

Portland Friends Meeting Newsletter

Ninth Month 2023

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



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portlandfriendsmeeting.org
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Connections

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Peter Woodrow
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Youth Religious Education Coordinator:
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The Light Overcomes Darkness

It doesn't matter how long we may have been stuck in a sense of our limitations.

If we go into a darkened room and turn on a light, it doesn't matter if the room has been dark for a day, a week, or ten thousand years---we turn on the light and it is illuminated.

Once we contact our capacity for love and happiness, the light has been turned on.

—Sharon Salzberg, “Lovingkindness”

Calendar

Upcoming Events

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Thursday, Sept. 28, 4:00 pm | Fellowship potluck and conversation to welcome traveling Friends Gail Melix, Buffy Curtis, and Paula Palmer, PFM Meetinghouse |
| Thursday, Sept. 28, 7:00 pm | Quaker Call to Action National Zoom Call, www.quakercall.net |
| Saturday, Sept. 30 | NEYM Permanent Board Meeting, PFM Meetinghouse |
| Sunday, Oct. 1 | World Quaker Day <i>(see link below)</i> |
| Sunday, Oct. 8, 12:30 pm | Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business, PFM Meetinghouse |
| Wednesday, Oct. 11, 6:00 pm | Conversation & Reception, Friendship and Courage in Times of Crisis, Hannaford Hall, USM
Frances Perkins Center (blackbaudhosting.com) |
| Saturday, Oct. 28, 9:30 am | Falmouth Quarterly Meeting at Windham Friends Meeting <i>(more information to follow)</i> |

Every Month

- | | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Every Sunday, 10:45 am | Meeting for Worship* at the Meetinghouse and separately on Zoom; |
| Every Wednesday, 7:00 pm | Young Adult Friends Mid-Week Worship
email yaf@portlandfriendsmeeting.org for location |
| Every Weekday, 10:30 am | Meeting for Worship on Zoom* |
| First and Third Thursdays: | Meeting for Healing on Zoom |

*contact Clerk for online Meeting for Worship links



World Quaker Day October 1, 2023

<https://fwcc.world/worldquakerday/>

Portland Friends Meeting
Minutes of Meeting for Worship for the Conduct of Business
September 10, 2023

Peter Woodrow, Clerk
Rob Levin, Recording

Members and attenders of Portland Friends Meeting gathered in worship at 6:00 pm following a hearty potluck. Some 38 Friends gathered, in person at the Meetinghouse and remotely via Zoom. Clerk Peter Woodrow opened by offering this query from the 1985 New England Yearly Meeting Faith and Practice:

Do you live with simplicity, moderation, and integrity? Are you punctual in keeping promises, careful in speech, just and compassionate in your dealings with others? Do you take care that your spiritual growth is not sacrificed to busyness but instead integrates your life's activities? Are your recreations consistent with Quaker values; do they refresh your spirit and renew your body and mind?

Following a period of silent worship, Peter welcomed everyone and expressed thanks to Rob Levin for starting a new term as Recording Clerk, Lyn Ballou for holding the Meeting in the Light, and to Luke Hankins for technical support.

Next Sunday we'll return to the Meetinghouse for regular worship, returning to our hybrid format. Peter requested assistance with the weekly in-the-room tech setup, please contact him if you're interested.

We went around the room and the zoom and individually introduced ourselves.

1. REVIEW OF MINUTES

The Meeting next approved the minutes of Meeting of August 13, 2023, without modification except that the Nurturing Ministries event on September 17 is not a formal threshing session and will start at 9:00 a.m.

2. FOLLOW UP TO JUNE MEETING FOR BUSINESS

Mags Fehr and Maggie Fiori presented on behalf of Ministry and Council Committee. Over the summer, M&C has been processing the insights and challenges that arose in the June 4 Meeting for Business, seeking to discern the best way forward for the Meeting. For a summary of M&C's key takeaways, see *What Has Stuck With Us* (Attachment 1).

