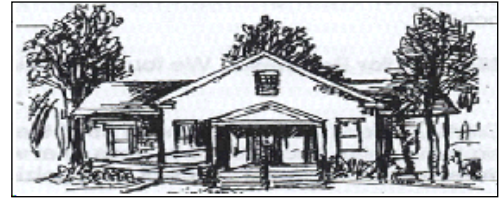


Portland Friends Meeting Newsletter

Third Month 2023

Meeting for Worship: 10:45a Sundays

First Day School: 10:30a Sundays



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portlandfriendsmeeting.org 207-200-6544

Connections

Co-Clerks

Rob Levin

Peter Woodrow

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Recording Clerks

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Treasurer, Contributions

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Special Needs Funds

Elizabeth Szatkowski 207-274-3564

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Muriel Allen, 207-420-1021

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Religious Education

Adult: On Hiatus

Youth: Bart Czyn btczyz@gmail.com

Youth Religious Education Coordinator:

Emily Troll etroll@wesleyan.edu

Use of the Meetinghouse

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e-group membership

pfm.email.list.owner@gmail.com

Newsletter submissions

Heather Denkmire

pfmnewsletter@grantwinners.net

Address/directory changes

directory@portlandfriendsmeeting.org

Calendar

April 1 9-4p Living Faith at the Friends School of Portland

April 4 6p Contemplative Writing with Theresa Oleksiw at the Meetinghouse, Adult Learning, fmi contact Thersa at toleksiw@gmail.com

Every Month

Every Sunday: 10:30a First Day School/All Ages Youth Programming at the Meetinghouse

10:45a Meeting for Worship* at the Meetinghouse and on Zoom;

Every Wednesday: 7p Young Adult Friends Mid-Week Worship
email yaf@portlandfriendsmeeting.org for location

Every Weekday: 10:30-11a Meeting for Worship on Zoom*

First and Third Thursdays: Meeting for Healing on Zoom

*contact Clerks for online Meeting for Worship links

The delegation which visited Cuba Yearly Meeting's annual sessions, Velasco Meeting, its mission church in Calderon, and other meetings in Cuba is home and each of us has stories, photos and songs to share. We will send a more complete report to the meeting soon.

Thank you to all who supported this effort, spiritually, personally and materially. The experience was profound and complicated. Please ask questions.



Portland Friends Meeting delegation with the mission church in Calderon.

Portland Friends Meeting

Draft Minutes of Meeting for Worship for the Conduct of Business

March 5, 2023

Peter Woodrow, Co-Clerk

Theresa Oleksiw, Co-Recording Clerk

Friends of the Portland Friends Meeting began in silent worship at 9:00 am. Some 33 Friends gathered in person at the Meetinghouse and remotely via Zoom.

Peter read from New England Yearly Meeting Faith and Practice, 1985, Working with One Another, p. 117. He thanked Rob Levin for helping out with tech support and Chris Beach for holding the meeting in the Light.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Meeting then approved the Minutes of the February 2023 Meeting for Business, with no corrections.

PROPOSALS FOR CONSIDERATION

Peter reviewed the many handouts emailed to Portland Members before the Meeting, including proposed minutes. The Discernment Steering Committee believes that, with approval of these items, most of the outstanding issues regarding the uses of the Meeting's financial resources will have been addressed, at least in broad terms. The path forward will require ongoing discernment regarding specific proposals for Shared Witness, use of Capital Reserves, and more.

TREASURERS REPORT

Kathy Beach presented the Treasurer's report. The 2023 budget proposed donations of \$5,000 a month. Actual donations so far were \$3,000 in January and \$2,600 in February. Kathy encouraged Meeting members and attenders to "dig a little deeper."

Kathy noted that a group met after meeting for worship on Sunday, February 26 to consider how to allocate the \$6,200 in the budget for donations to other organizations. The group decided to reduce the amount given to Friends of Kenya Rising by \$200, reallocating \$100 to the Maine Council of Churches (for a total of \$300) and \$100 to Friends World Committee for Consultation (total of \$300).

The Meeting approved the Treasurer's report.

MINISTRY AND COUNCIL

Support for a Legacy Grant: Beth Bussiere Nichols reported that Ministry and Counsel is recommending that the Meeting support Sally Farnsworth's application to the NEYM Legacy Fund to sustain her work providing English language resources to Quaker schools in Kenya and Rwanda. Sally is requesting a letter of support and an ongoing Support Committee from Portland Friends Meeting.

