



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

SEYM Queries & Advices

Third Section:

To what extent is our personal life in accord with Quaker principles?

9. Witness

Queries:

- *Do our lives reflect Quaker testimonies?*
- *Are we open and responsive to continuing revelation, and do we incorporate it into our spiritual life?*
- *Is our Quaker witness characterized by humility and a willingness to learn from others?*
- *Do we recognize that the Spirit works in the world through us?*
- *Does our witness lead us to the condition in which we "walk cheerfully over the earth answering that of God in everyone"?*
- *Do we as a meeting try to share in the religious life of our wider community, availing ourselves of opportunities for worship and service with other local religious groups?*

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

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

Advices:

- *Strive to keep true to the testimonies of integrity and simplicity.*
- *Try to keep before us the essential truths, and test our life by them.*
- *Endeavor to make our lives consistent with the high principles we profess. This involves the often-difficult discernment not only between good and evil but also between the better and the best.*
- *Live adventurously. Let not failure discourage us.*
- *Witness so that others can perceive the presence of God within us.*
- *Be as good as people think you are.*

E. St. John (Jack) Catchpool

Fort Myers Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends Minutes of 9th Month 8, 2024

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

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

- Do we recognize that the Spirit works in the world through us?
- Does our witness lead us to the condition in which we "walk cheerfully over the earth answering that of God in everyone"?
- Do we as a Meeting try to share in the religious life of our wider community, availing ourselves of opportunities?

Religious Education Committee

Friend Denise reported that the Religious Education Committee met on August 15 to discuss programs for the Fall of 2024. Present were Deb White, Jeanette Botha, and Denise Runyon. Absent were Sue Oehl and Sheilana Massey.

We will be talking with David Minnick about his offer to speak about teachings in the Christian church that have contributed to antisemitism. Reverend Minnick is an ordained minister and a volunteer at the Six Mile Cypress Slough.

We are planning a Fall program on the pamphlet, *The Four Doors to Meeting for Worship* by William Taber, a classic Quaker teaching. The dates are to be determined, possibly in November. Jeannette Botha will lead weekly sessions, meeting entirely on Zoom to make it easier for everyone to interact.

A copy of *The Four Doors to Meeting for Worship* can be purchased from Pendle Hill at this link: <https://pendlehill.org/product/four-doors-meeting-worship/d> Given the difficulty of getting books to everyone, Friends should purchase their own copies.

FMMM New Friends School Working Group Report September 2024

Friend Denise presented the following report:

The Friends School Working Group is currently Suzanne Frechette, Vicki Scott, Brad Smith, and Denise Runyon. Deb White was also in the group but chose not to continue because the amount of time involved conflicted with other responsibilities. The group met on August 26, 2024.

Brad Smith and Vicki Scott are working with Bill Petrarca (UUCFM) on the Tuition/Budget subgroup. Suzanne Frechette and Denise Runyon have been working with Beth Graham (UUCFM) on the Mission/Vision Group.

In addition to our valuable professional expertise and skill sets, our FMMM Friends School Working Group members provide a Quaker presence and living examples of Quaker values and practices in our collaborative efforts with the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fort Myers.

From the Friends Council on Education:

The fundamental and abiding strength of Friends schools is our rootedness in Quaker faith and practice. There is a profound and hopeful ambition in the Quaker vision of schools as spiritual communities. When we approach this potential, our schools are places rich in love, challenge, collaboration, fruitful conflict, and a generative sense of what is possible in ourselves, in the classroom, and in the broader community. Through our work in Friends schools, we support both children and adults in bringing the light of the spirit to one another and out into the world.

Tuition/Budget Work Group

The Tuition/Budget Group is responsible for creating and implementing the business model to be an independent Friends School. Being independent means that the Friends School will be a stand-alone organization with its own Board and financial responsibility, not under the care of a Friends Meeting.

