

# Middlebury Friends Meeting

April  
2022

*Inside:*

Calendar of Events

Minutes of Mar 20, 2022

Minutes of Apr 10, 2022



# APRIL 2022

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## 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](mailto:edmund.m.harris@gmail.com)
- Apr. 24    8:30 AM    (Hybrid format) Friendly Forum: Tools for the Spiritual Journey: Our Practices and Disciplines
- Apr. 25    Men's Group
- May 8    10:00 AM    Celebration of Life, in backyards of Rosenberg and Carey homes. Backup is Havurah House if weather is too wet or cold.
- May 9    Earthcare Committee
- May 15    8:30 AM    (Hybrid format) Meeting for Business
- May 22    8:30 AM    (Hybrid format) Friendly Forum. Topic will follow from 4/24 discussion.
- June 4-5    Northwest Quarterly Meeting, hosted by MFM
- June 12    8:30 AM    (Hybrid format) Meeting for Business
- June 26    8:30 AM    (Hybrid format) Ministry and Counsel combined meeting
- July 24    8:30 AM    (Hybrid format) Meeting for Business
- July 25-28    NEYM Spring Summer Retreat
- Aug. 6-11    NEYM Sessions at Castleton University

“It is spring again.

The earth is like a child that knows poems by heart.”

— RAINER MARIA RILKE

## NEWS OF QUAKERLY INTEREST

Collected by Lucy McKeon  
lucym@shoreham.net



FROM FAITH LOWELL: JUST A NOTE TO SAY THAT MY MOVING DATE FROM MIDDLEBURY TO BUFFALO, N.Y. HAS BEEN CHANGED FROM MAY TO JUNE 1ST. FAITH

FROM SARAH ASHE: I AM IN AN ART SHOW WITH THREE FRIENDS, WE ARE THE FERAL STITCHERS, DOING WORK WITH FABRIC, NEEDLE AND THREAD AT THE FURCHGOTT SOURDIFFE GALLERY, 86 FALLS ROAD, SHELBURNE. HOURS TUES-FRIDAY 10-5, SAT 10-4. THE SHOW IS UP FROM THIS FRIDAY THE 25TH UNTIL MAY 6. AS OF NOW THERE IS NO FORMAL OPENING OR RECEPTION, BUT I HOPE SOME OF YOU MIGHT WANT TO COME SEE THE IT...IT'S FUN.

FROM FRAN PUTNAM: OUR FAMILY CELEBRATED BENJ'S BIRTHDAY ON MARCH 13 IN THE SAME MANNER AS WE HAD DONE EXACTLY TWO YEARS AGO WITH A VERMONT-STYLE SUGAR ON SNOW AND SLEDDING PARTY. IT WAS A JOYOUS OCCASION COMPARED TO THE 2020 EDITION, WHICH WAS OVERSHADOWED BY THE IMPENDING CLOSURE OF THE WHOLE STATE DUE TO THE PANDEMIC. BOTH OF OUR CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES WERE HERE AND WE NOTED HOW FAR WE'VE ALL COME FROM THOSE DARK DAYS TWO YEARS AGO!

**Middlebury Friends Meeting**  
**Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business**

**20 March 2022**  
**via Zoom**

Clerking: Karen Way

Recording Clerk: Grace Seale

Present: Karen Way, Tom Baskett, John Cook, Doug Way, Ruah Swennerfelt, Louis Cox, Cheryl Mitchell, Laura Asermily, Spence Putnam, Fran Putnam, Grace McGrath, Lianna Tennal, Don Peabody, Molly Anderson, Thelma Stoudt, and Grace Seale.

**22:03:01 Opening Worship**

After settling into silence, Karen Way read from NEYM's work to revise Faith a& Practice. The passage recommended for March emphasizes the role of Ministry & Counsel, and/or Worship & Study, in guiding the Meeting in self-knowledge.

“It is of vital importance that Ministry & Counsel remains aware of the spiritual state of the meeting. It also has a responsibility to help the meeting itself understand its strengths and challenges as a community. Any meeting –monthly, quarterly, or yearly- benefits from a process of sitting together with queries, including ones that may lead to uncomfortable truths. Corporate discernment on its spiritual condition helps the community see how it has been led, how faithfully it has responded to challenges, and where it might need to focus its attention in the future. It helps bind the community and renew its sense of commitment.”

**22:03:02 Agenda Review**

The agenda for today's meeting was reviewed and approved.

**22:03:03 Review of Minutes**

Minutes from the Meeting for Business of 20 Feb were reviewed. Correction of the name of a Friend from the January minutes was approved.

