

Portland Friends Meeting Newsletter

Twelfth Month 2023

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

Note change in time to 10:00 am starting in January.



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Portland, Maine 04103
portlandfriendsmeeting.org
207-200-6544

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Connections

Clerk

Peter Woodrow
coclerks@portlandfriendsmeeting.org

Recording Clerks

PFM.recordingclerk@gmail.com

Treasurer, Contributions

Jane Mullen, 215-421-5257
jmmmaine@aol.com

Treasurer, Operating Account

Dick Stratton, 860-539-5040
rstratton@megalink.net

Treasurer, Special Funds

Special Needs Funds
Elizabeth Szatkowski 207-274-3564

Pastoral Care Coordinator

Stefanie Fairchild, 207-272-6500
stefaniefairchild@yahoo.com

Childcare Coordinator

[to be determined]
pfm-nursery-coordinator@gmail.com

Religious Education

Adult: Mary Tracy marytracy126@gmail.com
Genna Ulrich dgennajulrich@gmail.com
Youth: Bart Czyz btczyz@gmail.com

Use of the Meetinghouse

meetinghouse@portlandfriendsmeeting.org

e-group membership

pfm.email.list.owner@gmail.com

Newsletter submissions

David N. Hingston dhingston@comcast.net

Address/directory changes

directory@portlandfriendsmeeting.org

Every human being is a child of God with a measure of God's Light. War and other instruments of violence and oppression ignore this reality and violate our relation with God. Let us keep primary, therefore, Friends' concern for removing the causes of war. Let us seek, through God's power and grace, to overcome in our own hearts the emotions that lie at the root of violence. At every opportunity, let us be peacemakers in our homes, in our communities, and in our places of work. Let us take care that we who declare against war do not nourish the seeds of war in our possessions. Friends are urged to support those who witness to their governments and take personal risks in the cause of peace, who choose not to participate in war as soldiers nor to contribute to its preparations with their taxes. Let us support in all possible ways the development of international order, justice, and understanding.

~ Faith and Practice, NEYM, 1985

Calendar

Saturday, Dec. 2, 4:30 pm
Sunday, Dec. 3, 12:30 pm
Sunday, Dec. 24, 4:30 pm
Saturday, January 6
Saturday, Jan. 27, 4:30 pm
Thursday, February 1
June 30-July 6, 2024

Every Sunday, 10:45 am
**Changing to 10:00 am
in January**

Every Wednesday, 7:00 pm

Every Weekday, 10:30 am

First and Third Thursdays:

Upcoming Events

Advent Garden, PFM Meetinghouse
Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business
Christmas Eve Readings & Carols, Meetinghouse
PFS Admissions Open House
PFS Strategic Plan: Rooting Down, Branching Out
Friends School Summer Camp registration opens
Friends General Conference, Haverford PA
(<https://www.fgcquaker.org/fgcprograms/the-gathering/>)

Every Month

Meeting for Worship* at the Meetinghouse and separately on Zoom
Young Adult Friends Mid-Week Worship
email yaf@portlandfriendsmeeting.org for location
Meeting for Worship on Zoom*
Meeting for Healing on Zoom*

*contact Clerk for online Meeting for Worship links



**Christmas Eve
Readings
& Carols
4:30 pm at the
Meetinghouse**

Portland Friends Meeting
Minutes of Meeting for Worship for the Conduct of Business
December 3, 2023

Peter Woodrow, Clerk
Lise Wagner, Recording Clerk *pro tem*

We began at 12:18 p.m., gathered in person and also connected via Zoom. There were 45 members and attenders present for this meeting.

Mags Fehr read the following passage from Braiding Sweetgrass by Robin Wall Kimmerer:

“Today is the third grade’s turn. There are only eleven of them and they do their best to start together, giggling a little, and nudging the ones who just stare at the floor. Their little faces are screwed up with concentration and they glance at their teacher for prompts when they stumble on the words. In their own language they say the words they’ve heard nearly every day of their lives. Today we have gathered and when we look upon the faces around us we see that the cycles of life continue. We have been given the duty to live in balance and harmony with each other and all living things. So now let us bring our minds together as one as we give greetings and thanks to each other as People. Now our minds are one.”

