

# Portland Friends Meeting Newsletter

**Summer 2024**

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



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

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## Connections

### Co-Clerks

Mary Bachman DeSilva and Jim Grace  
[coclerks@portlandfriendsmeeting.org](mailto:coclerks@portlandfriendsmeeting.org)

### Recording Clerks

Rob Levin & David N. Hingston  
[PFM.recordingclerk@gmail.com](mailto:PFM.recordingclerk@gmail.com)

### Treasurer, Contributions

Jane Mullen, 215-421-5257  
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### Treasurer, Operating Account

Dick Stratton, 860-539-5040  
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### Treasurer, Special Funds

Special Needs Funds  
Elizabeth Szatkowski 207-274-3564

### Co-Clerks, Ministry & Care Committee

Mags Fehr [fehrmaggie@comcast.net](mailto:fehrmaggie@comcast.net)  
Maggie Fiori [nelsonmargaret92@gmail.com](mailto:nelsonmargaret92@gmail.com)

### Clerk, Pastoral Care Committee

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

Jennifer Frick  
[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)

I think most spiritual people  
have a good sense of humor.  
We must have because the sacred is so often funny.  
What we believe should bring us delight.  
It should help us not take ourselves too seriously.  
If we aren't laughing or smiling,  
even in hard times,  
We may need to reconnect to our source of joy.

- Bishop Steve Charleston

## Calendar

September 6-9

Sunday, Sept. 8, 10:00 am

Sunday, Sept. 15, Rise of Meeting

Sunday, Sept. 15, 12:15 pm

Sunday, Sept. 22, 10:00 am

Saturday, Sept. 28

Every Sunday, 10:00 am

Third Sundays, 8:45 am

Every Weekday, 10:30 am

First Thursdays & Third Tuesdays, 7:00 pm

### Upcoming Events

Art Church at Woolman Hill

PFM Fall Youth Programs begin (see Page 9 below)

Blessed Way welcome for Zawadi

Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business

Young Friends First Day School begins

Cuban Feast and Fundraiser (details to follow)

### Every Month

Meeting for Worship\* at the Meetinghouse and separately on Zoom

Early Meeting for Worship at the Meetinghouse

Meeting for Worship on Zoom\*

Meeting for Healing on Zoom\*

\*contact Co-Clerks for online Meeting for Worship links



A summer view looking south from top of the Portland Observatory. The islands of Casco Bay are to the left; the Fore River is on the right.

**Portland Friends Meeting**  
**Minutes of Meeting for Worship for the Conduct of Business**  
**July 28, 2024**

Mary Bachman DeSilva, Co-Clerk  
David N. Hingston, Recording

Members and attenders of Portland Friends Meeting gathered in silent worship at 6:00 pm, following a community potluck supper. Some twenty-five Friends gathered, in person at the Meeting House and remotely via Zoom.

Co-Clerk Mary Bachman DeSilva opened the meeting by reading the following Land Acknowledgement, which was originally offered by Alyssa Lodewick at Woodfords Congregational Church on Thanksgiving Eve, November 25th, 2020:

*We are in the homeland of the Wabanaki, the People of the Dawn. We extend our respect and gratitude to the many Indigenous people and their ancestors whose rich histories and vibrant communities include the Abenaki, Maliseet, Micmac, Passamaquoddy, and Penobscot nations and all of the native communities who have lived here for thousands of generations.*

*We acknowledge their inherent sovereignty in this territory. We respect the traditional values of the Wabanaki peoples and support their efforts for land and water protection, and cultural healing and recovery.*

*[This evening] we pause in remembrance of the tribes of the Wabanaki Confederacy whose lives and land were taken through genocidal strategies of colonial settlement of this land. We pay respect to elders both past and present, and we encourage the ongoing work of decolonization in Maine and beyond.*

After a pause, Mary then offered the following opening reading:

*For the real difference between happiness and joy is that one is grounded in this world, the other in eternity. Happiness cannot encompass suffering and evil. Joy can.*

*Happiness depends on the present.*

*Joy leaps into the future and triumphantly creates a new present out of it.*

--Elise Boulding, *The Joy That Is Set Before Us* (1956)

Following a period of silent worship, Mary welcomed everyone and expressed thanks to David Hingston for recording and Mags Fehr for holding the Meeting in the Light. Mary also expressed thanks to Peter Woodrow for his recent years of service clerking the Meeting.

