

# Portland Friends Meeting Newsletter

Eleventh Month

**Meeting for Worship:** 10:30am Sundays

## Connections

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*“What are our hopes and expectations of our meeting community as we enter into this season of increasing illness, and political turmoil? What is my role?”*

— 2008 Mt.Toby Meeting for Worship for Conduct of Business, paraphrased

## Calendar

**Every Sunday:** 10:30a Meeting for Worship\*

**First Sundays:** 9am Meeting for Worship for the Conduct of Business\*

**Second Saturdays:** 5-8p Youngish adults potluck  
Bart Czyn, btczyn@gmail.com, 207 899 5937

\*contact Co-Clerks for online Meeting for links



Close to 30 people attended Love Our Meetinghouse and it was clear everyone was feeling a real hunger to be together. About half of those stayed for the Community Lunch (bring-your-own, sitting 6 feet apart and masked unless eating) The temperature was just amazing for lingering in conversation. (more on p. 6!)

**Portland Friends Meeting**  
**Meeting for Business**  
**November 1, 2020**

We began in silent worship at 9:00 a.m., gathered remotely and connected via Zoom, with 32 members and attenders present.

Our presiding clerk, Lyn Ballou, read the Query (paraphrased from a 2008 Mt.Toby Meeting for Worship for Conduct of Business):

*What are our hopes and expectations of our meeting community as we enter into this season of increasing illness, and political turmoil? What is my role?*

1. **October Minutes.** The minutes from our October Meeting for Business were accepted as printed in the newsletter.

2. **Treasurer's Report.** Kathy Beach presented the report showing our expenditures and income through October. Due to a fortunate error, our financial situation is not as concerning as presented last month. We are 83% of the way through the year, with total income at 75% of budget (\$58,939) and expenditures at 80% of budget (\$62,425). The deficit has diminished to \$3,486. Many thanks to all who have continued to contribute as they are able. Friends approved the Treasurer's report, with thanks.

The financial summary for January-October 2020:

<b>Income</b>	
Donations:	\$47,569 (78%)
Rent:	1,370 (27%)
Endowment:	10,000 (83%)
Total:	\$58,939 (75%)
<b>Expenses</b>	
Meetinghouse:	\$25,270 (90%)
Meeting cmtes:	29,362 (65%)
Contributions:	4,880 (100%)
Total:	\$62,425 (80%)
Balance:	-\$ 3,486

Clerks of committees are reminded to submit their budget requests to Jo Linder, clerk of Financial Oversight, as soon as possible.

3. **Ministry and Counsel.** Christine Fletcher reported. COVID Use of Meetinghouse Group: the Health and Wellbeing subcommittee of M&C originally formed to consider whether it was safe to resume worship in the meetinghouse. At this point, heading into the winter, and with rising case numbers, they do not anticipate in-person worship in the near future. The Health and Wellbeing subcommittee is transitioning into a more nimble group empowered to make decisions on how to handle requests for use or rental of the meetinghouse. This group consists of Lyn Ballou, Chris Beach, Brad Bussiere-Nichols, Karin Wagner, and Lise Wagner.

We are entering the fall/winter season when we are snug in our houses but have limited ability to connect to others in these COVID times. As Thanksgiving approaches, the clerks are considering how to support opportunities particularly for those who live alone to gather around the holidays.

M&C has embarked, with Friendly assistance, on a Friendly Connection Project. Each active participant in the Portland Friends Meeting community will have a chance to feel cared for and get support from their spiritual home by receiving a phone call or visit at least every other month.

Faithfulness Groups: M&C is hearing about rich experience from groups that formed earlier and wants anyone who might be interested in joining now to contact Fritz Weiss. New groups are being formed this coming week.

(cont-)

(Minutes continued from page 2)

Other small groups for Spiritual Growth: Ministry and Counsel encourages Friends to consider offering other opportunities, such as book groups. Feel free to reach out to Beth or Christine with ideas.

Transfers: The committee shares the joy that it continues to get requests and forms welcoming committees for transfers to our community.

