

Portland Friends Meeting Newsletter

Summer 2023

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



1837 Forest Ave Portland, ME 04103
portlandfriendsmeeting.org 207-200-6544

Connections

Co-Clerks

Peter Woodrow

coclerks@portlandfriendsmeeting.org

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

Muriel Allen, 207-420-1021

murielpfm@gmail.com

Childcare Coordinator

Susan Grannell 401-413-5951

pfm-nursery-coordinator@gmail.com

Religious Education

Adult: On Hiatus

Youth: Bart Czyz btczyk@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

David Hingston

dhingston@comcast.net

Address/directory changes

directory@portlandfriendsmeeting.org

Calendar

September 3: Final Sunday of summer hours/locations

September 17: Rise of Worship, nurturing ministries threshing session

Every Month

Every Sunday: 10:45a Meeting for Worship at the Friends School of Portland and separately on Zoom*; 9am Meeting for Worship at the Meetinghouse

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

Friends School of Portland Seeking Help After School



AfterCare at FSP has grown from our early days of romping in the woods on Mackworth to just over 80 students this year. (FSP began with 31 students enrolled in school - not just AfterCare - back in 2006!) Even as the program has grown in order to serve as many families as possible, we maintain a strong sense of community and fun! For many families it is a crucial part of the school day as it provides a fun, safe and adventure filled childcare option from 3:00 pm-5:30 pm every day of the school week.

Finding caring and fun-loving staff has become more critical than ever!

We are in need of young adults over age 18 or adults young-at-heart on Tuesdays and Thursdays beginning this September.

We are also always looking for community members who are interested in sharing their talents in our AfterSchool activities. We've had community members offer classes like knitting, dance, board games, chess club, lego club, debate teams, pasta-making, and more!

If you or someone you know might be interested in working in AfterCare or leading an activity please reach out to AfterCare Coordinator, Eliza Robinson by email or phone: eliza@friendsschoolportland.org or 207-781-6321.

Portland Friends Meeting
Minutes of Meeting for Worship for the Conduct of Business
August 13, 2023

Peter Woodrow, Clerk
David N. Hingston recording

Members and attenders of Portland Friends Meeting gathered in worship at 6:00 pm. Some thirty Friends gathered, in person at the Meeting House and remotely via Zoom. Clerk Peter Woodrow opened by offering this advice, which was found by Karyl Sylken when asking, "How do Quakers prepare for worship?"

"I await messages from the Light with the following prayer: Open my ears to silence.

Open my heart to healing.

Open my mind to insight.

Open my soul to love.

Open my eyes to beauty.

Open my spirit to joy.

Open my actions to peace."

Following a period of silent worship, Peter welcomed everyone and expressed thanks to David Hingston for recording, to Luke Hankins for in-room technical support, and to Jessica Eller for holding the Meeting in the Light.

1. REVIEW OF MINUTES AND FOLLOW UP FROM JUNE MEETING

The Meeting next **approved** the final version of the minutes of Meeting of June 4, 2023 (archived as Attachment 1), with thanks to the Recording Co-Clerk and all those who contributed their thoughts and edits.

Mags Fehr reported that Ministry & Counsel is considering steps to ensure that the deep discussions of June 4th not be forgotten. Friends are invited to send their follow-up ideas to Mags and/or Chris Beach and the Meeting Clerk; M&C will report back at the next Meeting for Business on September 10th.

2. NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Before taking up new nominations, the Recording Co-Clerk reported that on review of his hand-written notes at the time, it was determined that the minutes of May 7th, 2023 should be amended as follows (changes in **bold**):

The Nominating Committee's nominations were approved. Chris noted that while about 100 positions are currently filled, some 17 positions remain open and Friends are encouraged to contact members of the Nominating Committee about ways they might be moved to serve.

Peter noted that there is therefore no need to re-approve those nominations brought to us in May.

Nominating Committee Co-Clerk Chris Beach brought forward the following additional names for committee service:

Sole Clerk of the Meeting:	Peter Woodrow (continuing for a 2 nd year) to be assisted by a
four-person Support Group:	Lea Sutton
	Jessica Eller
	Mags Fehr
	Genna Ulrich
Editor of the Newsletter:	David Hingston
New Member of Ministry & Counsel:	Lyn Ballou
Financial Stewardship:	Diana White
Nominating Committee:	Dorothy Grannell
Welcoming Committee:	Sandi Jensen
Greeter for 4th Sundays:	Ann Dodd-Collins

(Minutes continued from p.2)

The Nominating Committee's complete report is included as Attachment 2, and includes a list of positions that remain unfilled. It was noted that Genna Ulrich has just agreed to serve on the Clerk's Support Group, and their name does not appear in the report.

Chris noted that the Committee's work was complicated by the departure of two members and the challenges of contacting people during the summer. After some twenty-eight people were contacted regarding the position of Co-Clerk of the Meeting and declined, the Committee is proposing an alternative solution— nomination of a "solo" Clerk, together with a four-person Support Group.