The Meeting approved the project application and directed the Co-Clerks to provide a letter of support.

State of Society Report: Beth read a revised version of the State of Society Report, which responds to input from several Friends since the previous Meeting for Business.

The Meeting approved the State of Society Report.

WORK OF THE DISCERNMENT STEERING COMMITTEE

Julia Fitzgerald, a member of the Discernment Committee, led the gathering in a song. Becky Steele gave a summary of the 14-month journey.

The "Shared Witness Seasoning Process" handout was read aloud by Julia. It suggests a process similar to a clearness committee, but instead of focusing on an individual, the discernment would be for the entire meeting to consider proposals for use of the Shared Witness Fund. Peter read a proposed minute and discussion ensued. Some Friends felt the process was too lengthy and did not reflect the Quaker process of naming a ministry and then finding the funding, as opposed to the other way around. Friends felt the process need to be simpler. A Friend asked why this

(Minutes continued from p.2)

outlined process is different than our usual practice of an individual going through Ministry and Counsel to form a regular clearness committee. Rob Levin explained that the process differs from an individual leading and is designed to engage the whole meeting in determining if the proposed action or allocation of funds reflects the will of the group. In response to a question, it was clarified that the proposed "Conveners" would be an ongoing group, not a new group set up in response to each new call.

Friends approved the following revised minute:

With reference to the "Proposal for Shared Witness Seasoning Process," Friends approved the overall approach to discerning whether and how to allocate funds from the Shared Witness Fund and to take any other actions as a community that express Spirit moving among us. At the same time, Friends expressed desire that the process remain as agile and responsive as possible, encouraging the flow of Spirit among us.

ESTABLISH SUBFUNDS

Peter noted that we have previously approved the overall concept of creating subfunds and established the Shared Witness Funds at an initial \$200,000. The proposal concerns establishment of several additional funds. Peter read the proposed minute from the handout, and it was approved by the Meeting:

Friends approved creating five subfunds within the investment accounts at Friends Fiduciary, including \$200,000 in Capital Reserve Fund, \$50,000 in Jones Youth Fund, and \$200,000 previously dedicated to the Shared Witness Fund. The remaining balance will be kept in a General Meeting Fund for support or the annual budget. From that amount a Cemetery Fund will be established, based on consultations between the Cemetery and Financial Stewardship Committees.

RAISE BUDGET FUNDS AND REPLENISH SUBFUNDS

Peter read the proposed minute from the handout and discussion ensued. Meeting for Business was paused for Meeting for Worship at 10:35, and then continued at 12:15pm. The afternoon discussion included 25 Friends. A Friend had a concern that there was no mechanism to increase donations, while another Friend thought the proposed split of surplus funds between the Shared Witness Fund and Capital Reserve Fund was arbitrary. Several Friends spoke with the concern about putting leadings in a financial framework; we as Quakers ought to be identifying leadings/ministry, then figuring out the finances.

The proposed minute was set aside until a later date, while we work on issues related to more intentional fundraising and how to replenish any of the subfunds over time.

REVIEW THESE ARRANGEMENTS

Peter read the proposed minute from the handout, which was approved, with the addition of a phrase allowing for ongoing changes as needed:

The Meeting will review these arrangements regarding use of the Meeting's invested funds during the fall of 2025, with a view towards adjusting, as needed, for the 2026 budget. As we live into these decisions and processes, we can make adjustments along the way as needed.

LAY DOWN DISCERNMENT STEERING COMMITTEE

Peter read the proposed minute from the handout:

Friends approved laying down the Discernment Steering Committee with gratitude for their faithful service.

The Meeting approved this minute.

CLOSING WORSHIP

The Meeting adjourned at 1:00 pm, after a few moments of quiet worship. The Meeting expects to meet again for the Conduct of Business on April 2, 2023, at 9:00 am.

Portland Friends Monthly Meeting State of Society 2022

We testify in the larger community and society to the Spirit in human affairs, to what is loving, true, and just ... Quaker practice is not an individual practice of individual enlightenment, but of forming a beloved community and society. We seek a beloved society in which we order every relationship with others and the natural world in accord with the Spirit.