**4. Use of the Meetinghouse committee.** Karin Wagner reported. The Building Use Committee was formed by Ministry and Counsel in early October to facilitate efficient decisions regarding the use of the meetinghouse during the pandemic. The committee includes both clerks (Brad Bussiere-Nichols and Lyn Ballou), Lise Wagner (Meetinghouse Use Coordinator), Karin Wagner (clerk, Buildings and Grounds committee), and Chris Beach (general meetinghouse expert).

The Committee met on October 28, 2020 to consider whether and how to rent the meetinghouse at this time. After careful discernment, the committee has decided that at this time, particularly with the incidence of COVID-19 infections rising, it is inadvisable that the Meetinghouse be used for any kind of indoor meeting — whether held by Friends ourselves or by those from the wider community. The single most important impediment to safe use of the Meetinghouse is the inability to adequately ventilate any of our rooms for a meeting, even by a small group, during cold months.

An individual member may still enter the Meetinghouse if she/he/they follow the Guidelines for Safe Use that are posted on both doors and make limited use of the building. Entering with a mask on or in hand is essential in case one happens to encounter another Friend inside.

A question arose about whether anyone had researched the possibility of ventilation of our building. It has not been done as yet, although it has been briefly discussed.

Sign Update: Lyn Ballou reported that she had conferred with those involved in the Extending Our Welcome to the Sidewalk ad hoc committee regarding the status of replacing our sign at the street. Those Friends wish to wait to continue the discussion of the sign and other ways to be more visible and part of the neighborhood until it is safer to meet together.

**5. Proposal to Join Durham Friends Meeting for Sister Meeting Relationship with Velasco (Cuba) Friends Church.** Ann Dodd-Collins reported. As noted in the advance document, they are proposing that Portland Friends Meeting join with Durham Friends Meeting to continue the long-held sister relationship with Velasco Friends Church in Cuba. At present, that would require only virtual contact, but there is great hope for intervisitation, once a visit to Cuba is possible. They also requested that Friends approve the creation of a committee to nurture this relationship, along with Durham Friends, whose initial members would be Hannah Colbert, Ann Dodd-Collins, Doug Malcolm, Sydney McDowell, and Fritz Weiss. They will stagger their terms. Finally, they request that Portland Friends Meeting support NEYM's Puente de Amigos with an annual donation of \$100.

Friends approved joining Durham in this joyful relationship. Friends also approved the Friends who have offered to participate on this committee, with thanks. Financial Oversight will consider the request for the annual donation as it works on the budget for next year.

**6. Falmouth Quarterly Meeting.** Fritz Weiss reported. Falmouth Quarter gathered via Zoom on Saturday, Oct 24th, 2020, with representatives from all five monthly meetings in Southern Maine present. They dealt with the budget, set dates for the coming year, and collected ideas for the January Quarterly Meeting program. Most of the gathering was spent sharing how the quarter's meetings are living in this extraordinary time. There was an invitation from Windham which is a small meeting to join them for in-person worship following CDC guidelines. Friends from this meeting are encouraged to attend Windham Friends Church.

**7. Closing.** Our meeting closed in silent worship at 10:05a.m., with 41 people present, purposing to meet again, God willing, at 9:00 a.m. on Sunday, December 6, 2020.

Submitted by Lise Wagner, Co-Recording Clerk

## New Indigenous Medicine Wheel Garden

by Wayne Cobb

A new and beautifully artful garden has bloomed in South Portland this summer. It's near the Portland Jetport, on land offered by ReVision Energy at 758 Westbrook Street, opposite the turnoff where planes can be watched from your car while they take off and land.

