

Middlebury Friends Meeting

April/ September 2020

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SEPTEMBER 2020

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"Yesterday I was clever, so I wanted to change the world. Today I am wise, so I am changing myself."

— Rumi

QUAKER CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Every First Day (Sunday) 9 · 9:45 AM First Day School via Zoom

10 AM Meeting for Worship via Zoom

If you need the Zoom link, contact Ed at

edmund.m.harris@gmail.com

Sun Sept 20 8:30 AM Meeting for Business, via Zoom

Middlebury Friends Meeting Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business

15 March, 2020

Clerk: Tom Baskett

Recording Clerk: Jean Rosenberg

Present were Priscilla Baker, Laura Asermily, Ruah Swennerfelt, Louis Cox, Tom Dickinson, Grace McGrath, Karen Nawn Fahey, Susan Smiley, John Cole, Peter Schenck, and Norm Tjossem.

20:03:01 We opened with a poem by Rumi and silent worship.

20:03:02. Minutes of February 2020 were approved.

20:03:03 The treasurer reported that the audit by Spence Putnam is still in process, and all the bills to date are paid. Our reserve remains intact.

20:03:04 The clerk introduced a report and exploration on what MFM and other local faith communities have done in response to the very recent local preparations for the onset of the Coronovirus epidemic. The new practice among the area faith groups is not to hold worship services in person. The MFM clerks had cancelled our meeting for worship this day, but called us to our regular meeting for business this morning so that we may discern what practices to adopt in response.

MFM will hold meeting for worship, but NOT together in this space at Havurah House. We ask Friends to settle into worship at 10 am on Sundays wherever they are, and to hold each other in Light and love. Recognizing our yearning to worship together, we will organize a way to join each other electronically in worship, via computer technology, at that time. Grace will ask Ed Harris to help us organize and carry this out. Also, individual Friends may organize very small groups of local Friends to meet together in their homes at that time, perhaps three or four people, observing appropriate precautions. We note our concern to avoid exclusion in any such small groups.

We authorized the treasurer to pay MFM funds as needed to support the electronic remote meetings for worship on Sundays or other MFM electronic meetings such as meeting for business. We also note gratefully that Ruah Swennerfelt offers to help Friends learn how to electronically join such meetings. And Ed Harris will send out instructions for our electronic meeting for worship.

We will reevaluate and adapt this practice at our next meetings for business, which may be via electronic means.

20:03:05 We affirm that during this time our ministry to each other is NOT suspended, and is more important than ever. We encourage all Friends to participate in

such care and action as they are led and able, and particularly to reach out to the most isolated among us.

To support this, we appointed an Ad Hoc committee to organize and oversee the MFM response to the Coronovirus situation, of the coclerks, two members of the Pastoral Care committee, and our Zoom (electronic meeting) host and manager: Tom Baskett, Jean Rosenberg, Grace McGrath, Norm Tjossem, and Ed Harris. Friends may contact them with ideas, concerns, and questions. The immediate tasks for them that we recognized are to organize ways for us to check on and assist each other as needed, organize the electronic meeting for worship, manage our relationship with Havurah (with the help of our representatives to Havurah), make immediate decisions as called for, and respond to our QM and YM questions and recommendations.

We encourage and call on Friends to identify and bring their needs for assistance and support of any kind to the Pastoral Care committee or to any Friend. PLEASE do not be shy or reluctant to ask. We remember what a blessing it is for us to support and serve each other. If you want someone to check in with you by phone, please tell Grace McGrath or anyone on Pastoral Care. If you are able to offer assistance to others, also please tell Grace McGrath or anyone on Pastoral Care.

20:03:06 We canceled our currently planned Friendly Forums and will reschedule them a safe time. They may get reorganized as electronic events.

20:03:07 Our planning committee for the April 24 Community Supper will continue to organize us for the event, recognizing that it may be cancelled or reorganized as a take-out meal only. The Charter House Coalition or the Congregational Church will decide this. We are grateful to John Cook, Susan Smiley, and Don Peabody for their work and keeping us up to date on this matter.

20:03:08 We will be guided in our Coronovirus response by advisories from the CDC and the VT Dept. of Health. Information is available on HealthVermont.gov. And we urge Friends to regularly check their email for messages about the MFM on our MFM listserve.

