

# Portland Friends Meeting Newsletter

## Third Month 2024

**Meeting for Worship:** 10:00 am Sundays (childcare available)

**Note recent change in time to 10:00 am.**



1837 Forest Avenue  
Portland, Maine 04103  
[portlandfriendsmeeting.org](http://portlandfriendsmeeting.org)  
207-200-6544

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## Connections

Clerk

Peter Woodrow

[coclerks@portlandfriendsmeeting.org](mailto:coclerks@portlandfriendsmeeting.org)

Recording Clerks

[PFM.recordingclerk@gmail.com](mailto:PFM.recordingclerk@gmail.com)

Treasurer, Contributions

Jane Mullen, 215-421-5257

[jmmaine@aol.com](mailto:jmmaine@aol.com)

Treasurer, Operating Account

Dick Stratton, 860-539-5040

[rstratton@megalink.net](mailto: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](mailto:stefaniefairchild@yahoo.com)

Childcare Coordinator

[to be determined]

[pfm-nursery-coordinator@gmail.com](mailto:pfm-nursery-coordinator@gmail.com)

Religious Education

Adult: Mary Tracy [marytracy126@gmail.com](mailto:marytracy126@gmail.com)

Genna Ulrich [dgennajulrich@gmail.com](mailto:dgennajulrich@gmail.com)

Youth: Bart Czyz [btczyz@gmail.com](mailto:btczyz@gmail.com)

Teen Coordinator

Heather Denkmire

[pfmteens@heatherdenkmire.net](mailto:pfmteens@heatherdenkmire.net)

Use of the Meetinghouse

[meetinghouse@portlandfriendsmeeting.org](mailto:meetinghouse@portlandfriendsmeeting.org)

e-group membership

[pfm.email.list.owner@gmail.com](mailto:pfm.email.list.owner@gmail.com)

Newsletter submissions

David N. Hingston [dhingston@comcast.net](mailto:dhingston@comcast.net)

Address/directory changes

[directory@portlandfriendsmeeting.org](mailto:directory@portlandfriendsmeeting.org)

The ultimate touchstone of friendship is not improvement, neither of the self nor of the other; the ultimate touchstone is witness, the privilege of having been seen by someone and the equal privilege of being granted the sight of the essence of another, to have walked with them and to have believed in them, and sometimes just to have accompanied them for however brief a span, on a journey impossible to accomplish alone.

~ David Whyte, *Consolations*

## Calendar

### Upcoming Events

- |                                  |   |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Wednesday, Mar. 13, 10:30 am     | Rally for Housing, Augusta                      |
| Friday, Mar. 15, 9:00 am         | Wabanaki Alliance Workshop                      |
| Tuesday, Mar. 19, 6:00 pm        | Zoom call with Friends Fiduciary                |
| Sunday, April 7, Rise of Meeting | Meeting for Worship for the Conduct of Business |
| Friday, April 26, 5:30 pm        | Last day to donate items for FSP Auction        |
| Monday, May 6, 5:00 pm           | FSP Live Auction and Kick-Off                   |
| June 30-July 6                   | Friends General Conference, Haverford PA        |

### Every Month

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| Every Sunday, 10:00 am                    | Meeting for Worship* at the Meetinghouse and separately on Zoom   |
| Third Sundays, 8:45 am                    | Early Meeting for Worship at the Meetinghouse   |
| Second & Fourth Sundays, 10:00 am         | First Day School for high schoolers   |
| Every Wednesday, 7:00 pm                  | Young Adult Friends Mid-Week Worship<br>email <a href="mailto:yaf@portlandfriendsmeeting.org">yaf@portlandfriendsmeeting.org</a> for location |
| Every Weekday, 10:30 am                   | Meeting for Worship on Zoom*  |
| First Thursdays & Third Tuesdays, 7:00 pm | Meeting for Healing on Zoom*  |

\*contact Clerk for online Meeting for Worship links



**SECOND DRAFT**

**Portland Friends Meeting  
Minutes of Meeting for Worship for the Conduct of Business  
March 3, 2024**

Peter Woodrow, Clerk  
David N. Hingston recording

Members and attenders of Portland Friends Meeting gathered in worship just before 12:00 noon. Some forty-five Friends gathered, in person at the Meeting House and remotely via Zoom. Clerk Peter Woodrow opened by presenting this reading, from Thomas R. Kelly's *A Testament of Devotion*:

There is an experience of the Eternal breaking into time, which transforms all life into a miracle of faith and action. Unspeakable, profound, and full of glory as an inward experience, it is the root of concern for all creation, the true ground of social endeavor. This inward Life and the outward Concern are truly one whole and, were it possible, ought to be described simultaneously. But linear sequence and succession of words is our inevitable lot and compels us to treat separately what is not separate: first, the Eternal Now and the Temporal Now, and second, the nature and ground of Social Concern.