- 1. Minutes from November 5, 2023 Meeting for Business.** Friends accepted the minutes as printed in the newsletter, with one deletion of a line from the Welcoming Committee Report, namely “promote meeting members and attenders.”
- 2. Acceptance of Transfer of Membership Request.** Friends accepted Diana White’s request for transfer of membership to Durham Friends Meeting, with appreciation for what she has brought to our meeting .
- 3. Treasurer’s Report.** Kathy Beach, Treasurer, reported on our historical pattern of increased giving at the end of the calendar year, with thanks. She reminded us of the numerous opportunities that Friends have to give all year long. All pledges to outside organizations have been met, including to New England Yearly Meeting. There is a deficit at the moment, although enough resides in the checking out to pay current bills. The Shared Witness Fund is now at \$172,000, through Friends Fiduciary. To the great delight of the committee (and Kathy!), Dick Stratton has agreed to step in for a year as co-Treasurer, along with Jane Mullen, who will continue to take in the donations. Gratitude was expressed for the committee making the arrangements to move our accounts from TD Bank to Norway Savings Bank. Friends expressed appreciation to Kathy for her many years of excellent service.
- 4. Consideration of the 2024 Operating Budget.** Jo Linder, clerk of the Financial Stewardship Committee, reported. The proposed budget for 2024 was outlined, reflecting changes based on thoughtful comments after last business meeting.

The committee is pleased that there will not be a need to hire a bookkeeper, since Dick Stratton will be coming on as co-Treasurer.

The committee's proposed budget reflects a deficit and inquires of Friends whether that budget can be approved or whether Friends agree to add to the Donations line (\$11,930) to balance the budget. The committee noted that not all committees or other lines (such as Leadings Grants this year) use the amounts listed in the budget. One person noted that although this appears to be a 'deficit' budget, it is rare that all budgeted expenditures are actually spent, cautioning against making any significant changes due to a concern for a real deficit. Friends were reminded that this proposed budget has less in each line for the two youth coordinators, which may not be the same in the future.

One Friend raised a concern that there is a disproportionate amount allocated to the Velasco Friends Sister Committee, compared to allocations for local needs. Others suggested that local spending is more important. Friends were reminded that the Shared Witness Fund could also support other causes, requesting that folks bring their ideas to the conveners of the Fund. The Clerk noted that the meeting agreed to continue its relationship with Velasco Friends Meeting, and is a shared witness of the meeting. We were reminded that this experiment will be reviewed in 2025.

One Friend raised a concern about donations not keeping up with planned operating expenditures, relying too heavily on the investment funds to make up the difference. One Friend views the support of the Velasco Sister Committee as walking together as Friends in the world, belonging in the operating budget rather than in the Shared Witness Fund. Our incoming co-Treasurer invites us to live into this proposed budget, anticipating that 2023 will not end with a deficit. The Clerk noted that we might benefit from further analysis of the trends in spending over several years, in order to come to more realistic estimates, similar to the analysis of the patterns of giving. We also need more discussion of what belongs in the operating budget and what is better addressed by the Shared Witness Fund.

Minute: Friends approved the proposed budget. Two Friends requested to be minuted as standing aside.

- 5. Shared Witness Fund: Support of Bolivian Friends.** Paula Rossvall began by reminding us that Emma Condori Mamani came to us in July 2023, glowing with Spirit, and told us about the dire climate situation affecting the ability of indigenous Quakers in Bolivia to grow their own food. Dorothy Grannell and Beth Bussiere-Nichols joined her.

The request is for \$10,000 from the Shared Witness Fund for Friends International Bilingual Center, which has taken on food security for those Friends. This will also assist in changing ways of farming, among other things

Friends heartily approved the request.

6. Proposal to Change Time of Meeting for Worship. Mags Fehr of Ministry & Counsel reported on the proposal to change the time of meeting for worship to 10 a.m., with early worship on third Sundays from 8:45-9:45 a.m. Among other things, the earlier time for Meeting for Worship will allow for activities following the rise of Meeting without extending too far into the afternoon.

Friends approved the change in time of Meeting for Worship to 10 a.m., to begin in January.

Announcements

- Nurturing Ministries will continue being discussed in January.
- Plans for a meeting retreat in February/March are beginning; if you are interested in helping, please contact Maggie Fiori or Jessica Eller.
- Rob Levin gave information about how to contact the CEO of Cabela's to affect change in their sale of automatic weapons. He also gave thanks for all who held the group in the Light yesterday.
- Welcoming Committee is active and planning! Keep your eyes on the email/newsletter for fun times.
- Heather Denkmire inquired whether there are others who would like to organize a simple Christmas Eve early evening service. Please contact her if so.