20:03:09 We plan to hold meeting for business on April 19; this may well be an electronic meeting. We will address the other items on our agenda at the April and other meetings for business, including a proposed minute and recommendations regarding the discriminatory FUM personnel policy, how Friends are living into NEYM's 2017 minute on Israel/Palestine, and reports and plans from our committees.

20:03:10 The meeting closed with a period of silent worship.

Middlebury Friends Meeting Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business via Zoom 19 April, 2020

Clerk: Jean Rosenberg Recording Clerk: Grace Seale

Present were Tom Baskett, Jean Rosenberg, Ruah Swennerfelt, Louis Cox, Norm Tjossem, Karen Nawn-Fahey, Ann Barker, Peter, Schenck, Meg Langworthy, Spence Putnam, Fran Putnam, Shulamith Clearbridge, Annie Stratton, Grace McGrath, Don Peabody, Lianna Tennal, Joe Garren, and Grace Seale.

20:04:01 Opening:

We began with moments of quieting and silence.

Jean told us she has spoken with Friends in Canberra, Australia who are conducting Meeting for Business via Zoom. They report this working well for them, and have sought to keep the gatherings brief.

20:04:02 Review of Minutes

Minutes of March 2020 reviewed and approved as submitted.

20:04:03 Clerks' Report

MFM's response to COVID19 and social distancing:

Due to the COVID19 epidemic and the statewide orders for social distancing, Middlebury Monthly Meeting has ceased to hold meetings for worship, or any meetings, as of March 15. Instead we have electronic meetings for worship by Zoom, as of March 22. Many Friends attended the first such meeting, at least as many as regularly come to meeting in person, and the number attending increased somewhat over the next weeks as more Friends learned how to access the meeting. A number of Friends who do not regularly attend due to distance or needing to stay home are able and glad to attend.

We now offer a midweek Meeting for Worship by Zoom, on Wednesdays at 7pm as of April 8, for Friends who wish for another time to gather for worship, especially in this time of staying at home.

The Pastoral Care committee and the clerks have created phone call groups, for everyone in the meeting to receive a check-in phone call regularly. The calls are welcome, and are especially important for those who do not participate in the virtual Meeting for Worship.

Several Friends volunteered to shop for others who should not go out. We are mindful of the needs of Friends in the meeting. Committees are meeting by Zoom as needed.

We have created an online sign-up sheet for Friends to be Greeter at online meetings

for worship or to host Zoom meetings.

First Day School is meeting Sundays at 4PM via Zoom.

We have reported our changed practices to New England Yearly Meeting.

20:04:04 Financial Review Statement for Fiscal Year 2019

From Spence as of 18 March, 2020:

"I have examined the finanacial statements of the Middlebury Friends Meeting for the period January 1, 2019 through December 31, 2019 and made random checks on disbursements and receipts, with particular attention to receipt statements from recipients of our "benevolences". It should be noted that the bank account of Middlebury Friends Meeting has at times had nearly \$16,000 in it. In addition to the regular budget the treasurer has had responsibility for accepting, keeping track of, and disbursing a number of non-budget funds, including monies in the Rachel Harper Carey Fund, Vision for Vermont, and special donations to the Meeting's Acorn Energy solar project.

I was given complete access to the online and paper bank records of the Meeting by Karen Nawn-Fahey, Meeting Treasurer. It is my opinion based on this partial review that the financial books of the Meeting are in good order and that the record-keeping is thorough and accurate."

20:04:05 Treasurer's Report

1] Benevolence matters:

The Summer Meals Program was discussed. Although the details are yet undetermined because of COVID19 restrictions, there was agreement on the Meeting sending funds now.

The Community Supper cannot be prepared or served as in the past due to increased food safety requirements imposed by COVID19. The Meeting agreed to donate \$200 of our budgeted funds for community suppers to the Community Supper organization, which is now paying an approved provider to furnish take-home meals.

2] [to be appended ~by Win~ as submitted by K N-F as of 15 April, 2020.]