From Nadine Hoover's Walking in the World as a Friend: Essential Quaker Practices

The last few years have brought times of uncertainty, fear and loss. We know from our indigenous neighbors the blueberry fields need to be burned to remain productive. When competing grasses, encroaching bushes and last year's remaining blueberry plants are reduced in shimmering sheets of flame, they return their nutrients to the soil to nurture future fruitfulness. As this year ends, we know that our beloved community is resilient and blessed by the "fruits of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law." (Galatians 5:22-23)

Portland Friends Meeting decided to take a year turning inward in order to step outward together. That sounds simple but this discernment has been complex and challenging work. This year we have been held in all our many gathering places by God's sustaining grace. We hear of deep silence as well as spoken ministry that draws us to deeper communion in spaces large and small within our beloved community: meeting for worship, meeting for worship for conduct of business, threshing sessions, faithfulness groups, small ongoing worship gatherings, committee meetings, joining in spiritual support of a member on trial for climate action, intergenerational worship and more.

Discernment on the use of resources has been a searching exercise. While the leading topic has been the use of our financial resources, it has led to profound questions: who are we as a community; what is our shared purpose; in what ways are we shaped by White privilege; in what ways are we shaped by God; and how wide a range of beliefs can we hold and still be one community? Superficial discussion can hide both disunity and unity. There were times when a clear view of our differences made us fear that we might not be able to live in community together. We were grateful to be guided by a discernment steering committee who created threshing sessions throughout the year.

in September, as part of this financial discernment, many of us gathered in person at Friends School of Portland with an outside facilitator. We were invited in the circle to give voice to our own perspective and then to try standing in someone else's. Our final activity showed two deep desires: to care for our neighbors in need, and to care for our community and meeting home. As this year ends we sense a renewed trust that we can do hard things together. While we may differ in our use of language, sense of priorities, or even beliefs, we can still come together with a shared sense of how to use our resources.

When COVID began, our meeting was just beginning to explore with Durham Friends what shape being a sister meeting to Velasco Friends in Cuba might take. This year for the first time as restrictions eased we explored the possibility of members travel to visit with Cuban Friends. The possible expense of supporting such travel was a financial surprise and our discernment on how to use Meeting funds was still very much in process. Nevertheless, a combination of special fundraising and leadings grants supported three Friends as way opened to travel at a later time. This encounter made visible the importance of an arrangement of financial resources with more flexibility to respond to Spirit. We are still discerning what our sister relationship might look like.

What is our experience of COVID teaching us? We are committed to experimentation. Being comfortable with failing is a commitment to being creative rather than being stuck in one place. During the summer months, outdoor worship at Friends School of Portland continued to give us a way to be together and welcome families back. But this is Maine. We began last winter with our practice of separate Zoom and in-

person meetings for worship and, once a month, an All-Meeting Zoom for worship for conduct of business. This fall we returned with new energy to the Meetinghouse. A reenergized Youth Religious Education program has created a cozy corner and a clear welcome message to children in worship as well as youth programming. We have revived our Welcome and Events Committees. Adult Religious Education, which used to create bimonthly First Day morning programs, is now a pair of navigators who help Friends with enthusiasms to offer programs at many times in various formats.

In the past hybrid worship was a not a good fit for us. This fall most Friends shifted to in person worship with masks and we improved our hybrid chops. Now we are worshipping together as a whole community in the hybrid format. We have gratitude for our COVID safety team and our worship tech team for their ongoing support and guidance. We are beginning to ask who is still missing.

The opening of the Equality Community Center in Portland provided an invitation to be listed as a Welcoming, Affirming and Advocating Congregation. Our journey of LGBTQ+ inclusion is one of continuing revelation. In the 1980's the courage of LGBTQ+ members in leadership illuminated the basics of acceptance. In 1991, it took a year of deep discernment to commit to welcoming same-gender couples who wished to marry under the care of the Meeting. Two decades later we supported two members who helped lead the fight to make same gender marriage legal in our state. This year we are more deliberate about our sharing of pronouns in introductions and on our name tags. The Equality Center listing is a renewed call to explore the support of LGBTQ+ members and be more inclusive in our welcome to all. Along with this broad commitment we are working to deepen this opening.

Bills in the Maine legislative session reflected years of effort to recognize the inherent sovereignty of Maine's Indigenous Nations. Our working group on Right Relationship with Indigenous People provided us with timely information to support the Wabanaki in seeking state recognition of their rights to full self-determination, including the right to clean water and the right to be included in federal legislation that benefits other Tribes within the US.

