Portland Friends Meeting Newsletter

Fourth Month 2024

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



1837 Forest Avenue Portland, Maine 04103 portlandfriendsmeeting.org 207-200-6544

Contents

Page 1 Calendar

- 2 Minutes of April 7 Meeting for Business
- 5 Att 1: Procedures for Care of Ministry
- 7 Att 2: Report re: Call to Travel in Ministry
- 8 Att 3: Report re: Masking on Third Sundays
- 9 News from Portland Friends School
- 10 Climate Justice Camp
- 11 High Schoolers Calendar Update
- 11 Celebrate Earth Day
- 11 Friends Fiduciary Presentation
- 11 News from Beth King
- 12 Leadings Grant Applications
- 13 Greetings from Pastoral Care Committee

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May you be strengthened by yesterday's rain, walk straight in tomorrow's wind, and cherish each moment of the sun today.

- Ojibwe Saying



Calendar

10:00 am

Every Wednesday, 7:00 pm

Every Weekday, 10:30 am

First Thursdays & Third

Tuesdays, 7:00 pm

	Upcoming Events
Friday, April 26, 5:30 pm	Last day to donate items for FSP Auction
Tuesday, April 30	Deadline for spring applications for Spiritual Leadings grants
Wednesday, May 1, 6:00 pm	Parenting for Peace program at FSP
Sunday, May 5, Rise of Meeting	Meeting for Worship for the Conduct of Business
Monday, May 6, 5:00 pm	FSP Live Auction and Kick-Off
Friday, May 31, time TBD	High Schoolers Gathering
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,	First Day School for high schoolers

*contact Clerk for online Meeting for Worship links

location)

Young Adult Friends Mid-Week Worship

Meeting for Worship on Zoom*

Meeting for Healing on Zoom*

(email yaf@portlandfriendsmeeting.org for



Portland Friends Meeting Minutes of Meeting for Worship for the Conduct of Business April 7, 2024

Peter Woodrow, Clerk Rob Levin, Recording

Members and attenders of Portland Friends Meeting gathered in worship at 11:50 am. Some 24 Friends gathered, in person at the Meetinghouse and remotely via Zoom. Clerk Peter Woodrow opened with a land acknowledgment that reflected on the concept of land ownership embedded in the lyrics of *This Land Is Your Land*. Our Wabanaki neighbors and many peoples around the world did not practice individual land ownership and viewed the land as a common resource to be valued and protected. Peter then followed with these words by Thomas Kelly from Testament of Devotion:

Simplification comes when we "center down," when life is lived with singleness of eye, from a holy Center where the breath and stillness of Eternity are heavy upon us and we are wholly yielded to God. Some of you know this holy, recreating Center of eternal peace and joy and live in it day and night. Some of you may see it over the margin and wistfully long to slip into that amazing Center where the soul is at home with God. Be very faithful to that wistful longing. It is the Eternal Goodness calling you to return Home.

Following a period of silent worship, Peter welcomed all and thanked Rob Levin for serving as Recording Clerk and Beth Bussiere-Nichols for holding the Meeting in the Light.

1. REVIEW OF MINUTES

The Meeting **approved** the minutes of Meeting of March 3, 2024, without modification.

2. TREASURER'S REPORT

Co-Treasurer Dick Stratton presented the Treasurer's Report. Our expenses and income are generally as expected, with no real surprises. Our cash balance is healthy, and maybe even higher than is needed; Dick is looking into whether we can maintain a lower balance.

Following our \$75,000 contribution from the Shared Witness Fund that we approved in March to support AFSC's efforts in Gaza, members and attenders from PFM donated an additional \$13,000 or so.

We received notice of a pending donation from the estate of Kate Potter, mostly likely as an unrestricted gift.

3. MEMBERSHIP CLEARNESS REPORT

Jessica Eller presented on behalf of the Clearness Committee for Membership for Genna Ulrich, which met twice and joyfully recommends approval for membership for them.

We wildly approved, and then took a moment to appreciate Genna's many gifts to the Meeting.