20:04:06 Worship and Study Committee Report

- 1] Celebration of Life is planned via Zoom for 10th of May; details will follow.
- 2] There are no scheduled Friendly Forum meetings; the Meeting agreed it is better to hold these when we are able to meet in person.
- 3] Website changes are pending to reflect current practices, to include information to link to our Zoom meetings.
- 4] It was noted that Portland Friends Meeting has initiated smaller Zoom groups for conversation and fellowship, which we may consider as well.
- 5] First Day School is meeting via Zoom, and a report from Lianna follows.

20:04:07 First Day School Report

From Lianna:

"Since Middlebury Friends Meeting moved online, our First Day School has met four times. We meet on Sunday afternoons at 4pm, a time agreed upon by the three families who most often participate. Our hope is this will also work for other meeting adults to come visit FDS.

We have done three main things during these sessions: socializing and keeping connection, reading Emma Condori-Mamani's memoir of her early life in Bolivia growing up as a Quaker, and reading New Testament stories in the context of learning more about the variety of Quaker faith around the world.

Gretchen Richer has been leading the sessions, and working with Lianna to plan them with Susannah's frequent participation. FDS will be inviting others from Meeting to visit; please communicate with Lianna if interested. Joe Garren is scheduled for the 3rd of May.

Later in the spring we are planning to have the kids decide upon and implement a service project.

For me, this experience has been spiritually satisfying and light-filled. The kids seem to be enjoying it. We have had good attendance at most of the sessions – sometimes 5 kids and 3 adults."

20:04:08 Earthcare Committee Report

Watershed Discipleship Project: The Friendly Forum planned for 26 April has been postponed until we can meet in person again.

Next meeting and future dates are not yet scheduled.

20:04:09 Pastoral Care Committee

Members have met via Zoom, and with the Clerks have created phone call groups. All possible electronic means ~phone, email and texts~ are used to communicate with members. Shopping and transportation support is ongoing. Various members have expressed great appreciation for the care and concern extended by this committee.

20:04:10 Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee has begun the work of identifying people to take leader-ship roles for the year beginning I July. This includes Co-Clerk, Treasurer, Recording Clerk, members of standing committees, and liaison with the community organizations with whom we have special relationships. Convenors of each committee will be asked to check that their members wish to continue in their current roles.

A list of current Meeting assignments is found at the back of the directory. Questions or considerations for a new assignment are requested by members of this committee:

Spence Putnam spencerputnam1@gmail.com
Tom Baskett tomrbaskett@gmail.com, and
Tom Dickinson tmdickin@comcast.net.

20:04:11 Special committee on FUM hiring policy

The special committee on MFM's response to the FUM hiring policy presented a draft minute. After discussion we requested the subcommittee consider the ideas and nuances mentioned, revise the draft minute, and bring it back at the next Meeting for Business.

20:04:12 Closing We concluded with moments of silence, and a hug.



Middlebury Friends Meeting Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business via Zoom 17 May, 2020

Clerk: Tom Baskett

Recording Clerk: Grace Seale

Present were Tom Baskett, Grace Seale, Jean Rosenberg, Joe Garren, Lianna Tennal, Grace McGrath, Ed Harris, Shulamith, Louis Cox, Ruah Swennerfelt, Karen Nawn Fahey, Tom Dickinson, Spence Putnam, Kristin Lord, Debbie Ramsdall, and Mimi Love Nicholson

20-05-01 We approved the minutes of the April meeting for business.

20-05-02 We heard the Treasurer's report, as of May 17, 2020. From April 16 through May 17, 2020, the Meeting had member donations of \$2245. From April 16 through May 17, 2020 Meeting expenditures totaled \$513.33, including \$133.33 for Children's Program Coordinator, \$80 for Childcare, \$100 for MiddSummer Lunch Program, and \$200 for support of Community Suppers. When all these checks clear, the checking account balance will be \$9679.02 (includes RCH and VFV funds). Current balance of Vision For Vermont funds: \$480.85. Current balance of the Rachel Carey Harper Fund is \$1130.

20-05-03 We affirmed the times for meeting for business at 8:30 AM. The next meeting for business will be on June 28. The consideration of the proposed response to the FUM hiring policy will be taken up at the June meeting.

20-05-04 After consideration, we agreed that we will maintain the Sunday zoom meetings for worship for the present time, and noted that individual Friends may invite

a small group of others to a meeting for worship outside at other times.

