

Portland Friends Meeting Newsletter

Fourth Month

Meeting for Worship: 10:30am Sundays

Connections

Co-Clerks

Brad Bussiere-Nichols

pfmbrad@gmail.com 207-756-5586

Lyn Ballou

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Treasurer, Contributions

Jane Mullen, 215-421-5257

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Treasurer, Operating Account

Kathy Beach, 207-233-2065

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Treasurer, Special Funds

Special Needs Funds

Elizabeth Szatkowski 207-274-3564

Ministry and Counsel

Beth Bussiere-Nichols

Christine Fletcher

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Christina Davis 518-0784

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Religious Education

Adult: On Hiatus

Youth: Bart Czyz btczyz@gmail.com

Youth Religious Education Coordinator:

Andy Grannell 207-878-8698

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Use of the Meetinghouse

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Newsletter submissions

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portlandfriendsmeeting.org

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*“Is every aspect of your life open to the transforming power of God?
What stands in the way?”*

—New England Yearly Meeting Query No. 4

Calendar

April 30 Deadline for Leadings Grant Applications (details inside)

Every Sunday: 10:30a Meeting for Worship*

Second Saturdays: 5-8p Youngish adults potluck

Bart Czyz, btczyz@gmail.com, 207 899 5937

*contact Co-Clerks for online Meeting for links

Recently updated Portland Friends Meeting Directory available!

If you'd like the latest version of the Portland Friends Meeting Directory, please complete this quick form to request a copy https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdyj8DcnhNLgNJGOFL4UBU2NjFaZiTLc1Pe5ZO64E5q_TpnQ/viewform. As the current Directory scribe, last week I exported and formatted the most recent copy by Household Name, Last Name and First Name.

Many thanks to Friends reporting about their household moves and also collecting info during the Friendly Connection calls, there have been a number of recent updates. We so appreciate it! However, the Directory is always a work in progress - so after you review this latest version, please email directory@portlandfriendsmeeting.org about any needed revisions. Then I will make those tweaks to the database.

Also, if you aren't in the directory and would like to be added (we'd love to have you in there!), you can quickly fill out the Add Me to the Directory form: <https://airtable.com/shrk1d9Dk3ioE4uyU>.

Yours in connection and fellowship,

Sarah Cushman

current PFM Directory scribe

Portland Friends Meeting
Meeting for Worship for the Conduct of Business
April 11, 2021 & April 18, 2021

We began in silent worship at 9:02 a.m. on April 11th, gathered remotely and connected via Zoom. There were 42 members and attenders present for this meeting. On April 18th, we continued our business. There were 45 members and attenders present for this meeting.

Our presiding clerk, Brad Bussiere-Nichols, read the New England Yearly Meeting Query No. 4, "Is every aspect of your life open to the transforming power of God? What stands in the way?"

1. **Clerk's comments.** It has been an exhausting year meeting in this fashion. Despite the help of technology, it has still been lacking, in terms of feeding our souls. We hope that more outdoor gatherings such as happened on Easter will be able to occur more often. The clerk also asked for patience, as he had received his second dose of the virus vaccine and did not feel he was at top form.
2. **March Minutes.** The minutes from our March Meeting for Business were accepted as printed in the newsletter.
3. **Treasurer's Report.** Kathy Beach presented the report showing our expenditures and income through March. We continue to be in good shape as expenses are minimal and many Friends continue to contribute on a regular basis. There was a positive balance for the month of March. Income was \$4,510, expenses were \$2,386, leaving a positive balance of \$2,124. Friends accepted the report.

Year-to-Date:

Income: \$20,825 (27%)

Expenses: \$13,892 (18%)

Balance: \$6,933

4. **Financial Oversight.** Daryl Renschler reported for the investment subcommittee regarding our endowment funds through Friends Fiduciary. Many thanks to those on the committee who put together various reports for this presentation. Our endowment funds are now over \$800,000. The breakdown is the following: \$410,246 Endowment; \$272,788 Barbie Potter; \$105,900 Cemetery; \$45,237 Jones Youth=\$834,171. Friends School paid back the \$150,000 loan from PFM early last December. The committee has reinvested the loan repayment in our Friends Fiduciary account. Daryl also updated us on some new things about Friends Fiduciary. It decided to go completely fossil-free in all their funds, including Growth and Income Fund, as well as Green Fund. Because of that, the two funds are being merged. Friends Fiduciary has been performing above its benchmarks. The Fiduciary has hired an advocacy employee.

