

Portland Friends Meeting Newsletter

Sixth Month, 2020

Meeting for Worship: 10:30a Sundays; 6pm beginning 6/21/20



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Connections

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“Do you recognize divinely inspired insight? Can you distinguish between divine leadings and your own needs or desires?”

— Query 6, New England Yearly Meeting Interim Faith and Practice

Calendar

June 21 6:00p Meeting for Worship summer schedule begins

July 19 6:00p Summer Meeting for Worship

7:30p Meeting for Worship for the Conduct of Business

Monthly

Every Sunday: 10:30a Meeting for Worship* 6pm beginning 6/21/20

Monday-Friday: 10:30-11a Meeting for Worship
contact David Spector david01@nsrusa.org for details

Second Saturdays: 5-8p Youngish adults potluck
Bart Czyz, btczyz@gmail.com, 207 899 5937

*contact Clerks for online Meeting for Worship links



**NEW ENGLAND
YEARLY MEETING
OF FRIENDS
QUAKERS**

**Portland Friends Meeting is a part
of New England Yearly Meeting.**

**What is New England Yearly
Meeting?**

answers from neym.org:

Who We Are

Over 5,000 people living our faith in the Quaker tradition across the six New England states

More than 90 local Quaker congregations where the practice of this faith is encouraged

An organization providing programs and services to liberate ministry and strengthen the Quaker movement

What We Believe

At the core of the Quaker faith is our trust that all people can have direct, inward experience of divine love, healing and guidance. We have learned that through responding to this guidance, we can be changed—even transformed—coming to live lives reflecting the Light and Love of God. This is the hope, the invitation and the promise that gathers us as the people called "Friends."

Portland Friends Meeting
Meeting for Business (Virtual)
June 7, 2020

We began in silent worship at 9 a.m. with 30 members and attenders present, during which co-clerk Jennifer Frick read the following Query No. 6 from New England Yearly Meeting Interim Faith and Practice:—

Do you recognize divinely inspired insight? Can you distinguish between divine leadings and your own needs or desires?

1. **Minutes** We accepted the May 2020 minutes.
2. **Treasurer's Report** Muriel Allen presented the Treasurer's report on the operating budget five months into the year (42%). Her report was circulated to the community through the e-group on June 5. Our balances continue to be positive but we are encouraged to continue donations. Here are the numbers:

May 2020:	Year-To-Date:
Income: \$4335	Income: \$29,041
Expenses: \$ 4249	Expenses: \$26,098
Balance: \$86	Balance: \$ 2943

Friends accepted the Treasurer's report on the operating budget.

3. **Ministry and Counsel.** Beth Bussiere-Nichols reported for the Committee, noting that in these tumultuous times we continue to yearn for connection with each other, and seek to lovingly balance this yearning with our desire to maintain the health and safety of our community.

Health and Safety Committee. Ministry and Counsel would like Friends to know that we have created a Health and Safety Committee as a subcommittee of M & C to research what criteria should guide the re-opening of the Meetinghouse and what protocols would be needed. An initial conversation with epidemiologist Sharon McDonnell encourages patience. We acknowledge with sadness that we cannot expect to meet inside anytime soon. That gives us time to plan for safety. A full report of the committee's first meeting was circulated on the e-group before this Meeting for Business.. Friends with ideas or suggestions can contact Christine Fletcher.

Meetings for Worship and for the Conduct of Business over the summer. The main Zoom summer worship schedule will move on June 21 to 6PM. hosted by clerks and including announcements, instead of meeting at 10:30 AM. The announcements will, of course, be available to all by e-group.

Ministry and Counsel is supporting the emergence of informal Morning Zoom meetings. There will be a Google doc where people can sign up to host at 9 or 10:30 as way opens. Those wanting to host can contact Co-clerk Brad Bussiere-Nichols for Zoom link then share on egroup.

M&C is encouraging and expecting Pop-up Outdoor Meetings as weather and regulations allow. Certainly, it is important to check current guidance and find a space that allows room so that people aren't sent away or crowded in.

The Health and Safety Committee is hoping to plan for an outdoor worship gathering for July if conditions make that healthy and safe.

Summer Zoom Meeting for Worship for the Conduct of Business will be July 19th at 7:30 PM, keeping the 26th as an "overflow" option.

Faithfulness Groups. Small groups to support deeper listening within our spiritual lives. There have been two thoughtful introductory sessions and Friends who are interested in being part of a group (whether or not they attended an introductory session) should contact Hannah Colbert, Fritz Weisz, Paula Rossvall, or Jay O'Hara.

Tom Tracy Memorial Minute. The memorial minute was circulated with the notice of this meeting on June 5. Beth read the minute. Friends approved this beautiful and poignant minute, expressing deep thanks to all who participated in drafting it.

4. **PFM Letter to Newspapers for Black Lives Matter** Following Meeting for Worship last Sunday, May 31, several members of a break-out group felt the need of a clear statement on "Race as a White Problem." From the outset, the goal was to

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(Minutes continued from page 2)

bring this statement to the Monthly Meeting for Business today and if approved then send it to the Portland Press Herald for publication as an opinion editorial for "Maine Voices." Three members of that group – Julie de Sherbinen, Mary Tracy, and Andy Grannell – agreed to work together to draft a statement. Once they had a workable draft, they asked members of Ministry & Counsel, our co-clerks, and members of the Racism Study Group to review the draft with them. Following this thoughtful critique on Thursday June 4, the statement has received the support of those eight Friends who participated. The statement was circulated to our community through the e-group on June 5.

We are asked to approve offering the statement to the Portland Press Herald for an opinion editorial under "Maine Voices." Our discussion contained appreciation for the drafters and general approval of the minute, with some concern for how to word the issue of white complicity in racism, steering a course between deliberate actions to cause adverse effects and the unintended consequences of actions or inaction. We approved submitting the statement with any changes made by the drafters after this discussion. It was suggested that the Meeting revisit the letter after a time to assess whether we are sustaining this commitment.

- 5. Request to join Durham Meeting as sister meeting to Velasco Friends Church in Cuba** An ad hoc group has explored joining Durham Friends Meeting's sister relationship with Velasco Friends Meeting in Cuba. The group includes Fritz Weisz, Ann Dodd-Collins, Becky Steele and Doug McCown. A full report of the group's work and what the relationship could involve was circulated to the community through the e-group on June 3.