20-05-05 The Nominating committee reported that they will be nominating Cheryl Mitchell to be the Social Action Mapper, Laura Asermily to join the Fellowship committee, and Ladybelle Fiske to be our contact person with AFSC. They will nominate Ed Harris for a new position of Digital Connections facilitator. They will bring the full nominations slate to us at the June meeting for business.

20-05-06 The Pastoral Care committee is working on the new Directory of Friends. It is also checking in regularly with Middlebury Friends.

20-05-07 We agreed to contribute \$100 from the MFM contingency fund, to Emma Condori and the Friends International Bilingual Center, in La Paz, Bolivia.

We also ask our Rachel Carey Harper fund committee to meet and make a recommendation at our next meeting for business on making a contribution from that fund.

Bolivia is in the midst of the Covid19 pandemic, in shutdown that has collapsed the economy. They are in economic crisis, with food in short supply, and many people without income to live on. The FIBC income has also disappeared, which will force its closure and dismissal of its staff. The North American Friends Circle of Support for Emma Condori, director of the FIBC, has solicited donations to maintain the Center and pay its staff their very modest salaries. About \$10,000 will be needed for the rest of 2020.

The FIBC serves the 5 Yearly Meetings of Bolivia, which have 30,000 Friends, with multiple programs. Emma Condori visited Middlebury Meeting last summer after attending NEYM, and established an ongoing relationship with MFM's First Day School.

The meeting closed with a period of silent worship.



Middlebury Friends Meeting Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business via Zoom 28 June, 2020

Clerk: Tom Baskett Recording Clerk: Grace Seale

Present were Ed Harris, Tom Baskett, Tom Dickinson, Kristin Lord, Grace McGrath, Lianna Tennel, Brud Leedom, Lucy McKeon, Jean Rosenberg, Ruah Swennerfelt, Louis Cox, Joe Garren, Karen Nawn-Fahey, and Grace Seale.

20:06:01 Opening: Tom Baskett shared a reading.

20:06:02 Review of Minutes: Minutes from 17 May, 2020 reviewed and approved.

20:06:03 Clerk's report: The date for the summer Meeting for Business was set for 26 July, 8:30am. The attendance at our Sunday meetings for worship held by Zoom have ranged from 34 to 45, usually about 35. The midweek worship on Wednesday evenings has ranged from 3 to 8, with usually 4 or 5. We noted the volunteers who offered to host and greet for the next Zoom meetings.

20:06:04 Treasurer's Report: Karen Nawn-Fahey notes this is a report on the previous 6 weeks. Donations are generally fairly small with a seasonal pattern quite similar to previous years. At the end of Q2, benevolences are paid to date, \$100 from the Contingency Fund has gone to the support of Emma Condori-Mamani, and \$200 has gone to the Community Suppers program.

From May 18 through June 27, 2020, the Meeting had member donations of \$100. From May 18 through June 27, 2020 Meeting expenditures totaled \$447.33, including \$133.33 for Children's Program Coordinator, \$80 for Childcare, \$134 for Post Office Box Rental, and \$100 for support of Bolivian Friends. When all these checks clear, the checking account balance will be \$8100.49 (includes RCH and VFV funds). The current balance of Vision For Vermont funds is \$480.85. The current balance of the Rachel Carey Harper Fund is \$1130.

20:06:05 Rachel Cary-Harper Committee Report: The Rachel Cary-Harper Fund Committee met to consider whether it would be appropriate to allocate some of those funds to respond to the plea from the North American Friends Support Committee for the Friends' International Bilingual Center in Bolivia. It reviewed the criteria we had established for the use of this gift, which was unrestricted by the donor. These are:

- 1. Local programs in Addison County or statewide that support projects congruent with our Quaker values that are focused on issues raised in these times.
- 2. Activities that increase opportunities for greater communication, understanding, and collaboration among all elements of the Addison County community, and enhance our own participation in this collaboration.
- 3. Quaker Programs at the national level that address the prominent challenges of our time.

The committee notes that at the time we were discerning the use of these funds we were not considering international projects, but geographic limitations aside, the work of the Bolivian FIBC fits the criteria seamlessly. The center provides language classes, Quaker Women's leadership workshops, First Day School teacher training, First Day School collaborations with meetings/churches in the US, Quaker literature translation projects and more.