After a few moments of worship, Maggie provided some context for M&C's follow up. M&C sees its purpose as doing the work of holding the thread between Business Meetings. What is it that is creating a sense of tension in our Meeting? What are the road bumps to having a clearer sense of purpose of Spirit? What happens next, after so much was opened up and laid out? The work for M&C and for all of us is to further dig into our spiritual differences, and still love one another more clearly. Maggie and Mags invited us into a period of open worship, without a specific agenda or pressure for answers. Some reflections:

- There can be a tension between honesty and speaking forthrightly, not being too conflict avoidant, vs. speaking hurtfully and without tenderness.
- Our Meeting is blessed with a cadre of longstanding members. And we also are blessed with newer members, including some who are younger. How can we increase opportunities for cross-fertilization among newer and longtime members, as well as among different age groups? How do we encourage different age groups to get together, without creating a feeling of separateness by those who are not part of those subgroups?
- Continuing revelation is wonderful in theory but can be difficult in practice. It often means giving up previous beliefs, re-examining things, and it can feel like disruption. It is incumbent on us to ask ourselves, is there some new truth or pattern for me to understand, and might this be a new opportunity?

- One thing that's endearing about PFM is that we have so many idealists, and we hold out a sense of the perfect beloved community. We have to remember to be compassionate with ourselves and our imperfections, and that will help us be more understanding and accepting of other people and their imperfections. We can remind ourselves that we are already loved by God, and there is so much unity and love here.
- A challenge of Quakerism is that it's a spiritual democracy. Each of us has the capacity to hear Spirit, but the tragedy is that we don't all hear it same way. But we all drink from same well, and there is a source of unity, even if we have to struggle to get there. Our work is in deep listening, slowing down, and sometimes translating in a way so we can hear each other.
- We aren't persuaded of the truth by the words people speak, but by the Spirit behind those words. One obstacle to discernment can be that when people speak with urgency and passion, sometimes they are acting out of ego. And at other times it's not ego at all, but rather God speaking through that person. We don't always know how to make that distinction. The closest we come to truth is through story and imagination, not through logical discourse.
- A Friend who asked for more time for this exploration was trying to identify the sweetness and tenderness with which we are holding each other. May we be generous with our time so we can do the work that we're excited about. Some parts of this process are going to be uncomfortable. God is uncomfortable... and also so very comforting.
- It can be unsatisfying to be seeking agreement, and sometimes we set goals for agreement in Meeting for Business and that approach does not serve us well. What if, instead of seeking agreement, we sought a sense of unity and proceeded from there, a unity that we find first and hold through rest of Meeting for Business? And we wait for that unity, a quality of loving and feeling loved, before we try to do anything else. I have felt a lot of pain that on June 4, we heard mainly about the experience of feeling judged by those with challenging ministry, but we didn't hear about the experiences of those people who do have such ministry. I have also felt sad about how much of our conversations are about Jay O'Hara without naming his name. Much of June 4 was about him and he wasn't able to be there. Jay is someone I know well and feel close to, and I really hope we will get to know Jay and others we find challenging.

3. QUAKER CALL TO ACTION

We held off on a discussion of *An Urgent Call to the Religious Society of Friends, Update July 2023*, an initiative of a Steering Committee of concerned Friends from Philadelphia and New England Yearly Meetings. The Urgent Call arises from deep concerns about continuing threats to our democracy in anticipation of the 2024 election. There will be a national Zoom call on Thursday, September 28 from 7 to 9 pm. Register for this and future National Calls and trainings at www.quakercall.net.

4. TREASURER'S REPORT

Kathy Beach presented the Treasurer's Report (Attachment 2).

The Financial Stewardship Committee has made the decision to stop using TD Bank for our banking needs, in light of TD's financing of fossil fuel infrastructure projects, and its status as a big bank without our local community's interests in mind. We'll be writing a letter to TD explaining our reasons for leaving. After looking into local options, FSC decided to open a new checking account at Norway Savings Bank, a much smaller bank that aligns better with our Quaker values. See the Report for details on how to help with this transition if you have been making direct deposit contributions.

Peter reminded us that we are behind on donations, as explained in the report.

The report also notes that Kathy will be stepping down as Treasurer at the end of May 2024 and FSC is looking for a successor. Please see to Jo Linder, Clerk of FSC, if you might be feeling a call in this direction.