While the year began with a focus on internal concerns as the year ends we are confronted with the dire needs of our neighbors who lack housing. The affordable housing crisis is long-standing but the end of federal funding has local services for the unhoused overwhelmed and families facing winter nights on the streets. Portland Meeting has five years of experience with Family Promise, which brings together congregations of all denominations to provide housing and wrap around services to unhoused families, particularly asylum seekers. After a COVID model of supporting families in apartments we are returning to hosting families in our Meetinghouse. That means three or four families for two weeks four times a year. The current crisis has us asking what more we might be led to do. We have felt clear to add to our contribution to Family Promise and make a sizeable donation to a local immigrant rights coalition. A group of Friends is helping us discern what other actions we might take.

We are thankful so many people have been able to give generously of time and energy this year. But we hear from Nominating, Youth Religious Education and others that many people are maxed out. This was the first year in memory when there wasn't energy to create even a simple candlelight service on Christmas Eve, a much-loved tradition. Some Friends have asked if we have the energy to have support groups for individual ministries. At times we have been hobbled by lack of clarity, unity, or fear, but lightness, humor, and song, and openness to compassion are feeding us.

Our goal is always to seek deeper relationship with one another and the Divine, to be more faithful, more grounded in Spirit. And there is a hope that in our beloved community, our spiritual home, we give one another permission to be ordinary. In this place of unconditional love and forgiveness, we are welcome though we sometimes leave dirty tea cups on the counter, and we are free to walk around in holy socks.

The following message was sent to the Portland Friends Meeting e-group in advance of the March Meeting for Worship for the Conduct of Business

IMPORTANT UPDATES Please Read! We will not have time during Meeting for Business to review these.

Highlights from the Maine Immigrant Rights Coalition (MIRC)

Monthly Zoom Meeting Tuesday February 21, 2023 3-5PM

Alex Carter (she,her) from Maine Equal Justice told us about LD #199 in Maine Legislature which removes barrier to immigrants receiving Maine Care for both asylum seekers and those with green cards that make them ineligible for 5 years.

This failed to pass last year in a bill that did include pregnant women and children under 21. Why do we think it might pass this year?

1. Rachel Talbot Ross, Speaker of the House is supporting it.
2. They are gathering stories from people who are affected at: <https://www.tfaforms.com/496580>
3. Very important that many people attend the public hearing. Watch for date on: <https://legislature.maine.gov/>
4. No strong support in the Senate last year but Quaker Peggy Rotundo is back.

Also hopeful about Immigrants Right to Work Bill sponsored by Susan Collins and Angus King in Senate and Chellie Pingree in House.

Mufalo Chitam (Executive Director of MIRC) spoke about the layoff of 700 people at Abbott which consisted mainly of non-English speaking immigrants. She lamented that there was no media attention given to this and resolves to correct this. Urges us to please speak to this issue whenever it arises. They were employed by a temp agency so there is no severance pay or unemployment and Mufalo feels that they will need at least two jobs to take home what they were making at Abbott. Abbott did sponsor English classes which employees could attend on their day off but as you can imagine they often chose to be with family.

As you know there is a housing crisis in Portland. Madeleine Sautier (also MIRC) suggested we should encourage people to take any opportunity for housing, for example, in Lewiston because once the work permits come in, they will have to leave Portland anyway because rents are so high.

Alex Carter (MEJ see above) also spoke of changes coming to SNAP as they delink from the Public Health Emergency. Some families will see \$100 lower grants and of course this need will fall to the charitable food systems. Important to make sure folks are getting the correct benefit amounts for childcare, over 60, spending more than \$35 a month for medical.

A South Asian Deportation bill introduced in Washington in 2022 would eliminate South Asians from being removed by ICE and make sure that they receive care for Agent Orange.

Brief report re: Financial Contributions Beyond Our Meeting

Several individuals from our PFM community joined an informal session on February 26 to determine where to direct the as-yet unallocated \$6200 approved in the 2023 operating budget for financial gifts beyond our Meeting. The proposed contributions for 2023 were generally supported. Changes are reflected in this month's Treasurer's Report moving \$200 from Friends of Kenya Rising and divided equally to Maine Council of Churches and FWCC Friends World Committee for Consultation.

(Updates continued from p.6)

The informal group recommended further discernment to consider contributions beyond PFM from the annual operating budget in future years starting in 2024. Those interested in participating in this discussion include Andy Grannell, Sue Nelson, Lise Wagner, and Sam Solish.