4. NURTURING MINISTRIES PROCESS PROPOSAL

On behalf of Ministry and Council, Fritz presented on the Procedures for Care of Ministry/Witness/Faithful Service document. See Attachment 1. The document was changed slightly to acknowledge the variety of terminology that we bring to this concept. We all have different ways of speaking about the phenomena of being called to doing God's work. Also, we recognize that seeking a Ministry Care Committee is just one of many ways that the Meeting can support or respond to a call. Ministry and Council is asking for the Meeting's approval of what has already been taking place for the past couple years. We currently have five different active Ministry Care Committees.

Some Friends encouraged us to keep in mind a concern that we take on too much, and that Ministry Care Committees require many people to populate them, and there must be a mutual commitment and capacity between the Meeting and the Friend with a Ministry Care Committee. It is hoped that this process document will help guide us in discerning what we can take on together.

One Friend asked that we make the document more explicit that one of the most essential roles of a Ministry Care Committee can be corporate worship and prayer, and not simply problem solving or practical support.

Friends approved the Procedures for Care of Ministry/Witness/Faithful Service, noting that Ministry and Council will add some language to reflect that the work of a Ministry Care Committee is a spiritual discipline, to be approached with prayer and worship.

5. UPDATE REGARDING TRAVELING FRIENDS: BACKGROUND AND SUPPORT FOR OUR MEMBERS

Jessica Eller presented on behalf of a small Zoom gathering at which our three traveling Friends (Genna Ulrich, Maggie Fiori, and Jay O'Hara) shared more about the spiritual underpinnings of this endeavor. See Attachment 2. The spark started on a road trip to a NEYM event, at which our Friends recognized that they shared a spiritual friendship through a long history of worshipping together. They sense a mutual love, accountability and faithfulness, and they feel a bravery and boldness when they worship together. They also have an interest in knowing more about the health and vitality of the larger community of Maine Quakers, and travelling would give them an opportunity to deepen these relationships, especially in small Meetings that do not receive many visitors. And they felt a call to share their experience with us as their home Meeting.

The group also recognized that there is a deeper conversation needed within Portland Friends Meeting about the history of travel minutes and the tradition of traveling Friends. An excerpt from NEYM Faith & Practice regarding travel minutes had been circulated with this in mind (see https://neym.org/faith-and-practice/appendices/gifts-and-leadings-5). The group will plan a potluck gathering in the near future to broaden this discussion to the entire Meeting and to hear about the experiences of those traveling under this concern.

There continued to be some confusion and concern about how to best describe what our traveling Friends are seeking, and what they are offering. We agreed to revisit the travel minute to see if we can change it to better communicate among ourselves and to other Maine Quakers. In some ways, this is a continuation of our rich conversation about what we mean by "ministry."

6. EXPERIMENT WITH MASKING - 3rd SUNDAYS

Mags Fehr presented a proposal from Ministry and Council to make masks expected during Meeting for Worship on the third Sunday of each month through June, in the spirit of ongoing experimentation. See Attachment 3.

The yearning behind this experiment is the idea that it would be wonderful to have everyone in the same room together, as some Friends have not been able to join us for health reasons. One Friend supported the experiment, but did remind us that masks do make it more difficult for those wearing hearing aids, and so there can be somewhat of a tradeoff. Buildings and Grounds is also planning to upgrade our audio/visual technology for hybrid meetings and other purposes. They plan to integrate hearing assistance into the improved set up

The Meeting approved the proposal as presented.

7. CLOSING WORSHIP

We closed with a message celebrating Genna's membership, and a reflection from Genna that they see the heart of membership as serving the Meeting in love.

The Meeting then rose at about 1:05 pm, to meet again for the Conduct of Business on May 5, 2024, according to Divine will.

