

Middlebury Friends Meeting

February
2022

Inside:

Calendar of Events

Minutes of Jan 16, 2022



FEBRUARY 2022

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
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6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	○ 16	17	18	19
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28						

QUAKER CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Every First Day (Sunday) 9 - 9:45 AM First Day School
 10 AM Meeting for Worship
 If you need the Zoom link, contact
 Ed at edmund.m.harris@gmail.com

Sun. Jan. 23 3:00 PM State of the Meeting via Zoom
 Mon. Jan. 24 3:00 PM Men's Group
 Mon. Feb. 14 4:00 PM Earthcare Committee via Zoom
 Thur. Feb. 24 7:00 PM Worship & Study Committee at Havurah House
 -8:30 PM

“I want to unfold. Let no place in me hold itself
closed, for where I am closed, I am false.”

— RAINER MARIA RILKE

“The winter tree Resembles me,
Whose sap lies in its root:
The spring draws near
As it, so I Shall bud, I hope, and shoot.”



— THOMAS ELLWOOD

Middlebury Friends Meeting Monthly Meeting for Business

16 January, 2022
via Zoom

Clerks: Ruah Swennerfelt

Recording Clerk: Grace Seale

Present were Ruah Swennerfelt, Karen Way, Spence Putnam, Frna Putnam, Brud Leedom, Leigh Harder, Karen Nawn-Fahey, Louis Cox, Laura Asermily, Grace McGrath, Don Peabody, Jean Rosenberg, John Cook, Lianna Tennial, and Grace Seale.

22:02:01 Opening Worship

After settling into silence, Ruah Swennerfelt read from Wendell Berry:

*We travelers, walking to the sun, can't see
Ahead, but looking back the very light
That blinded us shows us the way we came,
Along which blessings now appear, risen
As if from sightlessness to sight, and we,
By blessing brightly lit, keep going toward
The blessed light that yet to us is dark.*

22:02:02 Agenda review

The agenda was reviewed and accepted.

22:02:03 Review of Minutes

Minutes of the 21 November 2021 Meeting for Business were reviewed and approved. Appreciation goes to Leigh Harder for her fine attention to detail in doing these minutes.

22:02:04 Co-Clerks Report

~The clerks observed and are concerned with the lack of speedy volunteering for the roles of greeter and Zoom host, and invited discussion of possible options. Ideas included Friends choosing to sign up for several consecutive weeks in the role, as well as other creative possibilities. Given that we are currently gathering only via Zoom, Spence Putnam will send Zoom-Specific instruction to supplement those previously circulated for hybrid gatherings.

~"Passage of the Month"

The draft chapter on Ministry & Counsel by the Yearly Meeting Faith & Practice Revision Committee was read and discussed:

"In some circumstances the meeting itself is seeking clearness about its role in a prospective mutual and covenant relationship. This is the case when M&C forms a clearness committee for membership or marriage under the care of the meeting. It also applies when Ministry & Counsel forms a clearness committee to consider taking a person's ministry under its care. These clearness procedures are two-way streets. Those asking for clearness are looking for the committee's assistance in determining their readiness for membership, marriage, or ministry and for helping in their preparation for these new roles. The meeting is coming to its own clearness about taking the Friend into membership at this point, or holding a wedding under its care, or supporting a ministry."

As we considered this draft, we were reminded that at Middlebury Meeting Ministry & Counsel functions in three associated but separate parts: Fellowship, Pastoral Care, and Ministry & Counsel. Their functions are, by definition, closely related though each of these groups directs attention to meet specific needs of the Meeting.

The Ad Hoc committee reviewing this draft requests Friends to consider additions or comments in this process, and share with clerks.

22:02:05 Bayard Rustin Fund discussion

During Sessions 2021 NEYM approved the Bayard Rustin Fund for Support and Action.

The intention of the new fund is to "support LGBTQIA+ organizations in East Africa, Central and South America, India, the Caribbean, and North America".

The body also approved allowing monthly meetings to redirect to this fund the portion of their Yearly Meeting contribution which would otherwise go to Friends United Meeting. (This is currently 1.4%, about \$44 for MFM)

That redirection is expected to "assist monthly meetings in their witness as well as target support to initiatives that resist current anti-trans youth legislation by increasing the visibility of efforts and opportunities for collaboration across NEYM".

The fund is open and ready to receive contributions from monthly meetings and individuals.

Discussion of the issue followed, with a variety of viewpoints respectfully

expressed. We are reminded of the multiple implications of coercion in financial ways, of our needs to hold true to our strong values, of taking actions that may impede communication among those with differing viewpoints. We recognized that we have already agreed to add the fund to our annual benevolences. We agreed not to direct contributions to NEYM to the fund since we are not in unity to do that. Individuals may contact the Treasurer to have funds re-directed.

22:02:06 Treasurer's/Finance Committee report, including the proposed budget

The Treasurer's Report of 16 January submitted by Laura Asermily was discussed, reviewed, and approved.

A Friend suggested that each newsletter might include an explanation of one or two of our benevolences. Laura volunteered to help establish this practice.