We are asked to approve the joining by Portland Friends Meeting with Durham Friends Meeting into a sister relationship with Velasco Friends Meeting, and to establish a joint committee with Durham Friends Meeting to support the relationship.

Time was too short to discuss the issues raised. It was suggested that we delay this issue until July, perhaps asking for information from Durham Meeting on the scope of the relationship. The Clerk deferred this matter until the July Meeting for Business.

- 6. Family Promise Report.** Ann Dodd-Collins reported that Family Promise has continued to host two families, supported by our contributions and some volunteers. Those two families will be moving into apartments this month.

Our team will spend \$450 of their budget to support those efforts. Holly Travers will no longer act as Food Coordinator when we do resume hosting. Friends who would have volunteered are encouraged to contribute directly to Greater Portland Family Promise.

The team's report, circulated on June 5 through the e-group, was accepted by us today.

- 7. Cemetery Committee Report.** There being no time to present this report at this meeting for business, we accepted it as circulated on the e-group on June 5.

- 8. Letter to Governor regarding an indigenous African American on the Economic Recovery Committee**

This draft was circulated through the e-group on June 5. It has not been seasoned by submission to Ministry and Counsel or otherwise, and it was not drafted by members of our community. There was no time to consider it fully at this meeting for business. Those wishing to sign as supporters should contact Doug McCown.

We closed at 10:18 a.m., with 51 members and attenders present, purposing to meet again at 7:30 p.m. on July 19, 2020, God willing.

Respectfully submitted,

Lyn Ballou
Co-Recording Clerk

Documents to follow minutes:

Tom Tracy Memorial Minute; Report from Health and Safety Committee; Cemetery Committee Report; Report from Family Promise Team; Report re Sister Meeting, Cuba

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Tom Tracy Memorial Minute
Draft approved by M&C May 2020

God calls each of us to our work. Tom Tracy answered the call and labored with joy. As his wife Mary so eloquently expressed it, his work was loving the world. He delighted in people, their stories, their gifts, and their challenges. He loved ideas, problems, and the creative process. He was resourceful and used his many gifts to engage with others to find ways forward that were compassionate, sustainable, and life-affirming. Tom was not satisfied with life as it was. While grateful for his own comfort and joy, he passionately strived for equality and social justice. Tom especially loved children, his own, his grandchildren, and any child that lacked the resources or support they needed to succeed in life. He celebrated the beauty of creation. One of his favorite sources of inspiration was a sunrise paddle out from the Tracy summer camp on Bow Lake in New Hampshire, with just him and his dog in the canoe as the natural world unveiled its wonders.

On April 3, 2019, at the age of sixty-six, multiple myeloma took Tom from Mary, his children, and grandchildren, from his extended family, his many friends, and the Portland Friends Meeting community. In his shortened years, Tom lived an engaged life. He was born and grew up in Meriden, CT, with his loving mom, dad, and two brothers, Bill and Davis. He graduated from the University of New Hampshire with a B.S. in Education and met Mary in Somersworth, NH, where they both taught elementary school. They married in 1977, in Ithaca, New York, where Mary had grown up, and where Tom would earn an MBA from Cornell. They moved to Maine where they happily raised their two children, Luke and Ann, moving from South Portland to North Yarmouth to Portland. Tom worked for 25 years in business including time at DeLorme Mapping and several years with two tech companies he started. Before retiring, he switched to the public sector and returned to teaching, choosing programs that supported students unable to succeed in the regular classroom.

Tom and Mary first started attending Portland Friends Meeting when they moved to Maine in 1979. Both have been active and supportive community members for all the years since. Tom became an official member of the Meeting in 1980 when he transferred his membership from Dover Monthly Meeting.

Kahil Gibran said that work is love made visible. That was certainly true of Tom's work with Meeting. He was on a number of committees over the years, including the Financial Oversight Committee and Bob Philbrook's Released Friend Support Committee. He was also a long-time member of a spiritual direction group that included Barbie Potter until her death. Most recently he was active with the Family Promise Program in which Portland Friends Meeting joined an interdenominational coalition to house homeless families. As Family Promise Meals Coordinator, he made love not just visible but edible: gathering information on the food preferences of our guests, rallying volunteers to help cook, and being the gracious host at suppers. He was such a wonderful friend and Friend always bringing his insight, dedication, and enthusiasm to the job.

At the Rise of Meeting, we long ago grew accustomed to Tom standing to give voice to the conscience of the Meeting. His voice might temporarily be a little low in volume or he might wander a bit in his delivery, but then his voice would lift up, he would clarify, and we got it. There was no mistaking the passion, the call for us to jump in. It was time to become a part of righting a wrong, to follow through and contribute to support the Meeting or a Friend in need or our homeless guests. Tom brought a passion and enthusiasm that drew others to the cause, often spicing the invitation with his dry, self-deprecating humor.

Tom loved to bring new ideas to life. Propelled by his unflagging optimism and commitment, he wasn't content with the theoretical. Many Friends remember his support of Mary in 2005 as she gathered people to begin a conversation. Was it possible to have a Friends School in Portland, Maine? Thanks to their vision and efforts, Friends School of Portland is a thriving place of joyful learning and Quaker values. His final project was organizing the Campaign for Young Families, advocating for pre-school education for all children in Maine. This endeavor brought together his joy in being a grandparent, his deep caring for students with few resources, and compassion for working families. Tom loved to put thought to action in smaller ways, too. He liked being outdoors in all kinds of weather, whether it was snow-blowing his driveway and all the sidewalks on his block, working on the summer house built on family land on Bow Lake, or sailing and canoeing there, or even less successful enterprises like trying to mount a motor on a canoe.

Tom shared freely. Tom and Mary were so obvious in their love and the enjoyment of one another's company in their almost 42 years of marriage. Their love radiated out to all of us around them. He loved to laugh and found humor and joy in so many of life's experiences, especially while visiting with family and friends.