ATTACHMENTS

- 1. Procedures for Care of Ministry/Witness/Faithful Service
- 2. Report from Friends Gathered to Explore the Call to Travel in Ministry of Jay O'Hara, Maggie Fiori and Genna Ulrich
- 3. Proposal from Ministry & Counsel: Masking on 3rd Sundays for Worship

Attachment 1

Portland Friends Meeting

Procedures for Care of Ministry/Witness/Faithful Service [April 2024]

1. Process for discerning and testing if a Friend is carrying a call to ministry, witness or faithful service.

- a. An individual may identify a strong persistent call or leading in themselves.
- b. Others in the meeting may notice that an individual seems to be experiencing such a call.
- c. The individual, perhaps with encouragement, requests a clearness committee from Ministry and Counsel (M&C) to test their sense of call or leading and to discern if the call or leading should be supported by the meeting.
- d. The clearness committee and the individual meet. In the clearness process the spiritual grounding of the call is explored, the group discerns if the call or leading is public, life changing and rooted in the spiritual life of the individual. The clearness committee also explores how the meeting can care for and support the call or leading.
- e. M&C will share at the Meeting for Business (MfB) that an individual is exploring their sense of call and invite feedback. The clearness committee may meet several times during the process.
- f. The clearness committee reports back to M&C. If there is clarity that the individual is experiencing a persistent spiritual call or leading and that this call should be cared for by the meeting, M&C recognizes this as a ministry or faithful service and will form a Ministry Care Committee (MCC). The clearness committee might discern that there is a persistent call or leading which might be supported in other ways (e.g. joining a faithfulness group, pairing with a seasoned friend for support or in other ways).
- g. If there is not clarity, or if the conclusion is that the sense of call is not seasoned, M&C could continue to meet with the individual to hold and season their condition.
- h. M&C will report to the next Meeting for Business that the ministry has been taken under care and how it is being supported. The report of the clearness committee will be read, and if a MCC has been appointed, the names of those serving on the MCC will be shared. MfB accepts this report.

2. Work of the Ministry Care Committee¹

- a. Broadly, a MCC has four essential functions. 1) to spiritually support the individual in their ministry, witness, or faithful service, 2) to pragmatically support the individual as need arises, 3) to test and hold the individual accountable to the ministry, or to recognize that the ministry no longer has life, and 4) to help the individual regularly report to the meeting.
- b. The MCC generally meets monthly. In urgent circumstances the MCC may meet more frequently. The individual carrying the ministry prepares reflections and updates for each meeting. The MCC may offer queries to guide this preparation. Notes are taken at each meeting.
- c. The MCC and the individual will prepare a report to the M&C annually about what has taken place, its dimensions and current condition. M&C will bring these reports, in whole or in part, to the MfB. These reports will be brought to the April MfB and sent to Falmouth Quarter.
- d. Other ways of sharing the ministry with the meeting may occur as appropriate. A special program, or a project to which the meeting is invited are examples.
- e. The Nurturing Ministries working group of M&C serves as a liaison to the MCC's of the meeting, checking in periodically and responding to issues that may arise. The Nurturing Ministries working group will name new members of a MCC, if some need to rotate off and will ensure that a current list of names of those being supported and care committee members are posted.

¹ Adapted from the Mt Toby Friends Meeting Oversight of Ministry Procedures

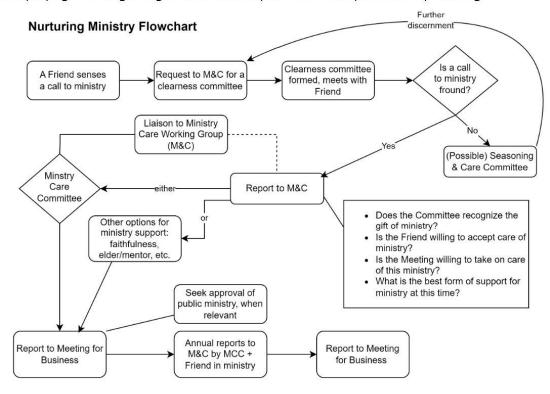
- f. A MCC will be laid down when the ministry or witness no longer has life. This will be reported to the MfB by M&C. Often the individual recognizes that it is time to lay a MCC down and will initiate this. At times the MCC will challenge the individual to consider this.
- g. If an individual who has an active ministry, cared for with an MCC transfers their membership to another meeting, the letter of transfer for their membership will include the request to the new meeting to care tenderly for the ministry.