Peter next offered the following Land Acknowledgement:

*Today we meet on unceded land of the Abenaki people. Rather than read an elaborated statement, let us settle into worship and a form of guided meditation, prompting us to stop and reflect, to commune with this place and our Abenaki friends past and present.*

*Sit with your feet firmly on the ground. Sense the good wood that has stood the test of time—likely from ancient trees that stood somewhere nearby.*

*Sense the ground around us and the trees that send roots deeply. Our native friends who walked this land for many generations were connected to the land, its creatures, its life. How can we become so connected?*

*Sense those around you. Sense the souls resting in our cemetery. Feel the presence of the nearby Presumpscot River, and dormant life waiting for spring's renewal.*

*Listen for Spirit moving. What is subliminal, ineffable, beyond words or sounds? What waits deeper still and yearns for connection to the land, to our Abenaki neighbors, to our Friends, to God's creation—and to those who nurtured the land before us?*

Following a period of silent worship, Peter welcomed everyone and noted that Sandi Jensen was in attendance via Zoom from New Zealand. Peter also expressed thanks to Luke Hankins for in-room technical support, Heather Denkmire for online technical support, to Lyn Ballou for holding the Meeting in the Light, and to David Hingston for recording.

## **1. REVIEW OF MINUTES**

The Meeting next **approved** the minutes of Meeting of January 14, 2024 without modification, with thanks to Rob Levin, Recording Co-Clerk.

## 2. STATE OF SOCIETY REPORT 2023

Beth Bussiere-Nichols read the final draft of Portland Friends Meeting State of Society 2023 for Friends' consideration. The report is attached hereto as Attachment 1. Peter noted that the report will be forwarded to New England Yearly Meeting and included in its documentation of the spiritual health of the Yearly Meeting. The Meeting approved the report enthusiastically, with gratitude to Beth and Mags Fehr for their efforts in pulling together the report.

## 3. PROPOSED DONATION FROM THE SHARED WITNESS FUND TO AFSC WORK IN GAZA

Peter first cued up two questions to guide discussion of the matter:

1. Is the proposed donation something the Meeting should do?
2. If so, are Friends comfortable with the proposed amount?

The ensuing discussion was wide-ranging and included the following considerations, among many others:

- *How will AFSC use the contribution?* We can designate a particular purpose, or defer to AFSC in its judgement. AFSC has extensive experience, having distributed relief in two world wars and numerous other conflicts. They are there; they know where the need is and how best to get help to those in need.
- In support of the proposed donation, one Friend quoted Isaiah 58:10-12: “If you pour yourself out for the hungry and satisfy the desire of the afflicted, then shall your light rise in the darkness and your gloom be as the noonday.”
- *What should the scope of our donation be? Should it be limited to Gaza? Should our donation be limited to humanitarian aid? Or should it include advocacy and/or other potential uses?* Friends were very impressed by the AFSC representative who met with us via Zoom. We saw that AFSC is very strategic in its work, and knows better than we do how to be effective.
- A generous donor to AFSC is currently offering a match for up to \$50,000. We may be able to leverage our gift to prompt offerings by other Friends or funding sources.
- We should make a concerted effort to publicize our decision. Margie Schoeller, Andy Grannell and Mary Tracy volunteered to undertake outreach.
- The need is immediate—people are starving as we speak. Every day matters—we need to act now.
- The proposed amount—\$75,000—is a significant portion of our Shared Witness Fund. Let us use the proposed donation as a challenge to ourselves, to make further donations as individuals and families to AFSC and other organizations for those in need, and to replenish the Shared Witness Fund.
- While it feels good to do things together, we must be careful not to become self-congratulatory, not to turn away from ongoing need and suffering throughout the world.
- One Friend spoke movingly of the conviction that we are complicit in the violence through the actions of our government, while another said she might feel called to nonviolent action. Our work is not finished with this donation..

After several draft minutes and amendments were considered, the final minute was **approved**:

Portland Friends Meeting is in unity to make a donation of \$75,000 from our Shared Witness Fund to the American Friends Service Committee to support humanitarian assistance to the people of Gaza and the West Bank. While our priority is to address urgent human needs, we trust AFSC will use these funds wisely to confront the full challenges of the situation.