Appreciation and joy were expressed for all the funds now being green. A question was raised about what each of the funds is for. Daryl and Kathy will create a report for the newsletter to outline those funds. Another question was raised about what an endowment is for and what goals there are for it. A suggestion was made that a session be held, led by Financial Oversight, to discuss the various funds held by our meeting. That will be scheduled in the not distant future.

5. **Ministry and Counsel.** Beth Bussiere-Nichols reported. The oversight committee for the marriage of Mel Brown and Maggie Nelson has been formed and consists of Jennifer Frick, Lea Sutton, Sandi Jensen, Rob Levin, Hannah Colbert, and Jessica Eller.

On March 21, 2021, Ministry and Counsel hosted a worship-sharing session using this year's state of society process as a starting point for listening to how our community is called moving forward. Approximately 25 Friends joined in the session and there was rich sharing by many. It was clear that more time was needed to continue this conversation, and a second session is planned for Sunday April 25th at 9am. All are welcome.

A clearness committee met with Doug Malcolm and found him clear for membership. Ministry and Counsel recommends that he be approved for membership in Portland Friends Meeting. Friends approved.

(Minutes continued from page 3)

Ministry and Counsel recommends the following minute of support be approved by Portland Friends Meeting:

Minute of Support for Fritz Weiss's participation in the Portland Interfaith Group

Portland Friends Meeting supports Fritz Weiss's participation in the Portland Interfaith Group. The Portland Interfaith Group is a gathering of clergy, rabbis, and leaders of faith communities in Greater Portland. The group shares concerns, initiatives, and opportunities for both interfaith projects and mutual support. In this group, Fritz is serving as a Public Friend fully able to participate in the activities and work of the Group. Because of Fritz Weiss's experience in Friends' faith and practice, we are confident that he brings seasoned and grounded wisdom to this work.

The term "Public Friend" indicates that the meeting feels that the person can represent Quakers in the public sphere, based on capacity and deep understanding of Friends' beliefs and practices.

Friends approved. Fritz expressed appreciation and indicated that he will take this as an obligation to report back periodically on the Interfaith Group's work.

This has been a strange year when our support of Family Promise has been at a distance. Ann Dodd-Collins was led to share with us about her experience of being called to this ministry as we ask ourselves as a community to renew our commitment to the program. Ann described her history with FP which began even before it came to Maine. Because she volunteered to be PFM's coordinator for the program, she was able to meet coordinators from all over our community and discovered the richness and compassion in other faith communities. She also described what the majority of the families participating in Family Promise have gone through, as asylum seekers, who arrive here with nothing, having had to leave everything behind. She spoke of the gaps that Family Promise fills which General Assistance can't cover, including bus passes and laundry quarters. (If one is on GA, one is not allowed to have cash.) Ann told of the amazing people who work for FP, as well as the amazing families she has come to know through the program. She feels so blessed to do this work, which has changed her life. She has found herself called to pay attention, for example, not just to the logistics of getting boxes of food, but what goes into those boxes: food that they recognize and want to eat. This can help them feel more at home, comfortable in this strange land. She has learned to love and trust people, even when logic has told her not to, because they have loved and trusted her. She has learned that gratitude comes in small and large packages. We are reminded that Family Promise is so much more than just bus passes and gift cards and sharing meals. We are part of a much larger picture of God's work.

Friends expressed deep gratitude for Ann calling us to the ministry she gives so beautifully, which is also our work. We were reminded to be attentive to those outside our culture and community as a gift, responding to those in need when and how they need it. Friends were encouraged to continue to support this program, even while other issues may call to us. One Friend suggested the creation of a support committee for Ann in her ministry; the Ministry & Counsel co-clerk agreed to have follow up conversations about this with Ann.

Friends agreed to make a commitment to provide support for GPPF's homeless prevention program for one month this year, likely in the fall, as a time when we give deliberate attention to fundraising for the program.

Friends have gathered for two sessions to reflect on and give feedback regarding the draft Apology to Native Americans from NEYM Right Relationship Resource Group. With gratitude for the engagement in these sessions, the committee that has organized this work (Ann Dodd-Collins, Jennifer Frick, Wayne Cobb) has drafted a letter as well as an annotated copy of the apology with our community's comments/feedback listed. Friends approved this as our meeting's discernment of Yearly Meeting's proposed Apology. We are asked to live into the commitment of this letter, working toward right relationship with Native tribal communities.