Our Maliseet friend and neighbor Mihku Paul was instrumental in creating the garden. Mihku told me, "Once I saw the site, and watched planes landing and taking off, I visualized a colorful wheel that people could see from the sky and look down upon; something that would make them smile and feel hopeful. It will have a

balanced color scheme dense enough to be made out from the sky, and have vegetables and Indigenous herbs in it that we share and distribute to off-reservation families and individuals in our region. I designed it, and three others built the garden. We had help from ReVision Energy, moving soil, and they also helped install the fencing and gate." She said the garden represents "cross-collaboration among community organizations, cultural sharing, food security and education. Part of the beauty of it is that it came about as part of the Maine Land Share project, which connects those with land to people who are looking for garden space to improve food security. Almost any size garden can have an impact. The point is that cross-cultural organizations are working together to help provide for their community."

Next time you're near the airport, swing by the new garden and take a look around. It's a contribution to our community from our Indigenous neighbors that should get even more beautiful over time.



### Portland Friends Meeting Directories

To request copies of the most updated directory, or to let us know about changes we should make to your contact information, just email:

[directory@portlandfriendsmeeting.org](mailto:directory@portlandfriendsmeeting.org).

*The Seed, or Grace of God, is small in its first Appearance, even as the Morning Light; but as it is given Heed to, and obeyed, it will increase in Brightness, till it shine in the Soul, like the Sun in the Firmament at its Noon-day Height.*

—Elizabeth Bathurst, 1655-1685

## Quaker Family Night!

Nov. 22, 2020 from 6:30-7:30 p.m.

Quaker Family Nights aim to provide meaningful moments for children and opportunities for connection between all ages. The most recent one, led by the Family Worship Working Group of Friends Meeting of Cambridge was engaging, meaningful, and a lot of fun! Friends who attended are still smiling with gratitude for the evening.

Our next one, to be led by the Eller Fitze Family (Portland Friends Meeting) will include joyous singing, a story, and a building activity with Legos, Duplos, or whatever materials you would like to use. (I'm bringing my tub full of paper cups!) There will also be an opportunity for sharing in smaller groups -- something that attendees have particularly appreciated. Register to receive the Zoom link.

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScLrjqm5D4UdopeS-OEGJ2a9x-3YLL5tpmdN-RUh4D1uviOtQ/viewform?usp=sf\\_link&mc\\_cid=8f3f483678&mc\\_eid=a3dc7e9ada](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScLrjqm5D4UdopeS-OEGJ2a9x-3YLL5tpmdN-RUh4D1uviOtQ/viewform?usp=sf_link&mc_cid=8f3f483678&mc_eid=a3dc7e9ada)

## Curiosity and Connection During Winter

Invitation from Mary Tracy to PFM Community

November 1, 2020

As we move into winter and face greater isolation because of the pandemic, I am offering to facilitate a support group focused on being curious and staying connected to each other. Here's what I picture:

- Group size of 8-10
- Meet once a week on Zoom on Tuesday mornings from 10:00 - 11:30
- If there is enough interest for an evening time, I would consider facilitating a second group Tuesday evenings, 7 - 8:30
- Participants commit to a full session:
  - Session 1: Nov. 10 - Dec. 29
  - Session 2: January 5 - February 23

As the title suggests, we will focus on staying curious about life, inner and outer, and on supporting each other during what may be a trying time.

Here's how I envision facilitating the group and structuring the time.

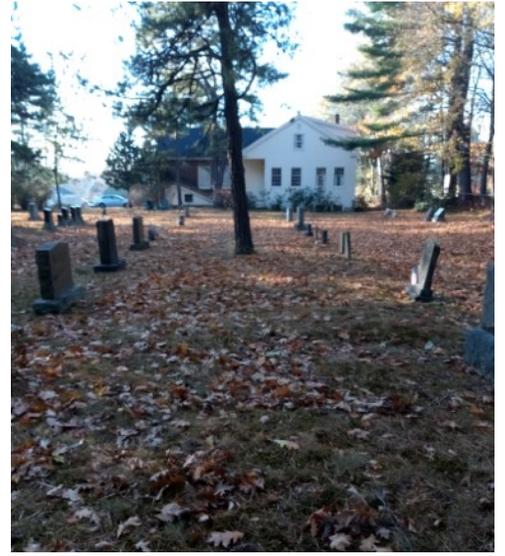
- Open with a 3-minute seated physical relaxation warm-up (stretching, relaxing shoulders, deep breathing, hand and arm exercises, etc.) followed by brief silent worship.
- Go around the group with a one-sentence answer to an ice-breaker question (e.g., Name one thing this week that brought you joy. Name a person who inspired you to change in some way. What role have pets played in your life?)
- Take turns talking for 4-5 minutes (or whatever amount of time fits the size of the group) about one's own situation - what you are curious about, and challenges, successes, and feelings living well in winter. The others listen, ask clarifying questions, perhaps share a resource. We are not together to fix each other, but to support each person's path to connection and growth.
- Close with a short reading or image brought in by a member of the group (on a pre-planned schedule), followed by a moment of silence.