Portland Friends Meeting as a Welcoming, Affirming & Advocating Organization

A small group met several weeks ago to consider the topic of how our Meeting can live into its Open, Affirming and Advocating intentions. Two decisions came out of the meeting:

1. In March, Fritz Weiss and Becky Steele will put together an online survey for the Meeting to get a sense from Meeting members and attenders what we're doing well, where we can improve, and to solicit ideas for steps we can take as a Meeting.
2. The Meeting will place a Pride flag both in a visible location indoors and outdoors. This will be a prominent display of our Open, Affirming, and Advocating status seems like a clear next step for us.

The task of living into our OAA commitment requires paying ongoing attention to these issues and to reflection periodically on how we are doing as a faith community. This will help to ensure that those who are already a part of us, as well as newcomers, feel at home in this community, no matter their sexual orientation or gender identity. Sometimes that will mean naming unwelcoming patterns or statements in the moment, not just after the fact. This responsibility should not fall only or especially on Queer Friends, but belongs to all of us as individuals and collectively as a body.

There was appreciation for the steps we have already taken, as well as a recognition that we are a work in progress, as in all ways of life.

Fritz will convene a next meeting, probably some time in April, after we have the results of the survey. We will also determine whether to form a more permanent group at that time.

Proposals for Consideration at Meeting for Business - Draft

5 March 2023

The following items are brought for decision at Meeting for Business. The Discernment Steering Committee believes that, with approval of these items, most of the outstanding issues regarding the uses of the Meeting's financial resources will have been addressed, at least in broad terms. That said, significant details remain to be handled—and the path forward will require ongoing discernment regarding specific proposals for shared witness, use of capital reserves, strategies for greening the meetinghouse, and more.

We are confident that the basic approach and the processes we are putting in place will enable the Meeting to respond to Spirit, as we attend to our needs as a community and the many concerns that call to us regarding justice, peace and the survival of our planet. Possible Minutes included below are drafts for consideration, amendment, and, if possible, approval.

1. Process Proposal for Shared Witness Fund *See separate proposal.*

Possible Minute: With reference to the "Proposal for Shared Witness Seasoning Process" (attached), Friends approved the overall approach to discerning whether and how to allocate funds from the Shared Witness Fund and to take any other actions as a community that express Spirit moving among us.

2. Establish Subfunds within the Meeting's Invested Funds

In previous meetings, the overall concept of subfunds was approved and the establishment of the Shared Witness Fund with \$200,000 was approved. The Jones Youth Fund is already segregated.

Capital Reserve Fund: It is proposed to set up a Capital Reserve Fund with an initial amount of \$200,000. This assumes that some portion of funding for HVAC/greening of the meetinghouse would be drawn from this fund, and that additional amounts would be raised for specific projects.

Cemetery Fund: Friends have identified the need to set aside an amount to ensure perpetual care for the cemetery. The chart below shows the creation of that subfund, while leaving the determination of the exact amount to further discussions between the Cemetery Committee and the Financial Stewardship Committee, asking them to bring a recommendation to Meeting for Business at a later time.

Operating Budget Support Fund: After designating amount for the Capital Reserve, Shared Witness, Jones Youth and Cemetery Funds, the remaining balance would be available to support the operating budget at an annual drawdown of 4%.

Possible Minute: Friends approved creating five subfunds within the investment accounts at Friends Fiduciary, including \$200,000 in a Capital Reserve Fund, \$50,000 in the Jones Youth Fund, and \$200,000 previously dedicated to the Shared Witness Fund. The remaining balance will be kept in a general meeting fund for support of the annual budget. From that amount a Cemetery Fund will be established, based on consultations between the Cemetery and Financial Stewardship Committees.

Capital Reserve Fund		Jones Youth Fund	Cemetery Fund	Operating Budget Support Fund	Shared Witness Fund
Initial fund: \$200K		\$50K	Amount TBD	\$475K	Initial fund: \$200K
HVAC	Other capital reserve				
Half of projects funded from gifts, half from invested funds	Save towards expected large future expenses	Supports children + youth programs in the operating budget. . At 4% harvest rate, would generate \$2,000/year to budget	Cemetery Committee and Financial Stewardship to work out appropriate amount to set aside for ongoing maintenance of the cemetery.	+ Support annual operating budget, including, buildings and grounds, donations to Friends organizations, Leading Grants, etc. + Maintain 4% annual "harvesting" cap to sustain this fund. At current value, would generate \$19,000/year	+ Amounts to invest or donate through process TBD. + \$26,000 already committed: MIRC (\$20,000) and Family Promise expenses (\$6,000). Remaining balance of \$174,000.