Relevant quotes:

"When the meeting takes a Friend with a ministry under its care, it does not imply that the Friend is speaking for the meeting as a whole or that the entire meeting is called to that particular witness. It means the meeting recognizes that the Friend is faithful and Spirit-led and, as an individual, is under the weight of a concern. The meeting is also affirming that it is prepared to provide spiritual and practical support as the Friend grows in faithfulness." -NEYM Faith & Practice

"Throughout this process the Meeting has a responsibility to name and support the ministry, and to regularly consider the ongoing truth of the leading. When the leading changes (as it likely will) the Friend, with [her/his Oversight Committee], will undertake discernment on how to proceed with continuing care of the Friend's leading or gift. This may include acknowledgment that the leading has been withdrawn, or that a fallow period for rest and reflection by this Friend and the committee is rightly ordered. The Friend, in turn, takes neither the gift nor the Meeting's support for granted, and is encouraged to share the experience of following God's leading generously since these experiences may be of great value to other Friends." -Fresh Pond Monthly Meeting

"Many Friends have gifts that support our ongoing spiritual work and community, both within and beyond the meeting proper. However, ministry involves three additional qualities: the gifts are public, the gifts are life-changing in the sense that the life is molded to give fullest expression to the gift, and ministry involves constant praying into the gift to give it its fullest expression." -Westport Monthly Meeting



Attachment 2

Report from Friends Gathered to Explore the Call to Travel in Ministry of Jay O'Hara, Maggie Fiori and Genna Ulrich

Presented by Jessica Eller to Meeting for Business, April 7

Following approval of a travel minute during Meeting for Business on March 3 and in order to further explore how the Meeting can best embrace the call to travel, a gathering was held on Zoom with Peter Woodrow, Fritz Weiss, Jessica Eller, Ann Dodd-Collins, Maggie Fiori, Genna Ulrich, and Jay O'Hara on Friday, April 5, 2024. The travelers shared some of their stories of what drew them to travel together.

Some highlights of what was shared:

- On a road trip to a NEYM gathering with those for a concern for Gospel Ministry and Vocal Ministry, Jay, Maggie and Genna held long discussions. They recognized a shared spiritual friendship and a sense of preparation developed through a long history of worshiping together.
- When the three gather in worship with others, they feel a sense of love, accountability and faithfulness in themselves, like feeling braver when the Spirit has a message to be shared, feeling less scared to speak, feeling more grounded in God's presence, a boldness when in worship together. In their spiritual friendship, they push each other to faithfulness.
- They share an interest in knowing the larger community of Quakers in Maine and a sense of hope and possibility by traveling to listen and experience what is alive among Friends Meetings.
- Traveling would offer them an opportunity to: know one another as Quakers in our broader community, to offer a grounding presence and share in deep worship with others; and to nurture love and inspiration with those gathered—to "play in others' pools." The intent is to listen and learn more about the life and health of Quakerism within New England and to share their learning and experiences with Portland Friends Meeting.

Those who met with the travelers recognized a myriad of benefits: for the travelers, for our Meeting and the Meetings being visited. It has the possibility to enrich PFM's soil. There was a shared understanding that the travelers are in God's hands and that our Meeting's spiritual support accompanies them on their journey.

The group agreed to invite others in the Meeting community to join the travelers (possibly for a Sat night potluck) to learn more about what a travel minute is and its history. We would also hear stories from the travelers on how they understand and are living into the travel minute, including experiences from the Meetings they have traveled to so far, and an opportunity for Q&A.

Attachment 3

Proposal from Ministry & Counsel: Masking on 3rd Sundays for Worship

The Friends serving on Ministry and Counsel would like PFM to consider requiring **or** strongly encouraging masks during Meeting for Worship every third Sunday of the month. This would apply to the meeting room only, and would last for a trial period beginning April 21st through June 16th. The hope of this proposal is to foster more wholeness as a community and enrich our worship by having more Friends present with us in person some Sundays.

What has led us to this proposal?

- We know there are at least a handful of members of the meeting (likely more) who cannot attend worship in person unless most are masked. We miss the presence of these Friends in the meetinghouse, and they miss being in person.
- After receiving a specific request to do so, we strongly encouraged masking for a small portion of the recent meeting retreat in order to welcome more Friends in need of that accommodation. The retreat planners received no negative feedback and everyone elected to mask. We witnessed overwhelming joy and gratitude from the Friends who were then able to attend that afternoon and be with the community in person.
- We have noticed how valuable and spiritually nourishing it is to individual
 Friends to spend time in community in person when able. We have also
 witnessed the love and spiritual depth this adds to our worship together.