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(Memorial Minute for Tom Tracy continued from page 4)

Tom was welcoming. He shared his thoughts and invited others to share theirs. He asked questions with humility, seeking the truth with an open heart. Tom believed that we each have within us that Divine spirit that can shine out, and he encouraged and mentored many as a teacher and a friend.

As Mary wrote in memory of Tom:

His joy was to connect
With all he met along his way
To go out of his way
To cheer or thank or share a laugh
To know well and love his family
Each one special and so dear
His anguish was to say goodbye
Too soon, too soon
Gratitude and grief hand in hand

Excerpt from Mary Tracy's "To Say Goodbye"

Supporting discussion for M&C Report to Business Meeting

Summer Zoom Worship at 6 PM. The big summer worship survey and analysis last year (which is not completely relevant but there wasn't energy for a re-do) showed more people wanted the evening time, and of the people who didn't, many of them wouldn't come to the morning meeting either in the summer. There was a discussion of 6 vs 6:30 but it was felt that 6 was easier to remember.

Summer is a great time to be creative and hold interesting gatherings for worship. Since our Maine warm weather play season is short we have to make the most of it in all regards.

Health and Safety Committee Minutes

Six of us met on Monday evening, Brad, Jennifer, Ann, Denis, Kiya and Christine, to start thinking about "reopening" of worship and we wanted to let everyone know what we discussed and what came out of our meeting.

We started by considering portions of a guided meditation that Noah Baker-Merrill had shared on the NEYM website that encouraged us to center in our consideration of these issues, think about our commitments to our community members and broader community. We checked in about where each of us was feeling related to these issues. Common themes were wanting to make sure that Portland Friends Meeting is safe and inclusive for everyone, feeling cautious and wanting to be slow and careful in this process, missing how we used to worship together in the meetinghouse and unsure when or if this will feel feasible in the future, being open to and grateful for the opportunities that virtual worship and the pandemic situation itself can provide for us.

We also reviewed current State of Maine orders that have starting as of 6/1 increased allowed gatherings of up to 50 people and opened the possibility of churches holding services again.

We shared gratitude that thinking about reopening is not a decision being made "in crisis mode" and that we want to take our time and be careful and thoughtful as we move forward. As many other faith communities have noted, just because we are allowed to gather in groups up to 50 people doesn't necessarily mean that we should. In particular for Portland Friends Meeting our demographics skew heavily toward people over 65 as a community and we have a beloved but fairly small meeting space. We also recognized that any decisions we make are almost certainly going to be imperfect - we are doing the best we can with our current understanding of the situation. We will make mistakes, we will not anticipate every issue or joyful surprise, and we will continue to work toward solutions that are grounded in caring and caretaking for our community.

We decided to work on these issues in stages, and developed the following proposal. For the summer months we will plan for continued weekly virtual worship, and not anticipate any indoor worship at the meetinghouse. The paving project will be going on throughout much of June, and this will necessitate keeping traffic to a minimum anyway at least during this time.

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(Health and Safety Committee Minutes continued from page 5)

Recognizing that outdoor worship likely presents significantly fewer risks, and is usually highly enjoyable in summer in Maine, we are planning to organize at least one outdoor, socially distanced worship opportunities starting in July. Some of the details we will be considering include how to manage attendance to adhere to current guidelines, where to hold this, if at the meetinghouse how to handle cleaning, bottleneck traffic areas, limited bathrooms, ensuring that people have masks, and how to facilitate Friends being able to hear messages. We also struggled with how children can participate in activities that require social distancing, recognizing that for younger children this may not be realistic.

Although we are not planning any organized outdoor worship before July, we are encouraging Friends to organize their own small group outdoor worships this summer (again encouraging 6ft social distancing, wearing masks, avoiding singing). Friends might consider meeting at 10:30 and holding the meeting in shared worship with the virtual meeting. These small groups should be intentionally small, and likely by specific invitation rather than blanket emails to the list serve in order to manage gathering sizes.

We also on a semi-related note discussed the concern that has been raised about many Friends wanting a Sunday morning worship in addition to the summer schedule 6pm worship that will start on 6/21. We reviewed that zoom makes it easier to host multiple meetings, and we might try a signup system wherein Friends who wanted to host a 9am zoom meeting could sign up in a google document to take turns at setting this up different weeks. Here is a draft signup template.

We are thinking that we will tentatively make plans to consider some degree of staged reopening of the meeting house possibly in September, pending no significant changes in the course of COVID-19 in Maine over the summer. There are myriad issues to consider in thinking about this - how many people can we accommodate in the meeting house with social distancing? How will we manage attendance/gathering size? How will we change our cleaning protocols? If we start having worship in the meetinghouse how do we continue to support virtual worship for those who can not safely return to in-person meeting - would we have a screen in the meetinghouse? How can the meeting continue to serve our children and families?

Throughout all of this unusual situation we continue to yearn for connection with each other, and seek to lovingly balance this yearning with our desire to maintain the health and safety of our community.

The Cemetery Committee Report

(1) Following a process that included: (1) consulting as we drew up a carefully drawn job description, (2) advertising through PFM channels, (3) reviewing applications, and finally this past week (4) meeting with applicants onsite, the Cemetery Committee, i.e., Anne Payson, Wayne Cobb, and Andy Grannell are pleased to announce the appointment of Bob Massengale as PFM's Grounds Caretaker for 2020 - to be renewed annually. Bob offers a remarkable body of scholarship, field experience, and well honed practical skills. Bob will join the Cemetery Committee where we look forward to drawing on his expertise and aiding us as we get down to work on the many immediate tasks. Thank you to those who consulted with us, made valuable suggestions, and especially to those who applied.

(2) At Wayne Cobb's request, Robb Spivey (a member of Brunswick Friends Meeting); brought his survey team to update his survey of the PFM Cemetery which was done originally 20 years ago in 2000. As a result of this revised survey and the map it has produced, Wayne Cobb and Bob Massengale are now able to integrate plot lines with the detailed information gathered in the past 20 years.

(3) In the space of ten days in April, we worked first with the family of Edward (Ed) Robinson and shortly there after with family of Anne Harwood in the preparation of their burial sites and the conduct of the burial services. Thanks to Anne Payson who aided in preparing the burial sites and to Jennifer Frick for her ministry in conducting the burial service for Anne Harwood's family.