3. Raise Budget Funds and Replenish Subfunds

The primary goal of annual fundraising among members and attenders is to meet the operating budget. It is proposed that once the amount needed to cover the annual budget is reached, any surplus be divided equally between the Capital Reserve Fund and the Shared Witness Fund to replenish those funds and enable actions in those areas.

Possible Minute: Going forward, donations from members and attenders will be allocated to reaching the amounts envisioned in the operating budget approved by the Meeting. Any surplus will be split evenly between the Capital Reserve Fund and the Shared Witness Fund.

The proposals challenge members and attenders to give more to support the operating budget and to replenish funds expended from any/all of the subfunds. The Financial Stewardship Committee has been giving thought to how we might increase giving in more intentional ways. The co-clerks are also reflecting on information provided by the Co-Treasurer for Donations regarding why people are making decisions to give or

step back from giving. This is something we all need to live into; Friends are invited to offer ideas to FSC or the co-clerks.

4. Review These Arrangements

Possible Minute: The Meeting will review these arrangements regarding use of the Meeting's invested funds during the fall of 2025, with a view towards making adjustments, as needed, for the 2026 budget.

5. Lay Down Discernment Steering Committee

With approval of the items listed above, the Discernment Steering Committee is ready to be laid down.

Possible Minute: Friends approved laying down the Discernment Steering Committee with gratitude for their faithful service.

PROPOSED SHARED WITNESS SEASONING PROCESS - DRAFT

Presented to Meeting for Business March 5, 2023

What is Shared Witness?

Shared witness follows when Spirit leads the Meeting to a collective sense that we must respond together to a call to take action in the world. Such movements of Spirit may reach beyond our Meeting and may involve the Meeting's financial resources. Shared witness is different from responding to a leading by a single individual or small group, although individual leadings may grow into shared witness with time, patience, and wider engagement of Friends. These need not be acts that all individuals in the Meeting might take, or even an issue that every individual in the Meeting might consider important—but they do represent witness that we undertake together.

A "call to shared witness" is more than just accessing money from the Shared Witness Fund, although that is an important consideration that has prompted this process proposal. Shared witness could involve dedicating volunteer time, making a public statement regarding a policy issue, spending or donating money, engaging in direct action, or joining a coalition, among many other possibilities.

Seasoning Process

A call to shared witness will benefit from seasoning, and the process may take time. The purpose of seasoning is to bring the idea from a "still small voice" into a call to action that addresses the concerns, hopes, and spiritual insights of the Meeting as a whole. Seasoning will involve gathering relevant information and speaking to people both within and possibly outside the Meeting.

Seasoning could take many forms, depending on the situation: listening and being a sounding board; suggesting resources, including people who have pertinent knowledge or skills; helping put thoughts into writing; helping lay out realistic timetables; exploring both financial and non-financial elements of this call to shared witness, and so on. The call will likely be shared with the wider Meeting for further discernment. This might happen through called meetings, presentations, Q&A sessions, written proposals, or other forms.

To facilitate this process, the Nominating Committee will identify three people for the Meeting's approval to serve as ongoing Shared Witness Conveners ("the Conveners"). As a group, the Conveners should understand what it means to sense a call to witness and know the spiritual gifts and different points of view in the Meeting.

People sensing a call moving in our Meeting can ask the Conveners to gather people for seasoning the idea: a Shared Witness Seasoning Group ("a Seasoning Group"), which could include one or more of the Conveners. The Conveners will let the Co-Clerks know when they have been contacted by an individual or

group seeking seasoning for a sensed call to shared witness. The intention is to include varied perspectives and skills within each group, so the team is well-balanced. Depending on the type of guidance needed, these skills could include things like organization, tending to details, seeing the big picture, listening, collaborating, being a leader, experience with social and political change, etc. Members of the group would be expected to have experience sensing Spirit's nudges—recognizing, of course, that this can look and sound very different depending on the individual.

Similar to a clearness committee, each Seasoning Group would be available to support the process of moving a call into proposed action(s), guided by Quaker testimonies, which include stewardship, integrity, peace, community, equality, and simplicity.

