

Dear Friends

WILTON QUAKER MEETING
of the Religious Society of Friends

317 New Canaan Road (Route 106), Wilton, CT 06897
www.wiltonfriends.org

Meeting for Worship 10:00 a.m. each First Day (Sunday)

Children attend
for the first 15
minutes,
followed by
Children's Meeting.

Meeting for Business at rise of meeting on second First Days



March, 3rd Month, 2021

“God does not require us to achieve any of the good tasks that humanity must pursue. What God requires of us is that we not stop trying.”

-- Bayard Rustin

Mud Season

Alice N. Persons

After a brutal Maine winter
the world dissolves
in weak sunshine and water.
Mud sucks at your shoes.
It's impossible to keep the floors
or the dogs clean.
Peeling layers of clothes like onion skins,
you emerge pale, root-like, a little dazed
by brighter light.
You haven't looked at your legs
in months
and discover an alarming new geography
of veins and flaws.
Last year you scoffed at people
who got spray-tanned
but it's starting to appeal.
Your only consolation is the company of others
who haven't been to Nevis
or Boca Raton,
a pale army
of fellow radishes,
round onions,
long-underground tubers.

From *Never Say Never* (Moon Pie Press, 2004).

Bayard Rustin on what God Asks	1
Mud Season	1
Announcements	2
Gifts from the Inside	2
WQM Hikes! and Pets	3
Minutes: Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business, 2nd Mo. 2021	4-5
Approved Minute on Solitary Confinement	5-6
Winter Love	6
Calendar & Officers	7

From the Editor:

During our studies in our “White Affinity” group, I have been struggling deeply with new awareness of my own acceptance of racial privilege. I imagined that I would acquit myself of white supremacy, having believed myself a racial justice warrior, albeit a passive one. I thought I would show myself as a “good white person” on the right side of things and “with black friends”. I am finding that all that is a self-adopted persona, that I have hardly ever introspected for the many assumptions and privileges I hold. I want to repair to talking about “those other prejudiced people”, which would be so much more comfortable. I confess this work is very hard, requires opening up emotionally, **but I am glad of it!**

Announcements

A Powell House Bible Study March 17, 5:30pm

This new weekly Powell House Bible study starts on Thursday, March 17 at 5:30pm Eastern time. We'll be reading through the book of Genesis one story at a time, using discussion and queries to explore what we find. Come every week, or drop in as you like; this gathering is free and open to all.

Co-facilitators: Regina Baird Haag and Emily Provance

To be added to the Bible study email list and receive each week's link, copy and paste this link:

https://poho.org/index.php?option=com_civicrm&task=civicrm/profile/create&gid=29&reset=1

Meeting for Worship with a Concern for the Incarcerated - Save the Date!

Thursday, March 25 2021 6:30 pm via Zoom

Are you a current member of the Inside Outside Letter Writing Collective? Do you write to someone in solitary confinement? Are you interested in writing to an incarcerated person? Everyone is welcome to this Meeting for worship. We will hold inside Friends and all incarcerated people in the light.. Following worship, there will be time to share joys and concerns about our prison ministry. The Zoom link will be sent out ahead of the meeting. Questions? Contact Judy Meikle jubilantjudy@gmail.com

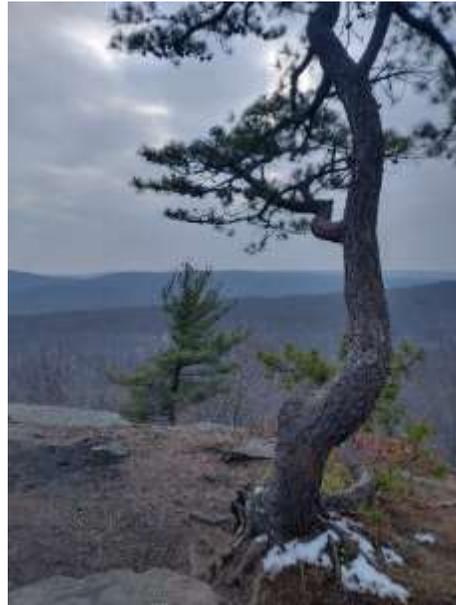


Gifts from the Inside

During the pandemic, incarcerated Friends and outside Friends have been corresponding through the Inside Outside letter writing collective - a mutual ministry of outreach during difficult times. As the ARCH Coordinator for prisons, I correspond with the Clerks of the prison worship groups and have been very grateful for their care and concern over recent months. The Clerk at Woodbourne prison is part of a crochet circle. To my delight this winter I received the gift of a wonderful pair of slippers (see picture) and a hat. I am held in the light and in warm friendship.