The committee is experiencing a revitalization as we become a well rounded team comprised of Anne Payson, Wayne Cobb, Bob Massengale, and Andy Grannell.



Report from Family Promise Team

The PFM Family Promise Team (FP Team: Judy, Holly, Lise, Sue, Kiya) met on Wednesday, May 20, 2020. We discussed the most recent information from Greater Portland Family Promise (GFPF) and our contributions given the current context of COVID-19.

We began and closed in silence. Judy read the following quote from NEYM website (Chapter 11, Faith and Practice): "... so far as [our gracious Creator's] love influences our minds, so far we become interested in his workmanship and feel a desire to take hold of every opportunity to lessen the distresses of the afflicted and increase the happiness of the creation. Here we have a prospect of one common interest from which our own is inseparable—that to turn all the treasures we possess into the channel of universal love becomes the business of our lives." — John Woolman (date unknown)

NOTES

1. Discussion of Quaker principle of integrity and our continued work with GFPF. Lise offered her experience of discussions at Friends School of Portland as a way to help us think about our responsibilities to GFPF: that the current situation is a test of Quaker integrity—keeping the body/organization as whole as possible; responsibility and desire to help. This discussion guided the rest of our conversation.
2. To fulfill our responsibility and desire to help, we first considered the money in the Family Promise part of the budget—the events line. One thousand dollars had been allocated to this line item (\$250 per hosting with 4 hostings a year). We are still hosting families, but hosting them elsewhere, because of the current COVID-19 restrictions and graduate families whom we have hosted continue to need support from GFPF, now more than ever. As has been communicated via the Life of the Meeting listserve, GFPF is currently hosting two families in two locations with limited volunteer support—volunteers shop and drop things off for the families.

Actions:

- We will ask Financial Oversight Committee to send a check to GFPF for \$450 for the April and June hostings at PFM that were cancelled (this is \$500 (\$250/ for each hosting for April and June) minus \$50 that had been spent for the anticipated April hosting) to be used for support of current and graduate families (not for staffing/administrative expenses).
 - We ask that people who would have usually volunteered in April and June, if they can, to consider donating money to GFPF. We know that people's circumstances may have changed and members and attenders may not be in a position to donate cash or grocery gift cards; yet if you are, we know GFPF would welcome it.
3. While we deferred discussion, we do note, If hosting resumes, we have many things to consider including
 - Review of the existing or revised covenant we have signed every year
 - Enhanced cleaning and any new expenses associated with it
 - Ability to recruit volunteers
 4. Other items
 - Holly will not continue to serve as food volunteer coordinator
 - Ann continues to volunteer with GFPF
 - We will not be hosting in June
 - GFPF is searching for an executive director so clarity regarding future hosting is not likely until someone has been hired
 - Judy has been forwarding GFPF updates she receives to the community
 - Ann purged the FP pantry of outdated items and took items still viable to current guests
 - The two families being hosted are expected to move into apartments in June
 5. Addendum to meeting notes 6/3/20 Please see attached memo from Jonathan Wright-Gray re status of GFPF (p. 8)

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(Family Promise report continued from page 7)

April 6 , 2020 letter, received June 2, 2020 by email.

WHERE IS GREATER PORTLAND FAMILY PROMISE NOW?

You probably remember us as the interfaith group that shelters families experiencing homelessness, right? In mid-March, just as we were about to gather to celebrate our several hundred volunteers and nearly three years of accomplishments, everything went dark. We had to cancel the party we planned, and shut down so many of the wonderful connections that make our work so rich and rewarding. We couldn't take the chance of spreading the virus among a very vulnerable community.

So in mid-March we did a quick pivot. We put most of our network of volunteers on hold, and now have two families sheltering in place—one each at two of our host congregations. We bring them groceries, and they take care of themselves with support from our staff and a small team of volunteers. It's lonely and boring for them, but it's safe. Maybe in June they will be able to move into their own apartments, like the 36 other families our hard-working staff continue to support. Many of the graduate families that our volunteers cared for in the past are now in need of support more than ever, and we continue to provide case management for them to help them keep their housing in the midst of this public health crisis.

We don't know exactly how or when yet, but sometime we will be ready to spring back into more visible action. When we do, we know there will still be caregivers and children needing our help, likely more than ever after the economic challenges faced by so many in our community right now.

And you—the clergy, staff, members and volunteers from our supporting congregations—are still the backbone of who we are, built over the last three years. Just because it's less visible right now, our connectedness is no less vital and real.

So thank you for being there for us—financially, spiritually, and with your willingness to help! Please reach out to us anytime.

Your GPF Congregational Relations Committee,

Linda Anderson, Kristen Crean, Jonathan and Shantia Wright-Gray

Youth Religious Education June 2020 Report to Monthly Meeting Andy Grannell

(1) Bringing all youth and children books online

I am working with Dennis Redfield as I complete the scanning of the entire PFM book and audio-visual collection (1241). Our PFM children and youth book collection (200 of 1241) has been scanned and will soon be cataloged. When completed, each parent will receive an invitation to review this collection on our website, i.e., "PFM-TinyCat" at LibraryThing

(2) Growing the YREC Endowed Funding

In early November of 2019, I discussed with David & Jennifer Kanaar their suggestion of adding to the Margaret Holden Jones Kanaar Endowment for the funding of PFM's youth religious education programs. In early May, I received this confirming message from David & Jennifer Kanaar: "Jennifer and I have just amended our Kanaar Family 2007 Trust, the Revocable Living Trust Amendment now reflects a \$20,000 endowment to the Portland Friends Meeting." The Finance Committee has been monitoring these developments and will follow up.

(3) Introducing "Faith & Play" to parents and teachers

Parents have been invited to participate in this 90 minute introductory workshop scheduled for June 10th from 7-8:30 pm, with Melinda Wenner Bradley.

Falmouth Quarter April Meeting Minutes -- Memorial Minutes (continued from the PFM Fifth Month newsletter)

Memorial Minute for Eileen Babcock

Born June 17, 1951 - March 20, 2018 to Francis and Vivian Babcock.