5. YOUTH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Bart Czyz presented for YREC. Susan Grannell is stepping down as Nursery Coordinator after six wonderful years. Emily Troll will transition out as Youth Religious Coordinator at beginning of November. YREC has youth programs lined up for the fall. At next Meeting for Business, we'd like to present again on state of youth program and its attendance, and research we've done on other comparable meetings for context. We'll be looking for input on what to do with these two paid positions.

6. NEW ENGLAND YEARLY MEETING LEGACY FUND

Fritz Weiss presented for M&C. A ten-year restriction on NEYM Legacy Fund ends this coming August. NEYM split a windfall from sale of Friends Home into two parts, and the Futures Fund gave away its half. Over the years, PFM sponsored three people for Futures Fund grants: Maggie Fiori to start Art Camp at the Friends School, Arthur Fink to travel to and share about his experiences at Auschwitz, and Theresa Oleksiw for her work on food insecurity. We've been invited to give feedback in preparation for a January report. Fritz, Nat Shed and Ann Dodd-Collins have formed a small group to offer ideas for what to do with the rest of the NEYM Legacy Fund, and any other interested Friends are welcome to join them.

7. CHANGE IN BUILDINGS & GROUNDS CLERK

Pending a clearness process, Sumner Caughey will be the new Buildings and Grounds Clerk. After Karin Wagner stepped down, Bill Diffenderfer was set to replace her but unexpectedly stepped back from the position. So Sumner has offered to fill the role, after a clearness process. Sumner clerked Buildings and Grounds at Beacon Hill Friends for several years, but asks for help in getting up to speed. He also shared that he is going to be a new father in October, so he might not be super available over next few months.

8. NOTICES

- a. **SEPTEMBER 28 EVENT:** Three Friends are travelling with a concern for history of Quaker involvement with Indian boarding schools. They will do a presentation at Friends School, but also will be coming to the Meetinghouse on Thursday, September 28 at 4:00 p.m. for a potluck dinner and presentation. See recent email from Mey Hasbrook for more details.
- b. **NEYM Permanent Board** is meeting at the Meetinghouse on Saturday, September 30.

9. NOTICE: OCTOBER MEETING FOR BUSINESS ON OCTOBER 8

Peter will be away on October 1, the first Sunday of the month, and so we will have October's Meeting for Business on the next Sunday, October 8.

10. CLOSING WORSHIP

A Friend reminded us that the Clerk's job is very difficult and that the current Clerk is doing an admirable job, and at the same time, that it's important for Friends to speak up if they are feeling a call for more open ended discernment together.

A friend let us in song with Wade in the Water. Another Friend led us in singing Alleluia. Following a period of silence, the Meeting then rose at about 7:35 pm, to meet again for the Conduct of Business on October 8, 2023, according to Divine will.

ATTACHMENT 1

What Has Stuck with Each of Us From the June Fourth Meeting for Business September 10, 2023

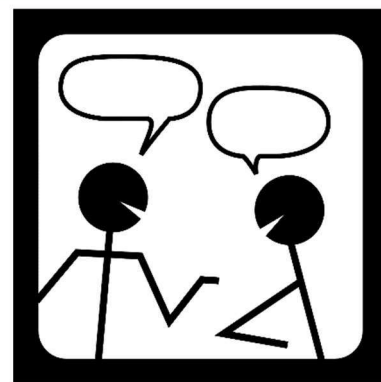
What has stuck with each of us from the June 4th MfB and the related M&C Meetings about the tension/conflict in our meeting? We entered into a discussion facilitated by Maggie Fiori. We hung up a big sheet and wrote down ideas as they were mentioned after Maggie gave an introduction and reminded us of the meetings we have held around this subject. Listed here are some of the ideas/themes that were mentioned:

- Lack of sufficient time (or energy?) to dig deeper and push past disunity, to get to know one another heart to heart
- Need for “Yes . . . and.” Don’t get stuck in “Either . . . or.”
- Need to speak more often with those with whom we are uncomfortable or disagree
- Cherish the diversity of our group/community
- Need for meetings in smaller groups
- God brought us together to learn from one another
- So many of us are conflict-avoidant; too much of this
- Naming things can help
- Tension between activism and spiritual worship?
- How to be comfortable and authentic?
- We aren’t always able to live in God’s hands, or to have a sense of that
- Can we find unity in nurturing the diversity within our community?