Friends are encouraged to register for the opportunity to engage in an interactive experience through Wabanaki REACH on May 24th to help us move forward in considering these issues more in the context of our Maine community. Other plans are a book group, a screening of 'Dawnland,' and an acknowledgment on our website that our meetinghouse sits on Wabanaki land.

6. **Initiative to Extend Our Welcome to the Sidewalk** Karin Wagner, clerk of Buildings and Grounds, reported. A small group of Friends, consisting of Lyn Ballou, Sarah Cushman, Dorothy Grannell, Denis Lachman, Bernard Mohr, Karin Wagner, met on April 1, 2021.

(cont-)

(Minutes continued from page 3)

As background, in 2018, the Buildings and Grounds committee began work on a proposal to design a new sign for the meetinghouse. This proposal was presented to and approved at Meeting for Business in January, 2019. Additional proposals to provide a bench at the bus stop and bike racks at the meetinghouse were also made in January, 2019. Simultaneously, a Welcoming and Fellowship group was convened to consider how the meeting could engage in outreach with the larger community and also with the Riverton neighborhood.

From the confluence of these ideas, a proposal arose to step back and develop an integrated design incorporating these ideas based on the values of the Meeting community. To that end, a Listening Session was held on April 28, 2019 to seek input and guidance from the Meeting on how and whether to proceed with this initiative. This session included a presentation by Denis Lachman and Sarah Cushman which elicited a lively discussion among approximately 50 members of the meeting community. A report on this session is available at: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Th__0G5E1qpO60kZ4J9AW4XEag3ahKyBd4i4PU51NY/edit?usp=sharing

A second listening session was tentatively scheduled for September, 2019, but the initiative was then paused due to other commitments and ultimately, the pandemic.

The group listed above met on April 1st to discuss whether and how to restart this initiative. There was agreement that the initiative should continue to consider the larger design picture, rather than focusing on individual projects (sign, bench for bus stop, etc), and that this should start with engaging the meeting in conversation to determine the community's current priorities and interest in this work.

Several challenges to this work were acknowledged:

- since April, 2019, the meeting's focus has turned inward, in part due to the effect of the pandemic, and the Welcoming and Fellowship group has lost some of its critical initial energy to power this work
- until the meeting community returns to in-person worship, it will be more difficult to engage in this discussion
- new priorities for the meeting community may have arisen in the past 1-2 years

Therefore the decision was made to continue to pause this work until we have returned to in-person worship and until there is discernable energy within the community toward this work.

7. **Closing.** Our meeting closed in silent worship at 10:00 a.m. on April 11th and 10:25 a.m. on April 18th, purposing to meet again, God willing, at 9:00 a.m. on Sunday, May 2, 2021.



Southern Poverty Law Center has issued multiple guides and reports on racism including "how to respond." Check out the action links below for more information:

The SPLC's guide to bystander intervention is a free, shareable resource for [how to respond while witnessing an act of hate](#). If you, or anyone you know, would like to safely report an incident of hate to the Southern Poverty Law Center, [please do so here](#).

Making sure hate incidents are reported and the voices of people experiencing hate are heard is the first step in supporting the AAPI community. We can also help by speaking up and sharing resources that actively counter hate around us. One resource we would like to share is Learning for Justice's [guide for parents, educators and caregivers](#) responding to this week's attack. [Learning for Justice](#) provides free resources for educators helping young people navigate critical conversations about race, gender, class and more.

For more information visit <https://www.splcenter.org/>.

Sydney's Barter Curiosities

I am currently clearing out and cleaning up my home. Available items will be listed and sent by e-mail shortly, and periodically updated through June. Most will be useful, a few quirky. There will be household items such as furniture, glassware, tires.

If you wish to receive the list, please e-mail me at: casco.sells@gmail.com No calls or texts, please.

Pick-up from my home near the Martin's Point Bridge.

Your barter offer could be prayer, labor, donations to charity, or cash. I am most in need of garden work and being 'held in the light' right now. Evolving items and needs will be communicated to those who respond. In peace, love and gratitude, Sydney McDowell.