A question arose: "What is meant by the Clerk's Support Group?" Peter replied that the group will provide the Clerk with different perspectives, and that its membership will typically include a former Clerk or Co- Clerk, a member of M&C, a parent, and a Young Adult Friend. Its role, Peter continued, will include:

- to sense what's rising in the Meeting, and to bring such matters to the Clerk's attention;
- to meet with the Clerk before each Meeting for Business, to help shape the agenda and to decide what can be written and distributed and what must be brought to the Meeting;
- to monitor the Clerk's workload and to find and call on other energy where needed;
- to provide the Clerk with occasional individual consultations;
- and to debrief after each Meeting for Business, identifying accomplishments and challenges and identifying needed follow-up.

Peter then expressed his gratitude to the Support Group members for agreeing to serve. One Friend noted that a similar group was formed some ten years ago and was very helpful to the Co-Clerks and the Meeting.

At Chris's invitation, the Meeting **approved** the Committee's slate of nominees. In response to the May 7th discussion about the nominating processes, Chris also asked Ministry & Counsel to name a subcommittee to review the workings of the Nominating Committee and how things might be done differently. The Meeting **approved** formation of the subcommittee. In an additional note, one Friend asked that someone younger be named to the Welcoming Committee.

Friends will be provided with a link to an updated list of PFM Current and Proposed Appointments to Positions.

3. FAMILY PROMISE

Mary Tracy reported with joy that Mary DeSilva and her daughter Zora have volunteered to be the Meeting's Coordinators for Family Promise. The *Ad Hoc* Family Promise Seasoning Group's report is included as Attachment 4.

Mary continued by noting that in light of the DeSilvas' offer, the Meeting is now in a position to reconsider its invitation to enter into the *Greater Portland Family Promise Partner Agreement* (Attachment 3), as the Seasoning Group recommends.

Peter Woodrow, in a note of caution, reminded us that the DeSilvas, as Coordinators, need other people to step up and be coordinated, without constantly spending the DeSilvas' time asking for help. Friends will need clarity about what the needed tasks are, and guidance and leadership in furnishing those tasks. It was noted that the Meetinghouse is currently not suitable for providing housing, due to ongoing facility issues that came to light when families were hosted earlier this year.

In response to a request, Mary read excerpts of the *Agreement*, focusing on its four areas of suggested commitment: (1) Homelessness Prevention, (2) Housing Stabilization, (3) Operational Support, and (4) Rotational Housing. Following considerable discussion, the Meeting **approved** signing the *Agreement* with a commitment to Items (1) and (3), with an "aspirational" commitment to Item (2) and a heartfelt expression of thanks to Ann Dodd-Collins for her Family Promise work to date.

4. BUILDINGS & GROUNDS COMMITTEE

Incoming Clerk Bill Diffenderfer first thanked Karin Wagner for her many years of service as Clerk of the Buildings & Grounds Committee.

Bill continued by reporting on the Committee's proposal for improvements to the Meetinghouse cesspool. The cesspool, which is a rarity in the City of Portland, is grandfathered under the City's building ordinances and functioning satisfactorily due to the site's unusual geologic conditions. It has been some twelve years since the cesspool was pumped, for which significant excavation is required. The Committee recommends installation of an access riser (essentially a vertical pipe or sleeve) to facilitate future inspection and pumping without major excavation, at the cost of about \$2,200 plus \$300 for pumping. The Committee has insufficient funds available in its current budget, and recommends that the work be completed before this winter.

Jo Linder noted that the Financial Stewardship Committee considered the matter last week and recommends approval, with the exact funding source to be determined, likely a combination of some funds from the Operating Budget and some from the Capital Reserve Fund.

The Meeting **approved** the Committee's recommendation for the improvements and pumping.

5. OTHER REPORTS AND ITEMS FROM THE CLERK'S DESK

Peter noted that three other reports are forthcoming:

- Report on the Meeting with Umaru Balde, Director of Justice, Equity, and Inclusion for the City of Portland (Attachment 4)
- Report on the recent visit to the Maine Immigrant Rights Coalition Root Cellar (Attachment 5)
- Summary of PFM Adult Learning 2022-23 (Attachment 6)

The **Treasurer's Report** for the month of July and Year-to-Date can be accessed on google spreadsheets:
<https://bit.ly/3KH29hq>

Beth Bussiere-Nichols reminded Friends of the threshing session concerning nurturing ministries that is planned for September 17th following the rise of Meeting.

Peter next read excerpts of *An Urgent Call to the Religious Society of Friends, Update July 2023*, "...in anticipation of the 2024 elections and the continuing threats to our democracy." The document is included as Attachment 7; further action by the Meeting will be considered in September.

Ministry & Counsel requests Friends' ideas and opinions concerning the format(s), in-person, online, hybrid, etc., of weekly Meeting(s) for Worship. One Friend noted that there are presently some six variants currently in use at PFM, and expressed her concern that "we need one Meeting in one place." It was noted that the working of First Day School must be part of future considerations.

Peter then announced that there will be a potluck luncheon next week following the rise of Meeting at Portland Friends School, hosted by Youth Religious Education.

Finally, Peter noted that the School is planning to get rid of the white chairs that have been used outdoors by the Meeting at the end of August. Friends are asked to bring their own chairs to the Meeting for Worship on September 3rd (Labor Day weekend), and to pass along any thoughts on any organizations who might have some use for the discarded chairs, which will need some rehabilitation if they are to be passed along.