In conjunction with this donation, we acknowledge that our work is not done, and we remain complicit in violence through the actions of our government. We challenge ourselves and each other to reach deeply to contribute what we can to address humanitarian needs, and to use our gifts of every sort for the expression of Love in the face of horror, which may involve actions that confront the policies and funding that perpetrate violence.

#### **4. CONSIDERATION OF A STATEMENT REGARDING THE WAR IN GAZA**

Ann Dodd-Collins and Paula Rossvall had been working to produce a statement of our deep concerns about the situation in Gaza and the West Bank, responding in part to requests from the Friends Committee on National Legislation that local Friends meetings speak out. A draft statement had been circulated, and Friends offered suggestions for changes or additions, including notice of the donation decision we just made. The Meeting **approved** its Statement of Portland Friends Meeting regarding War in Gaza, in principle, asking the clerk to work with others to produce a final version to be circulated for any additional comments. The final statement is included as Attachment 2.

#### **5. TREASURER'S REPORT**

In light of the extensive discussion thus far and other agenda items, the Treasurer's Report was deferred until Fourth Month. Meanwhile, a link to an update for January and February is available [here](#). The Treasurers are considering a possible change in the schedule for financial reporting to the Meeting to better align with quarterly activities.

#### **6. TRAVEL MINUTE**

Three Friends, Maggie Fiori, Jay O'Hara, and Genna Ulrich, have felt called to travel and visit other Friends in Maine, and have asked for the Meeting's support. Ministry and Counsel has approved a draft Traveling Minute for the Meeting's discernment. It is included as Attachment 3.

In discussion and in response to questions, the following considerations were raised:

- Ann Dodd-Collins offered to serve as an elder for the group.
- Friends explored the use of the term “gospel love” in the minute, noting that it can mean “good news” or “holy,” and also refers to the gospel texts. While some Friends were uncomfortable with this usage, there was not unity to change the wording at this time..
- The meaning of a traveling minute must be true to the intent of the travelers.

Friends asked that the travelers come back and report to the Meeting on what they have learned, and that the clerk of the receiving meeting record a response on the travel minute, as tradition suggests. The Meeting then **approved** the Traveling Minute.

## **7. MECHANISM FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SUFFERINGS FUND**

As a follow-up to the Meeting's approval of the creation of a Sufferings Fund in January, Ministry and Counsel has discussed the best way to implement the Fund. The draft Proposal for a PFM Fund for Suffering, including a clear process for decision making to release funds, was brought forward for Friends' consideration and is attached hereto as Attachment 4. After brief discussion, the Proposal was approved. Friends interested in serving on the advisory group for the Fund should contact Mags Fehr or Maggie Fiori, Co-Clerks of the Ministry and Counsel Committee.

## **8. CLOSING WORSHIP**

Following a period of silence, the Meeting then rose at about 2:00 pm, to meet again for the Conduct of Business on April 7, 2024, according to Divine will.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

1. Portland Friends Meeting State of Society 2023
2. Statement of Portland Friends Meeting regarding War in Gaza
3. Traveling Minute for Maggie Fiori, Jay O'Hara, and Genna Ulrich
4. Proposal for a PFM Fund for Suffering

Attachment 1

**Portland Friends Meeting State of Society 2023**  
Final Draft for consideration at Meeting for Business, March 3, 2024

*<sup>1</sup>Unless God builds the house, those who build it labor in vain.*

*Unless God watches over the city, the watchman stays awake in vain.*

*<sup>2</sup>It is in vain that you rise up early and go late to rest, eating the bread of anxious toil;  
for God grants sleep to Their beloved. (Psalm 127)*

**God is at work building our Beloved Community as a more resilient open place.** As separated as we were, we seem to be coming back together. This has been a year of big transitions, including a long discernment process about how to use our resources. Now there is openness and a forward-looking shared sense of responsibility. We know that God is the architect, as Friends speak of finding worship more comforting, spacious and filled with Light.

We began the year with masks required in the Meetingroom. Over the summer, our outdoor Meetings for Worship at Friends School of Portland created a generous invitation to return to worship in person. In the fall we transitioned to masks welcome. Most people are unmasked. So many of us are finally face to face again. Our weekly Meeting for Worship continues to be hybrid, as we have folks every week who need to attend on Zoom. We find we cannot not do hybrid.

Throughout the year, many Friends have been sustained by and immensely grateful for small groups such as Faithfulness Groups, early, midweek, and daily meetings for worship, as well as by their individual relationships with supportive Friends. A reenergized Welcoming Committee has sparked interest in the many ways we might build community. A talent show reminded us that we can connect with no agenda, just a chance to be with one another and share.