To keep in mind:

- "More masking = in person attendance" is not true for all Friends- some attend online for other reasons besides mitigating health risk. We continue to hold those Friends in love and care. Their presence on Zoom is a blessing to us.
- Some Friends strongly prefer not to mask or are unable to mask, especially in the summer.
- Some may choose to not attend a masked worship on 3rd Sundays or instead attend the early worship at 9am.
- Masking and Covid are not the only barriers to attending worship. We know this proposal will not solve all of these issues, but we hope it will help.

We bring this proposal to the meeting as another experiment. Like any experiment, we'll try it, notice how it feels and what's different, and hear feedback. M&C will then check back in at our June meeting to discern a way forward.

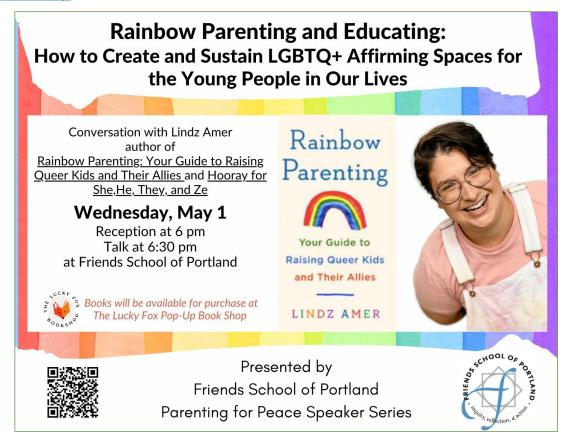
If we move forward with this experiment, we ask all Friends attending worship to help us pay attention to these questions and let us know what you notice:

- What is the quality of our worship on 3rd Sundays?
- Do you feel more or less likely to attend worship when we wear masks and why?
- What is Spirit showing us as we try this out? What truths are we noticing?
- Is this inspiring any other ways to radically welcome people to worship?

News from Portland Friends School

1. Parenting for Peace

Join us for this upcoming Parenting for Peace community event! Free and open to the public. This will be held at FSP with books available to purchase at <u>The Lucky Fox Pop-Up Book Shop</u>.



2. FSP Summer Camp

FSP has a few Chickadee (ages 4-5 yr old) Summer Camp spots that have opened up! Summer Camp runs from 9am-3pm for six weeks beginning Monday, June 17. Reach out to Camp Director Laura Glendening if you are interested. Scholarships are available. Laura can be reached most directly by email: laura@friendsschoolportland.org.

3. Friends School Rolling Admissions:

Friends School of Portland is now accepting students for the 2024-2025 school year on a rolling basis for limited openings. Interested in learning more? Reach out to Enrollment Director, Megan Campbell by emailing megan@friendsschoolportland.org.



FSP Eclipse Day trip to Winslow Park to take in the sunshine while learning about the science behind the anticipated natural phenomenon!

4. 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 6 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 Friend 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's 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, a watercolor, a 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: friendsschoolportland.org/annual-auction

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, by phone 207-558-6214, or in person (at meeting).

Climate Justice Camp

Although we still have some 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!



High Schoolers Calendar Update



We'll be cooking together at the Meetinghouse on Friday May 31 (previously scheduled for May 25, time TBD) and will have our last gathering for this school year on June 2 (we'll likely serve food to the Meeting before Meeting for Worship for the Conduct of Business).

We hope to get together in the summer at least once, too!

Parents of high schoolers, please nudge your kiddos to take the two polls that are in the PFM high schoolers group text so we can settle on a slime-making date with Family Promise children and a walk up Bradbury Mt with them, too. Thank you!

Celebrate Earth Day: Suggested Reads & Ways to Listen

For April, the PFM library has a display of books focused on Earth Day! Stop by and check out our selection.

To frame this theme consider the importance of listening deeply to the environment.

From feeling divine movement on personal and communal levels to the global scale of nature, our environment is woven into how we connect to that which is within and among us.

How do you already listen deeply?