ATTACHMENT 2

Summary: Portland Friends Meeting Monthly Operating Budget Report September 10, 2023

	Budget \$\$	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	YTD	%
TOTAL INCOME	95,915	5,565	5,105	5,710	6,460	15,440	4,545	5,310	4,255	0	0	0	0	52,390	55%
EXPENSES															
Total Meetinghouse & Grounds	19,300	2,572	2,001	2,416	1,967	891	5,060	995	2,204	0	0	0	0	18,106	94%
Total Youth of the Meeting	24,990	1,339	1,937	1,362	1,455	2,006	1,359	1,530	2,329	0	0	0	0	13,317	53%
Total Care of PFM Community	15,625	327	0	0	67	428	0	100	0	0	0	0	0	922	6%
Total Other Areas of Focus	17,650	0	0	0	0	4,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4,000	23%
TOTAL COST OF RUNNING OUR MEETING	86,215	4,238	3,938	5,015	4,510	7,325	6,979	3,151	5,076					40,232	47%
BALANCE		1,327	1,167	695	1,950	8,115	-2,434	2,159	-821					12,158	
Financial Contributions Beyond Our Meeting															
City of Portland (in lieu of taxes)	1,000						1,000							1,000	100%
Family Promise of Portland	2,000					2,000								2,000	100%
Ramallah Friends School	550						550							550	100%
Friends School of Portland	2,000					2,000								2,000	100%
Friends Camp	400							400						400	100%
American Friends Service Committee (AFSC)	450							450						450	100%
Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL)	450							450						450	100%
Falmouth Quarterly Meeting	100								100					100	100%
Maine Council of Churches	300								300					300	100%
Quaker Ridge Meetinghouse	100								100					100	100%
Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC)	300									300				300	100%
Friends Publishing	400					400								400	100%
Friends of Kenya Rising	800									800				800	100%
Puente de Amigos (Bridge of Friends)	200														
Woolman Hill Retreat Center	150														
Maine Immigrant Rights Coalition (MIRC)	500														
Subtotal Financial Contributions Beyond Our Meeting	9,700					4,400	1,550	1,300	500	1,100				8,850	91%
TOTAL	95,915														



Tell Us!

Why do you...contribute to PFM?

Our Meeting has been talking about money A LOT over the past year and a half!...How do operating funds differ from invested funds?...What to do with our invested funds?...How is our annual budget developed?...How may we donate to PFM?

An important topic not often discussed is WHY we support PFM financially. There are as many reasons for this support as there are donors, with no one reason more valid, appreciated or important than another.

Your Financial Stewardship Committee wonders:

Why do you support PFM financially?

What motivates and/or influences your giving?

Will you please share your perspectives with the Meeting community?

If you would like to share your reasons for giving, please send me an email describing what is true for you. This could be as simple as one sentence or one paragraph, or more if you wish. The content of your message is more important than the length. We're envisioning sharing responses in the newsletter, with attribution or anonymously, as you prefer. Your sharing will help contribute to increasing our understanding of one another, especially with respect to money and our Meeting.

Sent with thanks,
Jane

Jane Mullen, Treasurer for Contributions
For Financial Stewardship Committee
jmmaine@aol.com

2024 Operating Budget Process

Portland Friends Meeting Financial Stewardship Committee is beginning the 2024 operating budget development process which will establish the Meeting's budget for next year's day-to-day operating income and expenses.

The annual operating budget does not include big-ticket items that can't be covered by income all in one year -- like paving the parking lot (past), responding to emergency housing needs (present), or buying a new boiler (near future). We usually address these issues outside the annual budget process. More information about Portland Friends Meeting resources will be forthcoming in a future newsletter.