6. CLOSING WORSHIP

Following a period of silence, the Meeting then rose at about 7:15 pm, to meet again for the Conduct of Business on September 10, 2023, according to Divine will.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Minutes of the Meeting of June 4, 2023 (final version), archived
2. PFM Nominating Committee Report, 8/13/23
3. *Ad Hoc* Family Promise Seasoning Group report to MFB 8.13.23
4. PFM Meeting with Umaru Balde, Director of Justice, Equity, and Inclusion for City of Portland, Maine, July 14, 2023
5. Report on the recent visit to the Maine Immigrant Rights Coalition
6. Summary of PFM Adult Learning 2022-23
7. *An Urgent Call to the Religious Society of Friends, Update July 2023*

Minutes Attachment 2

PFM NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT: Folks to be Approved on 8/13/2023

Introduction: Earlier this year, we approved most of the individuals who have volunteered or who have been asked to hold the individual and committee positions that help Portland Friends Meeting operate and care for members. Today, the Nominating Committee brings for approval a few more individuals to serve in other essential positions. They are:

Sole Clerk of the Meeting	Peter Woodrow (continuing for a 2nd year)
To be assisted by a four-person Support Group:	Lea Sutton
	Jessica Eller Mags Fehr
	[One additional to be confirmed—YAF]
Editor of the Newsletter	David Hingston
New Member of Ministry & Counsel	Lyn Ballou
Financial Stewardship	Diana White
Nominating Committee	Dorothy Grannell
Welcoming Committee	Sandi Jensen
Greeter for 4th Sundays	Ann Dodd-Collins

Positions Still Unfilled as of 8/8/2023

Nominating Committee (2) _____; _____;
Youth Religious Education Committee _____;
Person to assist Meetinghouse Coordinator, Jennifer Frick _____;
Cemetery Committee volunteer _____;
Pastoral Care Committee volunteer _____;
Clean & Close the Meetinghouse, 4th Sundays (2) _____; _____;

Please contact one of these Nominating Committee members if you have interest in or if you are called to serve in any of the above roles, or in any other positions.

Chris Beach (772-2779), beachcris99@gmail.com

Elizabeth Szatkowski... (274-3564), eliz.szat@gmail.com

Brad Bussiere-Nichols.. (756-5586), bunic5@gmail.com

Stefanie Fairchild..... (272-6500), stefaniefairchild@yahoo.com

Dorothy Grannell..... (233-6587), stemp41@gmail.com

1 Please see the accompanying document for a full listing of all positions and committee members.

Minutes Attachment 3

Ad Hoc Family Promise Seasoning Group report to MFB 8.13.23

The *ad hoc* Family Promise Seasoning Group is happy to report that Mary DeSilva and her daughter, Zora, have volunteered for the role of Coordinator for Family Promise. The job description is below.

Therefore, we recommend that the Meeting sign the Greater Portland Family Promise Partner Agreement.

We are grateful for the work Ann Dodd-Collins has done for several years as the GPFP coordinator in our Meeting, as well as for those who have volunteered in the past or still volunteer now.

Wayne Cobb, Ann Dodd-Collins, Jay O'Hara, Mary Tracy.

Portland Friends Meeting Family Promise Coordinator Job Description 2023-2024

The coordinator is the primary point of contact between Portland Friends Meeting and Greater Portland Family Promise (GPFP). The coordinator facilitates Portland Friends fulfilling the meeting's commitments to Family Promise through communication and volunteer recruitment.

This includes:

- monthly attendance at GPFP coordinating committee meetings
- acting as liaison with GPFP executive director
- ensuring financial commitment in PFM budget for Operational Support
- announcing GPFP needs to the meeting
- helping recruit and schedule volunteers
- coordinating PFM volunteers to fulfill the meeting's commitments for Homelessness Prevention and Housing Stabilization
- alerting PFM members to other opportunities to engage; including food distribution and moving teams

Any of the above may be delegated to other volunteers. The following functions of PFM's commitment are expected to be delegated to others:

- Housing Stabilization program family liaisons
- yearly fundraising for Homelessness Prevention program

News from our sister meeting in Velasco from the sister meeting committee, August 2023

Yadira Cruz Pena, the pastor of Velasco Meeting was one of the representatives from Cuba Yearly Meeting (CYM) to New England Yearly Meeting (NEYM) last week. She shared this photo of Velasco Friends meeting outside this week in a service blessing a member's home. I sent her a photo of Portland Friends meeting outside at the Friends School. We agreed that in nature, God's presence can be easily felt.

She also shared this photo of her oldest daughter holding the "Church's baby".



We have begun planning how Velasco, Durham and Portland can have a joint or concurrent event on World Quaker Day on the first Sunday in October. We cannot be in person and probably cannot be on zoom together, but with creativity, we can feel each other's presence.

We are sending some spices and the photo album we shared with Durham and Portland to Yadira with a delegation traveling from New England to Cuba in September.

CYM and NEYM are beginning to explore ways that the two yearly meetings can be more closely connected even in these difficult times.

