaker.org)

To learn more about Tom Holmes, visit [About Tom | Tom Holmes | Winged Heart](#)



The butterfly counts not months but moments

And has time enough

~ Rabindranath Tagore

The Knoll

§ §

Where once the cottage stood, the hawthorn grew,
Remembrance wakes with all her busy train, Swells at my
breast, and turns the past to pain.

Oliver Goldsmith, The Deserted Village

On the knoll the grass grows green
And the meadowlarks sing.
Lovers stood in sunshine
And encircled the hillock with love.
On it they saw their future:
The ring of shovels and rasps of saws
Smells of newly sawn wood,
Pounding hammers,
Dinners laid out under a tree.

This newborn house of paint and plaster
Smelled like bright tomorrows.
Hope came through the front door
With babies in arms,

Joy came through windows like breezes before
rain,
In the cries of kids in a chinaberry tree,
In a girl's first kiss on a squeaky porch swing,
In the harvests of crops in very good years.

And then they left.

Despair long waited at the back door
Then came and whispered
Through silences and souf of wind.
It took possession of broken window
panes and
The unhinged door once opened to
hope
The owl that glares in the shadows.

Lightning struck.
The house on the knoll is ashes,
The grass grows green,
And the meadowlarks sing.

Theron White ©
April, 2024

News from the FMMM Peace and Social Concerns Committee:

Help the Immokalee Fair Housing Alliance Build a Playground for the Children

The FMMM Quakers have been donating to the Immokalee Fair Housing Alliance for several years to help their housing efforts in Immokalee. They are now sharing this news with donors:

“The Immokalee Fair Housing Alliance is excited to announce that applications are now being accepted for its soon to open apartment building in Immokalee, providing an opportunity for farmworker and low-income families to secure safe, affordable housing in the community.”

In addition, they have made an urgent appeal for a new playground:

“We are on the verge of opening the first of eight low-cost and affordable apartment buildings in Immokalee. We are thrilled about the progress and the positive impact these homes will have on the lives of those in need. However, we have encountered a pressing issue that requires your immediate attention and support.

With new families moving in soon, it is absolutely crucial to provide them with a safe and engaging play area for their children. We hope you can help us move up the timeline for the construction of the playground. Your support can make an immediate and lasting impact on the lives of these children and their families.

To jumpstart the campaign, Graham and Linda Hart, two amazing supporters of our mission, have offered a gift matching opportunity. They will match, dollar for dollar, every gift made to this special appeal, up to \$30,000 so that we can get to the level we need to make sure that when the families move in, a playground will be waiting for the children. This is an excellent way to make your gift go twice as far! To make a gift”, or read more about the IFHA, please visit:

<https://www.immokaleefairhousing.org/our-mission>

USEFUL WEBSITES FOR FRIENDS

<https://pendlehill.org>Pendle Hill, Quaker Retreat and Resource Center
<http://seymquakers.org>.....Southeastern Yearly Meeting
www.fcnl.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.comQuakerSpeak: A Quaker YouTube Channel
www.quakerhouse.org.....Quaker House, Fayetteville
www.quakervoluntaryservice.orgQuaker Voluntary Service

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.
First First Day of each month	Potluck lunch at Peace Acre (Chickee Hut).	Upon rise of worship
Each Wednesday	Mid-week Meeting for Worship at Peace Acre. This is in person only.	10:30 a.m.
4/21/24	Singing before worship.	10:10 a.m.
4/28/24	Religious Education Worship Sharing: (session 3) <i>Holding One Another in the Light – Marcelle Martin PHP #382</i>	following worship

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