

# Portland Friends Meeting Newsletter

Sixth Month 2023

**Meeting for Worship:** 10:45a Sundays (childcare available)



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I am an acorn, the package, the seed.

God is within me and God is the tree.

I am unfolding the way I should be.

Carved in the palm of God's hand.

Carved in the palm of God's hand.

—Carol Johnson, "[I Am an Acorn](#),"

## Calendar

**June 9:** 7p Friends School of Portland graduation, Specially Called Meeting for Worship

**June 11:** 10:45a Meeting for Worship\* in-person at the Meetinghouse, together (hybrid) with Members and Attenders via Zoom.

**June 18:** 10:45a Meeting for Worship\* at the Friends School of Portland and separately on Zoom;

**July 23:** Meeting for Worship for the Conduct of Business

**September 3:** Last summer hours/locations Sunday

### Every Month

**Every Sunday:** 10:45a Meeting for Worship\* at the Friends School of Portland (beginning 6/18) and separately on Zoom;

**Every Wednesday:** 7p Young Adult Friends Mid-Week Worship  
email [yaf@portlandfriendsmeeting.org](mailto: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

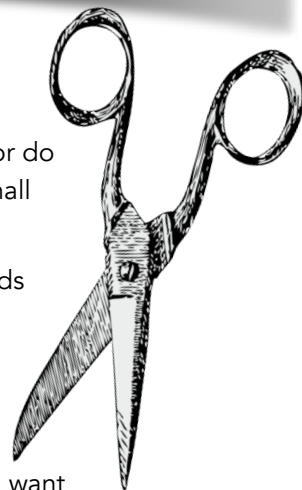
## Crafty Friends Wanted

Do you sew, carve, knit, paint, throw pots, quilt, weave, or do woodwork? If so, would you be interested in creating small items for a sale?

The sale will be in November held at the Windham Friends Church. The sale is the major fundraiser for Windham Friends

A small group meets Tuesday mornings from 10:00 to 12:00 at the Windham Friends meeting house to work on crafts and plans for the sale. If you are interested and want more information call Dorothy Grannell at 207-233-6587 to make a connection.

Make your crafty talents assist our neighboring Falmouth Quarter Friends.



**Portland Friends Meeting**  
**Minutes of Meeting for Worship for the Conduct of Business June 4, 2023**

Rob Levin, Co-Clerk   David N. Hingston recording

Members and attenders of Portland Friends Meeting gathered in worship at 10:20 am. Some fifty Friends gathered, in person at the Meeting House and remotely via Zoom. Following a period of silent worship, Co-Clerk Rob Levin welcomed everyone and expressed thanks to David Hingston for Recording, to Leslie Fairchild, Sarah Cushman, and Stan Scott for holding the Meeting in the Light, and to Luke Hankins and Heather Denkmire for technical support.

Rob opened the Meeting by noting the advance materials (Rob's Letter to PFM Community, Attachment 1, and Excerpt from 'Members One of Another', Attachment 2), and stated that this Meeting has a loose agenda and is planned as a time for worshipful sharing regarding the state of Portland Friends Meeting. He asked Friends to bring their minds, hearts, and spirits, with the recognition that there may well be moments of discomfort. Rob made note of Scott Peck's four stages of community: pseudo-community, chaos, emptiness, and true community, and proposed that in recent years, for the most part, we have toggled back and forth between pseudo-community and chaos. He added that the goal today is not to solve things or fix each other. The major purpose of today's gathering is to empty ourselves, to let go of barriers to communication. Rob then invited Friends to consider the following query: What has been my experience in Portland Friends Meeting over the last few years?

Over the next two hours, Friends offered wide-ranging and heartfelt responses to that query. Many of us shared experiences of pain and regret during the Meeting. We made ourselves vulnerable by bearing our wounds. There were indeed moments of profound discomfort. And yet, we also felt a growing sense of grace and love throughout this time—love for each other, and God's love for us. By the end of the Meeting, many of us felt awed by what we had just experienced together. Many felt a deeper sense of connection, even amidst our differences. There was the notion that something quite special and beautiful had just occurred, even if we couldn't put exact words to it. In that respect, these minutes will inevitably come up short in conveying the full richness of the Meeting and the sense that we cherish this community and want it to be a welcoming and nourishing place for all.

Like the Meeting itself, these minutes are a different kind of record of what transpired. The following lists a number of the major themes that emerged. After each theme are listed, in no particular order, several of the joys and concerns regarding the theme that Friends brought forward. Though not exact quotes, some of these joys and concerns are written in the first person for clarity.