Changes to the February minutes in section 22:02:09 in the name of the Called Committee: the correct name of this committee is “Call to Urgent Loving Action for the Earth and her Inhabitants”.

After these changes the minutes were approved.

### **22:03:04 CoClerks’ Report**

~The CoClerks discussed a revised approach to collaborative clerking including

1] A request for written committee reports to be sent to the clerks prior to Meeting for Business. The committee representative is asked to summarize in their oral report, calling attention to any decisions needed.

2] The Recording Clerk will read aloud notes following decisions made during the Meeting for Business.

~Barbara Shulamith Clearbridge’s request for transfer to Swarthmore Meeting was read, as well as the Clerks’ letter in response. Middlebury Friends miss her presence in our Meeting.

~April Meeting for Business will be held on 10 April, rather than on the third Sunday which falls on Easter.

~NEYM will hold an event on 9 April, on Spiritual Life and Ministry, in hybrid format. Notice has been sent via email. Further information is obtainable on the NEYM website.

### **22:03:05 Meeting Format: Move Back to Hybrid Gathering?**

Following a time of quiet, we discussed a variety of possible options for gathering. Local worship groups have variable policies and practices, some of which were reported.

We were encouraged to cultivate a spirit of experimentation, holding an awareness of benefits and risks to all in our Meeting, as we go forward. We were asked to think in several perspectives, both short and long term.

Questions arose about masking, vaccination status, refreshments, hosting and greeting, tech challenges with the hybrid format. It was suggested that the Tech Committee consider consulting with Cambridge and Beacon Hill Friends Houses whose hybrid meetings have been working very well.

]

After discussion, we agreed to begin gathering using Hybrid format starting 3 April.

### **22:03:06 Treasurer's Report**

Laura Asermily will update MFM listing in the Addison Independent, to include the addition of 802 to the telephone number.

She submitted the following report:

All statements in this report are as of March 20, 2022. From Feb 20 through March 20, 2022, the Meeting had member donations of \$425. During this interval Meeting expenditures totaled \$133.33 for First Day School Coordination.

When these checks clear, the balance in the checking account will be \$18,131.67. Current balance of the Rachel Carey Harper Funds is \$5,000.

### **22:03:07 Worship & Study Committee**

Cheryl Mitchell spoke of multiple committee activities :

- ~The Friendly Forum related to water is changed to a fall TBD date.
- ~Friendly Forum on 'Spiritual Practices' will be offered 27 April; details will follow.
- ~On Mother's Day our Celebration of Life will again occur, with weather-dependent venue of either Quaker Acres or Havurah House.
- ~The committee is exploring a proposal by Leigh Harder to offer a multi-week study during later spring, to include walking/hiking, poetry, writing, and discussion. A survey of interest will be sent to Friends.

### **22:03:08 Called Committee on Urgent Loving Action for the Earth and her Inhabitants**

Recent presentations on Pollinator Pathways and by Friends showing ways of welcoming pollinators to home gardens were widely appreciated both for knowledge shared and also for the lovely gardens from which participants could learn.

Fran Putnam will re-send the questions related to future interest in these topics and looks forward to using the information from replies in planning.

### **22:03:09 Earthcare Committee**

Ruah reported that the committee learned of a documentary film in process describing the life and work of George Lakey, now age 83. His deeply spiritual life directed toward working for justice and peace in multiple formats offers life-giving lessons. The committee regards this film as a tool for wider circulation of his universal truths in our current world. They requested that the Meeting consider using some of the Rachel Carey Harper funds toward its production. The Rachel Carey Harper Fund committee will consider this request.

### **22:03:10 Technology Committee**

Doug Way reported that the website is now updated with clerk and tech contacts.

There was discussion of what function(s) Friends wish for the website to serve; for example, are 'live links' or a calendar of events desirable? A suggestion about a survey to clarify this was raised. The committee will decide how to proceed.

Multiple expressions of gratitude to this committee for the work it has taken to accomplish so much.

### **22:03:11 Nominating Committee**

Doug Way is representing MFM at the MACA (Middlebury Area Clergy Association). He reported that a service at Sunrise is to be held at the College football field on Easter, and that campus Friends are regularly gathering.

The committee has been working on nominations to fill vacancies in our Meeting.

### **22:03:12 Pastoral Care**

As has been usual this committee remains busy and active. They have been seeking to arrange a memorial to celebrate Ruth Barenbaum.

### **22:03:13 Fellowship Committee**

Support of the local Viva el Sabor group has been discussed; interested volunteers are sought.