Key queries to help move from an initial idea or concern to concrete proposed action are included in an addendum to this document. They are intended to clarify the call, its implications, and the supporting logistics needed to carry out the proposed action. After seasoning the call, each Shared Witness Seasoning Group may make recommendations, such as identifying pathways for further seasoning, laying down the call, or other supportive steps, but it will not make decisions regarding the call. **Approval will come only through the discernment of Meeting for Business.**

When there is unity in the Seasoning Group that a call to shared witness is clear for possible action, the Seasoning Group would request to bring the idea forward for consideration at Meeting for Business.

At times when Friends fail to find unity through this seasoning process, Ministry and Counsel Committee and the co-clerks may meet with those initiating a call to consider a different approach or other recourse. Whether brought with growing unity or prompted by the passionate leading of a few, the gathered Meeting in shared worship for the conduct of business must discern the path forward.

Evaluating this Experiment

To promote continued growing and learning, we propose the following:

1. The Conveners will share a report with the Meeting each year in September about the challenges and successes they experienced;
2. Changes in this process might be made at any time by bringing concerns to Meeting for Worship for the Conduct of Business;
3. The Conveners will invite the Meeting to assess this process of seasoning calls to shared witness in September 2025.

Addendum 1: Queries to help season a proposed shared witness

1. How does this call to shared witness embody testimonies that are alive for us as Quakers in this Meeting? How would this call bring us closer to right relationship with our neighbors and the world?
2. Where do we see movement in our Meeting toward this call? How is this call showing up among us with energy, excitement and, at times, a sense of urgency? How might the Meeting community become educated about this concern?
3. If we encounter resistance to this idea during the seasoning process, what is the source of resistance? What might we learn from this resistance?
4. Who are we listening to as we consider this call? What relationships do we have, as a Meeting, with any groups or individuals involved? Are we being guided by the people who will be most impacted?
5. Who will carry out the action—those who are proposing it, another established organization, or others? Are there any risks to those carrying out this call to shared witness, to those who may be receiving funds, and/or to the Meeting?

6. What is the projected timeline for this call to shared witness? How will its progress, challenges, and successes be shared with the Meeting?
7. Does this call include using money from the Shared Witness Fund, as a public witness of our Meeting? How much money is needed for this call? Are there other sources of income for this work? If the funds requested will not go to an established non-profit organization, what banking and accounting procedures will be in place for depositing and disbursing the funds as the project gets underway?

Addendum 2: Questions and Answers about the Proposed Shared Witness Seasoning Process

1. Why not just bring a proposal to Meeting for Business instead of going through a committee?

We are a large Meeting—and it is our Meeting’s experience that prior seasoning of a proposal brought to Meeting for Worship for the Conduct of Business strengthens it. The proposed seasoning process will allow for fuller discernment about spiritual, logistical, and financial aspects before asking the full meeting to consider a proposal.

2. Does it matter if an initial call comes from an individual or a group?

No. However, over time, the call must gain support from the wider Meeting.

3. How is this process different from the work of the Leadings Committee?

The Leadings Committee supports leadings of an individual (or small group of individuals), and the Shared Witness process deals with a call to witness for the gathered body of the Meeting. The Conveners and, in some cases, each ad-hoc Shared Witness Seasoning Group, would hold the responsibility for discerning whether there is a call to shared witness, or if this is an individual’s call.

The Conveners or any of the ad-hoc Shared Witness Seasoning Groups might guide an individual to the Leadings Committee, for example, if it became clear that the idea was arising for an individual or small group rather than a call for shared witness for the whole Meeting. Or, the Leadings Committee might sense a Leadings Grant application had more movement in the Meeting as a shared witness project and could guide individuals to the Conveners as appropriate.

4. Doesn’t this put a lot of decision-making power in the hands of just a few people?

At times the Conveners or Shared Witness Seasoning Group may feel clear that there is not a call to shared witness. In this case, they will provide guidance for those who brought the call for seasoning to find the support they need. In that sense, they exercise decision making, but it is preliminary; people remain free to bring ideas for shared witness to Meeting for Business, regardless of the findings of any Shared Witness Seasoning Group. In any case, the final decision to approve an allocation from the Shared Witness or any other shared action comes from the Meeting as a whole.