**Theme 1: The Covid pandemic has been a tumultuous and painful period in the life of the Meeting for a number of years. Its repercussions are still being felt.**

- I have felt less connected to the Meeting through the years of the pandemic. Zoom has helped, but it's not the same.
- Throughout the pandemic Zoom has connected us without providing us with a way to engage in the Meeting.
- It has been especially hard to get to know newcomers during Covid, and some newcomers are still feeling like they are on the margins of the community.
- People had many different ways of coping with Covid. All the uncertainty bred judgement and insecurity.
- Covid hit everyone very hard. Grief is a very hard thing, and we're still in the midst of grief and loss.
- We have lost touch with many of the children in our Meeting, and especially the teens.
- I feel joy and gratitude for the Meeting and for the Zoom capability, and for the companionship that I have felt in this difficult time.

**Theme 2: Many Friends have felt a powerful sense of tension in recent Meetings for Business and other Friends' gatherings. This tension has been painful for many of us, and we have responded in different ways, including avoidance, denial, and resentment. Some expressed a longing for a warmer, more peaceful community. Others acknowledged that conflict is a part of life and that our Meeting has weathered periods of difficulty in the past, and we will come out the other side of the present conflicts.**

- I am afraid of conflict and have been made very uncomfortable by the sense of tension I have felt in Meeting. It makes me sad.
- The Meeting has always been a warm, intimate, calm, loving experience for me; I have always looked forward to and cherished the silence we share together. But recently I have been drifting away. There is a difference between challenge—"What are we going to do about it?"—and rancor, which is a tone or taste. There is so much rancor

(Minutes continued from p.2)

everywhere outside the Meeting, and if I continue to feel it here I will continue to drift away. My overall feeling is one of sadness.

- I have been hiding from this Meeting for two years—it has not been a safe place for me during a period of grieving over the loss of a loved one.

**Theme 3: Many are grateful for young Friends' presence in and contributions to the Meeting. At the same time, many young Friends have felt unknown and unheard in the Meeting.**

- I am thankful for the intensity of energy that young Friends have brought to their concern for Indigenous People's rights and land.
- I have particularly appreciated the messages of young Friends. I welcome their voices and they are part of my own growth.
- I am thankful for new Friends, who have brought fresh growth and dialogue to the Meeting.
- Families have faced difficulties as Meeting times have changed and gotten later in the morning.
- Young Friends' and families' concerns such as reparations and challenges such as child support have been going unheeded or unacknowledged.
- I am grateful for the challenge of reparations. Individuals have been a lifeline for me as I grapple with it and my other "stealth challenges."
- I sometimes feel that we're on different planets. There have been some little connections—but not enough.
- Challenges to our ways of being have not come only from young Friends; some elders among us have also voiced concerns.

**Theme 4: Many Friends have been sustained by and immensely grateful for small groups such as midweek and daily opportunities for worship, and by their individual relationships with supporting Friends.**

- Daily morning worship has provided me with an unexpected experience of personal connection.
- Small groups and midweek worship have saved me and provided me with much-needed love and fellowship. But I feel a lack of unity and unconditional love in the Meeting as a whole.
- Friends are each a part of many different circles, large and small. These circles overlap and provide support for each other and for individuals within them.
- Small groups help to deepen our understanding of what can be done. Small groups help to clarify "What can I do?" and "What can the Meeting do?"
- Speak to Friends one-to-one—don't let them drift away.

**Theme 5: Friends' experiences with the Meeting, with the pandemic, and with the world at large have varied greatly over the last several years. Yet nearly all agree that this period of time has been challenging and exhausting.**

- We speak so many languages; we're all at different places; all are a part of God.
- In these times, every day is a challenge. The pandemic has been a time of chaos and challenge, as supportive families have disappeared, as have Friends' faces and hugs. Reparations, politics, climate change—all are exhausting questions and require hard work.
- Multiple anxieties—Covid anxiety, social anxiety, conflict anxiety—have made it difficult to show up week after week.
- Friends have been in pain as the Meeting's comfort, safety and silence have been threatened. Friends have also been disappointed that we live in such discomfort. The discomfort has led to rancor and judgement—a sense that "We're not doing it right."
- The challenge for all of us is to go deeper to find common ground—and a balance between the Meeting as a refuge and safe space and the Meeting as a place to confront uncomfortable truths and live with discomfort as we search together for the way forward in responding to God's call.
- The depth of our spirituality exists at different levels. We can all act differently, but the Meeting is a place we can all come back to, to share our experiences.
- We have much to be thankful for; the challenges have been both wonderful and hard. People have tried hard to make it work and to be supportive of each other.