### **22:03:14 Closing worship**

Grateful for our time together we closed with a time of quiet.

**Middlebury Friends Meeting**  
**Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business**

**10 April 2022**

Clerking: Ruah Swennerfelt  
Recording Clerk: Grace Seale

Present: Ruah Swennerfelt, Karen Way, Jean Rosenberg, Fran Putnam, Louis Cox, Spence Putnam, Tom Dickinson, Brud Leedom, Doug Way, Laura Asermily, Grace McGrath, Leigh Harder, Don Peabody, Lianna Tennal ( with Willard and Alice Mae), and Grace Seale.

**22:04:01 Opening Worship**

After a time of quiet, Ruah Swennerfelt shared a reading:

“I’m sitting in front of a flower who is teaching me to open.”  
[author unknown]

**22:04:02 Agenda review**

The agenda was reviewed and approved.

**22:04:03 Review of Minutes**

~Minutes of 20 March were reviewed, and, after one correction, approved.

In 22:03:05 the sentence “...was suggested that the Tech Committee consider consulting with Beacon Hill Friends House” was amended to read “...with Beacon Hill House and Friends Meeting at Cambridge”.

~In order to facilitate a more timely newsletter, the Recording Clerk will read minutes for approval during Meeting for Business. It is anticipated this process of approval with needed changes made immediately will be helpful not only to our editor Maxine Fidler, but also to those seeking current news and updates.

**22:04:04 Co-Clerks’ Report**

~Volunteers continue to be needed for hosting and greeting, and regular requests for volunteers have been made. We are reminded that such sharing of tasks is a part of serving our Meeting. Written directions for these roles are readily available.

~Entering the Meeting space in worship



After contemplation and discussion at the Ministry and Counsel Meeting (see below) held on 3 April there was concurrence on encouraging entering the Meeting space in worship.

~Improving the quality of hybrid meetings:

With keen awareness of the importance of making Meeting for Worship as accessible as possible for all desiring to participate, improvement in both sound and visual quality is needed as soon as it can reasonably be accomplished. Friends approved the Tech Committee evaluating options and purchasing needed equipment.

~Ministry and Counsel Meeting (see 22:04:07, 22:04:08)

The reports of these committees' work were reviewed, with appreciation for the thoughtful consideration of all who worship and serve this Meeting.

We discussed creation of signage for the door entering into the hospitality space to help set the tone of quiet from the time of entering the Meeting space. First Day School could use break-out rooms to allow sharing and expression as desired.

~NEYM sessions in August: If all continues to improve regarding COVID and Department of Health recommendations support in-person gatherings, NEYM sessions will be at Castleton University [formerly Castleton State College] from 6 to 11 August. It is probable that Hybrid meetings will also occur.

~The Co-Clerks received and shared a letter from Wendel 'Jake' Jacobs. He requests to become a recorded member of Middlebury Friends Meeting.

The Pastoral Care Committee will organize a Clearness Committee to meet with Jake.

~Future MfB dates:

- 1) The third Sunday in June is Father's Day; after discussion, Friends agreed to gather for business on 12 June.
- 2) The July Meeting for Business will be held on the 24<sup>th</sup>.
- 3) Friends concurred not to hold MfB in August.

Appreciation was expressed to the Clerks for the discussion and planning about these dates.

~ June NWQM

The NWQM Clerk requested an update on progress for the June gathering to be hosted by Middlebury Friends. The interim committee is scheduled to meet on 23 April at 10am for discussion the program

and details, Karen Way will join this meeting. Ruah Swennerfelt and will reach out to South Starksboro Meeting to ask if they will cohost, as it usually does.

Jean Rosenberg, Karen Way, and Ruah Swennerfelt agreed to organize the day.

The deadline for the NWQM newsletter is 15 May; information should be submitted for publication by this date.

### **22:04:05 Hybrid Meetings**

After discussion we agreed to continue gathering using the hybrid format, with a review each month. Discussion included the topics of risk tolerance, as well as both mobility and health conditions among us.

For in-person Meeting full vaccination, masking, and refraining from sharing food or drink continue to be expected.

### **22:04:06 Called Committee for Urgent Loving Action**

Fran Putnam reported:

At our 3/9/22 meeting, the Called Committee reviewed the February program, Gardening with Nature, which all believed to be successful and useful. We expressed special appreciation to the three gardeners who gave excellent presentations which included beautiful and helpful slides.