What nudges you to listen in a different way to move into action?"



Friends Fiduciary Presentation

Interested members of Portland Friends Meeting and Friends School of Portland recently met via Zoom with Amy Carr of Friends Fiduciary. The program focused on how Quaker values guide both Friends Fiduciary's investment processes and its shareholder advocacy work.

If you were unable to participate in this informative event, you needn't miss out on the content!

A link to a recording of this educational presentation is included below, reflecting ways in which our funds are pro-actively invested in alignment with Quaker values.

Portland FM SRI Video Recording 3.19.24.mp4

News from Beth King

Beth King, who has reviewed our accounts on an annual basis for many years, has retired. We thank her sincerely for all her good work, and we wish her the best as she pursues other interests.

Leadings Grant Applications

The Leadings Committee is accepting applications for Spiritual Leadings that require some financial support. The deadline for spring applications is April 30th. Guidelines are as follows:

PORTLAND FRIENDS MEETING: LEADINGS GRANT GUIDELINES

CONTACT

Kathy Beach
14 Drew Rd

South Portland, ME 04106 **Phone:** 207-233-2065

Email: <u>katherinegbeach@gmail.com</u>

WHO CAN APPLY?

Active members and attenders of PFM are given priority, but members of the Falmouth Quarter Meetings are also welcome to apply. Preference is given to those applying for the first time.

PURPOSE

Grants must be for a spiritual leading that requires financial support. The applicant should have a strong sense that they are being led by the Spirit to undertake the proposed project or work. They should be able to explain how they arrived at their conviction.

APPLICATION

Application should be made as a written request of approximately two pages plus a budget outline. Your application should include the following:

- 1. A brief description of your project/activity, and your motivation for undertaking this leading. Be as specific as possible about the expected results and how it might benefit Portland Friends Meeting or the wider community.
- 2. Information about yourself, and a sense that the time is right to fully commit to the leading and give it your best effort.
- 3. Budget for the project/activity, including expenses and income from other sources. Please tell the committee of any independent corroboration or benefit you have received in regard to the project.
- 4. Reports on your project should be placed in the Leadings folder in the PFM library, both at the beginning of the project and again at the conclusion of the project, or within a year of the start of your project.

Grant Application Deadlines: 30th of April and 31st of October each year.

CURRENT COMMITTEE

Kathy Beach, Wayne Cobb, Stefanie Fairchild, Sandi Jensen, and Mary Tracy

ESTABLISHED

A bequest was made by Barbie Potter to Portland Friends Meeting in 2009. The Leadings Committee was formed in 2010 for the purpose of financially helping Friends with a leading that is spirit-led. Money for Leadings projects comes from

interest income on the endowment that was so generously left by Barbie Potter upon her passing.

PROJECTS

Grants are generally limited to one-time applications for each project. Grant size is modest, with \$1500 being the average grant awarded. Applicants are encouraged to find matching funds elsewhere and other collaborative funding strategies. Several projects have started through a Leadings grant from Portland Friends Meeting and have expanded with the help of the Obadiah Brown Benevolent Fund and/or the Lyman Fund. There are several good resources in the PFM library, listed below.

- Nudged by the Spirit by Charlotte Lyman Fardelmann
- How Do I Know It's a Leading? by Ruth Hyde Paine, Southeastern Yearly
 Meeting for the Religious Society of Friends Annual Michener Lecture, 1992
- Spiritual Discernment: The Context and Goal of Clearness Committees, by Patricia Loring, Pendle Hill Pamphlet 305, 1992

If you desire a clearness committee regarding your leading, please contact Ministry and Counsel for help with setting this up. Some applicants have formed a support group to help with on-going issues during their project.

Applicants must be available to meet with the Leadings Committee to discuss their application if requested. Applications may be sent via email or US Postal Service.

Requests for 2024 are to be submitted to Kathy Beach at 14 Drew Road, South Portland, ME 04106, or via email at katherinegbeach@gmail.com.

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 <u>stefaniefairchild@yahoo.com</u> 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

Portland Friends Meeting



Wednesday, May 8, 11:58 pm

submissions: <u>dhingston@comcast.net</u>

Please note "PFM Newsletter" in the subject line.