PFM Meeting with Umaru Balde
Director of Justice, Equity, and Inclusion for City of Portland, Maine
3:30-5:00 on Friday, July 14, 2023

Attendees: Becky Steele, Doug McCown, Dylan Pugh, Ann Dodd Collins, Wayne Cobb, Andy Grannell, Dorothy Grannell, Genna Ulrich, Jessica Eller

Convenors: Dorothy Grannell and Becky Steele

We met at the Meetinghouse and opened with a welcome and followed by a moment of silence. We introduced ourselves individually by name and by naming the ways we are involved in the cause of justice, equity, and inclusion. Then Umaru introduced himself and described his newly created position with the City of Portland.

Umaru's story:

Born in Guinea-Bissau, his parents gave him away at age six for purposes of education to study with a Muslim Imam which turned out to be a form of childhood indentured slavery. At age twelve he returned to his parents who were afraid to take him back because they were afraid of the Imam, and they were afraid Umaru may have been 'cursed.' Soon after, Umaru was captured and taken as a boy soldier.

At age 14, he escaped to Egypt and there received his first educational experiences. Then he sought asylum in Israel where he came under the care of a Jewish woman who adopted him and in essence became his mother. She encouraged him and there in Jerusalem Umaru achieved his first college degrees, i.e., a Bachelor of Arts and then a Masters at Hebrew University.

He decided to seek asylum in the United States and again sought advanced degrees at Northern Iowa University in Cedar Rapids and as doctoral candidate taught courses. At Cedar Rapids, Umaru met and married an Iowa 'farm girl' and they have a girl (9) and a boy (4).

Umaru shared stories with us about his social justice organizing on behalf of LGBTQ+; on at least one occasion this led to his being arrested.

Having experienced time as a practitioner and student of the Muslim, Catholic, and Jewish faiths, he studied the Bible and the Torah and memorized the Koran. Umaru now says his religion is love. And we felt aligned with his statement on love. Becky joined in at that point to share that we believe all human beings are blessed at birth with 'that of God' which has led us to testifying on behalf of peace, community, integrity, and equality.

Dorothy then offered a brief overview of PFM's social actions over the past thirty years detailing our support of Family Promise, LGBTQ+ rights, climate action, exploring white privilege/racism, and tribal sovereignty.

Then Umaru was invited to describe the goal of his newly created position in "a department of one." Initially then he is working closely with the City Council to examine practices, policies, and systems through the lens of inclusion and equity. Out of the gate then, Umaru is asking Council members to create a City of Portland mission statement. With a clear mission statement then it will facilitate open processes.

Umaru gave examples of needs he has observed, and these include neighborhoods complaining to their council representatives but that these complaints occur in silos and thus are not shared with other neighborhood associations. For example, there are city wide issues relating to climate and housing.

At this juncture – only weeks into his inauguration of a newly created position – Umaru could not offer PFM a current way to be of support other than to continue to do what we are doing.

Umaru views his challenge is to connect with other groups who are working with justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion issues. As Umaru took notes, we then shared ideas and suggested persons he could be involved with including:

- State Senators Jill Dusen and Peggy Rotundo
- Ministerial Associations, Maine Council of Churches, BTS Center
- Shirley Hager and specifically her book entitled, *The Gatherings: Reimagining Indigenous-Settler Relations*, co-authored by Mawopiyane (Native and non-Native participants in the Gatherings)
- Reza Jalali, Executive Director of the Maine Immigrant Welcome Center

- Third Act, which has a local chapter, is guided by a volunteer Advisory Council led by Akaya Windwood. Organizing, campaigns, and operations

(Editor's note: we can encourage that persons named could reach out to Umaru) Umaru stressed the critical need to:

- Listen
- Nonhierarchical structures
- Meetings held in circles.
- Open ended time expectations

We concluded by inviting Umaru to join us in worship and to use our Meetinghouse for community discussions. Umaru offered that he is working to bring his Iowa family to Portland and needs a place to rent.

Umaru recommended a film of LGBTQ realities entitled, "They Know Not What They Do." Becky then took Umaru on a tour of our Meetinghouse.

We concluded after one hour and thirty minutes at 5:00 pm.

Minutes Attachment 5

Report on the recent visit to the Maine Immigrant Rights Coalition

On Friday, 7 July 2023, Jessica Eller, Martin Eller Fitze, Paula Rossvall, Dylan Pugh and Ann Dodd-Collins visited the MIRC meal preparation center at the Root Cellar in Portland, Maine to help pack meals and to learn about the work.

We were met by Carol Riley and Susann Henderson, longtime volunteers from the Congregational Church in Cumberland. They and two new Mainers, James and Safo, were already at work. We got a brief introduction to the process, put on our aprons and gloves, and began packing meals. We helped to pack meals of rice, greens, and fish for people living at Motel Six in Portland and the Howard Johnson in South Portland.

The kitchen at the Root Cellar is currently packing meals for about 150 people, 140 for Motel Six and 15 for Howard Johnson. In the past they have packed as many as 300 meals a day. (MIRC has another kitchen in Saco which prepares meals for asylum seekers in the motel there.) When all the meals were packed, we cleaned the counters and swept the floor while Susan washed the hotel pans.

We waited to meet Toto ?, who is in charge of the kitchen, but she had been detained at another site, so we had plenty of time to ask questions while we waited. Carol has been volunteering at the Root Cellar since MIRC began preparing meals in March 2022, and I think Susan has been there almost as long. Both usually volunteer a couple of days a week but Carol was there four days this week because Toto was on vacation. We actually didn't have many meals to pack because the four people already working had begun at 4pm not 4:30, which was the time on the schedule to arrive. They indicated they started arriving earlier when it was getting dark so early. On the other hand, MIRC invites people to show up to help even if they haven't signed up, and neither James nor Sofo had signed up.