- The group has made a Critical Task List and Timeline with hopes to open the Friends School in August 2025.
- The working name for the school is The Watershed Friends School.
- A Founding Board has been identified: Brad Smith, Bill Petrarca, Sue Gabrielson, Vicki Scott, and Eileen Zingaro (of the SEYM Call Committee).

SEYM Call Committee

Dan Vaughn, Clerk of the SEYM Call Committee, has prepared a report for the October 5th Fall Interim Business Meeting about the Watershed Friends School with a request for \$15,000 from SEYM Yearly Meeting to help with startup expenses such as legal and government fees, professional marketing, and hiring a Head of School. Additionally, the Yearly Meeting is asked to set up a contributory line item in the budget that would accept and allocate contributions for the establishment and operations of the school. Friends throughout the Yearly Meeting and beyond will be requested to make contributions once this is set up.

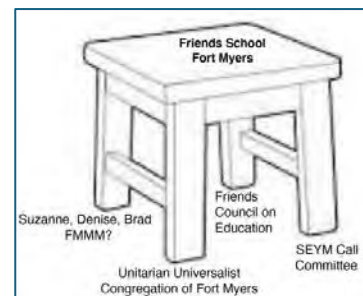
Mission/Vision Work Group

The Mission/Vision Group began the task of collaborating on a mission statement and vision statement. The group functioned with two members, one from FMMM and one from UUCFM until Suzanne rejoined us recently after her successful surgery.

There are many examples of mission statements from the network of existing independent Friends Schools. However, we may be unique in our collaboration with a non-Friends worship congregation. This has potential for enriching the outcome and also presents challenges in coming to a common understanding about the unique features of a Friends School that create a school culture that is grounded in our values.

This challenge became apparent in the MV working group. The two of us did not reach agreement about exploring what it means to be an independent Friends School.

After Denise reached out to Suzanne, Dan Vaughn/SEYM Call Committee and Rev Sue Gabrielson, the MV work group met with Rev Sue Gabrielson. We came to the conclusion that we need to request consultation from the wider world of resources, including a colleague of Rev Sue Gabrielson and Drew Smith, of the Friends Council on Education.



This is an important step because the need for orientation to what it means to be a Friends School, however we end up defining it, will occur at every step of the way forward - with the UUCFM, with Friends, Board members, staff, families and students.

It was agreed that the MV work group will take a pause at this time. Please hold this process in the Light. The Friends School needs us.

Discussion:

One Friend wondered why anyone from the UUs should be involved in defining a mission statement for a Quaker institution. It was explained that while several of the UUs, including Reverend Sue, see the UUs simply as landlords, others want to be more involved, especially those who are familiar with Quaker process, or who have taught in a Friends school. Another Friend added that working out a mission statement with the UUs “should be hard.” “The UUs have put their heart and soul into this process. We should be humble and accept their gifts.”

A Friend asked how our involvement with the school “fits with independence” if we rely on SEYM for a considerable amount of seed money. Another Friend replied that 95% of Friends Schools use an independent-type formula for their financing. “Anyone can contribute to an independent school.”

Treasurer’s Report

Treasurer Paul Davis reported that we received our first payment from the Donna Anderton Trust of \$23,570.60. It is a very significant gift. Per the direction of the Business Meeting it was placed in the Meeting House Fund.

We paid \$435 to Lee County for our permit for the Meeting House.

Next week Paul will be attending via Zoom a budget Meeting of the SEYM. This is the first time as Treasurer of our Meeting that he has been invited to take part in the discussion.