**God is at work in our financial discernment.** We began still in labor, after more than a year and a half, discerning how best to use our resources. The process was a huge commitment, often leading to the feeling that our differences were insurmountable. For example, the abundance perspectives and responsible stewardship perspectives are often in tension. All labored. A steering committee wrestled and designed discussions, regular committees calculated needs, and particularly, Finance Stewardship Committee did extra work. The whole Meeting community read materials and attended extra meetings each month. Our work together was difficult but also joyful.

Last spring, we finally reached unity to divide our invested fund into five separate funds: Shared Witness Fund, Cemetery Fund, Youth Religious Education Fund, Capital Reserve Fund, and General Meeting Fund. The latter four funds meet our internal community commitments. Shared Witness Fund is money freed for discernment about how it might be put to work in the world. We have already used our Shared Witness Fund locally to buy beds and dividers for Family Promise and internationally to help Indigenous Bolivian Friends fight a climate-driven hunger crisis.

**God worked with us as we did repair work during our time of community reflection from June to September.** Friends' experiences with the Meeting, with the pandemic, and with the world at large have varied, but most agree it has been challenging and exhausting. We devoted several meetings to invite God in to help us heal the tension in Meetings for Business and other Friends' gatherings. Some parts of the conversation have been dominated by voices of certain parts of the community, some parts by others. This conflict has been particularly painful for some of us. One Friend noted how hard we are on each other, even though we have so much to share.

With gratitude to Spirit, there is now broader involvement within the community. We have had a reset in which a number of Friends who had stepped out of the community conversation have stepped back in. We view our own perspectives as more robust, more malleable, and less precious. There is more talking with each other and less talking about each other.

**What might God teach us through the life of Kate Potter?** After years of decline, we lost a beloved longtime member. Kate was a lively emphatic and empathetic soul who believed fiercely in the power of the Spirit to heal through active imagination. Her therapy practice included a sand tray and a vast eclectic collection of miniatures.



She used it to invite people to step into difficult spaces and envision new embodied healing. She would be energized by the way we are more tender with one another as we move forward engaging big questions.

**What does Quakerism look like in Portland Friends Meeting in 2024?** We are putting more energy outward and joining with other faith groups. A Gay Pride flag is hanging in our front window and many participated in the Pride Parade. We approved minutes recognizing Maine tribes' sovereignty and calling for support for asylum seekers from the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Following the mass shooting in Lewiston, Friends have led prayer circles at a local gun dealer and in Augusta to protest gun sales and to promote new laws countering gun violence. Some of us are giving prayerful witness during the trauma of clearing encampments of unhoused individuals. We hosted three Family Promise families in our meetinghouse for two weeks. Members of Meeting are working in monthly food distribution of culturally appropriate food to New Mainers, and some at Family Promise's new static shelter. Our New Mainer neighbors could help us learn more about how to live with open hearts and open hands.

We began the year very divided about how to participate in a sister meeting relationship with Velasco Friends Church in Cuba. A traveling delegation to Velasco returned to report on the physical poverty and spiritual riches they experienced. The Velasco sister relationship in partnership with Durham Meeting was approved and reaffirmed. Financial support to Velasco Sister Meeting Fund will be part of our budget for the next two years. We found that we as a whole community can support work that speaks deeply at this time to a group within our community.

**What does support of ministry look like in Portland Friends Meeting at this time?** What should the process be for naming ministries? What language do we use as Spirit breaks forth in individuals, when some friends have come to Quakerism hurt, even in some cases abused, by those with the title "minister," while for others the language of ministry is a reclaiming of vital Quaker roots?

**Who do we welcome as our teachers?** Our Youth Religious Education Committee has gained insight into how the pandemic affected the involvement of youth and their families in our Meeting. This is based on input about the past four years and the last two decades. Many youth continue "in the orbit" of the life of the Meeting, but few engage in youth activities. The spirit of experimentation forced upon us by the pandemic continues to inspire new ideas as we seek to begin gathering our youth into community again. We are committed to funding our youth program positions as they evolve, but financial support is not enough. We are especially challenged by the absence of adults led to claim a group of youth as their teacher.

**What is rising in Meeting?** This is the opening query used by our new clerk's support group. It has been our practice for decades to have co-clerks work with overlapping terms of service. This spring the nominating committee reached out to many without finding a new co-clerk. We were led to experiment by having a single clerk whose committee of support includes a range of voices. Our Meeting's Afterthoughts group where all are welcome is a place to hear what is rising. This is a space where we can begin from our shared experience of worship each Sunday and use that as a starting place for deeper exploration together.