## 1. REVIEW OF MINUTES

The Meeting next approved the minutes of Meeting of June 9, 2024 without modification, with thanks to Rob Levin, Recording Co-Clerk.

## 2. STATEMENT REGARDING GENNA ULRICH'S OFFERING AT ANNUAL SESSIONS

Fritz Weiss reported that Genna Ulrich will be offering five biblically based prepared messages at the Annual Sessions of New England Yearly Meeting to be held August 2 through 7 in Castleton, Vermont. Genna has been preparing these messages for months, accompanied by a team of elders. Fritz continued, "I am asking the meeting to send Genna with our blessing as a meeting. Could we take a few minutes and lift up any prayers of support that come to you. Would Friends approve asking the clerks to write and sign a message sharing our blessings with Genna?"

After a few moments of silent consideration, a number of Friends noted their support and affirmation of Genna's offering. One Friend expressed joy for Genna's gifts of ministry. Another spoke of Genna "meeting the moment," and expressed excitement in recognition of Genna's gifts.

The Meeting approved the drafting and issuance of a message of blessings for Genna by the Co-Clerks, and invited send their further thoughts to the Co-Clerks for incorporation into the message.

In response, the Co-Clerks sent the following to Genna:

Genna,

As you travel to the 364<sup>th</sup> Annual Sessions of the New England Yearly Meeting of Friends later this week, know that you travel with deep and joyful heartfelt blessings of your home meeting in Portland. We as a community are grateful to have witnessed your spiritual growth over the past years, and feel an enormous sense of joy as we have collectively experienced and continue to experience your gifts of Ministry.

We know you as a deep and thoughtful listener and appreciate your willingness and ability to be open to consideration of all ideas and thoughts, whether new, uncomfortable, and/or challenging. We are confident that NEYM will experience these qualities in the messages you have prepared for this year's Bible half-hours. We are excited for you (and for us)!

And thus we send you off to Castleton with our deep blessings, heartfelt prayers, and light-filled Joy.

*Mary Bachman DeSilva and Jim Grace*  
*Co-Clerks, Portland Friends Meeting*  
*31 July 2024*

### 3. REPORT FROM BUILDINGS & GROUNDS COMMITTEE

Clerk Sumner Caughey reported first that the Committee has accepted the proposal from Integrated Energy Systems (IES) for engineering of the first phase of a project that includes energy-related improvements to the building envelope and upgrade of the electrical service, which are necessary both to bring the building into compliance with building codes and to permit later phases of decarbonization. The IES proposal has a cap of \$7,515; the Committee approved allocating \$10,000 from the Capital Fund to allow for possible contingencies and unanticipated engineering work.

Sumner then asked Peter Woodrow to update the Meeting on research that he, Sumner and others have done into an upgrade of the technology used by the Meeting for hybrid in-person and online (“Zoom”) meetings. Peter reported that their effort has been to identify a system that (a) is easier and more reliable to use and less intrusive than the present “kludgy” system; (b) is readily available to renters who want to use it; and (c) provides better audio for people on Zoom. The informal group working on this issue has consulted with David Colletta, who has been advising meetings in NEYM, and heard testimony from several other meetings who have been using a particular system called DTEN. Peter and Sumner have been working to arrange a thirty-day trial installation of the DTEN system that would give the Meeting an opportunity to test the system for several weekly meetings and at least one monthly meeting for business. The estimated cost of the system is \$11,000. If the Meeting approves purchase of the system, permanent installation of the internet cable would be an additional expense.