**Theme 6: Our path forward will require risk-taking, vulnerability, listening, and suspension of judgement and ego—and unconditional love and transformational love— both individually and collectively.**

- May we speak and listen to that of God. When we hear something new or challenging, let us ask, "Tell me more!" Let us keep asking, "Where is God in that person?" and set our egos aside. May we lay aside preconceptions and listen to our different languages.
- How do we challenge each other without judging each other? How do we work on issues together, without judging? How do we welcome the good trouble? While some have felt judged, others express disappointment that we are not achieving the full promise of Quakerism.
- I realize that I am showing up as a challenging voice in the Meeting, and it makes me sad to learn that others don't always hear the unconditional love that sits beneath that challenge.
- How can we get away from labeling and stereotyping each other? Let us enjoy our differences, learn from them. We are so much more interesting than the categories we belong to.
- Many people in the Meeting are doing things in their work or volunteer lives that are grounded in Quakerism, and these actions are not always visible in the Meeting. So collectively we are doing quite a lot, even when the Meeting as a whole hasn't been active or taken a stand on something or other.
- Love first, then challenge.
- I've had some sorrows and failures in my life, and I've always experience God as a fresh start. We are having a fresh start right now. Let's not waste it! I'm laying down my judgements—"I want to be ready...when joy comes back to me."
- I'm not so sure about the distinction between unconditional love and transformational love. Unconditional love is the only kind of love that can be transformational. Unconditional love and acceptance will make change. We can't say "I love you and you should change in this particular way." Our only task is to find love and invite others to join us in that space.
- I've learned a lot today about thinking about categories in people. I feel convicted. I want your help going deeper, where the two types of love are one and where everyone feels loved and I can really listen.
- I want to get better at showing up with love and sharing it.

**Theme 7: The world needs Quakers. And we need each other. And we need Portland Friends Meeting.**

- I have rarely talked about my experience in the Holocaust, but I have recently spoken about it to schoolchildren because I want people everywhere to know that it did happen. I have always been grateful to Quakers in England who provided me and my twin brother with schooling and saved our lives. I gave back by becoming a visiting nurse. I remain grateful for living and for being able to believe in life.
- This Meeting has pulled me out of the gutter many times in my life.
- The past few years have been very difficult for me. I lost my husband just before the pandemic, and this Meeting has been a touchstone for me. I need you. I am heartened by this Meeting.
- This Meeting has shown up for me in so many ways. Relationships don't go away because there's a conflict. I need this Meeting, where we can bring our vulnerabilities and our gifts.
- I'm not sure what would have happened to me if I hadn't found Portland Friends Meeting over the past few years. I have come to cherish the relationships I've made through this Meeting.
- To paraphrase the parable, what if we are each the messiah at one time or another, in our relationships with one another?
- Even though it's hard at times, I keep coming back to this Meeting to experience God, and to get better at this thing we call love. I want to keep showing up, when times are hard and when times are great.

**CLOSING WORSHIP**

Bringing the Meeting to a close, Rob thanked Friends for being vulnerable. He asked Friends who have been thinking about drifting away—"Please stay—we need you! Don't give up on us." Noting that we have more work to do, Rob posed a query for us to consider over the summer: *What have I been holding in? Might I be feeling led to share something on my heart with a particular person in our Meeting?*

As the Meeting settled into silence, one Friend stated, "Today I keep seeing earth, roots, tendrils, seedlings," after which Friends broke into song with the round, "I am an Acorn."

The Meeting then rose, at 12:30 pm, with some fifty Friends present.

Dear Portland Friends,

As my clerkship term comes to an end, I've been taking stock of this moment on a personal level and a community level. I'm feeling led to share some parting reflections. Please excuse the length of this message, but I did want to cover some tender issues, and I'm hoping it will help us prepare for more sharing at this Sunday's Meeting for Worship for the Conduct of Business.

Serving as Co-Clerk has been one of the most spiritually meaningful experiences of my life. I have learned so much, and the lessons are still unfolding. I love our Meeting fiercely, now more than ever. I am definitely ready for my term to conclude, but I am so thankful to have had this opportunity. I often leave Meeting for Worship in awe of the spiritual depth of this community.