We ended at 1:51 p.m., to meet again, God willing, on Sunday, **January 14, 2024** at a time to be specified.

Respectfully submitted,

Lise Wagner, Recording Clerk *pro tem*

PORTLAND FRIENDS MEETING PROPOSED 2024 OPERATING BUDGET--DETAIL					
	Proposed 2024 Budget	2023 Budget	YTD as of 10/31	%	NOTES:
INCOME					
Donations to PFM	57,000	65,080	38,113	59%	giving based on analysis of prior 5 years + current YTD
Transfer from Invested Funds	16,000	30,000	21,400	71%	PFM policy 4% (now from Meeting + Youth Funds)
Rent	5,000	835	5,780	692%	
Other	0	0	0		
TOTAL INCOME	78,000	95,915	65,293	68%	
EXPENSES					
Meetinghouse & Grounds					
Utilities					
Fuel	3,500	3,400	2,703	80%	
Electricity	2,400	1,550	1,918	124%	
Water, Sewage, and Stormwater	2,000	1,950	1,885	97%	
Phone, WiFi	1,800	1,750	1,343	77%	
TOTAL UTILITIES	9,700	8,650	7,849	91%	
Insurance	2,800	2,500	2,566	103%	
Custodial Care & Snow Removal	3,750	3,300	3,514	106%	
Bookkeeper	9,360				0.1 FTE salary (\$12,480/yr) for 9 months
Workers' Compensation, SSTaxes	3,400	2,620	2,090	80%	~30% increase
Payroll Service	300	300	281	94%	
Internal Building Loan Repayment	4,500	4,500	4,500	100%	annual loan payment through 2025 (2 more years)
Buildings & Grounds Committee	6,000	5,000	4,628	93%	
Cemetery Committee	0	4,000	3,315	83%	Cemetery Comm will use invested fund income (4%)
TOTAL MEETINGHOUSE & GROUNDS	30,110	22,220	28,743	129%	
Youth of the Meeting					
Youth Human Resources Compensation					WC, FICA, Payroll costs included above
Religious Ed Coordinator	9,200	11,440	9,539	83%	
Nursery Coordinator	2,300	4,630	3,469	75%	
Childcare (Hourly)	250	600	51	9%	
Total Compensation	11,750	16,670	13,059	78%	
First Day Program	1,500	1,800	260	14%	
Camperships & Youth Scholarships	3,000	3,000	0		
All-Meeting Youth Religious Events	600	600	0		
Total Youth of the Meeting	16,850	22,070	13,319	60%	
Care of the PFM Community					
Committees					
Adult Learning Committee	350	350	0		
Communications Committee	1,000	1,500	328	22%	
Events Committee	200	350	0		
Financial Stewardship Committee	500	600	50	8%	
Library & Records Committee	500	1,600	1,127	70%	
Ministry & Counsel Committee	200	350	100	29%	
Nominating Committee	100		0		
Pastoral Care Committee	100	100	0		
Velasco Friends Meeting Sister Committee	4,000	500	0		
Welcoming Committee	1000	275	17	6%	
Committee Subtotal	7,950	5,625	1,622	29%	
Special Funds					
Adult Scholarships for Friends Activities	1,500	1,500	200	13%	
Clerks' Enrichment Fund	500	500	0		
Leadings Grants	6,000	6,000	0		
Special Needs Fund	2,000	2,000	1,200	60%	
Special Funds Subtotal	10,000	10,000	1,400	14%	
Total Care of PFM Community	17,950	15,625	3,022	19%	
Other Areas of Focus					
Discernment Steering Committee	0	900	0		
Falmouth Quarterly Meeting Support	200				moved here from contributions
New England Yearly Meeting Support	16,000	16,000	12,000		
Miscellaneous	500	750	0		
Total Other Areas of Focus	16,700	17,650	12,000	68%	
TOTAL COST OF RUNNING OUR MEETING	91,310	86,215	57,084	66%	