For those who don't know me, I taught school for over 30 years and was one of the founders of Friends School of Portland. I have lots of experience facilitating group discussions and love watching people learn from and connect to each other. I am not a counselor and do not see this group as a setting for individual counseling.

PLEASE EMAIL ME at marytracy126@gmail.com with questions or to sign up. Let me know if you prefer mornings or evenings or either. Looking forward to hearing from you!

## Love Our Meetinghouse Day! (continued from page 1)

The day was a grand success while masked and socially distanced. The weather, the planning, and the 'getter done' energy has was wonderfully synchronous. Bob Massengale prepared the way by mowing over the leaves with a powerful mulching machine. This left the long neglected perimeter or fence area for a team effort. Families came and participated. Syl Doughty arrived with large flatbed truck. The humongous brush pile was dispensed with. Then a smooth working 40- 50 Friends among them some of finest leaf rakers, snatchers, baggers, and haulers you possibly imagine filled 80-90 leaf bags. Until early next week they will be stored on a large tarpaulin and covered by the same. Doug Malcolm was our leader. Thank you Doug. The result is that mulching of all but the pine needles and oak leaves is now manageable. Following a relaxing BYOL was enjoyed... and yes we did celebrate the news of our president elect.



## Vassalboro Quarter 11/7

We are invited to join Vassalboro Quarter hosted by Belfast Friends for their quarterly meeting on 11/7 with a mind and heart fully open to what may unfold. Here is the schedule:

8:30 - 9:15 Welcome (Kay Carter) and Silent Worship, followed by:

9:15 - 10:00 Breakout groups of ~6 people each, on the theme of Deepening Democracy. The following queries will guide us: "What is in your minds and hearts at this moment?" "How can we cleanse our gaze to be more human, interconnected, relational?" "How is your faith sustaining you in this difficult time?"

10:00 - 10:30 Return to full group - sharing from small groups (either spoken, or written into Chat)

10:30 - 10:45 A Break, followed by:

10:45 - Noon Meeting for Worship with Attention to Quarterly Business

Margaret Marshall, clerk Diane Oltarzewski, recording clerk

We welcome your participation with our collaborative poem - Our Peace - included here:

### Our Peace

A number of Belfast Friends each contributed a line to create the following Welcome to the Quarter. We were inspired by the Gawler Family singing Woody Guthrie's "My peace, my peace is all I have, that I can give to you"

The fragrance of hemlock and white pine  
In the mountains, and the sea  
Breathing in, breathing out....  
Calm-abiding, single-focused meditation  
The morning hours, before sunrise, when the world is still  
I close my eyes and listen  
to the birds  
successfully going about their lives  
unaware of turmoil inside and outside of us  
Whether in fog or vibrant splendor the sun will rise over the bay  
and a new day will begin  
Peace is the heart connecting to the Universe and knowing oneness  
The lettuce  
from soil, sun, and rain  
through farmer, truck driver, produce manager, cashier  
rinsed, spun, dressed, and placed on my husband's plate  
...brings me peace.

Peace comes to me outside in the quiet of nature,  
and in the sound of music, playing saxophone and clarinet with my friends.  
To find that flow in the ordinary day which leads to unexpected delight.