And yet... we appear to be an unsettled Meeting. My hope, perhaps a naïve one, was that after the financial discernment process came to an end, the various conflicts in our Meeting would recede, at least for a time. I was anticipating and hoping to help cultivate a period of less conflict, and more of a sense of joyfulness and togetherness. Based on what I've heard and seen of late, that does not seem to be happening. The last couple of Meetings for Business have had their usual level of tension. The feedback from the survey that followed the discernment process contained a number of concerns and regrets. Attenders of the recent *Members One of Another* zoom series have expressed varying levels of disappointment with the condition of our Meeting. And Peter and I have received other notes of disillusionment, including from a few who have been avoiding Meeting for Business due to the underlying tension. All of which is to say, we are unsettled. Or perhaps that's a bit of a euphemism. Another word that has come to me over the past couple years is "fractious." Put yet another way, we seem easily irritated, quick to judge and find fault.

One of the reasons I felt led to become a Co-Clerk was because I saw certain conflicts budding in the Meeting, and I thought that maybe I could play a role in helping to address them. Two years later, as these conflicts continue to fester, I am departing with a sense of having been largely ineffective. Often at the end of a frustrating Meeting for Business I will wish that I could have a do-over, a chance to try again. In some ways I have that wish for a do-over for the entire Co-Clerk term. (Although I am by no means suggesting I want another two years in this role! 😊)

What exactly are the nature of our conflicts? Sometimes I think I understand them. At other times I feel more confused than ever. And talking to various people in the Meeting, I'll get very different answers as to what's going on. What follows is my best attempt to articulate what I'm seeing and hearing.

Broadly speaking, we are arranged along a spectrum of those of us seeking various kinds of change in our Meeting, and those of us who feel more comfortable with the Meeting's present customs and practices. That is of course a simplification, but it feels useful as a general framing, and hopefully one that doesn't seem unfair or biased to anyone along that spectrum. To a certain extent, all Meetings since the dawn of Quakerism have faced this general tension. But the tension in PFM seems to have ramped up appreciably over the past five years or so, and seems as acute as ever here in June 2023.

If the change spectrum is a useful framing for the substance of our disagreements, I also see some process dynamics at play. Those of us seeking change are frustrated that our community is holding onto longstanding ways of doing things, simply because that's how we've always done them, and out of a generalized fear of change. Meanwhile, those of us who are more comfortable with our longstanding patterns feel judged and scolded that we're not doing it right, that we're not being sufficiently faithful. In response to this perceived self-righteousness, we often shut down or turn away, and we become less open to calls for change.

Along these lines, I'd like to share an "aha moment" that might offer some context for our present condition as Meeting. At a recent *Members One of Another* session, we were reading and reflecting on two different kinds of God's love: unconditional love and transformational love. Thomas Gates writes how each kind of love complements and is

dependent on the other. A God who offers only unconditional love would lead to a bland and complacent spiritual existence. A God who invites us to be transformed, but without a foundation of unconditional love, would be hard to connect with and respond to. It occurred to me that the same dynamic might be at play in our Meeting, in how we love each other. As with God's love, we need both kinds of love from each other. When one of us rises and urges us to consider doing something differently, how can they also share the unconditional love beneath that invitation?

Otherwise, I fear we retreat into defensiveness and cannot listen with open ears. Likewise, many of us are proud of our Meeting, and rightfully so. But may we also be open to the possibility of continuing transformation, of doing things differently. How can we offer and receive both kinds of love in our Meeting?

Much of what we are experiencing is not unique to us. I do believe in a zeitgeist, and I think our current period in time is subject to many of the same conflicts, pressures, and passions. The pandemic and our adaptations to it have challenged our minds and hearts and spirits in all sorts of ways, both known and unknown. The hunger for social justice, especially in the wake of George Floyd's murder and the influx of asylum seekers, has created a sense of urgency among many of us. The Trump years, the ongoing threats to our democracy, and climate change, have rubbed us raw. Our society as a whole, and liberal institutions in particular, are struggling in the face of these many challenges. We are not alone in this state of tenderness and vulnerability.

Ironically, the unaddressed conflicts in our spiritual body are all the more painful because, in the face of these outside forces, we hunger for a healthy community now more than ever. Another reason I felt drawn to serve as Co-Clerk was to help our Meeting remain a vibrant community. The trajectory of our national democracy is in decline, and nonviolent norms are under threat. Not to be a doomsayer, but it's possible that we will face even more difficult trials ahead as a society. These calamitous times cry out for a clear Quaker presence in general, and a healthy Portland Friends Meeting to support us and others on the local level. One of my all-time favorite quotes, by M. Scott Peck, seems more apropos than ever: "In community lies the salvation of the world." What if that is true of our community, Portland Friends Meeting?