It is with real sadness that we announce the passing of Eileen Babcock, who had been a member of Durham Friends Monthly Meeting for the greater part of her life. Eileen grew up in the Meeting, participating in Sunday School and Vacation Bible School. She was active in many Meeting committees and activities, including Trustees, Woman's Society, youth groups, benefit dinners for the Kakamega Orphans Care Center. At the time of her death, she was the Trustee in charge of the Meeting's cemeteries. She was deeply committed to following God's will and doing her best for the Meeting. She was always there to lend a hand in whatever was needed.

Eileen was active in the Durham community, working at Town elections, helping organize the local Republican Town Committee, and holding, at different times, every elected office in the Durham Extension Homemakers. After a brief teaching career, Eileen was a helper. She took care of her parents and other family members, and many, many others. Eileen really enjoyed helping, experimenting with new recipes, walking with family members and making cider with her father.

She was a giving, sharing, extremely private person, who is greatly missed.

Eileen is survived by her significant other, Tommie Frye; her two brothers, Jerel and wife Sheila Babcock, and Wilbert Babcock; her sister Priscilla Wormwood, and several Nieces and Nephews. She was predeceased by her parents and her sister, Sylvia Davis.

Brunswick Meeting - Memorial Minute for Natalie Faith Pierce Kent Kempner

Natalie Faith Pierce Kent Kempner, a long-time member of Brunswick Friends meeting, died on November 14, 2019. (She was always adamant about not using any other phrase to express our departure from this world.) She was born on January 18, 1924, to Gertrude Lindahl and George Kyle Pierce in Binghamton, New York. In a 2018 oral history interview with the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum she noted that she got two big things from growing up : frugality from the depression and pacifism from the war. Through a family she babysat for while attending Smith College in Northampton, she discovered the Society of Friends and joined the Northampton Friends Meeting. In her oral history she noted "One of the things that drew me to Quakerism was the 'practice' part of faith - finding things to do to witness to your faith."

She married Orlow Albert Kent, a friend from her early school years, in 1947 and they settled in Ithaca, New York. In keeping with her commitment to putting her faith in action, in 1948 they set out for two years of voluntary service with the American Friends Service Committee in Munich, Germany. Working in Bad Aibling at the International Relief Organization's Children's Village, their job was to provide, as much as possible, a "home life" for some of the international displaced children who landed in the village after the war. After their first child was born in Munich in 1950, Natalie and Orlow returned to Ithaca where they worked as co-directors of the Ithaca Children's Home and where their second child was born. From 1951-1953 they lived at a low income housing project in Cleveland while Orlow was in graduate school, and a third child was born there. The next four years saw them in Rhinelander, Wisconsin where Joe McCarthy was Senator. "It was a time when even my small job as International Project Director for the Girl Scouts Council was considered suspect. My reaction was to take a strong political stand!" Their youngest child was born in 1956.

During 1963 and 1964 the family lived in newly independent Tanganyika, East Africa where Orlow directed the AFSC's Voluntary International Service Assignments (VISA) that provided grass-roots work experience for young adults and alternative service for Conscientious Objectors to the draft. In 1964 Orlow died in an automobile accident, and Natalie and the children returned to Ithaca. Here, Natalie worked as program coordinator for the parents of Head Start children and then became a full-time student at Cornell. She earned an MA in teaching history and social studies, designing a program of African studies for Ithaca High School.

Natalie married Fritz Kempner (who immigrated to the U.S. from Germany just before the war) in 1971, moving to Philadelphia where she taught elementary school, focusing on Environmental Education. She co-founded and directed

(Memorial Minute for Natalie Faith Pierce Kent Kempner continued from page 9)

the Norris Square Neighborhood Project, a non-profit bilingual learning center in a Puerto Rican neighborhood in Philly which is still active today. By 1981 she was a very active participant in Philadelphia's Sanctuary Movement, giving shelter to Central American refugees at the Chestnut Hill Friends Meeting house. The Sanctuary work and the Norris Square project were very significant passions of hers.

In 1990 Natalie and Fritz retired and moved to Woolwich Maine, where they joined Brunswick Friends Meeting. Continuing her focus on action, Natalie served on the National Board of the American Friends Service Committee. At various times in her life she served as clerk of Friends meetings in Ithaca, Philadelphia, and Brunswick. Even when not clerking, she acted as a center around which the Brunswick Meeting swirled. She represented the meeting at the Brunswick Peace Fair, drove other members to meeting when they could not drive, participated in monthly play readings, and opened her Kennebec riverside home to the meeting for potlucks and cookie baking. Most of all she relished sitting in the silence of unprogrammed meeting for worship, where she felt renewed. In her last visit with members of the meeting, she asked that her love for the meeting be passed on, and reminded us all to "be wise."

Brunswick Friends Meeting, State of Society Report, April 2020

Change is constant. And Brunswick Friends Meeting certainly has been through cycles of change. Our first gathering of 4 people was in 1981, and two of those four people are still with us. But since then we have moved locations four times, grown to an attendance of over 30, worked through 3 cycles of youngsters (and are failing a fourth). We've had monthly potlucks, "current events", sewing circles, bible study, sporadic play-readings, book groups, and Quakerism 101.

But last year in a combination of deaths, transfers, moving away, and simply growing older, for a while we came full circle – back to 4 people at worship on a regular weekly basis, with drop-ins from several other members/attenders. It should be said, however, that the reduced number of regular attenders at worship does not fully reflect the connections within our meeting. There were 15 people at the December business meeting and potluck, for example. Some folk get together regularly just to lunch or play games, and many are connected to College Guild, the non-profit started by one of our members that provides correspondence courses for prisoners. Although as a meeting we aren't active, individually we participate in FCNL, AFSC, Haverford College, NEYM's board of Managers, and the Friends Camp board.

Nevertheless, it was a quiet year for the two couples that "kept the home fires burning" for our waiting worship. What is it that kept us showing up to make sure someone was there each week? For one it may be the connection to the wider Quaker community. For someone else it may simply be the quiet time in the week. For a third person it may be the continued connection with folks known for 40 years. Whatever it is, we are still here, and, better still, recent transfers and new attenders have helped grow our meeting for worship (until the virus set us back).