In discussion, Friends raised a number of questions and suggestions:

- What would the Meeting’s financial commitment be if the DTEN system is not approved? *The Meeting would be responsible for return shipping expenses, which are understood to be potentially substantial given that the device is quite large and would certainly need to be insured.*
- Would the Buildings & Grounds Committee be responsible for day-to-day operation and care of the system? *No. Peter, with support from Buildings & Grounds and other tech-savvy Friends, will take leadership through the trial period. After that, the Meeting should consider identifying a new Technology Committee to be responsible for the system (and possibly other technology-related matters).*
- At what height would the screen be installed? *To be determined.*
- Specialized “pens” are required for the system’s whiteboard function; other types of pens can cause serious damage. *Noted. All users, including potential renters, must be cautioned accordingly.*
- Would multiple microphones and/or speakers be required? DTEN information indicates that the microphone and speakers in the “all-in-one” system will likely be adequate, although Peter has received confirmation that it is possible to add microphones later.
- Does the system connect with hearing-assistance systems and hearing aids? *To be determined.*

- Why not provide permanent installation of a Wi-Fi cable from the library at this time? *A number of questions remain about routing of the cable and where its termination point(s) should be in the Meeting Room. In any event, it was agreed that such technical details are best addressed outside the Meeting for Business.*
- Are Friends able to “Zoom” into other meetings (e.g., Beacon Hill and Purchase NY) that are currently implementing the DTEN system to see how it works? *Peter will inquire with other meetings and provide links to members and attenders via the PFM Life of the Meeting list-serv if this is possible.*

Following the period of questions and answers, the Meeting **approved** temporary installation of the DTEN system for the proposed thirty-day trial period.

#### **4. TREASURER’S REPORT**

Treasurer Dick Stratton provided the attached Budget Update and reported that the projected deficit is actually not worrisome because (a) rental income is running higher than anticipated; and (b) spending by several committees is running lower than projected. Based on past history, the midyear numbers are favorable because revenue is greater than 50%, and spending is less than 50%.

In response to a question, Dick explained that there is no budget line for cemetery operations this year. The cemetery fund at Friends Fiduciary will be used as the source for expenses. We would like to see if the funds available on a sustainable basis will be sufficient to care for the cemetery.

#### **5. NEYM ANNUAL SESSIONS, August 2-7, Castleton, VT**

Fritz Weiss reported that he knows of some fifteen people from PFM who are planning to attend Annual Sessions in Castleton, Vermont, and invited any others to let him know and to register in advance. Fritz said that the theme this year is “Let us faithfully tend the seed” and continued with the following important announcements:

- If you would like to attend online you need to register for sessions here: [attending sessions online](#).
- Lloyd Lee Wilson will be our Sunday afternoon plenary speaker. Lloyd Lee has been active in the public ministry since his youth on the Eastern Shore of Maryland, becoming a Methodist Certified Lay Speaker at age 14. He has been a recorded minister of the Gospel in four different monthly meetings and has written a great deal on Quaker faith and practice. He and his wife Susan presently live near Greensboro, North Carolina.
- The minute Portland approved on Israel and Palestine will be shared with a request that a minute for all New England Friends be considered for approval.
- Material for the business sessions are here: [advance documents](#).

Fritz closed by noting that PFM is a member of NEYM, and attending Annual Sessions is a valuable way of getting to know Friends from across New England and beyond. Among other benefits, Portland Friends have particularly gained much over the years from the NEYM youth programs at Annual Sessions.

## **6. CUBA YEARLY MEETING (CYM)**

Fritz Weiss next reported that PFM and Durham meeting have formed a delegation to travel to Velasco next February and to attend Cuba Yearly Meeting. Our delegation will be travelling with several Friends from Dover meeting who will be visiting their sister meeting in Holguin, the fourth largest city in Cuba. In support of CYM, our delegation will be hosting a Cuban feast and fundraiser jointly with Dover Friends Meeting on September 28—**Please save the date.** There will be opportunities for volunteering. The money raised will be used both to purchase material donations and to be donated directly to CYM. The delegation members have already raised sufficient funds to cover travel and hospitality costs for our delegation.