Friends,

Have you been nudged by Spirit to undertake a Leading? If so, please consider applying to Portland Friends Meeting Leadings Committee for financial support to carry out your spiritual project. The guidelines for application are here:

Portland Friends Meeting: Leadings Grant Guidelines

WHO CAN APPLY? Active members and attenders of PFM are given priority, but members of the Falmouth Quarter Meetings are also welcome to apply. Preference is given to those applying for the first time.

PURPOSE: Grants must be for a spiritual leading that requires financial support. The applicant should have a strong sense that they are being led by the Spirit to undertake the proposed project or work. They should be able to explain how they arrived at their conviction.

APPLICATION: Application should be made as a written request of approximately two pages plus a budget outline. Your application should include the following:

- 1) A brief description of your project/activity, and your motivation for undertaking this leading. Be as specific as possible about the expected results and how it might benefit Portland Friends Meeting or the wider community.
- 2) Information about yourself, and a sense that the time is right to fully commit to the leading and give it your best effort.
- 3) Budget for the project/activity, including expenses and income from other sources. Please tell the committee of any independent corroboration or benefit you have received in regard to the project.
- 4) Reports on your project should be placed in the Leadings folder in the PFM library, both at the beginning of the project and again at the conclusion of the project, or within a year of the start of your project.

Grant Application Deadlines: 30th of April and 31st of October each year.

CURRENT COMMITTEE: Kathy Beach, Wayne Cobb, Stefanie Fairchild, Sandi Jensen, and Mary Tracy

ESTABLISHED: A bequest was made by Barbie Potter to Portland Friends Meeting in 2009. The Leadings Committee was formed in 2010 for the purpose of financially helping Friends with a leading that is spirit-led. Money for Leadings projects comes from interest income on the endowment that was so generously left by Barbie Potter upon her passing.

PROJECTS: Grants are generally limited to one-time applications for each project. Grant size is modest, with \$1500 being the average grant awarded. Applicants are encouraged to find matching funds elsewhere and other collaborative funding strategies. Several projects have started through a Leadings grant from Portland Friends Meeting and have expanded with the help of the Obadiah Brown Benevolent Fund and/or the Lyman Fund.

There are several good resources in the PFM library:

Nudged by the Spirit by Charlotte Lyman Fardelmann

How Do I Know It's a Leading? by Ruth Hyde Paine, Southeastern Yearly

Meeting for the Religious Society of Friends Annual Michener Lecture, 1992

Spiritual Discernment: The Context and Goal of Clearness Committees, by Patricia Loring, Pendle Hill Pamphlet 305, 1992

If you desire a clearness committee regarding your leading, please contact Ministry and Counsel for help with setting this up. Some applicants have formed a support group to help with on-going issues during their project.

Applicants must be available to meet with the Leadings Committee to discuss their application if requested. Applications may be sent via email or US Postal Service.

Requests for 2021 are to be submitted to: Kathy Beach at

Either: katherinegbeach@gmail.com

Or: 14 Drew Rd.

South Portland, ME 04106



INDIGENOUS MATTERS

by Wayne Cobb (wcobb2@gmail.com)

Register Now!

The Wabanaki REACH online program "Interacting with Wabanaki-Maine History" will be presented Monday, May 24 at 6:30 PM. Portland Friends who register by April 27 will receive priority, but you can also register after that date, when we will promote to a wider audience. The number of attendees will be limited. Participation is "pay-as-led," with a suggested donation of ten dollars. Contact Wayne Cobb at wcobb2@gmail.com to register.

Recent Testimony

Recently I and other members of the Friends Committee on Maine Public Policy (FCMPP) provided testimony on these matters before State bodies:

- in favor of LD, 159 to extend the time limit on placing land in trust status that is currently contained in the Settlement Act
- in favor of LD 554 to support the rights of the Tribes to make their own decisions about gaming and economic development
- in favor of LD 342, to require that a Wabanaki representative be appointed to the Marine Resources Advisory Council, and on LD 361 to mandate a Wabanaki seat on the Inland Fisheries & Wildlife Council
- in favor of LD 345 to require permanent Wabanaki membership on the UMaine Board of Trustees
- (before the Land Use Planning Commission) in opposition to rezoning that would permit Wolfden company to drill for a toxic copper mine in northern Maine.