Financial Contributions Beyond Our Meeting					
City of Portland (in lieu of taxes)	1,000	1,000	1,000	100%	direct donation to asylum seekers programs
Family Promise of Portland	2,000	2,000	2,000	100%	
Ramallah Friends School	600	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)	200	450	450	100%	
Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL)	200	450	450	100%	
Falmouth Quarterly Meeting		100	100	100%	move to Other Areas of Focus
Maine Council of Churches	350	300	300	100%	
Quaker Ridge Meetinghouse	100	100	100	100%	
Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWC)	350	300	300	100%	
Friends Publishing	500	400	400	100%	
Friends of Kenya Rising	500	800	800	100%	
Puente de Amigos (Bridge of Friends)	200	200	200	100%	
Woolman Hill Retreat Center	250	150	150	100%	
Maine Immigrant Rights Coalition (MIRC)	500	500			
Subtotal Contributions Beyond Our Meeting	9,150	9,700	9,200	95%	
TOTAL EXPENSES	100,460	95,915	66,284	69%	
NET: INCOME LESS EXPENSES	\$ (22,460)	\$ -	\$ (991)		What does our PFM community want to do? Raise more or spend less?

PFM annual giving 2018-2022:
2018 \$ 49,400
2019 \$ 62,400
2020 \$ 65,300
2021 \$ 56,800
2022 \$ 51,300

Christmas Eve Gathering



We are gathering for Readings and Carols on Christmas Eve.

The doors to the Meeting Room will open at 4:15 and singing will start at 4:30.

Feel free to bring a candle you can hold (an upside down paper cup can protect from hot wax drips). We will have some candles available as well.

If you would like to help with music or readings let us know!

In the Candle-Light!

Beth (207) 939-8247 and Brad Bussiere-Nichols (207) 756-5586
Colin (215) 303-and Rania Campbell-Bussiere (267) 897-1258
Jessica Eller (207) 761-6508.

MESSAGE FROM THE YOUTH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The Youth Religious Education Committee (YREC) seeks a new YRE Coordinator to begin with the new year.

The coordinator is the face of the Portland Friends community for families and collaborates closely with the YREC team to provide a rich variety of connections and learning opportunities for the youth of the Meeting and their families. The position requires, on average, 8 hours per week of commitment and includes compensation. The position has some flexibility to match the needs or leadings of the person in the role. Further details can be found in the following job description.

Cover letters, resumes, and questions are requested at the earliest opportunity and can be directed to Bart Czyz (YREC clerk) at btczyz@gmail.com.



Job Description: Youth Religious Education Coordinator

The Youth Religious Education (YRE) Coordinator is the face of the Portland Friends community for families and the foundation of the Youth Religious Education Committee's (YREC's) work building and maintaining strong relationships between families and Portland Friends Meeting. The YRE Coordinator collaborates closely with the YRE volunteer team to provide a rich variety of connections and learning opportunities for the youth of the Meeting and their families. A substantial (but not exclusive) responsibility of the Coordinator is the support of the First Day Youth Program.

The work of the coordinator may vary with the time of year, but the position requires, on average, 8 hours per week of commitment. In recognition of the significant investment and commitment required by the position, the Meeting provides the Coordinator with a compensation of \$22 per hour for 8 hours per week. All work of the Coordinator is under the guidance and grateful support of the Youth Religious Education Committee (YREC).

A typical week for the Coordinator often involves:

- Communicating with last week's volunteers and this week's volunteers.
- Writing to families about upcoming events.
- Preparing and delivering materials for Sunday's program.
- Recruiting volunteers for future Sundays.
- Collaborating with meeting members and clerks around supporting families.
- Updating the attendance and budget as needed.
- Some reflection and reporting about the program
- Research into the activities of other meetings and regional offerings

While not a requirement, previous coordinators have found that attending Meeting for Worship at least twice per month supports them by helping to build and maintain important connections. Finally, both the committee and the coordinator recognize that the lasting effects of the COVID 19 pandemic continue to require a spirit of exploration and adaptation in this work.

Responsibilities:

1. Greet new families with children.
2. Build relationships with families and connect them to the meeting community. Inform families about nursery care, youth program, annual events, fall clean-up, and regional Quaker programming.
3. Support the Youth Program and Nursery
 - a. Coordinate volunteers and support the Nursery Coordinator, providing plans, materials, snacks, substitutes and problem-solving.
 - b. Maintain attendance records and contact info for families
 - c. Keep a record of the general activities of the youth program
 - d. Maintain spaces used by children, and tend to safety and tidiness
 - e. Ensure organization of the youth program materials
 - f. Ensure that background checks are conducted for all volunteers
4. Attend monthly YREC meetings
5. Coordinate with the clerk to provide a report about YRE activities Meeting for Business (MFB) several times per year
6. Coordinate PFM scholarship applications for youth programming like Friends Camp, Friends School camp, Youth Retreats with families and the committee.

