Portland Friends Meeting Newsletter
Fifth Month 2022

Meeting for Worship: 10:45a Sundays

Connections
Co-Clerks
Rob Levin
coclerks@portlandfriendsmeeting.org
Lyn Ballou
balloulyn@gmail.com
207 838-6717

Recording Clerks
PFM.recordingclerk@gmail.com

Treasurer, Contributions
Jane Mullen, 215–421–5257
jmmmaine@aol.com

Treasurer, Operating Account
Kathy Beach, 207-233-2065
katherinegbeach@gmail.com

Treasurer, Special Funds
Special Needs Funds
Elizabeth Szatkowski 207-274-3564

Pastoral Care Coordinator
Christina Davis 518-0784

Childcare Coordinator
Susan Grannell 401-413-5951
pfm-nursery-coordinator@gmail.com

Religious Education
Adult: On Hiatus
Youth: Bart Czyz btczyz@gmail.com

Youth Religious Education Coordinator: Emily Troll etroll@wesleyan.edu

Use of the Meetinghouse
meetinghouse@portlandfriendsmeeting.org

e-group membership
pfm.email.list.owner@gmail.com

Newsletter submissions
Heather Denkmire
pfmnewsletter@grantwinners.net

Address/directory changes
directory@portlandfriendsmeeting.org

“In meetings for business, and in all duties connected with them, seek again the leadings of the Light; let our utterances be brief and without repetition. Let us keep from obstinacy and from harshness of tone or manner and admit the possibility of being in error. In all the affairs of the meeting community, let us proceed in a peaceable spirit, with forbearance and warm affection for each other.”

—Advices from Faith and Practice of New England Yearly Meeting (1985)

Calendar
May 9 7-9p Fruits of Faithfulness, Maggie Fiori (zoom)
June 12 12-2p End of year picnic! (at the Meetinghouse)
June 19 1-2:45 Discerning Financial Resources Use Threshing Session (zoom)

Every Month
Every Sunday: 10:45a Meeting for Worship*
First Sundays: 9a Meeting for Worship for the Conduct of Business
Every Wednesday: 7p Young Adult Friends Mid-Week Worship
Second Saturdays: 5-8p Youngish adults potluck
Bart Czyz, btczyz@gmail.com, 207 899 5937
Every Weekday: 10:30-11a Meeting for Worship on Zoom*

*contact Clerks for online Meeting for Worship links

Join us for the end of year picnic! June 12th 12-2ish, Meeting House
An annual tradition to celebrate the end of the school year - and boy, do we have a lot to celebrate. What a year of hard work and trying new things. Join us after meeting for *dumplings* as well as traditional cookout food. Bring a side if you like. We will also take our whole meeting photo! Hope you can be there.

The annual “tug of peace” in 2012!
We began in silent worship at 9:00 a.m. on May 1st, gathered in person and remotely, and connected via Zoom. There were 30 members and attenders present for this meeting. [12 roomers, 18 zoomers: 30]. Ann Dodd-Collins held us in the Light and Luke Hankins provided tech assistance.


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Land Acknowledgment: We are meeting on land nurtured by our friends and neighbors, the Wabanaki, for thousands of years. We are also part of a culture that benefitted from unpaid labor of people from Africa, which also needs to be acknowledged.

1. **April minutes.** A couple of issues were raised in relation to the April minutes that may require some adjustments in wording.

   The April minutes were held over for approval in June, pending further refinements.

2. **Quarterly Treasurer’s Reports** (documents attached)

   Kathy Beach reported for the Financial Oversight Committee, noting that the committee would like to change their name to the “Financial Stewardship Committee,” as the word “oversight” does not ring true anymore. Their report (attached) lists the current names of committee members.

   Kathy presented the summary income and expense numbers for this month and year to date (detailed reports were sent out ahead of time). In terms of income, we should be bringing in an average of about $5,000 each month. A significant amount of income also comes from the endowment: $18,000 this year. We are 33% through the year and donations are at 35%. We currently show a balance of over $8,000.

   In response to a question regarding how the amount taken from endowment is determined, Kathy noted that this is part of the budgeting process each year. The Financial Oversight Committee meets, estimates how much donations will cover, and then determines how much to take from endowment.

   Another member commented that Portland Friends Meeting has about 120 members and attenders, but only about 65 actually contribute. The ability of individuals to give varies widely, of course, but it is concerning that only half of the group gives. Drawing from the endowment has been a regular practice for many years.