**God is at work building our Beloved Community as a more resilient open place.** Our path forward will require risk-taking, vulnerability, listening, and suspension of judgement and ego. We can't say, "I love you and you should change in this particular way." With Spirit's help we can share unconditional love, the only kind of love that can be transformational. Some have suggested that we move forward centered on queries and reflection, inviting God to help us put aside the bread of anxious toil as we look at big questions. We begin with those before us: Who do we welcome as our teachers? What does Quakerism look like in Portland Friends Meeting in 2024? What is rising in Meeting?

Kate Potter would delight that this fall at last we are again singing before Meeting for Worship.

*My life flows on in endless song, above earth's lamentation.  
I hear the real, though far-off hymn that hails a new creation.  
Thro' all the tumult and the strife, I hear the music ringing;  
It finds an echo in my soul, how can I keep from singing?*

Attachment 2



## Portland Friends Meeting

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### **Statement of Portland Friends Meeting regarding War in Gaza**

Approved by Portland Friends Meeting, March 3, 2024

As Quakers we believe that there is that of the Divine in each and every person and therefore every life is precious. We are horrified by the violence and loss of life in Israel and Palestine. We feel the killing and inhumane treatment of civilians is abhorrent, whether perpetrated by the government of Israel, Hamas or other forces in the area. We recognize that we are complicit in the perpetuation of violence and abuse through the actions and policies of our government.

This crisis that began in 1948 when 700,00 Palestinians were displaced to make room for the state of Israel is complicated, but all people need a safe place to live where they can access food, shelter, healthcare, work, and education. We believe the violence we are witnessing today is sowing seeds for future conflict. Only with a ceasefire can we start to address the root causes of this and future conflicts.

This war has escalated violence in neighboring Middle East countries, disrupting lives of more innocent civilians. International laws have been broken. Here at home, we stand against the surge of Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia in our local communities and throughout the United States.

We urge the US government and our representatives in Congress:

- To call for a permanent ceasefire;
- To fully support delivery of humanitarian aid in the area;
- To negotiate the release of all the Israeli and Palestinian hostages;
- To work diplomatically to address de-escalation in the region; and
- To stop supporting the Israeli military with funding and with weapons manufactured in the U.S.

In response to this horrific situation, Portland Friends Meeting made the following decision on March 3, 2024:

Portland Friends Meeting found unity to make a donation of \$75,000 from our Shared Witness Fund to the American Friends Service Committee to support humanitarian assistance to the people of Gaza and the West Bank. While our priority is to address urgent human needs, we trust AFSC will use these funds wisely to confront the full challenges of the situation.

In conjunction with this donation, we acknowledge that our work is not done, and we remain complicit in violence through the actions of our government. We challenge ourselves and each other to reach deeply and contribute what we can to address humanitarian needs, and to use our gifts of every sort for the expression of Love in the face of horror, which may involve actions that confront the policies and funding that perpetrate violence.



Attachment 3



## Portland Friends Meeting

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March 3, 2024

To Friends Meetings in Maine Dear Friends,

Maggie Fiori, Jay O'Hara, and Genna Ulrich, beloved members of Portland Friends Meeting of New England Yearly Meeting, are traveling in gospel love among Friends in Maine. We have prayerfully considered their call to travel and visit with Friends and knit connections among us. We believe them to be genuinely called to this work and trust you will benefit, as we have, from their listening, insights and from the experience of faithful time together.

Approved and minuted at Meeting for Business, March 3, 2024

We commend these Friends to your care and hospitality,

Peter Woodrow

Clerk, Portland Friends Meeting

## Attachment 4

### **Proposal for a Portland Friends Meeting Fund for Sufferings**

Fund Approved by Meeting for Business, January 14, 2024; implementation approved March 3, 2024

#### **Introduction**

Friends have been providing financial support to those who suffer due to their faithful witness since at least 1675 when Britan Yearly Meeting established a mechanism to support those Friends who were imprisoned or refusing to pay tithes. Recently, PFM Leadings Grants were made to cover court imposed fines and legal fees for Jay O'Hara and to provide contingency funds to cover bail costs and possible fines for the Interfaith Prayer Circle witness against gun violence this month. The Leadings Committee has indicated their support for establishing a Fund for Suffering and has shared this idea with the Financial Stewardship Committee (FSC).