To provide understanding of how the Coordinator's role fits into the YRE team, the following descriptions are also provided:

Teacher and Youth Program Volunteer responsibilities:

- Welcome and work with children and youth during First Day youth programs.
- Use tools provided by YRE Coordinator, and add on as inspired.
 - Tools include: games, songs, crafts, and books to support spiritual experience and an understanding of Quaker life.
- Communicate with YRE coordinator about issues of concern.
- Report to the Coordinator about attendance.

Committee member responsibilities:

- In collaboration with the YRE team and Meeting: offer a general structure of First Day School and coordination between the age groups
- Attend Meeting for Business (clerk and coordinator)
- In coordination with YRE team, support the creation of materials, curricula, and lesson plans
- Provide coverage for teacher and coordinator responsibilities during absences as needed
- Recruit teachers and coordinators
- Oversee the needs of the nursery
- Provide relevant information to the PFM newsletter (clerk)
- Ensure safe, clean environments that meet child safety guidelines
- Keep committee documents organized and accessible (clerk)
- Plan and carry out our yearly all-meeting events focused on youth
- Support the Meeting to incorporate youth into the meeting's other work and events

Nursery Care Provider Needed

The Youth Religious Education Committee of Portland Friends Meeting continues to seek a Nursery Care Provider to begin in the new year.

The Nursery Care Provider provides childcare every Sunday from 10:15 am to 12:15 pm for infants and children too young (generally 5 years old and under) to attend the youth program of Portland Friends Meeting.

To offer a consistent face to the Meeting's youngest children, applicants who can commit to working most Sundays are preferred, but other arrangements will be considered. Prior participation in Portland Friends Meeting is not a requirement of the position, and Friends are encouraged to share the details of this position with appropriate people in their wider community who may be interested. Further details can be found in the attached job description.

Cover letters, resumes, and questions should be directed to Bart Czyz (YREC clerk) at btczyz@gmail.com.

What we know about Fellowship Events: Report from Welcoming.

If your talents can be put to use with any of the following events, please contact the organizer and Volunteer!

- Jessica Eller is organizing Game Night on Jan 5. Save the date! Time 5:30 to 8:30 pm at the Meetinghouse. Friends will be asked to sign up ahead of the event. Pizza will be ordered after people arrive and contribute to costs. Jessica needs people to bring games in.
- RETREAT: Maggie Fiore and Jessica Eller are organizing the Ad Hoc Retreat Committee. (Two additional people to be named.) The date has not been determined, but February - March has been suggested. Place is not yet determined. Jessica and Maggie would like to have the Contra Dance as part of the Retreat. but If that doesn't happen. it will likely happen in the fall and an organizer would need to come forward.
- Arts and Crafts Saturday in April: Kathy Beach is the organizer of this event along with Julie de Sherbinin; Kathy and Julie would appreciate having an additional helper. They have two workshop leaders and are looking for more Friends to share their talents with small groups.
- Ice Fishing: When ice is thick enough; time and place to be announced. Colin Bussiere Nichols will announce and organize; a helper would be good.
- Contra Dance in the fall: Nothing in place yet. Would you like to organize one? Contact Welcoming.

Friends School of Portland: Strategic Plan



**FRIENDS SCHOOL
OF PORTLAND**
inquiry • reflection • action



Pictured above: At Friends School...we like to dance! (left) Contradance Night held in 2013 on Mackworth Island; (middle) Contradance held at Broadturn Farm; (right) dance party in Rachel's 3-4 class last spring!

Dear Families and Friends,

Friends School of Portland is excited to share our [Strategic Plan: Rooting Down, Branching Out](#), the product of a year of dedicated discussion and collaboration. Our plan builds on our strengths and pushes us in a direction of connection, clarity, support, and space. I look forward to talking with you about our vision for the future of Friends School of Portland over a potluck dinner.



We hope you will join us at FSP for a contradance and potluck on Saturday, January 27.

Bring your dancing shoes, your instruments, and delicious dishes of food to share!

4:30 pm -- Potluck

5:15 pm -- Strategic Plan Remarks

5:30 pm -- Music and Contradance

7:00 pm -- Last Song!

FSP board members and I look forward to sharing more about our plan and hearing your thoughts and questions. And we can't wait to enjoy the music, conversation, and dancing with one another!