We identify our next tasks as 1) follow up to the recent presentation and how to continue the momentum which is building for pollinator-friendly gardening and landscaping. Parallel to our efforts is a larger community group, Pollinator Pathways of Addison County, with whom some of us are involved, and which expand our efforts. 2) discern the future of the ad hoc Called Committee, when is it time to lay down the committee and prepare a report for NEYM?

### **22:04:07 Ad hoc committee on review of draft Faith & Practice, chapter 5: Ministry and Counsel**

Leigh Harder, John Cook, Jean Rosenberg, Karen Way, and Ruah Swennerfelt met over the months of November through April reviewing draft chapter 5 of the NEYM Faith & Practice. We have sent in our suggestions.

The committee revising Faith and Practice asked us: As it is a long

chapter, we draw your attention to these specific spots that represent new ground for NEYM, but we welcome comments on other parts of the chapter, too.

**CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION:** What is your meeting's experience of transformation from conflict to understanding? Appendix 5D, "Conflict Transformation in the Meeting Community," is new for our book of Faith and Practice. Does this section capture the spiritual heart of the process? Are there sections of this discussion that need to be clarified? Has your meeting used these processes differently? What can you share with the F&P committee about this?

**THE MUTUAL AND COVENANT PROCESS OF CLEARNESS:** What is your meeting experience with clearness committees for membership, marriage, or support of a ministry? In paragraph 26 in the discussion of the clearness committee we write about the mutual and covenant relationship in the clearness process concerning membership, marriage and the support of a ministry. Does this discussion of the covenantal relationship resonate with your meeting's experience? Would your meeting articulate this differently?

**RECOGNIZING AND SUPPORTING LEADINGS AND MINISTRY:** Our 1985 F&P writes about recording of gifts in the ministry, and it is clear that the text is referring to gifts of vocal ministry. We have expanded this section with a broader coverage entitled "Recognizing and Nurturing Gifts, Leadings and Ministry," paragraphs 47-57. Appendices 5I and 5J describe the work of the care and accountability committee which supports the Friend and their work. Is this discussion sufficient to guide a meeting in this work? Are there sections that need to be more fully developed in regards specifically to Ministry & Counsel's role in supporting ministry?

The chapter covers, in part, the work of Ministry & Counsel, Spiritual foundations, care of worship, support of corporate discernment, religious education, clearness, and recognizing and nurturing gifts. There was much for us to consider for Middlebury Friends Meeting and we collected numerous suggestions for our MFM committees and Meeting, that we will share. Once the chapter has been edited with the comments from Monthly Meetings, we will make it available for

everyone in our Meeting.

We learned a lot, were challenged, and gave us renewed commitment to our Meeting. It was a joyful time for us to grow deeper in Friendship.

## **22:04:08 Report from Meeting of MFM Ministry and Counsel subcommittees**

Notes from the Sunday meeting of Ministry and Counsel

The Query was How can we care for our meeting?

In Middlebury Friends Meeting, our Ministry and Counsel functions are shared out among three committees: Pastoral Care, Worship & Study, and Fellowship. The committee of volunteers who are preparing a review of the draft chapter on Ministry & Counsel from the draft revision of Faith & Practice realized that these three committees need to work together. So our clerks are calling us together to explore how we can communicate and support each other in our work of care for the meeting. Ruah facilitated this meeting.

Three matters were brought to us.

1. Friends who come a little early to meeting for worship and sit in worship as others come in play an important role in grounding the start of worship and holding the worship space. We proposed having a sign on the door where people enter saying “You are Entering the Worship Space” or some such. This will require having the sign and scotch tape available for the greeter to put up the sign (and/or M&C folks make sure it gets put up). Grace Seale agreed to provide the scotch tape. We need to get the sign made. We also thought of either signing up, appointing, or encouraging some people to enter early and sit in worship. We realized that modeling this can encourage other people to do the same and also encourage people entering to become quiet. Norm volunteered to do this regularly. This plan will be reported by the clerks at the next MfB, to notify/remind Friends to enter into the meeting room quietly as worship has begun.

2. We proposed to identify a “listener” at the end of MfW, a Friend who will be available to meet with anyone who has a concern or would like to talk or has questions about the meeting, at the rise of meeting. That person would stay available (not get into other conversations). Pastoral Care agreed to find the “listeners.” We could also identify the Pastoral Care committee members, as a way of reminding Friends of the support available.

3. We agreed to the proposal for the three committees to meet together quarterly. We will meet next at the last Sunday in June (to be confirmed), at 8:30 am, hybrid in person and by zoom. At the next three meetings, each of the 3 committees in turn will be the focus, to talk about what the committee does, challenges, concerns, needs, gaps, and successes. Someone from that committee will facilitate. That committee will send out the reminder to this group, and ask the zoom host to open the zoom by 8:25 that day. The Pastoral Care committee will take this focus at the June meeting.