For the first meeting in our new location (as of March) we had 10 people in attendance. It felt good. But we now also need to circle back to the questions that brought all of us here in the first place. What do we need from our connection with Brunswick Friends? And what place should Brunswick Friends Meeting serve in the community?

Dismantling White Supremacy: monthly check-in groups for White anti-racists

I posted on the e-group an invitation to join with other White anti-racists for an hour long monthly check-in. These groups are meant to be a tool to help us stay accountable; it helps me to follow-through with my intentions if I say them out loud and in front of witnesses. :-)

If you would like to know more, or would like to join us, I wrote a bit more about it here: <https://serenebabe.net/dws-checkin-for-antiracist-white-people/>

This is open for any White anti-racists, but our format holds a distinctly Quaker flavor. (It's been my experience that anti-racism work requires faith!) —Heather Denkmire

Nothing, I believe, can really teach us the nature and meaning of inspiration but personal experience of it. That we may all have such experience if we will but attend to the divine influences in our own hearts, is the cardinal doctrine of Quakerism.

—Caroline Stephen, 1834-1909

Durham Friends Meeting State of Society Report 2019

In 2019, Durham Friends Meeting was a spiritually vital, supportive worship community in Maine's lower midcoast. Our numbers were a little diminished this year. Nevertheless, there was strong ministry from a wide array of members. We looked after one another -- sometimes in difficult situations--, and we leaned into our commitments to peace, justice and sustainability throughout the year.

On a typical First Day, we gathered a few dozen people in worship. Now in our third year as a programmed and yet unpastored Friends Meeting, messages are generally brought in turn by members of the meeting. Occasionally we invite someone from a neighboring Meeting or a Friends organization to bring a prepared message. Eighteen different members or regular attenders gave these messages this year. The honesty of these efforts at seeking and speaking the truth are the soul of our Meeting.

As we gather in worship, one or another Friend calls out a hymn for us to sing together. A few much-appreciated members of the Meeting rotate the responsibility to play the piano to accompany this hymn singing. We also close Meeting with a hymn chosen at the moment. Often there is a wonderful resonance between the hymns we sing and the messages we share.

We are a Meeting that takes delight in children, and we celebrate the births and significant moments in the lives of the children, grandchildren and great grandchildren of our members and regular attenders. One of our members, with assistance from others, takes care that a quilt is sewn and gifted when a child or grandchild is born, even at a distance. We provide childcare and adult Sunday school every Sunday all year and offer Sunday school during the school year for children and youth on the first and third Sundays of the month. Our Christian Education Committee sponsored several intergenerational game nights, a yard and plant sale, a Children's Day, and wreath-making and egg painting occasions. We are especially grateful for the work of our Youth Minister.

Julie Fogg passed away in the spring, and Clarabel Marstaller passed away in the fall. A mentor to many of us, for decades Clarabel was a stalwart member, a wise and cheerful steward of both this Meeting and of New England Yearly Meeting as well. We mourn the passing of both. We welcomed a few newcomers who have joined the Meeting this year, and we miss a few who have drifted away.

We have been challenged this year to provide care for an unusual number of our members who are aging, ill, poorly housed or facing other significant life difficulties. Providing the right approach and finding the right people with sufficient time to devote has been regularly before us. We are grateful for the generosity of spirit and energy that has allowed us to meet these challenges, many of which continue.

Our Peace and Social Concerns Committee has made climate crisis issues a particular focus of attention. They hosted a film series, a youth panel and house parties to raise awareness, and sponsored climate crisis events with other churches in midcoast Maine. They also supported lobbying efforts encouraged by the Friends Committee on National Legislation.

Several of our members (and this has been true, too, in the past) are significantly involved in wider engagements among Friends and the concerns that animate Friends. These include New England Yearly Meeting, Friends United Meeting, AFSC, Pendle Hill, the Center for Courage and Renewal, the Lisbon Area Christian Outreach foodbank, promoting civility in public discourse, supporting refugees, sponsoring peace vigils around Bath Iron Works (a builder of war weapons), prison reform, the Kakamega Orphan Care Center in Kenya, and opposition to gun violence. A hardworking affiliate of USFWI, our Woman's Society continues to provide spiritual sustenance and practical support for nearly everything we do.

Meeting continues to host a Twelve-Step Group and a Native American worship group.

Our Finance Committee gave needed attention to reorganizing the Meeting's finances (especially its various funds and bequests), and our Trustees gave diligent attention to care for our Meetinghouse, rented parsonage and burial grounds.

We are seeking wider attention to our community's spiritual life, fellowship and our concerns and leadings. We widened the purview of our Newsletter Committee to become a Communications Committee. With that change we are trying to see how best to communicate -- in both old and new ways -- with all who are a part of Durham Friends Meeting. A very old Meeting, Durham Friends is finding ways to renew itself.

Approved at Durham Friends Monthly Meeting for Business on April 19, 2020

Books for Families in these Trying Times of Covid-19, Part 2

(Part 1 appeared in our Fifth Month newsletter)

The Quaker Religious Education Collaborative (QREC) ...is a grassroots network of Friends holding a sense of stewardship for life-long Quaker faith formation through religious education. We include Friends from all branches of our international Quaker family. Together with her working group friends of Quaker Religious Education Collaborative (QREC), Sally Farneth – and soon of our Portland Friends Meeting Library Committee - recommends the following....

Celebrate Earth Day – all spring long!

Below is a list of some of our favorite books that are associated with Earth Day. Some books tell about people and the work that they've done to help the Earth. Others share stories to appreciate our beautiful Earth. Each has been chosen because it has a link to the book being read aloud. Some are better performed than others. We have provided a short description of each entry. Sparkling Still Working Group of FGC: A. Collins, S. Farneth, S. Hopkins, E. Mittag.

On Meadowview Street written and illustrated by Henry Cole. Ages 4-8 (full lesson in Sparkling Still) [youtube.com/watch?v=0VJaY3MOIUc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0VJaY3MOIUc) Published by Greenwillow Books; c. 2007 Caroline moves to Meadowview Street, but where's the meadow or the view? There's nothing growing in her front yard except grass. Then she spots a flower and a butterfly and a bird. Soon Caroline realizes that with her help, maybe Meadowview Street can be a meadow after all.