Middlebury Friends Meeting

Treasurer's Report

October 17, 2021

All statements in this report are as of Oct 17, 2021. From Sept 19, 2021 through Oct 17, 2021, the Meeting had member donations of \$700. From Sept 19 through Oct 17, 2021 the Meeting expenditures totaled \$3,448.33 including \$133.33 for Children's Program Coordinator, \$500 for Woolman Hill, \$500 for Community Supper, \$62.50 for NWQM, \$752.50 for Havurah, \$800 for NEYM, \$500 for Bolivia Friends, \$150 in Quaker Conference scholarship (Fidler). When these checks clear, the balance in the checking account will be **\$13,952.81**

Current balance of Vision for Vermont Funds: \$324.85

Current balance of Rachel Carey Harper Funds: \$5,000

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Asermily

Oct 17, 2021

The Finance Committee submitted a proposed budget, which was reviewed and discussed.

		2021	2022		
	Budget		Budget		
Middlebury Friends Meeting					
2022 Budget					
	\$ 17,025.00		\$ 17,430.00		
INCOME					
EXPENDITURES					
Rent	\$ 2,650.00		\$ 3,010.00		Reflects 2021 increase to \$752.50 per quarter
New England Yearly Meeting	\$ 3,200.00		\$ 3,200.00		
Northwest Quarterly Mtg	\$ 250.00		\$ 250.00		
Books and Library	\$ 200.00		\$ 400.00		Reflects active librarian, covers Journal/Pendle Hill
First Day Coordination	\$ 1,600.00		\$ 1,600.00		
Child Care	\$ 1,200.00		\$ 900.00		Assumes resuming in spring 2022
Materials for Children's Program	\$ 150.00		\$ 150.00		
Advertising	\$ 240.00		\$ 240.00		
Gifts for Young Friends	\$ 20.00		\$ 20.00		
Mail Box Rental	\$ 140.00		\$ 170.00		
Middlebury Area Clergy Assoc	\$ 25.00		\$ 25.00		
Woolman Hill Capital Campaign	\$ 500.00		\$ 500.00		Reflects balance due (one yr left)
Miscellaneous	\$ 350.00		\$ 100.00		Reflects normal spending pattern
Zoom Subscription	\$ 150.00		\$ 160.00		
Newsletter/Directory	\$ 200.00		\$ 200.00		Assumes directory printing, FY 21 \$175
COSA: Community Suppers	\$ 500.00		\$ 500.00		
Postage	\$ 55.00		\$ 80.00		Reflects more realistic level/encourages use
Web page Domain	\$ 20.00		\$ 20.00		
Worship and Study/Pastoral Care	\$ 400.00		\$ 300.00		Reflects some dormancy
Earthcare Committee	\$ 100.00		\$ 100.00		
Quaker Camps and Conferences	\$ 150.00		\$ 300.00		Reflects more realistic level/encourages use
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$ 12,100.00		\$ 12,105		FY 21 expenses \$13,040
BENEVOLENCES					
ACORN (Add Co Relocalization Network)	\$ 100.00		\$ 100.00		
AFSC National	\$ 300.00		\$ 300.00		
Bolivia Friends (Emma Condori)	\$ 100.00		\$ 100.00		Reallocated from End of Life Services
Charter House Coalition (shelter)	\$ 300.00		\$ 300.00		
Charter House Coalition (lunches)	\$ 300.00		\$ 300.00		
CSAC (Counseling Service of AC)	\$ 200.00		\$ 200.00		

22:02:07 Worship and Study Committee

Among this committee's multiple activities, members are in process of planning the State of the Meeting gathering on 23 January at 3pm via Zoom.

22:02:08 Called Committee on Urgent Call to Loving Action for the Earth

This group will present a program on creating backyard wildlife habitats and pollinator-friendly communities. This Zoom program on 24 February from 7:00-8:30pm will include information on gardening practices, from micro to macro, as well as time for questions and discussion. The resources gathered will be available to all.

22:02:09 Earthcare Committee

Spence Putnam described ways in which this committee continues to plan educational activities. John Beattie expanded his leadership role and is now MFM liaison to NEYM.

In support of these activities the Vermont Bookshop offers a discount to Friends for related purchases; Spence will provide our tax ID# upon request.

22:02:10 Fellowship Committee

John Cook reports a time of relative quiet.

22:02:11 Pastoral Care

Grace McGrath describes quite a busy time recently, with several crisis-level events among friends.

22:02:12 Library Committee

Jean Rosenberg reports the bookshelves approved by Havurah House are now partially installed, and committees have display space available. She and Becky Holmes have organized and catalogued the books.

22:02:13 Other concerns

We are mindful that the holiday tomorrow is Martin Luther King Jr Day

22:02:14 Closing Worship

After a time of silence our meeting concluded.

Middlebury Friends Meeting
Financial Review Statement for Fiscal Year 2021
February 18, 2022

I have reviewed the financial statements of the Middlebury Friends Meeting for the period January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2021 and made random checks on disbursements and receipts, with particular attention to checks cashed by recipients of our “benevolences.” It should be noted that the bank account balance of Middlebury Friends Meeting has at times approached \$20,000. 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 Carey Harper Fund, Vision for Vermont (which has now been terminated), and various special donation funds. She has also been responsible for tax filings in connection with our contract employees.