FMMM Funds Report for 8/30/2024

General Funds	
Checking	6,813
Gen Fund Savings	38,405
Gen Fund Fr Fiduciary	35,115
Total General Fund	80,333
Meeting House Funds	
Savings	500,531
MH Funds Fr Fiduciary	16,340
Total Meeting House Funds	516.871
FMMM Total Funds	597,204

August 2024 Income vs Expenses	
August Income	\$ 24,620*
August Expenses	\$ 435*
* Income	
* \$23,571 Donna A. Estate	
* \$1,050 Member Donations	
• Expenses	
• \$435 Lee County (Permit Fee)	

Report of Meetinghouse Committee

Friends Helen Fox and Suzanne Frechette reported that Suzanne has heard from our builder, Tommy Lee Cook, who says his crew can break ground once the Development Order is approved by Lee County. We are waiting for a report from Morris & Depew about the status of

the DO, which we receive every Monday. After final approval of the DO, Tommy Lee says his crew can haul in fill, excavate, cut trees, and so on while waiting for the approval of the next step, the Building Permit. Tommy's engineer, Bob Case, will submit his revised plans and financials for the new building to the County after the Meetinghouse Committee has looked them over and approved them, hopefully by September 15. We hope this can be done over zoom, since most of the Meeting House Committee will be away. Friend Suzanne explained that only the roof structure will be changed; the outside of the building will look exactly the same as the original design. Tommy and Bob are trying to get our costs down with their modifications to the architect's plan.

We thank the Meeting for their patience, as we had originally reported that breaking ground would happen in November, 2023, almost a full year ago. We do understand that many building projects throughout SW Florida have been delayed in the aftermath of Hurricane Ian because of the backlogs for permits, the difficulty of finding builders and construction people who are at work on larger projects, and the increase in costs of building materials.

Other Business

Friend Richard announced that for the next four weeks, First Day worship will be held over zoom only, as the Frechettes will be away and the Chickee Hut will be readied for any possible hurricane in their absence. It was suggested that Friends could gather at other people's homes for hybrid sessions. Friend Helen Fox invited Friends to her condo (206 Pinebrook Drive, Fort Myers) for the first Sunday of this new arrangement. (September 15 at 10am). Friend Bond invited Friends to go with him to the UU service next Sunday "as a Quaker presence" during that period.

There being no other business, the Meeting closed in silent worship at 12:25 pm.
Respectfully Submitted,
Helen Fox, Recording Clerk

Kudos to one of our F/friends...

Every year the *Florida Weekly* publishes its annual Writing Challenge. Friend Nancy Reges Murvine of Marco Island has won overall winner in 2013, 2nd in 2014, had her 2020 entry published and this year she has took honorable mention with her story based on a photo prompt: "Living on the Fringe". Congratulations to our dear Friend Nancy Murvine!

News from the Poltzer Family

Many of you may remember a young Cape Coral family that attended our Meeting before the pandemic. Nico Ashe has recently connected with Friend Nancy Howell on the important milestones of their two boys.

Benji has graduated from high school and is a Freshman at Florida Gulf Coast University. His new address is:

Benjamin Poltzer,
7000 FGCU Campus Housing, PAL
409B;
Fort Myers, FL 33965



Benjamin Poltzer

Zander is a Junior at Florida Polytechnic University. His new address is:

Zander Poltzer;
4540 Polytechnic Circle;
Florida Polytechnic University; Room
4007 B;
Lakeland, FL 33805

We are grateful for the time these two young, capable men and their parents Nico Ashe and Andy Poltzer attended our Meeting. And we wish them well on their continued journeys.



From Peace and Social Concerns Committee

Cultivating a Culture of Peace

The Peace and Social Concerns Committee would like to invite all FMMM members and attenders to help us prepare for the Peace Day Festival on September 21. The theme for the day is Cultivating a Culture of Peace. We would like you to share your thoughts in one word, a sentence or a paragraph what Cultivating a Culture of Peace means to you. We will summarize these ideas to share at our booth at the Peace Day Festival. At the Chickee Hut we will have a clip board and paper for your responses. Everyone is also welcome to send responses in an email to Chris McBride (McBrideHouse@gmail.com) or to Helen Fox (hfox@umich.edu).

Come support the FMMM Peace Booth at:

**Peace Day on Pine Island
Sat, Sep 21, 10 - 4 | St James City Civic Association**

**International Peace Day - live music,
entertainment, children's activities, food trucks, vendors,
artists, and more.**

Cultivating a Culture of Peace!