In general, the Center is a linchpin for the Bolivian Quaker community, serving espe-

cially the youth spiritually and financially. It serves all five Bolivian yearly meetings. Restrictions due to COVID-19 have dried up the funding of FIBC and they are unable to cover rent and other expenses and provide income for staff. Survival of the center is in doubt.

By chance, Beth Collea (of the North American Friends support committee for the FIBC) was visiting in Middlebury and was able to join the committee's Zoom meeting. Her discussion brought to life the information in the appeal letter and on the FIBC website. She remarked that the five Bolivian yearly meetings represent political and cultural differences, and the FIBC and its director Emma Condori-Mamani serve all of them and are able to bridge these differences enhancing communication, understanding, and collaboration.

Political divisions and the pandemic are certainly prominent challenges of our time, and our financial support can address them. Middlebury Friends Meeting has a vibrant connection to the FBIC, primarily through our First Day School and we feel we should respond in their time of need. The Rachel Cary-Harper Committee recommends that \$500 from the fund be allocated to the Friends International Bilingual Center to help in their survival in these difficult times. The committee further recommends that Middlebury Meeting reconsider the geographical limitations on the criteria for use of these funds.

Friends united to approve that we send \$500 from our Rachel Cary-Harper Fund to support the Friends International Bilingual Center in Bolivia. The Treasurer suggests that if we wish to continue this support, we consider it as a new regular budget item in benevolences.

20:06:06 Minute on FUM hiring policy Friends approved the following minute concerning the Friends United Meeting's hiring policy:

In following Friends deeply rooted testimony of equality and call to love, respect and care for our neighbor as ourselves, no exceptions, Middlebury Friends Meeting is in unity in objecting to Friends United Meeting's hiring policy which maintains a discriminating bias against employment applicants on the basis of sexual orientation and non-marital sexual relationships. We refer specifically to the sentence in the Personal Ethics Policy,

"It is expected however that intimate sexual behavior should be confined to traditional marriage, understood between one man and one woman."

While we recognize that the FUM Board has moved over the years towards being more inclusive in its hiring policies and appreciate the Board's efforts to sustain unity among its members in the face of deeply held differences, we wish to urge FUM to recognize in its hiring and volunteer policy that sexual orientation and non-marital sexual relationships should not, in themselves, be a cause to refuse employment nor an expectation about how love should be sexually expressed. As a member Meeting of FUM, we ask the Board to prayerfully consider how the Quaker testimony of equality

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and experience of continuing revelation speak to this bias and hope that way may clear for this sentence to be removed from the hiring policy manual.

LGBTQ+ persons have suffered too long being discriminated against or worse, imprisoned and killed. As Quakers, whose testimonies and way of living have been guided by Biblical understanding, listening to the One Spirit and common sense informed by the love that evolves from these sources, we should be at the forefront of those welcoming our LGBTQ+ family as truly and fully, our family.

When New England Yearly Meeting halts its contribution-withholding practice, Middlebury Friends will allow its members to express their conscience on FUM's hiring policy by designating a percent of their Meeting contributions destined to FUM as a contribution to another benevolence. Middlebury Meeting will still pay its full dues to NEYM.

20:06:07 Worship and Study Committee

- ~Zoom meetings for First Day School are continuing. Several Bible stories were studied, plus Joe Garren was a guest. Fran Putnam has done a series on water, and potential future service projects are under consideration.
- ~The change to Zoom for worship has offered opportunities for several Friends unable to join in person during the recent past to participate regularly. When in person Meeting becomes possible, a hybrid form of Meeting should be considered.
- ~Friendly Forum gatherings are on break for summer but are planned to resume in the fall.

20:06:08 Nominating Committee Friends approved the following Nominating committee slate.

Co-Clerks: Jean Rosenberg, Joe Garren '19

Rising Clerk: Open

Recording Clerk: Grace Seale '19 Treasurer: Karen Nawn-Fahey

Rising Treasurer: Open

Committees

Worship & Study:

Joe Garren '18, Cheryl Mitchell '18, Lianna Tennal, Jean Rosenberg

Pastoral Care:

Brud Leedom, Wendy Goodwin, Norm Tjossem, Grace McGrath,

Debbie Ramsdell '19, Meg Langworthy '19

Children's Program:

Fran Putnam, Erin Ruble, Lianna Tennal,

EarthCare:

Ruah Swennerfelt '19, Susan Smiley, Fran Putnam, Mimi Love-Nicholson, Spence Putnam, Chris Stackhouse, Louis Cox '19

Fellowship:

Robert Wyatt '18, John Cook '18, Laura Asermily '20

Finance:

Karen Nawn-Fahey, Spence Putnam, Jean Rosenberg

Social Action Mapper: Cheryl Mitchell '20

Nominating (appointed by the clerks)

Spence Putnam '18, Tom Dickinson '19, Tom Baskett '20.