This operation seems to be very organized and very efficient. Meals are cooked early in the day. I'm not sure who comes in or when they are warmed up. Packing the meals is an assembly line with the containers, which are divided, at one end of the counter. The rice was put in the largest section, the smaller sections were filled with the greens and the fish. Once the containers are filled and closed, they are put into large boxes which hold 28 containers each. I volunteered at Preble Street when Khadija Ahmed's crew was preparing meals for the Expo in 2019, and we had to make do with whatever containers were around. It didn't always work very well. This worked quite well.

Toto arrived at the end of our time, and was able to confirm the information above. She said that **MIRC can always use more volunteers, both for packing meals and for delivering to the motels.** Food prep volunteers often end up delivering when no drivers show up. On Wednesdays and Saturdays they receive additional donations of vegetables which need to be cut up/prepped for cooking the next day, so volunteers those days help with that after filling containers. I think we all left feeling that this would be a good place to volunteer, thinking we may do so again as individuals, and wondering if perhaps Portland Friends might be willing to commit to volunteering to pack meals one day a month.

To sign up, <https://maineimmigrantrights.org/mirc-food-program-volunteers/> Ann Dodd-Collins

**Summary of PFM Adult Learning 2022-23
June 2023**

We wish to enthusiastically thank all who led and took part in our experiment with Adult Learning this year, and we look forward to continuing the same model next year. The approach of encouraging members of the Meeting community to offer discussions on topics that interest them at a variety of times and places has succeeded in drawing together a number of people.

Sharings were rich, deep, and heartfelt as we opened up to each other.

Offerings included the following:

- Afterthoughts, fairly regular discussion of the experience of Meeting for Worship, Sundays after meeting, led by Genna Ulrich, Fritz Weiss, Maggie Fiori and others. Often attended by 5-10 people.
- Discussion of the book, *Let Your Life Speak* by Parker Palmer, led by Mary Tracy, 6 sessions, attended by 8 people in Mary's home.
- Discussion of Quaker and other religious terms, led by Genna Ulrich, 1 session attended by 16 people following an evening potluck.
- Contemplative Bible Study, led by Stan Scott for 5 sessions, attended by 7 people.
- The work of the Friendly Book Collaborative by Sally Farneth, 1 session attended by approximately 15 people.
- Contemplative Writing, led by Theresa Oleksiw, 2 sessions, attended by 2 people.
- Discussion of the pamphlet, "Members One of Another: The Dynamics of Membership in Quaker Meeting," led by Genna Ulrich, 4 sessions attended by 8 people.
- A second Zoom discussion series of "Members One of Another," led by Jay O'Hara, 5 sessions attended by between 10 and 25 people.
- A discussion of the topic Rallying After a Close Call with Cancer, led by Diana White, 4 sessions attended by 5 people.
- A discussion of the term, "the Light'" led by Genna Ulrich and Fritz Weiss prior to Meeting for Worship, attended by about 15 people.
- A get-to-know-each-other session at Rise of Meeting, Connecting the Dots, led by Mary Tracy, attended by about 18 people.
- Two discussion groups of the book, *The Church of the Wild*, led by Jennifer Frick, 8 sessions, attended by 15 people.

A Few Reflections:

Muriel Allen on a *The Church of the Wild* book group:

The group offered very rich discussions with differing emphasis. I learned that passing through a spot is not the same as sitting there for an hour, that recording data about a place, not the same as taking time to embrace it. I recommend both Victoria Loorz book *Church of the Wild* and another recent release by Karen Armstrong *Sacred Nature*.

Jennifer Frick on both *The Church of the Wild* book groups:

The Church of the Wild book groups (fifteen of us all together) are finished after 9 weeks of gatherings. My spiritual journey the last two + years has led me to several different sources voices that have spoken to deep longings I've carried. This book was one of them, and being able to share it with other PFM folks has filled me with gratitude. I had the gift of meeting with two groups each week and witnessing so many varied and wonderful perspectives. Thank you to everyone who participated and shared their experiences of the prompts that were part of the BTS Center guide which we used during the times between our gatherings.

Diana White on the zoom "Members One of Another" pamphlet group:

The format was conducive to the topic, in that the shared reading and discussion were consistent with the shared spiritual community which is the topic of the pamphlet. There was open, soulful, and frank sharing by those present. I am grateful that Genna Ulrich and Jay O'Hara were led to provide us with the opportunity to engage with this timely reading. I am grateful that they are engaging in community building activities at a time when our Meeting is feeling the strains of differences among us.

Please feel free to contact either of us if you have even just an inkling of an interest in leading one or more sessions in 2023-24.

Coordinators: Mary Tracy mrytracy126@gmail.com and/or Genna Ulrich dgennajulrich@gmail.com.