**Thank you for your participation,
-The P&SC Committee members.**

Other news from P&SC....

The Fort Myers Monthly Meeting has been making contributions to the Immokalee Fair Housing Alliance since its inception. On Friday, August 23, there was a Move-In Celebration for the families moving in to the first set of affordable apartments that have been completed. See photos and hear stories here:

<https://www.nbc-2.com/article/16-families-move-new-affordable-housing-immokalee/61959699>

F/friends Jim Koopman, Bond Perry, and Chris Ruhnke after a recent Meeting for Worship at Peace Acre.





cultivate abundance

Dear Fort Myers Friends,

I'm writing to share the story of Gabriela, a woman whose life you've helped transform.

Since February, Gabriela has been volunteering in the Misión Peniel Garden, working alongside Cultivate Abundance staff members Lupita and Maria. While her husband labors long hours in the fields as a farmworker, Gabriela often brings her children to the garden. Together, they plant, weed, and harvest, and she takes home fresh vegetables like cilantro and quelites (leaf amaranth) to cook for her family.

But her story is about more than just food-it's about how your support has changed her life.

Life in Immokalee has been incredibly difficult for Gabriela and her husband, as it is for many farmworkers. They came from Guatemala hoping for a better future, but the reality has been tough. The work is grueling, with long hours under the hot sun, and the pay is often barely enough to cover rent and bills, leaving little for food. On top of that, Immokalee is a food desert-a place where fresh, healthy food is scarce and expensive. Gabriela often had to buy what she could afford, which sometimes meant feeding her children less healthy, processed foods.

But everything changed when Gabriela discovered the Misión Peniel Garden. There, she found nutritious, culturally preferred food and so much more-she found a community.

Because of you, Gabriela and hundreds of others in Immokalee now receive fresh, culturally appropriate produce every Friday at Misión Peniel. The grocery bags they take home include rice, beans, and shelf stable items sourced by Misión Peniel, along with fruits, vegetables, and herbs grown or collected by Cultivate Abundance. Just last Friday, Gabriela took home plantains, field peas, okra, avocados, and tropical fruits like longan and carambolas. This food is not only nourishing-it helps keep her family healthy and honors their cultural roots.

Thank you for caring about the Immokalee farmworker community. Gabriela, and everyone else who benefits from your kindness, is grateful for your support. It's making a real difference in their lives.

Together, we are cultivating abundance, one garden at a time. Sincerely,

The Cottonwood Seed,
Calvary Creek near Protection, Kansas



Within its vital boundary, in the mind.
We say God and the imagination are one...
-- Wallace Stevens, "Final Soliloquy"

Hot and still, a day for dragonflies.
When cyclones dangle from mounting clouds.
We walk, you and I, to Morgan Pond.
Sand plums are sweet this year;
Jack rabbits jump from the thickets;
I picked red gaillardias for you.
We were the summer that never ends.

In shade of cottonwoods,
We see blue sky between the branches.
There, in slowly flowing water,
We see in its blackness the flash
Of a fish — the great, granddaddy bass.
Seated on a fallen tree that bridges the pool,
We dangle our bare feet.
A water strider skitters on a glassy mirror.
A mule-tail deer, still as a statue, ignores us.
We hear the clattering of leaves,
The ostinato croaking of a bull frog,
We sink into silence, into a pinpoint in time
Confined within the unconfined.

Then a seed of cottonwood,
White and light as snow, hovers on a breath of air,
Then touches water softly,
Ripples it into a tiny growing circle,
We can see it, eyes closed.
It extends into forever.

Theron White September 2024

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

MEETING CALENDAR		
Each First Day	Meeting for Worship for Sept 15/22/29 & Oct 6 via Zoom only. After those dates, hybrid format will return. An informal conversation time begins at 10:00 am.	10:30 a.m.
Second First Day of each month	Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business	Upon rise of worship
September 11, 2024	Religious Education committee meets via Zoom.	2:00 p.m.
September 21, 2024	Peace Day on Pine Island: St. James City	10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.