   In response to a question, Kathy clarified why Family Promise appears twice under two categories. One is a donation to the organization for the year, while the other covers PFM’s direct expenses in support of families.

3. **Ministry and Counsel**  Christine Fletcher  (10 minutes)

   Christine Fletcher reminded Friends that Fritz Weiss had sent a notice to the e-group regarding interfaith group dedicating a plaque at a tree planted last year as a memorial to people who lost lives to COVID. Lyn noted that she and Kathy Beach went last year, which was a delightful ceremony.

   [Quote of Fritz’s message] On May 12th at 11:30 there will be a dedication ceremony at Gilsland Farms Audubon center for a memorial for those in Maine who died or who have had a close family or friend die of COVID during the pandemic. Last fall the Portland multi-faith group planted a tree to honor those Mainers, this May we will be dedicating the stone set by the tree. PFM contributed to the tree planting and two Friends were present when it was planted.

   Jessica Eller reported for the clearness committee that met with Maggie Fiori regarding her application for membership. The clearness committee is bringing an whole-hearted and joyful recommendation that Maggie Fiori be approved as a member of PFM.

   **The Meeting enthusiastically approved the membership of Maggie Fiori.**

(Continued on p. 3)
4. Discussion of Spring Survey Results (document distributed ahead of the meeting)

We were reminded that the survey is a tool, not a replacement for our discernment.

Where to hold MfW going forward

The preponderance of people either don’t feel strongly or would like to meet in the meetinghouse. The sense is that Zoom meeting would continue, but not hybrid—two parallel meetings. Friends are invited to speak with the co-clerks with any concerns. It was noted that Friends School of Portland is independent of PFM; we can ask but not assume that they will always welcome us. They have so far been enthusiastic about our presence. In response to a question whether we are contributing to the upkeep of the property at FSP, it was stated that we have been.

Several Friends spoke to the need for consistency—especially to enable visitors to find where we are meeting. Weekly announcements work for ourselves, but it’s more difficult for visitors to find us. We should be posting on the website regularly, but don’t always get to it. One parent commented that her child expressed enthusiasm for meeting at the Friends School.

The clerk clarified that the co-clerks will work with M&C to make final decisions about the location of meeting for worship, in the light of considerable feedback from the survey and this discussion.

It was also noted that sign out front has an old phone number: could replace with website? Time for worship is also out of date. We should return to discussion regarding replacement of the sign.

Timing of Roomer and Zoomer Meetings for Worship

Holding the Zoom and room meetings at the same time was generally supported in the survey. However, twenty percent wanted them separated, which might allow for a “human bridge” between the gatherings. It is not clear that many people would take advantage of both meetings. There is some support for hybrid meeting, which enable us to see everyone. At this point, we are not committed to hybrid, although that might change in the future, as we continue to experiment and explore. Again, Friends urged consistency.

Friends supported keeping both in-person and zoom meetings at 10:45.

Summer Meeting for Worship

Experience has varied over previous years, although also interrupted during COVID. Support was expressed for keeping it at 10:45 through the summer (continuing the theme of consistency). We could explore having fellowship outside before/after.

Friends supported keeping meeting at 10:45 (zoom and room) through the summer.

Format and Timing for Meeting for Business

Hybrid MfB worked well in April, although we have had some difficulties today. Our stalwart tech support, Luke, feels that the set up could be improved with some additional expenditures. There is a human resource demand and a lot of the tech tasks have been falling on Luke. We need to expand the numbers of people able to provide tech support.

One Friend expressed doubt about last month’s MfB as a good example, as there were no items for decision, only reports and discussion. There is something lost when we are not present in body together. It is actually better when we are all on Zoom. The hybrid format does not allow for the transmission of subtle and quiet information. This situation is not ideal, not what we want. Perhaps we should hire someone to do the tech support for us. One other suggestion was to hold MfB at the Friends School, weather permitting, retreating to Zoom as backup.

The meeting asked M&C and co-clerks to discuss and bring a suggestion for June and going forward, including both the format and timing of the business meeting.

5. Steering Committee on Stewardship of our Resources

Dorothy Grannell reported for the Steering Committee (report appended). She asked that Friends send the Steering Committee topics to cover in a planned informational session in May. The next threshing session will be on May 22nd, followed by a session on June 19th.
6. Proposed new Welcoming Committee (document attached)

Mary Tracy noted the report that was circulated before the meeting. The proposal is to make Welcoming a formal committee with the following general tasks: Coordinate greeters; organize fellowship after MfW; explore ways to make people feel more welcome; collect names for addition to the e-group.