Living Faith Gathering, April 1 9a - 4p

The Living Faith gathering is an opportunity for Friends new and old (and the Quaker-curious) to get to know one another, hold multigenerational worship together, participate in interactive workshops, eat tasty food, share the different ways we experience and live our faith, and build community. Age-appropriate youth programming and childcare will be available, in addition to some parts of Living Faith programming being intergenerational, like worship. Details here: <https://nevnm.org/events-calendar/2023/04/living-faith>



**NEW ENGLAND
YEARLY MEETING**
OF FRIENDS
QUAKERS

All Maine Gathering 2023

The All Maine Gathering (our first since the pandemic) will be held on Saturday, May 6 from 9-4 at the South China Community Church (formerly the South China Meetinghouse, home meeting of Rufus Jones). Our presenter will be Quaker activist and teacher, George Lakey, whose most recent book is "Dancing With History". <https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/711533/dancing-with-history-by-george-lakey/>

Our theme is "Our Quaker Stories".

We are hoping to be able to invite interested Friends to gather Friday evening for a retreat experience.

All ages are welcome, but we ask that those under 16 pre-register by contacting durham@neym.org.

The church is located at 246 Village St., South China (parallel to Route 202) about an hour and a half from Portland.

Since we in Falmouth Quarter are hosting this event, we ask that you bring something to contribute to our pot luck lunch. For more information, you can contact us at the same durham@neym.org with questions.

We look forward to seeing you there! <https://neym.org/events-calendar/2023/05/all-maine-gathering>

Leslie Manning for the planning committee

Portland Friends Meeting Email Lists

Our Meeting has two email lists, also sometimes referred to as "e-groups" or "Google groups."

- 1) **Life of the Meeting:** Announcements about Meeting for Worship, committee work, Quaker business or events, and gatherings for the Portland Friends Meeting community. To send an announcement to this list, email: .
- 2) **PFM Wider Community:** Everything else!
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.

Daily Weekday Silent Worship:

This is an opportunity for silent worship. The group meets for thirty minutes each Monday through Friday at 10:30 AM. All are welcome.

The zoom link is: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88630165246?pwd=QXhMYWozZnRteWFsWmdJTUZqamIUUT09>



Adam Swanson

"Goldrush-Saloon Piano Play'n!"

Friday, March 31
@ 7:00 pm

Woodfords Church
202 Woodford St.

4 time World Champion:
Olde-Tyme Piano-Playing
Competition

Adam was a hit at both
Carnegie Hall and
The Kennedy Center

" Don't miss him... He's
a Wizard at the Keys ! "

Free Admission, with Donations to Benefit Greater Portland Family Promise

Annual Friends School Fundraising Auction



You are invited to the Annual Friends School Fundraising Auction! We will once again have an **online auction beginning Friday, May 5**. We will also hold a **celebration at FSP on Saturday, May 13**. This will include food, music, kids' activities, and auction item pick-up.



The **online auction** will be "open" for 7 days, and will be full of wonderful, creative items to bid on. You will be able to invite family and friends near and far to bid.

The auction is Friend School of Portland's most important fundraising event. Proceeds go directly to FSP's Annual Fund, which supports the most essential aspects of FSP - supplements tuition aid and supports our amazing teachers' salaries and classroom activities. Last year, we had a successful auction because of all the generous donations of items and services.

We hope that you will consider making a donation towards to auction this year!

We are beginning to collect auction items for this year's event! The deadline for donation items is Wednesday, April 26! Get the creative juices flowing! Think of a way you love to spend your time, build community and being kind to others - is it sitting around a campfire? Donate a professionally built stone fire pit. Is it taking time to relax with family? Donate a week stay at a cabin. Is it enjoying delicious homemade food? Donate a homemade pie or cake! Is it spending time in nature learning new things? Donate a plant ID or mushroom walk. Is it making art? Donate a photograph, watercolor, piece of art made by you.

You can fill out an [online donation form here](https://forms.gle/XkzrkFM38kjPtZdp7). <link: <https://forms.gle/XkzrkFM38kjPtZdp7> >

Learn more about this year's auction on the Friends School of Portland website here. <link: <https://www.friendsschoolportland.org/annual-auction> >

If delivering in person, please bring donations to the main office, or direct any questions to the Development Coordinator, Brooke Burkett at brooke@friendsschoolportland.org or 207-558-6214.

Portland Friends Meeting
1837 Forest Ave
Portland, ME 04103

Address Service Requested

Next newsletter deadline:
Wednesday, April 5, 11:54pm

submissions: pfmnewsletter@grantwinners.net