#### **Definition**

The Fund for Sufferings is available to support Friends who suffer as a result of their faithful witness and is intended to respond to urgent needs precipitated by such witness. The Fund is not to be used for releasing ministers or for other ongoing expenses, except where needed to ensure continuity of support (for example, legal expenses for a prolonged period, when available).

Examples of time-sensitive expenses that might receive support from the Fund for Sufferings include but are not necessarily limited to: legal expenses resulting from nonviolent direct action and holy obedience/civil disobedience, including bail and expenses related to arrest, property damage/loss and incarceration; legal proceedings or financial penalties related to conscientious objection to military service or war tax refusal; and medical expenses resulting from injuries sustained or illness contracted in the course of public witness. We note that it is usual for Friends engaged in public witness to have participated in a clearness process in preparation for the witness.

#### **Eligibility**

The Fund for Sufferings will be available to members and attenders of Portland Friends Meeting, but may be extended to others (for example, others, including people of other faiths, participating in a Quaker-led activity) based on the discernment and discretion of the Clerks of Ministry and Counsel in consultation (see authorization). Friends who are considering an action that risks a financial penalty are advised to notify the co-clerks of M&C in advance, if possible.

#### **Funding Mechanism/Budget**

Our recommendation is to handle the fund similarly to how the Special Needs Fund is budgeted. There would be a \$2,000 expense item in the operating budget, which may be used as the occasion arises.

#### **Authorization/Approval:**

1. Ministry & Counsel will establish a small advisory group of people with relevant experience in the area of witness and action to support discernment regarding uses of the Fund in consultation with the M&C co-clerks.
2. Anyone who wishes to access the Sufferings Fund is invited to contact either of the co-clerks of Ministry & Counsel.
3. When one of the co-clerks receives a request for resources from the Sufferings Fund, they will confer with at least two members of the advisory group to consider the request, aiming for a decision within 24 hours, when the issue is urgent.
4. Ministry & Counsel will report allocations from the Sufferings Fund to the following Meeting for Business, and report yearly on how the Fund has been used and the efficacy of these implementation procedures.

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## **A Conversation About Invested Funds: How Quaker Values Influence Friends Fiduciary's Approach to Investing**

**Tuesday March 19th, 6-7 pm**

**Pre-Registration is Now Available**

Learn from Friends Fiduciary about the ways in which Quaker values influence its approaches to investing and shareholder advocacy. Amy Carr, Friends Fiduciary Senior Shareholder Advocate, and Eston Griffin, Director of Constituent Relations, will offer information and insights, and respond to our questions.

Both Portland Friends Meeting and Friends School of Portland entrust management of their invested funds to Friends Fiduciary. Members of both communities are welcome to participate in this virtual event.

This program will be held via Zoom. **[Click the link below to preregister.](#)**

We hope that many within our community will take advantage of this learning opportunity. Please feel free to contact me at [jmmmaine@aol.com](mailto:jmmmaine@aol.com) with questions.

Sent with appreciation,

Jane Mullen, Co-Treasurer  
On behalf of the Financial Stewardship Committee

PS: If the 6-7 pm timing of this event overlaps with your evening mealtime, please feel free to enjoy your meal while participating in the program!

**Click Here To Register & Receive the Meeting Zoom link:**

<https://us06web.zoom.us/join/zoom/register/tZYkfu-grjMqGdUb5SJVNAlvbhg0EGMww347>

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## **Request from Friends Camp**

Friends Camp is seeking Registered Nurses! FC is looking for RNs who are available to help out on a day or two throughout the summer, or who could work a two-week session in July or August. If you are interested in learning more, please reach out to Friends Camp at [director@friendscamp.org](mailto:director@friendscamp.org) or by calling 207-877-4302.

***Friends Camp is a Quaker youth camp of the New England Yearly Meeting of Friends. We offer overnight camp sessions for youth ages 7-17 on China Lake in South China, Maine.***

## Wabanaki Alliance Workshop

### Wabanaki Alliance workshop opportunity March 15, 9:00 am, Zoom - Deep Canvassing: Conversations That Change Hearts and Minds—Learn tools to build relationships

We know that to ensure successful enactment of LD 2007 An Act to Advance Self-determination for Wabanaki Nations persuading as many legislators as possible to support it is the best insurance to overcome a possible gubernatorial veto.