Community/Organization Contact People — Official Meeting Roles

AFSC: Ladybelle Fiske '20 Archivist: Lucy McKeon

Community Dinner: Karen Nawn-Fahey, Tom Dickinson, Susan Smiley, John Cook '19

CropWalk: Priscilla Baker '19

Digital Connection Facilitator: Ed Harris '20

FCNL: Ladybelle Fiske

Havurah Contact: Chris Stackhouse, Spence Putnam

Library: Debbie Ramsdell '19; Becky Holmes has offered to help.

Listserv: Aaron Coburn MACA: Tom Baskett '18

Middlebury College Student Liaison: Sas Carey'18, Molly Anderson '18

Nametags: Win Colwell

Newsletter Editor: Win Colwell

News of Quakerly Interest: Lucy McKeon

NEYM: Susannah McCandless '18

NEYM Puente de Amigos committee: Susannah McCandless '19

NWQM Interim Committee: Tom Dickinson, Don Peabody '19, Lianna Tennal '19

Quaker Earthcare Witness: Ruah Swennerfelt

Recorder: Brud Leedom

Website Coordinator: Win Colwell

Activities of Interest to the Meeting (Not appointed by MFM)

ACORN: Susan Smiley

Addison County Farm Workers: Susannah McCandless, Norm Tjossem '20

Food Shelf Delivery: Laura Asermily Habitat for Humanity: Tom Dickinson

Homeshare: Manya Dickinson,

Interfaith Climate Action Network: Fran Putnam, Spence Putnam

Lunch Program: Tom Dickinson

Migrant Justice Board: Susannah McCandless

Quarterly Sessions Planning Committee: Don Peabody '19, Lianna Tennal '19

20:06:09 Earthcare Committee The committee has not met, but is communicating with First Day School regarding a possible future water project. Ruah is assuming the role of convener; she notes the close links between social justice and earth care, which may warrant more careful consideration including the expansion of the mission statement. It will be valuable to include the social action mapper.

20:06:10 Pastoral Care. Committee members continue to communicate with, and often do for Friends when we are still unable to meet in person. Friends greatly appreciate this effort and care.

The updated directory is in progress.

20:06:11 Friends are asked to think about a possible minute in response to the current suffering and concerns arising from the COVID19 pandemic on all levels, from local to global.

Many Friends are involved in socially active projects and in protests.

20:06:12. Today marks the conclusion of Tom Baskett's loving service as Co-Clerk. We note with deep appreciation and gratitude his thoughtful and genial leadership and long service.

20:06:13 Closing: We closed with silent worship

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Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)

Co-Clerks Tom Baskett 989-7034

Tom Baskett 989-7034 Jean Rosenberg 388-6453 Recording Clerk

Jan Grace Seale mrs.seale@gmail.com Treasurer

Karen Nawn-Fahey PO Box 1026 Middlebury, VT 05753

Pastoral Care Committee

Caring for one another in a loving community is an important part of our life as a Meeting. Call any member of Pastoral Care to share a concern or need.

Wendy Goodwin (385-1900) Norm Tjossem (388-0338) Brud Leedom (558-1005) Grace McGrath (388-6576) Debbie Ramsdell (453⁻2027) Meg Langworthy (877⁻3217)

Editor: Win Colwell

We welcome your submissions! — winslow.colwell@gmail.com News of Quakerly Interest — lucym@shoreham.net

MIDDLEBURY FRIENDS MEETING

PO Box 1026 Middlebury, VT 05753

Meeting for Worship 10 AM every First Day
Havarah House, 56 N. Pleasant St. (Rt.7), Middlebury
www.middleburyquakers.org
Please send newsletter submissions to the address above or to
winslow.colwell@gmail.com