The basic steps in the annual operating budget process include:

- Asking the Clerk(s) of each PFM Committee to provide their committee's proposed 2024 budget and list any anticipated 2023 4th quarter expenses.
- New or additional expense requests may be directed to the appropriate Committee clerk as listed in the PFM newsletter or to the Clerk, Financial Stewardship Committee.
- Consolidating this information as the starting point for the expense elements of the 2024 operating budget.
- Considering non-committee based expenses including monthly costs of operating the meetinghouse and grounds.
- Anticipating income from PFM community donations, invested funds withdrawals, and rent. Note: our meeting's operating budget relies heavily on funds received as donations from our members and attenders throughout the year. These funds support the vast majority of the operating expenses incurred during the year, which in turn enables the meeting to run smoothly.
- Preparing the draft income/expense 2024 operating budget.
- Once the Financial Stewardship Committee feels clear to recommend the draft budget for meeting-wide consideration, the budget will be presented at the November Meeting for Worship for the Conduct of Business (MfWfCB).
- As directed by the outcome of the November review/discussion, the proposed budget will be presented for approval at MfWfCB in December.
- The draft and final versions of the annual operating budget will be shared widely through the PFM Life of the Meeting e-list and published in the newsletter.

If such topics interest you and you don't already do so, please consider attending the monthly Meeting for Worship for the Conduct Business as a way to learn more about how the meeting considers its financial priorities, makes financial decisions, and carries out its operating budget process.

In the light,

Financial Stewardship Committee members

OUR INVESTED FUNDS AS AN EXPRESSION OF OUR QUAKER VALUES

Portland Friends Meeting's invested funds are held at Friends Fiduciary, in five investment sub-accounts. They will remain invested until they are withdrawn and used for the purposes for which the sub-accounts have been created (i.e. meeting needs, capital needs, cemetery needs, youth needs, and shared witness purposes). In recent months the meeting has established the processes by which the funds may be drawn from each sub-account.

Thoughtful meeting-wide discussions have focused on the amount, sources, purposes, priorities, past uses and potential uses of our invested funds. Not yet discussed widely are ways in which these funds, rather than being static unused resources, are actually at work in support of Quaker values even while invested at Friends Fiduciary. The Friends Fiduciary website is rich in information on this broad topic. Some of the relevant excerpts from the website are presented below, addressing both their [Investment Screening](#) and [Shareholder Advocacy](#) practices.

We encourage you to visit <https://FriendsFiduciary.org> for more in-depth information.

Financial Stewardship Committee: Alan Farneth, Becky Steele, Diana White,
Dick Stratton, Jo Linder, Joyce Blossom, Kathy Beach, Sue Nelson, Jane Mullen

INVESTMENT SCREENING – excerpts from the Friends Fiduciary website

We actively screen for companies that meet our social responsibility investment criteria, including:

- 1. Quaker Values:** Friends believe investments should be made in businesses that serve a beneficial purpose to society. The judgment of what is beneficial to society changes over time in both degree of certainty and importance. Friends Fiduciary is guided in this challenge and obligation by the Quaker testimonies of simplicity, peace, integrity, community, equality, and stewardship. Additionally, we are committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion in all aspects of our work as an authentic expression of our Quaker values.
- 2. Investment Portfolio Criteria:** Friends Fiduciary reviews a company's products, management, employment and personnel practices, and its respect for human rights, community relations and environmental commitment. ...We especially seek companies that are good corporate citizens and that perform well in terms of environmental, social and governance (ESG) criteria.
- 3. Environmental:** Friends Fiduciary excludes companies that explore, extract, produce or refine coal, oil or gas or have carbon reserves...also, companies that derive a majority of their revenue from the transportation and storage of these materials (example: pipeline

We seek to invest in electric utility companies that are transitioning to a lower carbon, sustainable business model. We evaluate companies on their current and future fuel mix and plans to increase renewable energy capacity.
- 4. Social:** We exclude from our portfolios companies whose business involves the production, distribution, and/or direct support of weapons or weapons components and seek to avoid investing in business involved in the production and, in some cases, the distribution and/or servicing of alcohol, tobacco, firearms, gambling, pornography, and for-profit prisons.