One critique I have heard in recent weeks is that our Meeting has shied away from conflict, has swept it under the rug. Yet others lament that there is too much overt conflict. Perhaps it's a bit of both – we avoid directly naming and dealing with the conflict, yet it still shows up in unhealthy ways. I think there might be some truth to this on a personal level. I am inclined towards the "walking cheerfully over the Earth" kind of Quakerism, and although I have other modalities, I default towards lightness in my clerking style. Sometimes that means I have overlooked or brushed past certain expressions of conflict. Or I have been reluctant to go deeper, for fear of an open breach in the middle of a Meeting for Business. I'm still trying to sort all of this out in my heart and mind, but perhaps if I did have the do-over I might have urged us to go deeper into these conflicts from the beginning. I suppose I kept thinking that if we could just get past this or that issue (discernment about the meeting's finances, whether and how to financially support the Cuba mission trips, nurturing ministries, etc.), we might round a bend into a period of easier communication. Or not the absence of conflict, but healthier conflict.

During my term as Co-Clerk, I was truly blessed to overlap with two dedicated, talented, and generous partners in Lyn and Peter. Together, we have tried all sorts of ways to address the conflicts in PFM. Sometimes we met with individuals or groups behind the scenes, in an attempt to listen better and occasionally offer some eldery perspectives as well. We have tried various tweaks and experiments with Meeting for Business, including the current switcheroo format. We were actively engaged in the financial discernment process, for better or worse. So far, nothing has seemed to help. Which brings me to this letter.

This letter started out in a somewhat different form, and was addressed to Ministry and Counsel. I didn't think its message was intended for the full Meeting. But the letter led to a heartfelt worship sharing at our most recent M&C meeting. We spent over an hour in deep and grounded discernment and listening. To be sure, there were difficult moments, and the conflicts I tried to identify above were right there in the room with us. But at the same time, there was a general sense of relief and appreciation that we were naming these longstanding but unspoken tensions.

After that experience, I feel led to share this updated version with the entire body. And I am hopeful that we can have a similar airing and naming of tensions, regrets, and yearnings at this Sunday's Meeting for Business. I am also apprehensive about this process, for the same reasons I've been hesitant to openly discuss our conflicts for the past couple years. I worry about ratcheting up the tension, rather than easing it. I worry that my clerking skills will not meet the moment. I worry about our anger, that we might express it in such a way that rather than start to heal, our wounds grow deeper.

With these worries laid bare, I ask that we take the risk together on Sunday. I hope that we can share from the heart and listen deeply. I hope that we can be honest and vulnerable with each other. I hope that we can create a worshipful space where we can start to name our tensions, and not jump right to fix-it mode. More than anything else, I hope that we can love each other, both unconditionally and transformationally.

Below are some queries for entering the worship sharing space. Please reflect on whatever you find useful, and leave aside those that are not.

If you've gotten this far, thank you for taking the time to read this, and I look forward to being together on Sunday.

With love,

Rob

***Some queries for worship sharing:***

1. What is my perception and understanding of the underlying conflict in our Meeting?
2. How is God/Spirit nudging *me as a spiritual being* to grow through this conflict? How is God/Spirit nudging *our Meeting* to grow as a spiritual body through this conflict?
3. What has been my experience of *unconditional love* in our Meeting? What has been my experience of *transformational love* in our Meeting?
4. Where do I see how I might grow in offering or receiving unconditional love? Where do I see how I might grow in offering or receiving transformational love?
5. What have I been holding in? Might I be feeling led to share something on my heart with a particular person in our Meeting?
6. What am I feeling led to share with our Meeting as a whole?
7. Can I think of other queries that might help our Meeting engage with this conflict?

**Attachment 2: Excerpt from "Members One of Another"**

EXCERPT FROM "MEMBERS ONE OF ANOTHER" THE DYNAMICS OF MEMBERSHIP IN QUAKER MEETING  
By Thomas Gates, Pendle Hill Pamphlet 371

"For as in one body we have many members,  
and not all members have the same function,  
so we who are many are one body in Christ,  
and individually we are members one of another."

-Romans 12: 4-5 (NRSV)

As we enter into this stage of transformation, there is often an air of challenge, discomfort, and uncertainty. The individual is being challenged by God to change and grow beyond previous limits. The meeting is challenging the individual to be true to his or her leading, even at a cost.

And the meeting itself is being challenged to make room for the Spirit, to be willing to change in response to the genuine leadings of its members. All of this can be difficult, even painful.