And two other concerns were brought up. It would be wonderful to gather outside in the warm weather. We would like to have some outside potlucks, maybe monthly. And in general, we need to make sure we accommodate the people who cannot attend any meetings for health reasons. Meeting outdoors when it’s possible may be really helpful.

#### **22:04:09 Nominating Committee**

Louis Cox reported the nomination of Grace Seale to the Fellowship Committee.

Friends approved.

#### **22:04:10 Worship and Study Committee Report**

The Celebration of Life will be May 8, at 10am, in the backyards behind Jean Rosenberg’s and Sas Carey’s houses, weather and non-squishiness of backyards permitting. Havurah House will be the backup. Please bring folding chairs, tarps for sitting on, and a brown bag lunch. Musical instruments are welcome, and we will have drums for a drum circle.

Park at the Animal Hospital across the street; parking behind Sas's house is reserved for those with mobility issues. Announcements will go out.

~Friendly Forum April 24, at 8:30 am. Hybrid. Title is Tools for the Spiritual Journey: Our Practices and Disciplines. An article from FJ will be sent out on the list serve to read beforehand, along with queries for discussion.

~Friendly Forum May 22, at 8:30 am. Hybrid. This will follow on from the discussion on April 24, so will be announced later.

~Ramblings: W&S approved that in early summer, Leigh Harder will lead Ramblings, a series of opportunities for Friends to hike together, listen to a poem, reflect and write on it, and share as desired. More information will come.

~ Tech: We feel strongly that MFM needs to invest in improved technology in order to solve the audio problem when we have hybrid meetings of any kind.

### **22:04:12 Library Committee Report**

Jean Rosenberg submitted this report:

The library is very substantially reorganized, with new expanded shelving. We still have to put some borrowing cards into the backs of a bunch of new books from the last few years. So, we are not encouraging people to take out books yet, although it is OK for people do so long as the book has a borrowers card in it and they fill it out and put it in the borrowers card box, as usual.

Soon, soon, we will be all ready.

There is a shelf in the new corner shelves for Earthcare books, and one for Pastoral care books and there will be one for W&S books.

Abundant appreciation to Jake Jacobs for all his work designing and building the new shelves.

### **22:04:13 Pastoral Care Committee**

Brud Leedom reported the Pastoral Care Committee has been very busy assisting the family in the planning of Ruth Barenbaum's Family Memorial Service on May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2022, and the Meeting's Celebration of Life for Ruth on June 11<sup>th</sup>, 2022 at 1:00 PM at the Ripton Community House. There remains much planning and preparation to be done for both Memorials. In addition, the committee continues to provide

ongoing pastoral support as needed for our Meeting community.

### **22:04:14 Treasurer's Report**

Laura Asermily submitted this report:

All statements in this report are as of April 10, 2022. From March 20, 2022 through April 10, 2022, the Meeting had member donations of \$300. From March 20, 2022 to April 10, 2022, the Meeting expenditures totaled \$2,248.33: \$133.33 for First Day School Coordination, \$62.50 for NWQM, \$800 for NEYM, \$752.50 for Havurah rent, and \$500 for Wollman Hill (2<sup>nd</sup> and final installment toward our pledge of \$1000). When these checks clear, the balance in the checking account will be **\$16,184.04**.

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

**FY 22 Quarter 1 Report (Jan-Mar)** is under review of the Finance Committee and will be shared by email when it is ready so ministries can see the status of their budgets. No one has made requests for expense reimbursements as yet so what you see in the approved FY 22 budget is what you have to spend. Our income totaled \$1,125 and our expenditures totaled \$2,014.99. This is on par with FY 21. We have enough in reserve to cover this and look forward to donations in the next quarter.

### **22:04:13 Closing worship**

After silence, this Meeting closed.

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**MIDDLEBURY FRIENDS MEETING**  
 Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)

Editor: Maxine Fidler

**Co-Clerks**

Karen Way (732) 208-7624  
 Ruah Swennerfelt (802) 922-2259

**Recording Clerk**

Jan Grace Seale  
 mrs.seale@gmail.com

**Treasurer**

Laura Asermily  
 PO Box 1026  
 Middlebury, VT 05753  
 388-4894

**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](http://www.middleburyquakers.org)**

**Please send newsletter submissions to the address above or to**  
**[maxine.fidler@gmail.com](mailto:maxine.fidler@gmail.com)**