Please help support the new "omnibus Tribal Sovereignty bill" (last session's LD 2094)

This new bill would implement the Recommendations of the 2019 Task Force on Changes to the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Implementing Act. This is the one bill for which we want as many people as possible to submit testimony, write Letters to the Editor, and otherwise show support. Even though the new bill has not been assigned an LD number as of this writing, please reach out to your State legislators to ask for their support of this "omnibus bill," and to learn what's getting in their way if they are not planning on supporting it. Let Toby McGrath, lobbyist for the Wabanaki Alliance (<https://wabanakialliance.com/>), know of any concerns, and someone from the Alliance will get in touch with your legislator. All are invited to join the online strategy sessions Wabanaki Alliance is facilitating every Friday at 11:00 AM, using this link: <https://maineconservation.zoom.us/j/8326082819>

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Draft Minute in support of the sovereignty bill

Shirley Hager and Kay Carter of Vassalboro Quarter, fellow members of the Friends Committee on Maine Public Policy, and I have put together a draft minute for consideration at the Vassalboro and Falmouth Quarterly Meetings for Business, both being held on April 24. If adopted by both Meetings, a joint statement from Maine Quakers in support is expected. This minute may also be discussed at the All Maine Gathering on May 1.

The Gatherings

A new book, written by Our Friend Shirley Hager in collaboration with Wabanaki Tribal members, is called *The Gatherings: Reimagining Indigenous-Settler Relations*. Thirty years ago, in Wabanaki territory, a group of Indigenous and non-Indigenous individuals came together to explore some of the most pressing questions at the heart of Truth and Healing efforts in the US and Canada. Meeting over several years in long weekend gatherings, alliances and friendships were formed that endure to this day. Reuniting to reflect on how their lives were changed by their experiences, and the participants share the valuable lessons they learned. Copies of the book are being given to Legislative, State, and Tribal leaders jointly by FCMPP and the Episcopal Committee on Indian Relations. The Gatherings is available through Longfellow Books in Portland, Gulf of Maine Books in Brunswick, and online. Starting May 7, Midcoast Indigenous Awareness Group (<https://www.miag-group.org/>) is leading a discussion group on The Gatherings on Friday mornings, starting May 7. The series is free and attendance is limited; contact Mia Beale (matzatlx@gmail.com) to register.

A final word of inspiration from Black Girl in Maine Media's blog (blackgirlinmaine.com):

"We need to stop just talking online and start looking at our local systems and figure out how we are each going to create change in our communities. We have to stop looking to magical thinking or hoping that others will save us and start rolling up our own sleeves—committing to change in our own communities. But that requires a willingness to step out of our own comfort zones and stretch. Because no matter how many books you buy and read or how many times you read my words or post on Facebook, that doesn't change things. That is simply the foundation needed for you to become aware so that you can then move to action. If you truly care about Black people and other communities of color and the desire to dismantle white supremacy, now more than ever you must move from talk to action."

What We Believe

At the core of the Quaker faith is our trust that all people can have direct, inward experience of divine love, healing and guidance. We have learned that through responding to this guidance, we can be changed—even transformed—coming to live lives reflecting the Light and Love of God. This is the hope, the invitation and the promise that gathers us as the people called "Friends."

source: <https://neym.org/beliefs>

Announcement of Falmouth Quarterly Meeting Friends

Falmouth Quarter is gathering on April 24th from 9:30 to 12:00. We will be celebrating ministry and the life of the Spirit in our meetings throughout the morning in each of the concerns before us. We will hear Memorial Minutes sharing the lives and witness of Friends we have known and loved; We will hear the State of Society reports, sharing our experience of Spirit in the life of our meetings; We will hear reports and sharing about and from individuals with recognized ministries in Falmouth Quarter.

To help prepare, I am sharing the following from Carl Williams, Plainfield meeting, as one expression of Friends understanding of ministry. Love, Fritz

Living Close to the Center

My prayer time has felt a bit chaotic recently. Not uncentered, really, but there's been a sense of swirling and disjointed divergence, seemingly with no common thread. And then during worship on Sunday—wham. I imagine I share the experience with many Friends—the startling epiphany, that moment of clarity, when understanding is laid suddenly bare and you're presented with a gift you didn't even know you wanted.

For me, this time, there was a renewed understanding, a reminder, of the depth of one of Friends' pivotal concepts, often encased in the phrase "that of God," or "the seed of Christ." I confess I use these a lot—both out loud and in my head. In their overuse, they'd become hollow and trite. I'd lost my awareness of the essential importance they carry in my day-in-day out life.