Once There was a Tree by Natalia Romanova, Gennady Spirin (Illustrator) Ages 4-7 (pictures not clear) [youtube.com/watch?v=77yfwPz2DSY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=77yfwPz2DSY) Published by Puffin c. 1992 A woodsman cuts down a broken tree, soon several creatures make the stump their home. Over time a new tree grows, and it too becomes the home for several creatures.

The Raft by Jim LaMarche, Ages 4-8 [youtube.com/watch?v=8WLnX4dWxKE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8WLnX4dWxKE) Published by Harper Collins c. 2002 Based on the life of the author, the story tells of the wonders of life along the river. A really magical story about how a young boy and his grandmother create relationship as they both love the river, its creatures, and the paintings of all.

Up in the Garden, Down in the Dirt by Kate Messner, illustrated by Christopher Silas Neal, Ages 5-8 [youtube.com/watch?v=T3F6N92SPVY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T3F6N92SPVY) Published by Chronicle Books c. 2015 Explore the hidden world and many lives of a garden through the course of a year! Up in the garden, the world is full of green—leaves and sprouts, growing vegetables, ripening fruit. But down in the dirt exists a busy world—earthworms dig, snakes hunt, skunks burrow—populated by all the animals that make a garden their home.

Wangari Maathai: The Woman Who Planted Millions of Trees by Franck Prévot and illustrated by Aurélia Fronty Ages 6- 9 [youtube.com/watch?v=UiV0rnMc2MU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UiV0rnMc2MU) Published by Charlesbridge 2015 Wangari Maathai said, "Trees are living symbols of peace and hope." The trees that she and her Green Belt Movement planted are more than symbols; they are the result of the hard work of the women she enlisted to replant Kenya's forests, replenish the wildlife, and instill democracy among the people.

One Plastic Bag: Isatou Ceesay and the Recycling Women of the Gambia by Miranda Paul and illustrated by Elizabeth Zunon. Ages 5-9 [youtube.com/watch?v=_B6p04Zph04](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_B6p04Zph04) Published by Millbrook Press, 2015 One Plastic Bag" is a picture book about Isatou Ceesay that tells the story of how she recycled the plastic trash bags that were littering the village in which she lived in The Gambia. She and her friends turn the trash into something that helps change the life of all the people in the village.

The Red Bicycle: The Extraordinary Story of One Ordinary Bicycle by Jude Isabella, Simone Shin, illustrator Ages 8-12. [youtube.com/watch?v=HdQSK0GZCfM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HdQSK0GZCfM) Published by Kids Can Press, 2015 In this unique nonfiction picture book, the main character is a bicycle that starts its life like so many bicycles in North America, being owned and ridden by a young boy. The boy, Leo, treasures his bicycle so much he gives it a name -- Big Red. But eventually Leo outgrows Big Red, and this is where the bicycle's story takes a turn from the everyday, because Leo decides to donate it to an organization that ships bicycles to Africa. Big Red is sent to Burkina Faso, in West Africa, where it finds a home with Alisetta, who uses it to gain quicker access to her family's sorghum field and to the market. Then, over time, it finds its way to a young woman named Haridata, who has a new purpose for the bicycle -- renamed Le Grand Rouge -- delivering medications and bringing sick people to the hospital. (Good Reads)

Miss Rumphius [youtube.com/watch?v=xxh8ZPU_HfY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xxh8ZPU_HfY) a picture book for children written and illustrated by Barbara Cooney, Ages 5-8 Publisher: Viking Books c. 1982.It features the life story of fictional Miss Alice Rumphius, a woman who sought a way to make the world more beautiful and found it in planting lupines in the wild.

(cont-)

(Celebrate Earth Day book recommendations continued from page 12)

A River Ran Wild by Lynne Cherry ages 5-8 (2 versions for reading) [youtube.com/watch?v=JFgYs63V0xl](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JFgYs63V0xl) Publisher HMH Books for Young Readers; c.2002 The author tells us this is a True Story of the History, the Polluting and the Clean-up of the Nashua River. In this book one of the last remaining native Americans has a dream. In this dream, the first Indian to see the Nashua river, when it was clean & beautiful, comes back. He sees the polluted Nashua and he cries.

Over and Under the Pond by Kate Messner and Christopher S. Neal, illustrator [youtube.com/watch?v=FwW69AgRGLI&t=36s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FwW69AgRGLI&t=36s) Publisher: Chronicle Books LLC c. 2017 The reader will discover the plants and animals that make up the rich, interconnected ecosystem of a mountain pond. Under the pond is a hidden world of minnows darting, beavers diving, tadpoles growing. These and many other secrets are waiting to be discovered...over and under the pond.

The Tree Lady: The True Story of How One Tree-Loving Woman Changed a City Forever by H. Joseph Hopkins and Illustrator Jill McElmurry Ages 5-11 [youtube.com/watch?v=qvkbztXug10](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qvkbztXug10) Publisher: Beach Lane Books c. 2013 Unearth the true story of green-thumbed pioneer and activist Kate Sessions, who helped San Diego grow from a dry desert town into a lush, leafy city known for its gorgeous parks and gardens.

Flute's Journey: The Life of a Wood Thrush [youtube.com/watch?v=XvEUA2x9OOI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XvEUA2x9OOI) written and illustrated by Lynne Cherry, Ages 4-8. Publisher: Harcourt Children's Books; c.1997. The story of one wood thrush's first year and his arduous first migration--across thousands of miles--from his nesting ground in the Belt Woods in Maryland to his winter home in Costa Rica, and back again. Listen to a Wood Thrush singing its flute-like song: [youtube.com/watch?v=mcR6XrnD7Yc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mcR6XrnD7Yc)

Report to Portland and Durham Meeting concerning the sister relationship with Velasco Friends Meeting, Cuba Yearly Meeting.

The small group appointed by Portland Friends Meeting to explore and make a recommendation about joining Durham's sister meeting relationship with Velasco Friends Meeting gathered on Friday May 22. We reviewed the 27 year history of New England Yearly Meeting's (NEYM) sister relationship with Cuba Yearly Meeting (CYM) (The Puente de Amigos), We also briefly reviewed the 120 year history of CYM.