The meeting approved formation of a Welcoming Committee with the tasks listed in the report.

Mary noted that the committee needs people to volunteer to be greeters. With the continued variability in venue, they are asking everyone to be attentive to welcoming.

7. Rising Concerns

A Friend brought our attention to the following learning event organized by the BTS Center from June-November:


Respectfully submitted,

Peter Woodrow, Recording Clerk pro tem

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Financial Oversight Committee Report

May 1, 2022

The Financial Oversight Committee would like to change its name from Financial Oversight to the Financial Stewardship Committee. We feel uncomfortable with the word “oversight”, and that is the reason for our desire to change the name.

The Friends currently on this committee are Jo Linder, Clerk and

Muriel Allen  Jane Mullen  Emily Silevinac
Kathy Beach  Sue Nelson  Dick Stratton
Alan Farneth  Daryl Renschler

Please see documents that were sent via email for April and YTD figures. (Summary of Income and Expenses attached below).

Our monetary contributions this month were to Quaker Ridge Meetinghouse in Casco, ME and to Friends of LGBTQIA+. The national organization for the LGBTQIA+ community no longer has a contact person, so we sent our donation to Mount Toby Meeting in Leverett, MA as they have a vibrant LGBTQIA community doing good work.

Checking account balance is $17,750.

Savings account balance is $15,143.

Balance in Friends Fiduciary Corporation is $813,000. This is down about 10% from January.

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Quick Summary of Income and Expenses for PFM
Through April 2022
4th Month (33% of the year)

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Stewardship Discernment Steering Committee — Report to Meeting for Business — May 1, 2022

More than 40 Friends attended the Stewardship Discernment Session that was held on Zoom on April 24, 2022. Friends shared seriously, personally, and truthfully about their understandings of the Testimony of Stewardship and its importance in the life of Portland Friends Meeting. There was a shared sense that the resources we steward include far more than money. We care for Spirit, Talents, Children, Building, Grounds as well gifts of money.

We heard a hunger for clarity and transparency about our policies and procedures. For some there is a sense of frustration with this process as well as a sense of urgency to start addressing some specifics. Some fears about the process and its potential results have been allayed. There is a developing sense of trust and hopefulness.

The Steering Committee will distribute notes from the session without attribution to individuals through the May newsletter. Julia Fitzgerald has been asked to join the team. We recommend the following topics for discernment in May and June as well as a change of date for June. We intend to take a break in discernment sessions until September and are considering an outside facilitator for a future session.

May 22, 2022 1pm on Zoom — Topic: PFM Where are we now?
An informational session concerning meeting history and important processes relating to program development, use of finances, Leadings, and building use. A variety of presenters will share our current policies and procedures around the stewardship of our resources. There will be time for questions and answers as well as open worshipful exploration.

That being said, the Steering Committee wants to hear from you THIS WEEK as to what processes and policies you most want to know about, and we will seek out knowledgeable Friends to address the topic. Send suggestions to pfm.discern.steering.committee@gmail.com by noon on Thursday May 5

June 19, 2022 on Zoom — Topic: PFM Where are we going?
We will begin working on the queries of “How much is enough?” as well as “How do we move forward?” Please note that specific proposals for moving forward will not happen until the fall. This session is to examine the resources we have and how their use may be changed going forward.

Welcoming Group Recommendation and Request to the Meeting Community 5.1.22

1. Recommendation. Initially, our group was tasked with surveying the meeting about the sense of welcome people felt or did not feel, and then making changes to improve how we welcome people, especially, but not only, newcomers. Refreshments after meeting for worship, planned activities, and other measures were begun, until the pandemic brought those to a close. Once we can be back together in person, these tasks as well as others will continue to be important. We now recommend that this group become a formal committee. We suggest the following roles for the committee:
   a. Coordinate the greeters.
   b. Coordinate fellowship after meeting for worship (i.e.food and mingling).
   c. Develop and carry out ways to help people feel more welcome.
   d. Each week invite newcomers to join the egroup, pass along those requests to Heather Denkmire, and then follow-up personally with newcomers via email.