It is also in marked contrast to the earlier stage of acceptance and belonging. Although this contrast may seem stark, it

is fundamentally important, because it is rooted in our basic understanding of God. Challenge and transformation are central to the process of membership, precisely because they are central to our understanding of how God acts in our lives.

To fully comprehend this, we need to understand how love (both God's love for us and our love for one another) must include both acceptance and challenge. In what is not a bad summary of the entire New Testament, John the Evangelist says, "We love, because God first loved us." (1 John 4:19).

Love is not something we grudgingly give in an effort to live up to some external commandment. Rather, love is a response, a free and grateful response to the experience of having been loved. We are able to keep Jesus' commandment to love one another only to the extent that we have first experienced the grace of God's love toward us. This experience of having been loved by God is primary; everything else follows.

If this is true, then the next question is: How is it that we experience God's love in our lives? When I try to answer that question from my own experience, I can distinguish two facets, two different but complementary aspects of God's love for me.

The first is the experience of unconditional acceptance, the conviction that no matter who I am or what I've done (or not done), I am somebody in God's eyes. In theological terms, this is grace: love that is unwarranted and undeserved, and yet unconditional, not dependent on anything I do. In terms of the Quaker image of the Light, we can think of this facet of God's love as sitting in the warm glow of a sunset and feeling everything is right with the world. In terms of human love, we can compare it to parents' love of their newborn infant: adoring love that is unconditional, not dependent on any particular action or trait on the part of the child, but simply rejoicing in the child's existence.

If this were all there is to God's love, then our spiritual lives would eventually become bland and complacent. But I experience another facet of God's love for me, not different from or in opposition to the first, but complementing it. This is a love that is never quite satisfied with the way we are, but always inviting and encouraging us to become what we are meant to be.

It is not just a here-and-now acceptance, but a leading toward the future. It is a love that challenges us, leads us, and transforms us.

In terms of the image of the Light, it is not the warm glow of the sunset, but a beacon that searches us out, shows us the way, and, at times, makes us uncomfortable enough that we may long to return to the darkness. In terms of human love, it is more like the love of parents for a toddler: love that by its constancy, firmness, and patience transforms a self-centered being that knows only its own physical needs into a social person capable of sharing toys, using a fork, and speaking in sentences.

In my experience, these two facets of God's love are both necessary to the spiritual life, complementing each other as they become intertwined in a tapestry of intricate detail. When I feel only God's unconditional acceptance, grace begins to degenerate into complacency, even arrogance, until God rescues me from my smugness by once again humbling me and challenging me to new growth and maturity.

And when too many challenges begin to overwhelm me, or I begin to fall into the trap of believing I must somehow earn God's love, then grace reasserts itself, usually with some experience that reminds me that I am not in control, returning me once again to the joy of being grounded in God's unconditional love. We need to recognize and experience both aspects of God's love in our lives: both the comforting love of unconditional acceptance and the second love, the uncomfortable love that challenges us and transforms us.

This second love is a major theme of the Biblical witness: it calls Abraham to leave his father's home and go to a strange land; it leads Moses and the Israelites out of bondage and into the Promised Land; it inspires the disciples to leave their boats and follow Jesus; and it calls forth Lazarus from death into new life.

What is true of God's love for us is also true of our love for one another, in the context of the spiritual community that is Quaker meeting. We come together in community so that we can begin to reflect God's love back into the world and to each other. We need a vision of community that allows not just for loving acceptance, but also for loving challenge, growth, and transformation.



Just as in our individual spiritual lives the two facets of God's love complement one another, so too in our community life both kinds of love are necessary.

This goes to the very heart of why we gather in community in the first place. We all need to belong to a group in which we can feel acceptance and support, and that is a very valid reason why we choose to be together.

But there is another reason that God calls us into community: we are people in need of transformation, and community is the place of that transformation.

At its best, a Quaker Meeting is not just a collection of individual seekers, but a community of faith, a covenant community, knit together by our common seeking of God.

We are like spokes on a wheel: as we draw closer to our center in God, we also draw closer to each other. And as Douglas Steere has reminded us, "to come near to God is to change."