This training will be useful for anyone who hopes to develop skills and practices to successfully engage in conversations with people who hold different, often opposing, views. Based on the strategies and techniques of the Deep Canvass Institute, this session will explore how this scientifically proven approach works to create mutual understanding grounded in stories and lived experience, rather than relying on debate or talking points.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85970232325?pwd=T2VBVVRXSFBNNEZvaEhRUi9UZFhGQT09>

Meeting ID: 859 7023 2325

Passcode: 312305

About the Facilitator: Katie Beane-Lewis serves as the Director of Justice, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging (JEDI+B) at ReVision Energy. She is an ever-aspiring ally; and an anti-racism, implicit bias, and mindfulness educator who believes in the power of connection and empathy to create a more just and equitable world. Katie is an active participant in the Wabanaki Alliance Tribal Coalition. ReVision Energy belongs to both the Wabanaki Alliance Tribal Coalition and Businesses for Wabanaki Sovereignty.

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## The emergency family shelter at State Street Church in Portland is opening on March 17!

A coalition of faith communities is coming together to make sure approximately 4-5 families with children (20-24 people who have had harrowing journeys) will have a safe, warm place to go each night this winter and spring. Although the model is to have a faith community claim a week and work to fill the 2-3 slots each night, individuals are also welcome. To help with another faith community, sign up at <https://signup.com/client/invitation2/secure/242582212060/false#/invitation>.

The shelter will need 2-3 volunteers per night:

- One person who will cover the 6:00-8:30 pm shift welcoming families as they arrive for the evening (serving with a State Street Church Host)
- Two people who will cover the 8:30 pm to 7:30 am shift.
- Volunteers will stay on cots in an area near the families in the basement shelter area.
- There will be mentoring and orientation as needed so volunteers feel comfortable.
- Volunteers will undergo a simple background check.

If you would like more information, or if you already know you want to help, please contact Ann Dodd-Collins at [doddco@gmail.com](mailto:doddco@gmail.com) or 207-232-9576.



## Rally for Housing

### It's time to rally for housing!

We believe that everyone in Maine should have a safe and affordable place to call home. We have just 8 weeks to push the legislature to fully fund rent relief and shelter.

**Join MEJ and housing partners in Augusta at the state house on March 13th, 10:30 am. Sign up to come!**

Right now, legislators are meeting to negotiate a budget. Together with Gov. Mills, they're going to decide whether Maine will meet our urgent housing needs this year—or not. Over the past year, you've helped us educate, organize and mobilize around this issue with your testimony, letters, emails, calls and raising your voice. Let's show up together once more on March 13th.



Rent relief is a critical unmet need in our response to the housing crisis in Maine. Without rent relief, people are paying 50-75% of their incomes on rent alone, thousands are facing impossible choices, hunger, eviction, and homelessness. While the housing crisis we face in Maine is unprecedented, our state is operating with a surplus of millions. **We have the resources to prevent homelessness and eviction. We have the knowledge about what's needed. But we must act together now!**

**Join us March 13th for a Rally for Housing and let's make our voices loud and clear!**

**[RSVP here!](#)**

Are you with an organization and want to co-sponsor with us? Let us know!

**Here's the agenda for the morning, we'd love to have you there:**

- 10:30-Meet at the State House, Rally with Mainers from across the state, hear from housing justice leaders, media/press will be present
- 11:00-Holding a line of symbolic keys around the capitol, we'll call on lawmakers to fund rent relief ("you hold the keys!").
- 11:30-go inside the state house to catch lawmakers in the hall and share your stories and support for rent relief in the budget.
- 12:00-wrap up the morning with snacks and community

Investments in housing and other basic needs are **how we build a future together**. While we've built a lot of support for rent relief in recent months, the Governor and some in the legislature still need to hear from us!

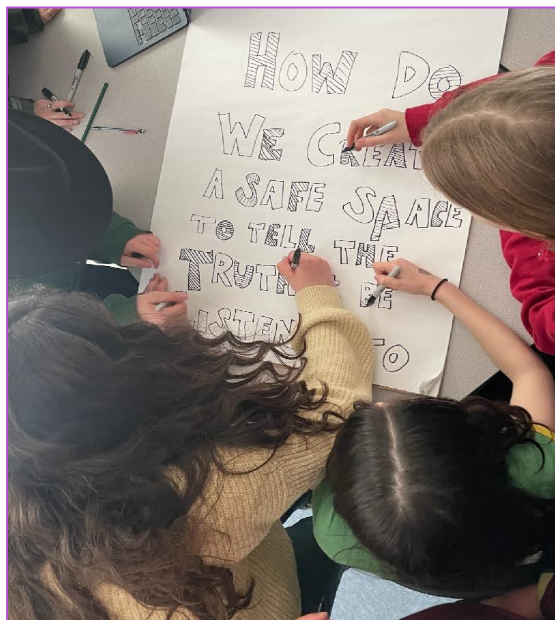
**Let's show up together in solidarity once more to celebrate our growing housing justice community, all that we've accomplished and collectively push the legislature to do more.**

See you then,

Kate Brennan  
Maine Equal Justice



## News from Portland Friends School



*Seventh and eighth-grade students writing the query together for the month of March.*

### 1. Friends School Rolling Admissions:

Friends School of Portland is still accepting students for 2024-2025 school year on a rolling basis for limited openings.