2. Request. We need everyone’s help in greeting each other, especially reaching out to people you don’t know. There have been many people who have started attending meeting for worship in the past two years. The Welcoming Group is having difficulty in finding greeters and welcoming newcomers while the location of meeting for worship changes week to week because things remain uncertain with Covid. Therefore, we are asking that EVERYONE in the meeting be extra alert to recent arrivals, both on Zoom and in person, and do their utmost to welcome them. We recognize the challenge of knowing where to hold meeting for worship now, and appreciate the hard work of the Covid planning committee and others involved in surveying and sorting it out. We hope there will soon be a routine on Sundays - this will help newcomers and “old-comers” gel as a community.

Thank you,
Mary Tracy, clerk
Welcoming Group
Fruits of Faithfulness: Monday, May 9; 7:00-9:00 pm (on Zoom)

Come and join a celebration of the talents and gifts brought to Portland Friends by Maggie Fiori (formerly Nelson) in her capacity as the New England Yearly Meeting Youth Minister. Have you ever wondered what is involved in a ministry? PFM’s Nurturing Ministries Support Group is teaming up with Maggie Fiori’s Spiritual Care Committee to offer a program that will at once make Maggie’s work visible to the PFM community, shine a light on Quaker youth, encourage us to embrace new intergenerational ways of worship and connection, and educate us all on ways of supporting ministries in our Meeting.

The program—including art and music—will feature an interview with Maggie about her leadings and work conducted by Leslie Manning (clerk of the Permanent Board for NEYM and member of Maggie’s Care Committee). This will be followed by breakout-group discussions of the query: “How do you sustain spiritual energy in pursuit of your leadings when obstacles appear in your path and things feel discouraging?” Tom Antonik will elder the gathering.

To prepare for the evening, Friends may wish to become acquainted with the Guidelines for Spiritual Care Committees (from the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting site) which follow:

- Mirror to the Friend the ways God is acting/shining/serving through them.
- Demonstrate a willingness to accompany the Friend lovingly into difficult spiritual place.
- Be able to challenge the Friend to live more deeply and fully the life of the Spirit, while also accepting the Friend without judgment in the present moment.
- Demonstrate clear willingness to devote the time necessary to prepare for the work of the care committee and to attend the sessions of the committee with the Friend.

The Zoom link for the gathering is our regular PFM Meeting for Worship link: https://us06web.zoom.us/j/94840029377

Word-of-mouth continues to be our number one way that families find out about Friends School of Portland. With that in mind, we appreciate you passing on the news that FSP is still accepting student applications on a space-available basis for grades 2, 4, and 6-8.

We continue to have financial aid available as well for these spaces. We are also offering Friday tours of the school in May for parents only. Please pre-register here: https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c0d49aae62eabf4c61-fridays

Many thanks!
Anna Child
Director of Admissions
May Day delights!

Julie de Sherbinin brought supplies for miniature May Pole making to celebrate May Day. Sharia Campbell-Bussiere had a good time crafting her own May Pole and then helping adults decorate additional poles with streamers for dancing to celebrate the arrival of spring.

Portland Friends Meeting Email Lists

Anyone is welcome to join our email lists! Announcements about worship, documents for Meeting for Worship for the Conduct of Business are sent via the “Life of the Meeting” list.

To join/subscribe to these email lists/e-groups, simply email pfm.email.list.owner@gmail.com.

Once you have joined, to send a message to “Life of the Meeting” use pfm-life-of-the-meeting@googlegroups.com and, to send a message to “Wider Community” use pfm-wider-community@googlegroups.com.

I don’t have a report on Family Promise this month, just a poem. It hit me in the gut when I first read it two weeks ago. Right now our focus is on Ukrainians forced to leave their homes and hoping to find refuge in neighboring countries. But what about those fleeing violence in Angola, South Sudan, DRCongo, Syria... the list goes on. How did we contribute to their plight? Was it our tax dollars that are spent on the military rather than peacemaking efforts? Was it our ignorance of world affairs? And how can we make amends? Do we want to? Or should we tear down the spider’s web and go about our day, ignorant of the havoc we caused in another being’s life? —Ann

Mimesis

My daughter wouldn’t hurt a spider
That had nested
Between her bicycle handles
For two weeks
She waited
Until it left of its own accord

If you tear down the web I said
It will simply know
This isn’t a place to call home
And you’d get to go biking

She said that’s how others
Become refugees isn’t it?
— Fady Joudah, Alight
Address Service Requested

Next newsletter deadline:
Tuesday, May 7, 11:56pm

submissions: pfmnewsletter@grantwinners.net