## An invitation to "Small groups to speak & listen deeply"

Several of us, from Friends meetings in the U.S. and beyond, been meeting for about an hour each week to share in an almost worship sharing format, responding to queries about our spiritual lives.

This started as an experiment, and has been very successful. Even though many of us have never met in person, we've formed deep bonds, and the whole experience has been helpful in nurturing our spiritual lives and in helping us truly live guided by the Spirit.

Would you like to join us?

We meet 10 am - 11 am on Friday mornings. This may change, but I'm not yet sure how.

Although our group began with some attenders at Pendle Hill worship (that meets every day 8:30 - 9:10 am), and we sometime inherit inspiration from that worship, our group is much bigger than that.

Among our recent queries have been the following:

What is my spiritual need?

How do I let my life speak?

What spiritual texts help you in your spiritual process?

Is the Bible among them? Why or why not?

How about poetry, artwork, music, or dance?

In what ways do you any of these help you?

What nourishes my spiritual life?

What gets in the way of my spiritual life?

What helps me navigate between these two?

What is my ministry?

What ministry speaks to my condition today??

When have you felt or sensed the leading of the Spirit? How did you know?

Or, where do you get your guidance?

What are you seeking, and what are you finding, in Meeting for Worship?

What are my spiritual gifts? How might they be visible, or perhaps hidden, within my spiritual community?

How do we make space for those times in our lives when our compassion, our caring, our faith in the Spirit is clouded by anger in the moment, by conflict, by strife around us or within us? What helps us return to a centered space of grace, of spiritual abundance, of contentment, of trust, and of faithfulness?

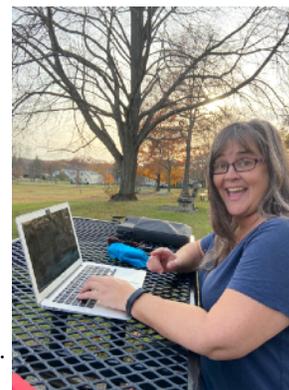
When you sense that you are being led by the Spirit, how do you know that? What is your process for discernment? How might you learn that you were led by something other than a true spiritual calling?

To join our group, just email me at 'arthur@arthurfink.com' and I'll put you on the list to receive announcements. Our next meeting will be Friday November 6th at 10 am.

Questions? E-mail me or call 207.615.5722. — Arthur Fink

## Newsletter Delay!

Pictured here, your newsletter layout-er, Heather Denkmire. She says, "Like many of you, this election cycle threw off my concentration and focus game quite a bit. Today, with the news



that our job as progressives to make the world better for everyone just got a little easier got me back on track. Maya and I got some things done while looking out over Payson Park this afternoon." (Posted 11/7/20 at 3:30pm!)

## Invitation to join Windham Friends Worship

Windham Friends are gathering for Worship in person on 9:00 a.m. on Sundays. Friends are invited to join them; they are a small congregation with a large sanctuary and are taking appropriate precautions. Windham Friends meeting is at 374 Gray Street. Windham, ME

## Portland Friends Meeting Email Lists

Our Meeting has two email lists, or, "google groups:"

1) *PFM Life of the Meeting*, for items directly related to Portland Friends Meeting business and/or directly Quaker items.

To send an announcement to this list, email: [pfm-life-of-the-meeting@googlegroups.com](mailto:pfm-life-of-the-meeting@googlegroups.com).

2) *PFM Wider Community*, for **any** items of interest from the PFM community to share, not necessarily *directly* related to Quakers, including (but not limited to!) personal invitations or wider community events.

To send an announcement to this list, email: [pfm-wider-community@googlegroups.com](mailto:pfm-wider-community@googlegroups.com).

For any questions related to the lists, including requests to add yourself to one or both: [pfm.email.list.owner@gmail.com](mailto:pfm.email.list.owner@gmail.com).

Portland Friends Meeting  
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Address Service Requested

**Next newsletter deadline:**  
Tuesday, December 8, 11:59pm

submissions: [pfmnewsletter@grantwinners.net](mailto:pfmnewsletter@grantwinners.net)