Interested in learning more? Reach out to Enrollment Director, Megan Campbell by email: [megan@friendsschoolportland.org](mailto:megan@friendsschoolportland.org).

### 2. Friends School of Portland Annual Fundraising Auction:

You are invited to the Annual Friends School Fundraising Auction!

This year, the online auction begins Monday, May 5 and runs through Friday, May 10.

After the bidding is over, we hope that you will join us for a celebration at FSP on Saturday, May 11. This will include food, music by the Rodney Mashia Project, kids' activities, and auction item pick-up.

**We hope that you will consider donating to the auction this year!** The auction is Friends School of Portland's most important fundraising event. Proceeds go directly to FSP's Annual Fund, which supports the most essential aspects of FSP, supplements tuition aid, and supports our amazing teachers' salaries and classroom activities. Last year, we had a successful auction because of all the generous donations of items and services.

**Get the creative juices flowing!** Think of a way you love to spend your time, build community and being kind to others - is it sitting around a campfire? Donate a professionally built stone fire pit. Is it taking time to relax with family? Donate a week stay at a cabin. Is it enjoying delicious homemade food? Donate a homemade pie or cake! Is it spending time in nature learning new things? Donate a plant ID or mushroom walk. Is it making art? Donate a photograph, watercolor, or piece of art made by you.

Learn more about this year's auction and how to donate an item on the Friends School of Portland website here: [FSP Annual Auction 2024](#).

Last day to donate an item is Friday, April 26.

Items can be dropped off at Friends School of Portland during the school day (Mon-Friday 8am-5:30 pm) or reach out to Development Director, Brooke Burkett to arrange an alternate pick up on a Sunday at PFM. Reach out with any questions to Brooke Burkett at [brooke@friendsschoolportland.org](mailto:brooke@friendsschoolportland.org), by phone at 207-558-6214, or in person at Meeting.

The poster for the "Let It Shine Annual Fundraising Auction" features a blue background with white and yellow text. At the top, the title "Let It Shine" is written in a large, cursive font, with "Annual Fundraising Auction" in a smaller, sans-serif font below it. To the right of the title is a small graphic of a heart with a string tied around it, and a small circular logo for the Friends School of Portland. Below the title, there are three main sections, each with a heart icon and text: "Live Auction & Kick-Off @ Goodfire Tasting Room + Kitchen Mon., May 6, 5:00 pm - 8 pm", "Bid Online Mon., May 6 - Fri., May 10", and "Celebration & Pick Up Event @ FSP Saturday, May 11, 10 am - 1 pm".



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## Climate Justice Camp

Although we still have a long time before summer returns, it is never too early to start planning, especially when your young people are involved. This year, the BTS Center is thrilled to be offering a Climate Justice Camp for teens in partnership with Pilgrim Lodge on beautiful Lake Cobbosseecontee in West Gardiner, Maine. Registration is now open, so please spread the word to any high schoolers you know!



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## Greetings from the Pastoral Care Committee

We would like you to know more about PFM's Pastoral Care Committee. We are available to provide assistance with a variety of needs, such as

- Rides to Meeting
- Planning and providing food
- Visits at home, hospital, and assisted living
- Prayers for holding you or a loved one in the Light
- Errands when it is difficult to do them on your own

Contact our Clerk, Stefanie Fairchild, at [stefaniefairchild@yahoo.com](mailto:stefaniefairchild@yahoo.com) or 207-272-6500, for assistance, or any other member of the Committee: Kristina MacCormick, Joyce Blossom, Paula Rossvall, or Mags Fehr.



**Address Service Requested**

**Portland Friends Meeting  
1837 Forest Ave  
Portland, ME 04103**

**Next newsletter deadline:**

*Wednesday, April 10, 11:58 pm*

**submissions: [dhingston@comcast.net](mailto:dhingston@comcast.net)**

*Please note "PFM Newsletter" in the subject line.*