Friends in New England who have actively participated in this relationship have experienced the power of sharing the vibrant passionate persistent faith of the Cuban Church; Friends in Cuba have found the deep friendship with New England valuable. Their understanding of Friends' history, testimonies, faith and practice has grown through this friendship. Individual meetings with sister relationships have been transformative for both members of the pair.

Durham has been in a sister relationship with Velasco for a long time, and has asked Portland to consider joining with them to sustain this long distance partnership.

The pragmatic details of the relationship between NEYM and CYM are complicated by our governments' policies. The US government has not allowed Cuban representatives to attend NEYM annual sessions for the past three years. NEYM has been able to send delegations to Cuba up until the pandemic. Currently it is not possible to visit. However, the relationships have been able to continue through Facebook.

We recommend to Portland Friends Meeting that PFM join Durham in the sister relationship with Velasco Meeting. We are clear that Portland Friends Meeting will grow through this relationship; that we will learn much from our sisters and brothers about living faithfully in the face of adversity; and of the value of passionate committed spiritual communities.

The actual relationship will be virtual during the period of the pandemic. Once visiting is possible again there is a proposal for a conference of sister meetings in Gibara Cuba to which we would want to send a couple of representatives. But for the immediate future we expect that this relationship would be nurtured through the sharing of our stories, of our newsletters, and perhaps through some shared experiences, each in their own country. One example would be celebrating the 120th anniversary of CYM in November with a party here, however we are able to do that. (Cuban virtual potluck?)

We ask Portland Friends Meeting to approve joining Durham in the sister relationship with Velasco; and we ask Portland Friends meeting to form, with Durham, a committee to nurture this relationship. We would be able to help Nominating Committee fill this new joint committee.

Fritz Weiss, Ann Dodd Collins, Becky Steele, Doug McCown

Racism Belongs to White People

Today Quakers join many churches, synagogues and mosques in decrying racism. We are Portland Friends Meeting, a peace church with Christian roots, a deep commitment to social and environmental justice, and a belief in the Light of God within every person. We are called to examine and challenge the thought patterns and practices of whiteness both within our own lives and in the wider society.

In 2016, New England Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, the regional organization of Quakers, adopted a minute which said that its European-American members are “complicit in white supremacy” and asked us to begin “interrupting white supremacy in ourselves, within individuals, interpersonally, in our meetings, and in all system levels” of the organization.

The term “white supremacy” is controversial even among Friends, evoking fringe, racist, and often violent attitudes and organizations. As used in current anti-racist discourse, “white supremacy” describes the innumerable ways that white Americans continue to create policies and practices of white domination and privilege that exclude, disempower and victimize brown and black people.

The coronavirus pandemic has laid bare the devastation that policies favoring white people have caused for brown and black Americans. The disproportionate number of brown and black people who are poor, lack decent housing and health care, are in prison, and are killed at the hands of police is undeniable evidence of racist treatment. The most recent public example is the callous killing of George Floyd. Pent-up rage has duly erupted.

We agree with all people of color who for generations have repeatedly pointed out that the responsibility for undoing racism belongs to white people. We are trying to live by Jesus’ admonition to remove the log from our own eye before seeking to remove a speck from our brother’s or sister’s eye.

What, then, to do?

Here are some of the steps that we are learning to take to build new habits of mind and action, and to be deliberate and consistent in our work for social justice.

First, we must accept that most of us who are white have been taught ideas about racial identity that are not true. We have been taught that “race” is a well-researched and defensible scientific concept. It is not. We have believed that being “nice” to all people is enough. It is not.

We need to follow the messages of brown and black voices. For example, Black Lives Matter suggests memorizing the names and stories of unarmed black and brown Americans killed by white police. Imagine a child you love being killed like Tamir Rice was, playing with a toy gun.

We need to think carefully about the reasons such deaths keep happening. Read Ta-Nehisi Coates’ book *Between the World and Me*. Read Robin DiAngelo’s book *White Fragility*. Read *How to Be an Anti-Racist* by Ibram X. Kendi. Keep reading.

We can refuse to clump people into limiting categories (“juvenile delinquent”) and envision instead a face, a personality, a family, a loved one.

We can insist that schools and police training programs include learning about the ways institutional racism works and its effects on individuals and communities of color. We can learn about the toll of generational trauma on people of color.

We can consider financial support of anti-racist organizations, especially those led by people of color. Some people have shared their government-issued stimulus checks in this way.

Ultimately, the only way to make a real difference is to change the structures, institutions, policies and practices that hold people down. Where can we each plug into this work?

Those of us with European heritage must exchange guilt and paralysis for knowledge, thoughtful action, and right relationship with those who have been crushed by a system in which we are complicit. It is a white problem and the time is now.



Friends School of Portland All Community Art Project!

In the spirit of community, we are inviting Friends and friends to make flags that will hang out front of Friends School of Portland, waving in the wind, spreading peace, compassion and strength from one another, to our community and beyond.



Want to make one too? Let Brooke know and she'll send you a kit - brooke@friendsschoolportland.org.



Portland Friends Meeting Email Lists

Our Meeting has two email lists, or, "google groups."

- 1) *PFM Life of the Meeting*, for items directly related to Portland Friends Meeting business and/or directly Quaker items.
- 2) *PFM Wider Community*, for **any** items of interest from the PFM community to share, not necessarily directly related to Quakers, including personal invitations or community events.

To send an announcement to PFM Life of the Meeting, email: pfm-life-of-the-meeting@googlegroups.com.

To send an announcement to PFM Wider Community, email: pfm-wider-community@googlegroups.com.

For any questions related to the lists, including requests to add yourself to one or both: pfm.email.list.owner@gmail.com.



Portland Friends Meeting Directories

Simply email

directory@portlandfriendsmeeting.org to request copies of the most updated directory or to let us know about changes we should make to your contact information!

(tip: add directory@portlandfriendsmeeting.org to your email/computer/phone address books so the directory doesn't end up in your spam folder!)

Portland Friends Meeting
1837 Forest Ave
Portland, ME 04103

Address Service Requested

Next newsletter deadline:
Tuesday, July 21, 11:59pm

submissions: pfmnewsletter@grantwinners.net