Greater Portland Family Promise

We are thrilled to report that at the August Meeting for Business, Portland Friends Meeting renewed its commitment to support Greater Portland Family Promise! Over the years, Portland Friends have supported Family Promise, a non-profit organization that supports families experiencing homelessness through a community-

based approach, in various ways—including staffing evening volunteer shifts, collecting needed household items, providing financial support, and hosting families in the meetinghouse when a rotational model was used. After several years of tireless leadership from Ann Dodd-Collins, Mary and Zora DeSilva recently stepped up to serve as the Meeting's co-coordinators for Family Promise going forward. They know they have big sandals to fill, yet are excited to get started. More information on current needs, activities, and ways to be involved will be coming soon (big hint: we'll need some volunteers!) Stay tuned!

(and a related P.S. -- Here's a link to a recent *Maine Calling* program on the homelessness crisis in Maine. The show gives listeners a comprehensive overview of the crisis, and what various entities are doing to address the challenges.

<https://www.mainepublic.org/show/maine-calling/2023-08-14/providing-homes-for-maines-asylum-seekers>)



15 Day Spiritual Journey to Peru, The Land of the Quero & Aymara Shamans, Cuzco & Puno February 18 - March 3, 2024

You are invited to join this epic 15-day journey, taking you directly into the center of the world, Cuzco (literally means belly button), and the heart of Peruvian shamanism offering you the opportunity to participate in Incan ceremonies led by Quero Shamans and Aymara Shamans of the Altiplano and Lake Titicaca area of Puno. Some of the highlights include:

A permission ceremony at the Naupa iglesia led by Quero Shamans;

Silvia Calisaya, Aymaran Shaman will lead us to a vision quest in Macchu Picchu; Exploration of the Sacred Valley and the majestic Andean Mountains and visit Incan sites such Sacsayhuaman where we will do a cleansing ceremony to release past lives and karmas. We will visit Ollantaytambo, Pisac, Moray and Aguas Calientes.

Our home base for 5 days will be in Ollantaytambo at a beautiful spiritual center nestled in the Andes Mountains. Maria will lead a daily Kundalini practice in the morning and restorative yoga in the evening. These practices will strengthen your nervous system, balance your glands, purify your blood, and clean out subconscious thought patterns. This practice will bring balance to your body, mind, and soul.

In this spiritual journey, you will experience the depth of your soul and true identity. This direct experience of your higher self will build a platform of strength, radiance, and security on which to build your life and create a state of total relaxation where healing and transformation can take place.

Cost of the 15-Day Journey: \$3,800 For more information, visit <https://incaroots.net/15-day-spiritual-journey-to-peru/>



Childcare is available each Sunday during Worship, 10:45 -11:45 for families with children. All are welcome. Friends School has several areas for children to play and get to know both other children and adults who attend Portland Friends Meeting.

“Trouble of soul can teach us things that raptures never could – not only patience and perseverance, but humility and sympathy with others.”

~Edward Grubb, 1933

Request for Friendly Hospitality Sept 28 and 29 for Friends Peace Teams

Gail Melix (Sandwich Meeting), Buffy Curtis (Clinton NY Meeting) and Paula Palmer (Boulder Meeting) will be in Portland to give presentations at Friends School on the morning of Sept 29 (8:30 am - noon). They are traveling in ministry as part of Toward Right Relationship with Native Peoples, a program of Friends Peace Teams. Their presentations focus on the history of colonization and how to build relationships with Native Americans based on truth, respect, and justice. Would any Portland Friends be able to offer lodging for them on Sept 28 and 29? They would also be happy to meet for informal conversation with Friends, or present either of these programs:

1- *Roots of Injustice, Seeds of Change: Toward Right Relationship with Native Peoples*

This is a 2-hour interactive workshop where participants experience the story of the colonization of Turtle Island (the United States) through the voices of Indigenous leaders, Euro-American leaders, and Western historians. We share reflections through writing exercises and small and large group discussions. We need five volunteers to help us present this program, and a minimum of 20 participants (high school and adults).

2- *The Quaker Indigenous Boarding Schools: A Call for Accountability and Healing*

For more than a century, Quakers promoted and participated in the forced assimilation of Native children by operating Indigenous boarding schools, often in direct collaboration with the federal government. This program is a one-hour slide presentation, followed by worship and reflection in small and large groups. What does this history mean for Friends and for Native Americans today?

For more information about Toward Right Relationship with Native Peoples, visit friendspeaceteams.org/trr

Please contact Paula Palmer, paulaRpalmer@gmail.com
240.595.5993

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.

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>

Falmouth Quarter
Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business
10 June 2023

Brunswick: Betsy Muench

Durham: Wendy Schlotterbeck

Portland: Theresa Oleksiw, Fritz Weiss (clerk for the day), Maggie Fiori, Hannah Colbert, Genna Ulrich, Ann Dodd-Collins (recording clerk), Rania Campbell-Bussiere

Southern Maine:

Windham:

The purpose of the spring meeting of Falmouth Quarter is to read State of Society reports or to share the current state of our meeting and to hear how each meeting is nurturing ministry and share the ministries that are alive in our meetings. We began with a few moments of silence.

Betsy began by saying that meetinghouses (in Maine) were large, not because they had large congregations, but because they were built for Quarterly meetings in a time when travel took longer and Quarterly meetings were a place to socialize and meet others (perhaps finding one's life partner) as well as to do the business of the Quarter. Before the internet and zoom, Quarterly meetings were the means to pay attention to the local ecosystem.