Judy Meikle

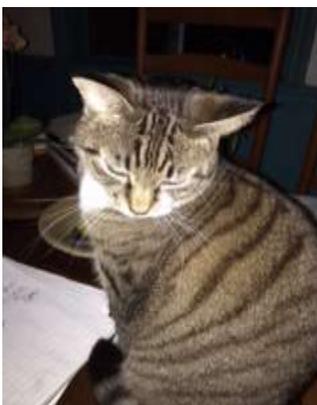
WQM Hikes!



Looking west from near Charles Ives cabin site,
Pine Mountain Trail, northern Ridgefield 1-13-
2021

Match us with the humans we own

(Answers will be revealed in the listserv)



Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business
Wilton Quaker Meeting
February 14, 2021

Attendees: Martha Gurvich (Clerk); John Anderson (Recording Clerk); Albert Hsu (Treasurer); Pete McCaughan; Renda McCaughan; Sean Higgins; Peter Murchison; Madeleine Wilken; Judy Meikle; Wini Keane; Missy Conrad; Virginia Auster

1. Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business opened with a period of silent worship.
2. **Treasurer's Report (AI)**
 - Fiscal YTD Income is \$70k; YTD Expenses are \$42k, Fiscal Year surplus is \$28k
 - However, fixed expenses are ~\$3k per month and one-time expenses such as snow removal are yet to come in, so it is expected that the surplus will narrow over the coming months
 - Income is slightly ahead of budget (\$70k vs \$68.5k)
 - Expenses are running behind budget. Physical stewardship expenses are \$25k thus far vs budget of \$45k. Total expenses are \$42k YTD vs budget of \$80k
 - The top 10 donors contribute ~78% of total contributions
3. **Ministry & Oversight Committee Report (Peter M.)**
 - M&O will sponsor a 'Quakerism 101' series for Friendly Forums. Leslie Chapman is working on this project
 - Ministry & Oversight Committee is led to change the name of the committee to 'Ministry & Counsel'. NYYM advises that the term 'Overseers' has an association historically with slavery. Friends accepted this proposal.
 - The draft 'State of the Meeting' report to NYYM was reviewed. Friends believed that the draft report largely captured the sense of the 'State of the Meeting'. A final version will be sent to Friends for approval for the next Meeting for Business.
4. **Peace & Service Committee Report (Judy and Missy)**
 - Solitary Confinement: Peace & Service Committee proposes a minute on Solitary Confinement and the PROTECT Act proposed in the CT General Assembly.
 - **Friends approved of the proposed minute 2021-02-01, included separately.**
 - This minute will be shared with other Friends meetings in CT. The basis of this minute may be shared as a proposed letter to The NY Times. The Wilton Interfaith Council liaison will share the Minute with the other Council member churches, to encourage other faith communities to join in supporting the passage of the PROTECT Act.
 - Peace & Service Committee proposes the following minute: "WQM supports SB 842, which provides for public health insurance option for small businesses, nonprofit organizations and unions. We urge Governor Lamont and the CT Legislature to increase access to quality affordable health insurance in CT."
 - **Friends agreed to hold over this proposed minute to next month's Meeting for Business, and asks the Peace & Service Committee to please provide more information on this proposed bill in advance of next month's Meeting for Business.**
 - Peace & Service Committee proposes the following minute: "WQM supports SB 00255, the Open Choice Program Act, which proposes to voluntarily enable opportunity for children from overcrowded urban public school systems such as

Norwalk and Danbury to attend public schools with declining enrollment in smaller towns nearby. Diversity enriches the educational experience of all students.”

■ **Friends agreed to hold over this proposed minute to next month’s Meeting for Business.**

5. Physical Stewardship Committee Report (Sean):

- Herbert Recovery was hired to complete the clean up and removal of the oil tank leak. Herbert Recovery is awaiting the result of the soil sample to ensure that the remediation is complete.
- The hole created by the soil removal needs to be back-filled, before the foundation can be poured for the new oil tank. This may incur additional costs.
- The 6 55-gallon drums have been removed from the WQM property.
- Because the doors to the water heater could not be fully closed the water pipes beneath the meeting house froze. A plumber was called to unfreeze the pipes. CFS had to close for a day while the pipes were unfrozen.

6. Connecticut Friends School Report (Sean):

- The teacher who teaches the year 2-3 group is leaving after this school year. A search has been initiated for a replacement.
- The school is considering starting a year 5 program, which would utilize the expanded space at Helen Gander Hall.
- It appears there is a hole in the bathroom ceiling at Helen Gander Hall.
- It appears our enrollment at CFS has remained relatively healthy in spite of COVID.
- The new school director Nicole has done a commendable job in maintaining calm and stability in the face of COVID. Parents seem happy with the school and her leadership.

7. Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business closed with a period of silent worship.

Minute 2021-02-01

Approved at Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business
Wilton Quaker Meeting
February 14, 2021

Minute in Support of the PROTECT Act

From the late 1700’s, Quakers in England and in Pennsylvania played a large role in the introduction of isolation as an alternative to the mayhem that was then prevalent in prisons. In the U.S. a group of reformers, including many Friends (Quakers), developed a vision of the penitentiary as an alternative to these horrendous squalid dungeons. The notion at the time was that providing a space for silent, solitary reflection and penitence would result in rehabilitation. Instead, the stark isolation caused people to deteriorate mentally and physically and yet the experiment in solitary confinement has proliferated and is a cautionary tale of how unintended consequences can undermine good intentions. Following in the footsteps of the Quaker prison reformer Elizabeth Fry, we must work to end the practice that we had a hand in creating. To that end, Wilton Quaker Meeting supports the PROTECT Act to stop solitary confinement in Connecticut.

Solitary confinement is defined by the United Nations as the confinement of prisoners for more than 22 hours a day without meaningful human contact. Prolonged solitary confinement of more than 15 consecutive days is regarded as a form of torture. The Connecticut Department of Corrections (DOC) routinely holds people in solitary confinement in multiple prisons, using other names for the practice such as “administrative segregation.” Data from the DOC shows that isolated confinement in Connecticut prisons overwhelmingly targets people of color and includes large numbers of people with prior histories of mental illness. It is also of great concern that, unlike most other States, the Connecticut Department of Corrections is subject to almost no external oversight.

As Quakers, we have a strong belief in the possibility of positive transformation within each person. Our long history of involvement in correctional facilities throughout the country with the Alternatives to Violence Project gives us direct experience of such transformation. We believe that the way we treat people affects their ability to connect with that of God within. Criminologists have demonstrated that solitary confinement is not an effective tool for rehabilitation. The use of solitary confinement creates permanent psychological injury to incarcerated people and could impact their capacity to make positive changes. People may become more of a risk to themselves, to corrections officers, and when released, to the public. We also lift up that of God within the staff who work in the prisons. People with lived experience of working in the correctional system in Connecticut have testified to the high level of trauma they suffer as a result of working in these facilities.

Believing that solitary confinement is a form of torture and knowing that this practice disproportionately harms people of color in Connecticut, Wilton Quaker Meeting calls on Governor Lamont and Connecticut legislators to support the transformative reforms as proposed in the PROTECT Act. With a focus on minimum standards, working conditions and oversight, the PROTECT Act will end the use of solitary confinement in the State of Connecticut and improve wellness for both incarcerated people and staff.

Winter Love

By Linda Gregg

I would like to decorate this silence,
but my house grows only cleaner
and more plain. The glass chimes I hung
over the register ring a little
when the heat goes on.
I waited too long to drink my tea.
It was not hot. It was only warm.



Calendar

All Meetings are Online for the Duration

March 7	10:00 am	Virtual Meeting for Worship
March 14	10:00 am	Virtual Meeting for Worship
March 21	10:00 am	Virtual Meeting for Worship
	Noon	<i>Virtual Meeting for Business</i>
	7:00 pm	White Space
		6:30 pm
March 17		10:00 am Women's Group via
March 28		Zoom
		Virtual Meeting for Worship

Committee Meetings: (may not take place)

First Sundays: Phys.Stewardship, Finance at 9:00 am, P&S at noon. Second Sundays: Library: 9 am. Third Sundays: A&O 9 am; LRP noon. Fourth Sundays: M&O 8:45 am

Clerk	Martha Gurvich
Recording Clerk	John Anderson
Treasurer	Albert Hsu
Ministry & Oversight Co-Clerks	Peter Murchison & Leslie Chapman
Children's Meeting Acting Clerk	Ann Nunes
Physical Stewardship Convener	Sean Higgins
Peace & Service Clerks	Diane Keefe & Virginia Auster
Advancement & Outreach Clerks	Diane Keefe & Irene Corsaro
Finance Clerk	Becky Bunnell
Newsletter Editors	Madeleine Wilken & Laura Higgins
Newsletter submissions due the Friday before the last Sunday	

To join the WQM email announcements listserv, email Albert Hsu or Pete McCaughan and ask to be added.

Wilton Quaker Meeting

of the Religious Society of Friends
317 New Canaan Road
Wilton CT 06897-3322

First Class Mail