With excitement,

Lise Wagner P'15, Board clerk

Learn more about the 5-year strategic plan by visiting FSP's website here:
<https://www.friendsschoolportland.org/strategicplan>

Other News from Portland Friends School

1. Friends School Open House and Application

Friends School is looking forward to a winter Admissions Open House on Saturday, January 6. The application for the 2024-2025 school year is open and online! Interested in learning more? Reach out to Enrollment Director, Megan Campbell by email: megan@friendsschoolportland.org



2. Friends School Summer Camp

Friends School Summer Camp registration opens on Thursday, February 1. You can email laura@friendsschoolportland.org to make sure you know how to register...spaces fill quickly!

Friends General Conference Gathering

This is the first Gathering in 50 years in the Philadelphia area, so planning ahead is a good idea.

Friends General Conference, with Divine guidance, nurtures the spiritual vitality of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) by providing programs and services for Friends, meetings, and seekers. The Gathering is a week of Quaker worship, workshops, and community for all ages. Friends come together from across the US and Canada (and sometimes further) to deepen our connection to one another and the Spirit. The Gathering is typically held on a college campus in late June/early July, and location changes from year to year.

Gathering attendees range from newborns to elders in their 90s, and include both long-time Friends (mostly from the unprogrammed, liberal tradition), and those newer to Quakerism. In structure, it's part conference and part family camp. In content, it provides an abundance of opportunities to learn about Quakerism and to foster your spiritual life — and to have fun together.



Advent Greetings to Velasco (first week)

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Velasco,

Our prayers and love to you this first weekend of Advent. Tomorrow we will light the candle of Hope – remembering Mary's song where she says that the new life she is bringing into the world will "lift up the lowly and fill the hungry with good things." Today our community is witnessing to this hope in two ways. During the day, there is a peace vigil in a store that sells assault rifles proclaiming the vision of our country free of these weapons and the fear that they represent. This evening Portland Meeting will gather for the annual advent celebration in which the children walk a spiral path carrying a candle and lighting their candle in the center, walk back and choose where to place their candle along the path.



In this advent season, as we hope for the light that is already here and wait for the miracle that has already happened, may we each carry our candle of hope and place it where it will illuminate the path.
In Love

Queridas hermanas y hermanos de Velasco

Nuestras oraciones y amor para ustedes este primer fin de semana de Adviento. Mañana encenderemos la vela de la Esperanza, recordando el canto de María donde dice que la nueva vida que ella trae al mundo "levantará a los humildes y colmará de bienes a los hambrientos". Hoy nuestra comunidad es testigo de esta

esperanza de dos maneras. Durante el día se realiza una vigilia de paz en una tienda que vende rifles de asalto proclamando la visión de nuestro país libre de estas armas y el miedo que representan. Esta tarde, la reunión de Portland se reunirá para la celebración anual de Adviento en la que los niños caminan por un sendero en espiral llevando una vela y encendiendo su vela en el centro, regresan y eligen dónde colocar su vela a lo largo del sendero.

En esta temporada de Adviento, mientras esperamos la luz que ya está aquí y esperamos el milagro que ya sucedió, que cada uno de nosotros lleve nuestra vela de esperanza y la coloque donde ilumine el camino.

En Amor

--

portlandfriendsmeeting.org

Advent Greetings to Velasco (second week)

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Velasco,

Tomorrow we will light the second candle of Advent – the Candle of Peace. In Maine this is a season of darkness and cold. We will have only 9 hours of sunlight today; there is a little snow on the ground. I imagine Joseph and Mary travelling to Bethlehem through the dark. Today on that road they would be travelling through a war zone. Peace seems to be more of a dream than a promise. And I am reminded that God often speaks to us through our dreams. May we know that we are all travelling on that long road in the same direction with peace in our hearts with the certainty that Spirit is with us and the kingdom is before us.

With Love

Queridas hermanas y hermanos de Velasco,

Mañana encenderemos la segunda vela de Adviento: la Vela de la Paz. En Maine ésta es una estación de oscuridad y frío. Hoy tendremos sólo 9 horas de luz solar; hay un poco de nieve en el suelo. Me imagino a José y María viajando a Belén en la oscuridad. Hoy por ese camino estarían transitando por una zona de guerra. La paz parece ser más un sueño que una promesa. Y recuerdo que Dios a menudo nos habla a través de nuestros sueños. Que sepamos que todos estamos recorriendo ese largo camino en la misma dirección con paz en el corazón desde la certeza de que el Espíritu está con nosotros y el reino delante de nosotros.