Southern Maine

Southern Maine did not write a State of Society this year. Fritz shared their emailed report. SMMM has lost two important members who were at the heart of the meeting. They meet in people's homes, once every three or four weeks. Because of their uncertain schedule, they do not have visitors. They love and care for each other, but it is unclear that Southern Maine is moving towards meeting weekly again. Is the meeting clear about their future? Are they grieving? Based on their report, the quarter asked Fritz and Wendy to reach out and have a conversation with Southern Maine.

Brunswick

Brunswick did not write a state of society this year. The meeting relies on long time members to keep them connected. They meet in the meeting room of the Curtis Public Library in Brunswick. This winter average attendance was 10 or more, and there were no children. Last winter the meeting averaged 5 attenders at meeting. They also have a number of seasonal members. One attempt was made to have a Quaker gathering at Thornton Heights but that was canceled due to ice. The pandemic has made it difficult to stay in contact, but the clerk keeps in touch with everyone. They have had good discussions on abortion rights and the war in Ukraine. One of their members brings concerns for them to consider supporting. Question: Is it time for Brunswick to try again to pull in students from Bowdoin?

Asked about their spiritual condition, the sense was that it is a very quiet, meditative meeting. They do not discuss their faith or Quakerism. They have formally requested that specific Friends from other meetings visit them, and some have. The purpose is to strengthen connections with Friends and to have grounded Friends present at their worship. They are delighted with and feel nourished by those visits.

Action: Theresa will talk with Marian about having a conversation with the chaplain at Bowdoin.

It was suggested that Brunswick needs to be clear about who Brunswick is and that Portland's Wednesday night group may already have wisdom that could help them with this.

One FQ attender asked, "What do we do with hearing these spiritual conditions? What's alive? What is Spirit/God speaking? What's exciting? A partial answer could be that it is spirit-led for a small group to care for one another and that may be enough.

Windham

Windham is a small pastored historic meeting only nine miles from Portland. Their community persists and cares deeply for one another. A new member, who is a long-time Quaker, is inserting Quaker history and stories into their services. Windham Friends are clear that they are Quaker and are clear about the identity of their church. . They are very involved in their community and are very much a community church, and they are rediscovering their Quaker

roots. They were delighted with the windsock made for them at a recent Quarterly meeting and value their connection to the Quarter. Dorothy Grannell and Fritz Weiss have been occasionally visiting Windham.

Windham will hold their annual craft sale in November. They are inviting members of other Falmouth Quarter meetings to contribute crafts for their sale:

" 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."

There is also the possibility of the Quarter hosting events or occasional waiting worship at Windham at a time that does not conflict with their Sunday service.

Windham reminded one attender at FQ of Quaker meetings in Cuba and we wondered how a bridge of love between Windham and the quarter might enrich us both. Friends suggested that we ask if the Fall Quarterly meeting might be at Windham.

Durham

The State of Society report for Durham was not available. The clerk will ask that it be shared with the quarter on the email list.

The Peace and Social Justice Committee at Durham is concluding the second year of the Social Justice Enrichment Project, which provides books to participating PreK-2 teachers that focus on social justice issues. This project came out of a series of discussions on antiracism and is expanding. There are other outreach programs as well. Durham still has hybrid worship and masks are now optional. Both decisions have pros and cons. They often have visitors but the pandemic hit them hard, as has the death of several members, and they are still struggling. The children have not returned.

The meeting room is a space that is dedicated to Quaker worship. Care of worship is often behind the scenes but vital. Durham Meeting feels like a grounded space, a space that is held.

Portland

The State of Society report (Attachment #1), as well as a note about nurturing ministry at Portland, was read.

At Portland, technology setup gets in the way of spiritual care of worship on Sunday morning. So does chatting in the meeting room until time for worship. Portland is struggling to figure out what it means to be in a sister relationship with Durham and with Velasco, Cuba, meetings and Fritz is grateful that Leslie Manning, Durham clerk, shared how important that shared relationship is. The Wednesday night Millennial(z) worship is a new community without a history, and that frees them to explore Quakerism and their spiritual journeys in a way that long-time Portland Friends do not. What is not reflected in the State of Society report is a hunger felt by many for deep worship, a longing for a lot of dynamic life.

Conversation on Nurturing Ministry

There is a sense that meetings are struggling to find the clarity of purpose that the Wednesday Millennial(z) group at PFM has found. That group is centered around their purpose and naming what people are there for. To gather people in, there has to be a reason to come. You want to come to a meeting because of what it offers, not because it needs young people or BIPOC people. We need to pay attention to Spirit, not the demographics. Focusing on the numbers distracts.

This meeting for business, which we thought would be short, lasted for more than two hours. We were surprised by the amount of time we took and grateful for the deep, rich conversation.

Over 30 people attended some or all of the Falmouth Quarter Family Campout on June 10-11. We deeply appreciate the generous hospitality of Betsy and Cynthia Muench at their home on the bay in Georgetown.

An Urgent Call to the Religious Society of Friends

Update, July 2023

The Steering Committee of the Urgent Call has continued prayerfully to discern whether and how we are called to further action in anticipation of the 2024 elections and the continuing threats to our democracy.