I was given complete access to the online and paper bank records of the Meeting by Laura Asermily, 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.

I would like to note that Karen Nawn-Fahey passed the treasurer role to Laura in 2021 and was very helpful in the transition period. She deserves our thanks for her valuable service.

Spencer Putnam
Finance Committee

Friends, Here is the draft of the State of Society Report that was reviewed at Meeting for Business on February 20, 2022. If you have edits (substantive or grammatical) please share them with Cheryl.W.Mitchell@gmail.com prior to March 18, 2022. We are so grateful to all who participated in creating this reflection on the spiritual life of our Meeting. Once your changes have been incorporated, the first page will be sent to NEYM and NWQM. Our aspirations for the coming year (page 2) will be shared with the relevant committees.

Spiritual Hospitality in the time of Covid

Draft State of Society Report for Middlebury Friends Meeting 2021

Friends gathered January 23, 2022, to consider the state of our meeting and to dream of the future.

Despite being physically apart for most of the year, Friends have felt supported and nurtured by the Spirit and one another. Love and kindness flowed through and around us. The traditions and structures of the Meeting provided a sense of closeness and cohesion despite the discontinuities and challenges of the pandemic and other world situations. Our way of worship was an anchor for many: Settling-in, healing circle, deep silent listening, vocal ministry, sharing afterthoughts, brief announcements, the birthday song all contributed to a comfortable rhythm on First Days and framed personal worship for some. We were grateful to technology for allowing us to see and hear one another, and grateful to Friends who entered the experiment with hybrid worship with patience and perseverance. We worshipped with Friends near and far and felt a part of the wider Quaker Community, yet worried about those Friends for whom the use of technology was not an option or not a pleasure.

Opportunities beyond First Day worship reinforced the sense of knowing and connecting with one another: Wednesday evening worship, Quaker Coffee House, First Day School, adult education and friendly forums, Meeting for Business, the library, the newsletter, men's group, the women's holiday gathering, our in-person out-of-doors celebrations (the summer picnic at Maritime Museum and the holiday bonfire at Rosenbergs'). Work in smaller committees such as Fellowship, Earthcare, Faith and Practice Revision, Worship and Study, Finance, Children's program, Technology, NEYM Called Committee, both brought us closer and provided a structure for the ongoing vitality of the meeting. Pastoral Care had a huge and deep role. Friends were deeply grateful to them and concerned that they might be overwhelmed at some point by our

increasing needs as a community. Despite the moments of darkness, grief and discouragement, the Meeting has sustained us in working for climate change, social justice, and healing. We have learned that a physical location is not essential to being gathered. We can meet the Guide in worship wherever and however we may be.

We are connected to many Spirit Infused groups in the extended Quaker World: North West Quarterly Meeting, New England Yearly Meeting, Friends Camp, Farm and Wilderness Camps, Pendle Hill, Woolman Hill, Powell House, Beacon Hill Friends House, Friends Committee on National Legislation, AFSC, Quaker Earthcare Witness. We connect with many non-Quaker groups who are also working toward a more just and inclusive world. We long to deepen our relationship with members of the Abenaki, migrant, and BIPOC communities. We have watched with joy as young people who grew up in the Meeting are now moving gracefully in the wider world. And we continue to hold a concern that so many of our members are aging and younger families are not taking their place.

The overarching feeling of our gathering was the Ocean of Light rolling over the Ocean of Darkness with waves of love and kindness.

Aspirations for the coming year:

Friends also spent time dreaming of ways we would like to deepen our connection with Spirit and strengthen our connections with the wider community.

- carry out more intentional outreach to Middlebury College,
- learn to use technology more effectively so that we can have a more vibrant on-line presence (and make it easier for seekers to find us),
- work with other groups on issues of mutual concern (perhaps sponsoring another visit and discussion with George Lakey),
- use our library as a support for committees and other groups,
- sponsor book discussions,
- hold public outdoor events,
- expand opportunities for our young people to engage with others,
- promote social and emotional connections between meeting members:
- meals on zoom?
- coffee klatches after worship?

cont.

- share the work of pastoral care more broadly,
- provide adult education opportunities such as the Elements of Quakerism course,
- create more formal connections with our Abenaki neighbors,
- read The Gatherings together.

We are grateful to those who contribute to the vibrancy of our Meeting in so many ways (holding the Meeting in prayer, worshiping together, helping to make decisions, deepening their own practice, serving on committees) and know that our best intentions for the future will be nurtured by this support.



MIDDLEBURY FRIENDS MEETING
 Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)

Editor: Maxine Fidler

Co-Clerks

Joe Garren (610) 324-8185
 Ruah Swennerfelt (802) 922-2259

Recording Clerk

Jan Grace Seale
 mrs.seale@gmail.com

Treasurer

Laura Asermily
 PO Box 1026
 Middlebury, VT 05753
 388-9478

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)

We welcome your submissions! — maxine.fidler@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 via Zoom

www.middleburyquakers.org

**Please send newsletter submissions to the address above or to
 maxine.fidler@gmail.com**