Con Amor

--

portlandfriendsmeeting.org

Holiday Greetings from Ramallah Friends School

From Ramallah Friends School to the world, we share our version of the timeless “Little Drummer Boy.” Our hearts come together in prayer for the safety of the children in Gaza. May our shared prayers echo for peace and justice, weaving a tapestry of hope that goes beyond borders, embracing the shared humanity we all hold dear.

<https://youtu.be/ZsEbIVjyOGg>



Spiritual Journey to Peru

Join us for a 15-day transformative journey from February 18 to March 3, 2024, exploring Peruvian shamanism and spirituality in Cuzco and Puno. Led by Quero Shamans, we'll conduct ceremonies at Naupa Iglesia and experience a vision quest in Machu Picchu with Aymaran Shaman Silvia Calisaya. Explore the Sacred Valley, Andean Mountains, and Incan sites like Sacsayhuaman for cleansing rituals. Transition to Puno for water ceremonies at



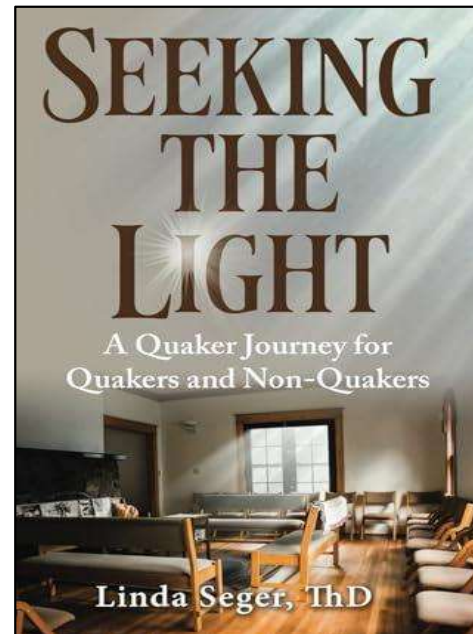
Lake Titicaca, visiting Aymara sacred sites and engaging in an Ayni Ceremony with a local community. Conclude in Arequipa's Colca Canyon, home of Peruvian Condors, with a final ceremony. At our home base in Ollantaytambo we will offer daily Kundalini and restorative yoga, fostering relaxation and transformation.

View a 4 minute informational slide show and learn more here:

<https://incaroots.net/15-day-spiritual-journey-to-peru/what-to-expect-in-cuzco-puno/journey-to-peru-informational-slideshow/>

Our Friend Linda Seger

has just published her newest book, *Seeking the Light*. Linda is a long-time Quaker who has integrated her Quaker values as a professional in the scriptwriting and film industry for 40 years. This practical and accessible book deepens the faith of Quakers and introduces non-Quakers to Quaker testimonies, practices, and values.



Holiday Hats from the Meeting's yarn box, bound for [MAINENEEDS.ORG](https://maineneeds.org)



Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) Urges Action on Palestine-Israel

The U.S. Must Act to De-Escalate the Violence in Israel and Palestine

We are heartbroken by the recent violence in Israel and Gaza. As Quakers, we deeply mourn the loss of all lives and pray for those who have lost loved ones due to this latest escalation. We unequivocally condemn Hamas' attacks and inhumane treatment of civilians and call for the immediate release of all hostages. We also condemn the indiscriminate and violent Israeli response that has already claimed hundreds of civilian lives.

More war and weapons won't bring peace. In the face of growing violence, lawmakers must:

- Work to de-escalate this situation by calling for restraint, ceasefire, de-escalation, and respect for international law.
- Protect lives—those of the Israeli hostages and the roughly 1 million children who live in Gaza.
- Address the root causes underlying this explosion of violence, including decades of institutionalized oppression and collective punishment of Palestinians through brutal military occupation and a 16-year Gaza blockade.

Urge Congress to call for an immediate ceasefire, de-escalation, and restraint to prevent further civilian harm in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories.

Congressional staff tell us personalized letters are most impactful. Customize your message to reflect your experience. Email Lobby@fcnl.org for tips.

Address Service Requested

Portland Friends Meeting
1837 Forest Ave
Portland, ME 04103

Next newsletter deadline:

Wednesday, January 17, 11:58pm

submissions: dhingston@comcast.net

Please note "PFM Newsletter" in the subject line.