## **7. FINAL NOTES AND CLOSING WORSHIP**

Co-Clerk Mary Bachman DeSilva reported with joy that she and other faith community volunteers had received news from the director of Greater Portland Family Promise (GFPF) just that morning that the trustees of the New England Conference of the United Methodist Church have donated the Clark House to Family Promise. The email from Michelle Lamm is included below:

*Dear Board members, staff and volunteers,*

*Just yesterday I received the amazing news that the Board of Trustees of the New England Conference of the United Methodist Church voted to donate the Clark House (22 Pleasant Avenue in Portland) to Greater Portland Family Promise.*

*I am beyond excited and can't wait to start planning for the future of the property to expand housing options for families!!!*

*Thank you all for what you do for Family Promise and the families we work with and for celebrating this good news with us.*

We look forward to future updates.

Then, following a period of silence, the Meeting then rose shortly after 7:00 pm, to meet again for the Conduct of Business on September 15, 2024, according to Divine will.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

1. PFM 2024 Operating Budget June Update

## Attachment 1

PORTLAND FRIENDS MEETING 2024 OPERATING BUDGET										June
7/17/24 R. Stratton										
INCOME	2023 Budget	2023 ACTUAL	2024 Budget	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	YTD 2024
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	95,915	91,683	81,000	5,709	5,197	4,539	10,269	6,482	9,269	41,464
<b>EXPENSES</b>										
<b>Total Meetinghouse &amp; Grounds &amp; Utilities</b>	27,950	32,373	26,750	1,024	944	1,850	779	985	4,764	10,346
<b>Total Youth of the Meeting</b>	24,990	18,155	19,380	176	210	130	110	218	162	1,006
<b>Total Care of PFM Community</b>	15,625	6,187	19,950		1,925	228	18	1,422	565	4,158
<b>Total Other Areas of Focus</b>	17,650	16,000	16,700			4,000	0	75	4,000	8,075
<b>TOTAL COST OF RUNNING OUR MEETING</b>	86,215	72,715	82,780	1,200	3,079	6,208	907	2,700	9,491	23,585
<b>Contributions Beyond Our Meeting</b>	9,700	9,700	9,150				4,000		400	4,400
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	95,915	82,415	91,930	1,200	3,079	6,208	4,907	2,700	9,891	27,985
<b>NET INCOME LESS EXPENSES</b>	<b>0</b>	9,268	<b>-10,930</b>	4,509	2,118	-1,669	5,362	3,782	-622	13,479

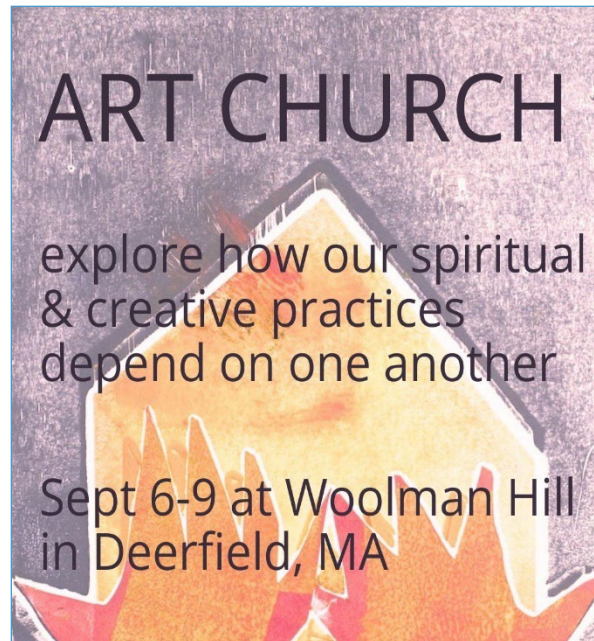
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## ART CHURCH: Spring forth the creative well!