### 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=QXhMYWozZnRteWFsWmdJTUZqamlUUT09>

*Words of Isaac Pennington:  
"Our life is love and  
peace and tenderness;  
bearing with one  
another, and forgiving  
one another, and not  
laying accusations one  
against another; but  
praying one for another;  
and helping one another  
up with a tender hand."*

**FALMOUTH QUARTERLY MEETING**

**June 10-11**

**Family Campout**

**Beach Kayak Campfire Friends!**

**710 BAY POINT ROAD  
GEORGETOWN, MAINE  
COME ANYTIME!**

**SATURDAY**  
NOON- PICNIC  
2PM- FQM  
4-6PM- PLAYTIME  
6PM- QUAKER FEAST  
8PM CAMPFIRE  
CAMP OVERNIGHT

**SUNDAY**  
9AM- POTLUCK BREAKFAST  
10:30- MEETING FOR WORSHIP  
NOON- PICNIC  
1-5PM- PLAYTIME!

FMI- ROSSVALL.WEISS@GMAIL.COM. OR WENDY.SCHLOTTERBECK@GMAIL.COM

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Jon Watts, the Friend who started "Quaker Speak", has launched his new project: **"Thee Quaker Project"**. The second episode was released this week and is described below. Dorothy shared her excitement at the rise of meeting after the first episode. I am on Jon's board. Both Dorothy and I encourage each of us to subscribe and share widely.

Episode 2: <https://quakerpodcast.com/george-fox-and-the-birth-of-quakerism/>

"For Episode 2, we're going all the way back to the beginnings of Quakerism.

Join us on a journey to explore the life of George Fox and how his spiritual restlessness led him on a tireless pursuit of God and truth...and we'll ask if his story is relevant to Friends today."

Audio on youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/@quakerpodcast>



### Graduation at Friends School of Portland

This year marks a milestone, Friends School of Portland graduates its 100th student! Join us on **Friday, June 9th** as we celebrate the graduation of our eighth-grade students. At **7:00 pm** – we will hold a Specially-Called Meeting for Commencement, followed by simple refreshments.

Margaret Wentworth's memorial meeting will be held on June 25th at Durham Meeting after Sunday Worship. Durham's Sunday worship is from 10:25 - 11:30.



### Upcoming Open House at Friends School of Portland

Join us for a special Open House on Tuesday, June 13 from 4-5 pm.

Prospective students and their families will have a chance to explore beloved spaces on campus with 3-4 Class Teacher, Rachel. Families are invited to join us at 4 pm for a scavenger hunt, tour, and chat. This afternoon is geared towards prospective students entering third grade, but all are welcome.

Learn more and sign up to attend: <https://www.friendsschoolportland.org/admission-events>

### 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: [pfm-life-of-the-meeting@googlegroups.com](mailto:pfm-life-of-the-meeting@googlegroups.com).
- 2) **PFM Wider Community:** Everything else! To send an announcement to this list, email: [pfm-wider-community@googlegroups.com](mailto:pfm-wider-community@googlegroups.com).

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

## **Fritz Weiss's Annual Report from the Portland Area Multi-Faith Group**

I participate in the multi-Faith group of Portland as a Public Friend, endorsed by PFM. This endorsement includes the responsibility to report to the meeting annually.

The multi-Faith Group is an informal gathering of faith leaders from spiritual communities in and around Portland. The group formed seven years ago as individual faith leaders recognized the need for spiritual leaders and spiritual communities to support each other and to be clear about our Truth in the face of the challenges facing us in these times. The group includes mainline Christian Churches, Jewish congregations, the Buddhist community, the Bahai community and individuals in chaplaincy service. I am grateful that Portland Friends have supported my involvement.

It is a privilege to gather with individuals who share a vocation to their faithful work. Consistently this group has provided mutual support and encouragement as congregations have struggled with concerns specific to each congregation and with concerns shared across communities. For the past three years, much of the focus has been on the multitude of challenges for faith communities during the pandemic. We have also supported shared concerns for the climate crises, for welcoming new Mainers, for being open and affirming congregations, for reproductive justice, for supporting self-determination of the Maine tribes and for supporting families in our communities.

During the past year, our involvement has impacted Portland Friends Meeting in a number of ways including:

- Our participation in the ceremony in May dedicating a plaque and a tree at Gilson Farm as a memorial to those in Maine who died from Covid or had a close relation die.
- Our participation in the PRIDE parade last year was encouraged by other faith communities participation. Our delegation participated in the parade piggy backing onto the UU's parade permit.
- A number of members from PFM attended a presentation by Dustin Ward sponsored by the Maine Council of Churches and promoted by the multi-faith group titled "Saying Peace, Peace but there is no Peace, how "civility" risks supporting White Supremacy".
- The decision to list the meeting with the Equality Center of Maine as an "Open Affirming and Advocating" congregation was in response to an invitation through the multi-faith group in March of last year.
- When Hope Gateway church was considering returning to in-person worship they gathered a consultation group through the multi-faith group from a variety of congregations to help them make decisions. Members of PFM participated.
- Three members of PFM attended a program on radical inclusion "Beyond the Rainbow Flag" at St. Ansgar's Lutheran Church.
- A number of Friends from PFM attended the Equality Center's block party and grand opening in October 2022.
- The urgent concern about sheltering asylum seekers in the Portland Area was brought to PFM through the multi-Faith group – specifically by Trinity Episcopal - in November 2022. PFM signed onto a letter to Janet Mills sponsored by the multi-faith group. Our renewed commitment and involvement with the Maine Immigrants Rights Coalition is a direct result of this concern. As a meeting our involvement has continued both in supporting Family Promise, supporting the State Street Shelter, involvement in The Westbrook community response to families at risk in Westbrook, and gathering supplies for families moving into the Avesta development in South Portland.
- Many Friends from PFM attended the annual reading of the Letter from the Birmingham Jail on MLK day in the "Called to Listen" event sponsored by the Multi-faith group.

Although it did not involve others from the meeting, I also want to share that I participated in washing and caring for the feet of residents at Florence House with a number of clergy on Maundy Thursday of Holy Week. This was a bit outside my comfort zone, and it was a very tender and gathered time.

Thank you for continuing to support my involvement, and peace.

Fritz Weiss  
5-9-2023



# Annual Giving to Portland Friends Meeting

## WHY GIVE?

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Financial contributions to our meeting are vital to sustaining us as a community that supports our spiritual journeys, offers a safe and welcoming environment, provides a range of programming and outreach, and joins together in living witness to our Quaker testimonies. As we explore ways in which we can do more and be more as a community, the financial support provided by our members and attenders is more important than ever.

## THERE ARE MANY WAYS TO GIVE

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If you already provide financial support for our meeting on an ongoing basis, thank you very much. If you are not currently supporting Portland Friends Meeting in this way, please consider what is possible for you. Gifts of all amounts are meaningful and appreciated, and there are many ways to give. Please read on to learn more, and feel free to contact me with any contribution-related questions.

**GIVE CASH** by using the donation box at the meetinghouse.

**GIVE ONLINE** by debit card or credit card. Make one-time or recurring gifts using our new online donation option. ( [https://www.portlandfriendsmeeting.org/?page\\_id=873](https://www.portlandfriendsmeeting.org/?page_id=873) )

**GIVE BY “DIRECT PAYMENT”** Please contact me for details on how to transfer your one-time or recurring gift directly from your bank account to the meeting’s bank account.

**GIVE BY CHECK** Make your check payable to Portland Friends Meeting and mail it to: Portland Friends Meeting / Attn: Treasurer for Contributions / 1837 Forest Ave. / Portland, ME 04103.

### **GIVE FROM YOUR IRA**

A Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) is a direct transfer of funds from your IRA custodian, payable to a qualified charity. Giving a QCD excludes the donated amount from taxable income. To make a QCD to Portland Friends Meeting please contact your IRA Custodian.

### **GIVE THROUGH A DONOR ADVISED FUND**

If you have established a Donor Advised Fund please contact the fund administrator to recommend a grant to Portland Friends Meeting.

### **GIVE STOCK**

Donating appreciated securities directly to a charitable organization may increase the amount that you are able to give by avoiding taxes on capital gains. To give publicly-traded securities please contact Tim McElroy at Friends Fiduciary Corporation by email or by phone ([tmcelroy@friendsfiduciary.org](mailto:tmcelroy@friendsfiduciary.org); 215-241-7272).

With appreciation,

Jane Mullen, Treasurer for Contributions, for the Financial Stewardship Committee  
[jmmaine@aol.com](mailto:jmmaine@aol.com), 215-421-5257

## Wrap up of Church of the Wild Book Discussion Groups



Last Thursday saw the gathering of both the Tuesday and Thursday discussion groups for the last chapter of *Church of the Wild*, by Victoria Loorz. We met at Evergreen Cemetery again, our 3rd time in the 9 weeks of gatherings. We also met twice at Gilsland Farms Audubon Sanctuary, and three times in members' backyards. Those who were not at last month's rainy day gathering (see May's newsletter for those intrepid folks) were, mostly, available for our final gathering- Including the photographer from the rainy day, who didn't get included last month.

Portland Friends Meeting  
1837 Forest Ave  
Portland, ME 04103

Address Service Requested

**Next newsletter deadline:**  
Wednesday, July 26<sup>th</sup>, 11:58pm

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