We evaluate companies on their human and labor rights performance using industry standard objective ratings data and conducting our own research. We look at company performance on labor management relations, including hiring practices; employee and management diversity; employee health and safety; and child labor and supply chain standards, among others

We also consider company involvement in internationally recognized conflict zones and occupied territories due to the unique risks such involvement may pose. We avoid investing in companies that provide products or services that materially contribute to the maintenance and expansion of occupied territories and conflict zones.

- 5. Governance:** We assess company corporate governance policies and practices as well as our ability to impact a company through direct dialogue, engagement and/or proxy.

We evaluate board recruitment, refreshment, and diversity policies and practices.

SHAREHOLDER ADVOCACY – excerpts from the Friends Fiduciary website

Ways in which Friends Fiduciary pro-actively promotes shareholders' Quaker values to the companies in which they invest include:

- 1. Proxy Voting:** We deliberately vote our shareholder proxies in a manner that communicates to corporate management our Quaker values on financial and social issues
- 2. Shareholder Resolutions and Company Dialogues:** As Quaker investors we make the moral as well as business case, directly to companies and our fellow shareholders, for corporate change on issues of economic, environmental, and social justice and to influence systems and policies that benefit some groups while marginalizing, excluding, and harming others. We join other institutional and faith-based investors in company dialogues and shareholder resolutions to encourage reform. Recent examples include:
 - Asking Texas Instruments to examine its role in human rights harms
 - Raising significant investor concerns on McDonald's child labor laws violations
 - Urging the EPA to adopt multi-pollutant emissions standards per the Paris Agreement
 - Urging the Tesla Board to reevaluate governance and leadership policies at the company
 - Signing on to an investor statement on Human Rights and Business Activities in Iran
 - Supporting investor comments to the FTC for its non-compete clause rulemaking
 - Signing on to an investor letter on ending payment of the subminimum wage
 - Urging the Federal Reserve to address climate risk in the banking system
 - Calling on policymakers to protect the freedom to invest responsibly
 - Asking the Euro Parliament/EU Members to establish robust forced labor regulations
 - Asking European Banks to stop financing new oil and gas fields
 - Calling on global insurers to protect the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge

Epistle of Cuba Yearly Meeting Sessions 2023
shared by Kim Bolshaw, Velasco Sisters Committee

Gibara, February 19, 2023

The soft breezes of the white villa welcome us and hugs and laughter fill the house of the Lord as we gather, those from near and those from afar from the Puente de Amor with New England. Guided by the Holy Spirit we began to worship singing that today we have hope as we struggle courageously, the hymn that was the theme of this 95th Assembly.

Our presiding clerk gave us words of warm welcome, exhorting us to be the Quaker sowers of hope that the world needs and challenging us to deepen our Quaker values basic to our identity without neglecting the challenge of changing structures and processes that stifle the life of the church.

A reason for joy was the prize for the best song, *Es la Oración*, composed by our brother Jesus Leyva Peña that he received at the Kairos Center's Festival of Christian Songs.

With gratitude we received the news of all the work each monthly meeting and committees accomplished even amid all the difficulties surrounding us.

Today we continue dreaming that the seed of Quakerism will continue to be sowed in other parts of the island. We pray that this dream become a reality in the Province of Santiago de Cuba.

We listened to encouraging messages that invite us to nurture the seed of hope and to be partners in the kingdom as we plant the seed, seeing hope as the horizon of our lives, allowing the Holy Spirit to dwell in us so that we experience its truth, sowing it through the testimony of our lives, convinced that this is not just any seed but a special one.

Our brothers of the Puente de Amor helped us reflect on the necessity of cultivating the seed of love for only in doing so can the seed of hope also be planted.

With gratitude we received and dedicated the new board for the coming year.

May God accompany us and be our shepherd in green pastures and amid the shadows of death. May his hope remove our fears and his presence cover us and his Spirit comfort us.

In the Light,

Cuba Yearly Meeting of Friends (Quakers)

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

continued on reverse

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
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Next newsletter deadline:
Wednesday, October 11, 11:58pm

submissions: dhingston@comcast.net