*I've got a river of Light flowing out of me  
Heals the weary souls, helps us all to see  
Opens prison doors, sets the captives free  
I've got a river of Light flowing out of me*

*Spring forth the well inside my soul  
Spring forth the well and make me whole  
Spring forth the well and let me see  
That Light that shines in me*

Art Church\* is where we explore how our spiritual and creative practices intersect and depend on one another. This is a weekend retreat at Woolman Hill, a Quaker retreat center in Deerfield, MA, from Friday, September 6th at 5pm through Monday, September 9th at noon. This is an invitation to make art, worship, and build solidarity in a multidisciplinary, spiritually diverse space, led by three young queer Quakers from Western Mass and Portland, Maine. Read on to find out more.



Is this you? Do you feel this?

1. *you feel a persistent call to CREATE (art, music, dance, writing...)*
2. *you feel that what you create flows from an inward source that is larger than yourself*
3. *you feel a divine power that can guide your life, through a faith tradition and/or lived experience*

If yes, do you want the following?

1. *For your heart to be broken open, to be creative in new ways, to encounter the divine in new ways, to leave different than when you arrived*
2. *To make art in a multidisciplinary space where all creative mediums are connected and feed each other*
3. *To worship together in experimental ways, guided by Quaker faith, with room for spiritual diversity*
4. *To share your experience and your work with others with love and courage*
5. *To listen together to the one inner Voice that calls us all to make what we make in order to change us and change our world*
6. *To build solidarity and creative friendships based on this^ that can sustain us beyond this time together*

### **A little bit more about this gathering:**

A major part of how we'll connect as a group is through a personal and collective "threshing" practice. We will each learn how to bind a small sketchbook and use that to collect everything we notice throughout the weekend, share it with one another, and notice throughlines and patterns. This practice is not meant to focus on visual art specifically, but to give each participant a non-judgmental place to deposit their ideas through any medium.

There will be several workshop opportunities when participants can plan to bring a creative practice which helps them connect to their flow, to share with a small group. Examples might include a group movement activity, structured jamming session, writing exercise, or drawing game. You're encouraged to be silly, have fun, and learn from one another. The goal is to help



one another submit to the creative flow, not acquire skills. If you think you might like to offer a workshop, contact Maggie, Sal, or Piper ASAP!

- \* What we mean by “church” in the name Art Church: Quakers experience the church not as a building or institution, not as a particular Christian group or denomination, but as a living, breathing community of human beings that is gathered up by God’s loving embrace. We experience the church when we gather our bodies close to one another for worship in order to listen to God’s whispers amongst us. We experience it when we care for one another and toil for justice alongside one another and choose to knit our lives together out of hope and love. We (Maggie, Sal, and Piper) named this gathering Art Church not to ignore the harm that Christian institutions have done in the name of the Church, but to reclaim its true meaning as Quakers. You’re invited to dive into that as much or as little as is safe for you-- the most important thing is to bring your authentic spiritual experience and heritage. People of all faith backgrounds are welcome.

(For those of you who remember Art Camp-- this is the same thing! It’s no longer being held at Friends Camp, so we changed the name to be more accurate to its purpose.)

**Registration is now open on Woolman Hill's website [here](#).**

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## **PFM Fall Youth Programs**

**Thunderquakes (Grades K - 4)** will kick off their year at 10 am on Sunday, Sept 8th making peace flags in anticipation of World Peace Day. Eight Thunderquakes have said they plan to be there. Please join the crew! You may direct any questions to Brooke Burkett, our Thunderquakes Coordinator, at [brooke.burkett@gmail.com](mailto:brooke.burkett@gmail.com).