In light of the events since the mid-term elections, we believe that our original Urgent Call to the Religious Society of Friends, endorsed by more than 720 individuals and 80 Quaker Meetings and organizations nationwide, is as relevant and urgent now as when it was first issued.

Many Friends worked hard during the 2022 mid-terms to protect our elections and rebuild democracy by registering voters and serving as canvassers, poll workers, poll watchers, and election officials. To our great relief, the elections were conducted safely and without major problems. Many voters overcame partisan efforts to restrict their access to the polls and rejected election deniers and extremist candidates in key races.

Regrettably, we see that truth, democracy, equality, and civility continue to be under unprecedented attack by authoritarian movements in our society. These extremist movements, many anchored in the tenets of white supremacy, are aggressively pursuing an agenda that counters equality, integrity, community, peace and justice. Their actions include racist attacks on people and communities of color, restricting voter access to the ballot, denying health care choices for women and LGBTQI+ people, and refusing to address the scourge of gun violence. Meanwhile, the existential threats of the climate crisis are growing dramatically, requiring urgent action to transition rapidly from an economy based almost entirely on fossil fuels to one based totally on clean energy.

We believe Friends are called to persevere in seeking and speaking truth, followed by right action.



We urge Friends to consider taking the following actions, both individually and corporately through our Quaker monthly and yearly meetings, wherever possible working with allied groups to increase the impact of our witness:

1. Publicly affirm our core belief that God gives every human being a measure of Divine Light and encourage every person to act in accordance with that holy witness within them.
2. Publicly denounce all efforts to subvert free and fair elections through voting restrictions, gerrymandering, and other undemocratic means; work to protect and promote free and fair elections by volunteering as poll-workers and election officials; actively support conscientious election officials and state attorneys general.
3. Publicly affirm our historical and religious commitment to the radical equality of all human beings under God. Take up the work of recognizing and repairing the racism, anti-Semitism, homophobia, and other oppressions in our midst, even as we counter intolerant and vindictive forces at work in the broader society.
4. Publicly denounce the MAGA and related authoritarian movements, including their continued lies, distortions, support for autocratic leaders, and attacks on individual liberties and democratic institutions. We are called to counter the use of hate, threats, and violence whenever and wherever we see them.
5. Act locally to support good candidates running for office. Working together as allies of and in coalition with other faith communities and

community-based organizations, particularly those led by Black, Indigenous, People of Color and LGBTQI+ people, can help build community and strengthen the impact of our actions.

6. Circulate the Urgent Call within our meetings, churches, and Quaker organizations for individual and organizational endorsements.

The Urgent Call Steering Committee pledges to serve as a hub for communication, conversation, learning, and support as Friends act for truth and democracy over the next 16 months. We will organize periodic national Zoom calls and training sessions to support and facilitate our witness together.

The first national Zoom call is scheduled for September 28, 2023 from 7–9 pm EDT. We are delighted that Parker Palmer, noted Quaker author and teacher, will be providing an opening message on “The Better Angels of Our Nature: Love, Truth, Justice & the Work of We the People.” Please print, post, and distribute the attached flyer in your meeting and elsewhere.

Our second call this fall (to be scheduled) will be a learning opportunity to understand the bi-partisan **American Anti-Corruption Act**, and how your endorsement and work with allied organizations for its passage locally and nationally could lead to major reforms needed to protect truly democratic, free and fair elections.

These national Zoom calls provide opportunities for us to gather in community, affirm our commitment to worship, learn together, and prepare to act locally. Register for these National Calls and future trainings at www.quakercall.net.

We have felt the immense value of listening and acting together as Friends around these urgent issues of our time. We look forward to being with you in the coming months.

The Urgent Call Steering Committee:

MARIAN BEANE

Charlotte Friends Meeting, Piedmont Friends - Yearly Meeting and Fellowship

BRUCE BIRCHARD

Central Philadelphia Friends Meeting, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, Former General Secretary, Friends General Conference

SAM CALDWELL

Providence Friends Meeting, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, Former General Secretary, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting

GRETCHEN CASTLE

Doylestown Friends Meeting, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, Dean, Earlham School of Religion, Former General Secretary, Friends World Committee for Consultation World Office

MARY ELLEN MCNISH

Byberry Friends Meeting, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, Former General Secretary, American Friends Service Committee

DIANE RANDALL

Hartford Friends Meeting, New England Yearly Meeting, Sojourning Friends Meeting of Washington, Baltimore Yearly Meeting, Former General Secretary, Friends Committee on National Legislation

JIM WADDINGTON

Salem Monthly Meeting, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting

MICHAEL WAJDA, CLERK

Goshen Friends Meeting, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, Sojourning Bennington Friends Meeting, New England Yearly Meeting, Former Associate Secretary, Friends General Conference

Meeting and Organization Affiliations are listed for identification purposes only.



You can endorse the Urgent Call, find additional resources, register for national conversations on these issues, report on specific actions that you, your meeting, or your organization has undertaken, and sign up for continued updates at www.quakercall.net.

We also welcome your questions, suggestions, and resources at info@quakercall.net.

Portland Friends Meeting
1837 Forest Ave
Portland, ME 04103

Address Service Requested

Next newsletter deadline:
September 13, 11:58pm

submissions: dhingston@comcast.net