And as I sat in virtual worship, this refreshed understanding brought me around to the practical aspect of carrying the Seed of Christ—our ministry. I know that the idea of ministry among Friends is sometimes a challenge for many of us. I think, in part, because it's one of those terms that looks the same but whose meaning is different "in the world" than in our Friendly understanding. The world's definition has proven only a short walk to hierarchy and exclusion, certainly antithetical to the path of Friends.

My Quaker understanding of ministry comes (in part) from its Latin root, "to serve." Friends ministry holds primarily an active engagement with that Divine Spark that we each carry. And as we embrace that Spark, a path of service opens. It's not just doing things we are good at or like to do, but the things—which are sometimes hard and not infrequently inconvenient—that God calls us toward. Yes, vocal and Gospel ministry are part of it, but there are many and varied ministries, from baking to eldership, expressions of being the hands and feet, the eyes and ears and mouth of God.

Ministry is the reverberation of the "that of God" we each carry. It grows and is nurtured in community. We find it by living close to the Center. Genuine ministry involves waiting and listening as well as giving and receiving. Our ministries rise, are recognized, nurtured, and challenged within our worship communities. While it's the role of the community to identify a Friend's ministry and encourage it, ministry grows from the Spark, the Seed, the "that of God."

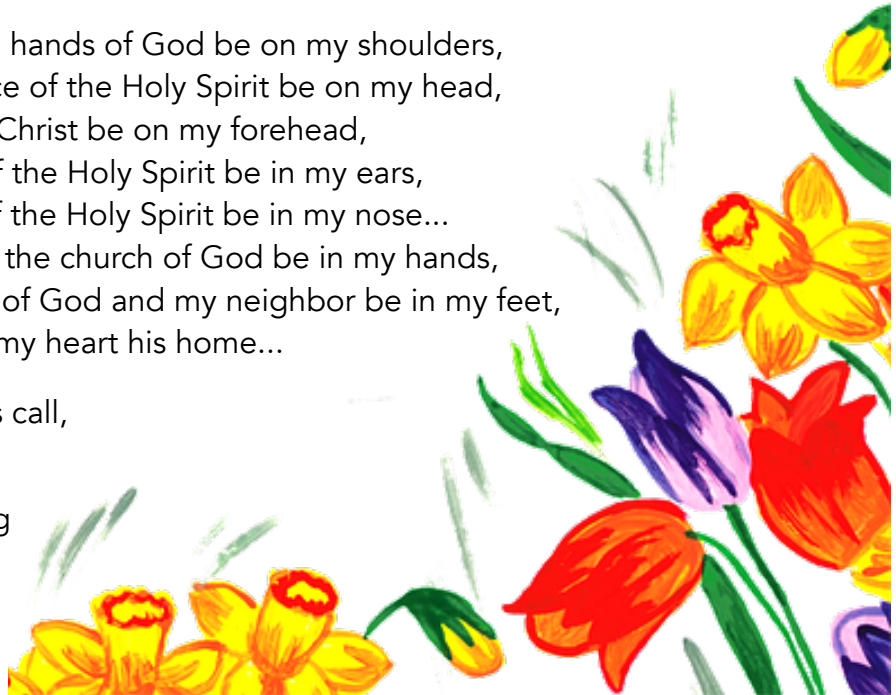
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It's easier said than done for me, this living into the Center. How do I step into that place? It requires surrender, it requires stepping into places I might not normally step into. It requires openness to God's whispering call. In my seeking I join in prayer with Flurse, a 7th-century Irish monk, and his protection prayer (lorica):

May the guiding hands of God be on my shoulders,
may the presence of the Holy Spirit be on my head,
may the sign of Christ be on my forehead,
may the voice of the Holy Spirit be in my ears,
may the smell of the Holy Spirit be in my nose...
may the work of the church of God be in my hands,
may the serving of God and my neighbor be in my feet,
may God make my heart his home...

In the joy of listening to God's call,

Carl Williams
Plainfield (VT) Friends Meeting



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. Think, "official." (Occasional messages about Members or Attenders will be shared, as needed.) To send an announcement to this list, email: 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.

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

Portland Friends Meeting
1837 Forest Ave
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Address Service Requested

Next newsletter deadline:
Tuesday, May 4, 11:59pm

submissions: pfmnewsletter@grantwinners.net