Brooke adds this note:

*I'm looking forward to gathering Thunderquake kids during the school year for First Day School. I would love to have some little Legos for kids to play with when they are arriving. Does anyone have any little Legos to donate to meeting for the upcoming school year? We are hoping to have our first program on Sunday, September 8.*

*I am looking for lego plates and smaller legos. Please let me know if you might have some you are willing to part with!*

**Junior High (Grades 5 - 8)** are invited to join the peace flag event, 10 am on Sunday, Sept 8th. Five Junior High youth said they plan to be there. Please join, too! We are still looking for a permanent Junior High Coordinator. In the meantime, questions can go directly to Bart Czyz, Youth Rel. Ed. Committee Clerk, at [btczyz@gmail.com](mailto:btczyz@gmail.com).

**Young Friends (Grades 9 - 12)** will kick off their year on Sunday, Sept. 22nd at 10 am. Please check out this great crew! Information about Young Friends, including a calendar of dates and contact information for Heather Denkmire, the Young Friends Coordinator, can be found at <https://www.portlandfriendsmeeting.org/young-friends/>.

**Childcare (Infant to age 5)** is offered every 2nd and 4th Sunday in the nursery with the wonderful Susan Grannell. Questions can go directly to Bart Czyz, Youth Rel. Ed. Committee Clerk, at [btczyz@gmail.com](mailto:btczyz@gmail.com).

## Save the Date!

We are holding a Blessing Way for Nuna and Tyler Gleason's new baby, Zawadi, on **September 15th** at the rise of Meeting. Zawadi is now 3 months old, and it is our tradition to welcome new babies into the PFM community by conducting a Blessing Way.

At the rise of Meeting, the new family will stand in the center of the Meeting room and all those in attendance will stand around them in a circle, and we each in turn will give a blessing to Zawadi. Finger food in the parlor to follow. Please let me know if you'd like to bring some finger food for this event. Please contact Kathy Beach with questions.

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## New Book Group for Queer Parents and Caregivers

Do you want to be more loving and patient with your kids, but the day-to-day of being a human is leaving you too exhausted/angry/stressed?

In this six-session book group, connect and learn alongside other queer parents and caregivers as we make our way through *Peaceful Parent, Happy Kids: How to Stop Yelling and Start Connecting* by Dr. Laura Markham. We'll go through the book chapter-by-chapter, build a supportive community, and show up as our full selves as we dig deep to work through some of our biggest parenting challenges.

**When:** Sunday afternoons, 2-3:30pm, for six weeks beginning September 8, 2024

**Where:** Equality Community Center, 15 Casco St., Portland, ME

**Cost:** Sliding scale of \$50-150 for the series. Books generously provided by MaineTransNet.

**Reserve** your spot: Fill out this form: <https://forms.gle/iJUkmbcr8HUqDB9W6>

**RSVP by September 2.** Space is limited to 10 participants.

*About the facilitator: Lev Leviter trained with Dr. Laura as a parenting coach and educator. Their style is warm and affirming, informed by their 10+ years of experience as a conflict mediator and coach, facilitator, and full-time parent to two young kiddos. Lev's approach is also informed by lessons gleaned from their healing journey -- as a disabled, queer/nonbinary, and Jewish person whose ancestors fled from modern-day Poland and Ukraine. Learn more about Lev here: <https://www.peacefulparenthappykids.com/coaching/lev-leviter>*

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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**

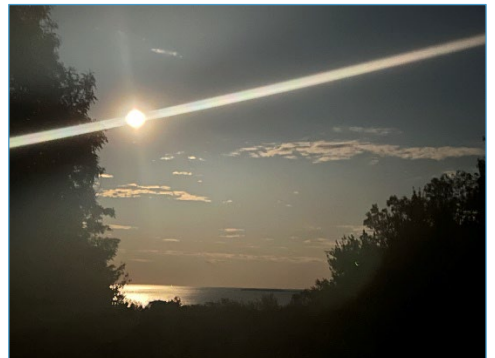
**Portland Friends Meeting  
1837 Forest Ave  
Portland, ME 04103**

**Next newsletter deadline:**

*Wednesday, September 18, 11:58 pm*

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

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



**Summer moonrise over Casco Bay**