

Morningside Matters

*The Newsletter for Morningside Monthly Meeting
of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)*

www.morningsidemeeting.org

December 2019

Calendar

Weekly	Sunday	Meeting for Worship	Riverside Church 490 Riverside Drive, room 12T (childcare provided in room 13T)	11:00 am
Monthly	First Sunday	Moving with the Spirit	room 12T	10:00 – 10:30 am
	First Sunday	Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business	room 12T	12:30 pm
	Second Sunday	Bible study: Genesis	room 12T	9:30 am
	Second Sunday	Peace & Social Concerns Committee meeting. Everyone welcome	room 12T	1:00 pm
	Fourth Sunday	Welcome Breakfast: An easy way of getting to know other members and attenders. Just tell the cashier you're with the Quakers. The tab is picked up by our hosts, the Ministry & Counsel Committee	Riverside Café	9:30 am
	Fourth Sunday	Racial Justice Study Group (resumes in January)	room 12T	1:00 pm
Monthly, Quarterly, Yearly Meeting events	Thursdays	Downtown Manhattan Quaker Meeting (May – September)	Battery Park	6:00 pm
	December 15	Annual Cookie Swap	room 12T	12:00 pm
	December 15	State of the Meeting Review	room 12T	1:00 pm
	January 11	Ribbon International Workshop	15 th Street Meeting	2:30 – 4:30 pm
	January 19	NYQM meeting	Brooklyn Meeting	1:00 pm
	January 22	Meeting for Eating Potluck	15 th Street Meeting	6:30 – 9:30 pm
	April 3 – 5	NYYM Spring Sessions	Oakwood Friends School	
	April 19	NYQM meeting	15 th Street Meeting	
	July 18	NYQM meeting	Friends Cemetery, Prospect Park	
	July 19 – 25	NYYM Summer Sessions	Silver Bay, NY	
	August 1	Ribbon International Peace Walk, NYC		
	October 23 – 25	Morningside Fall Retreat	Stony Point, NY	
	November 6 – 8, 2020	NYYM Fall Sessions	Shrewsbury & Plainfield, NJ	

Events of interest	First Sundays	Vigil for Peace	Washington Square Arch	1:00 – 2:00 pm
	Saturdays	Vigil for Yemen	Union Square	11:00 am – 1:00 pm
	November 14 – 17	FCNL Quaker Public Policy Institute and Annual Meeting	Washington, DC	
	November 15 - 16	White Privilege Symposium	Asbury First United Church, Rochester, NY	
	November 15 - 17	Peace Witness: Turning Quaker Testimony into Action	Powell House	
	November 22 – 24	Clerking, Serving the Community with Joy and Confidence	Pendle Hill	
	November 22 – 24	Quaker 12-Step Weekend	Powell House	
	December 12 – 15	The Quaker Institute	Pendle Hill	
	December 21	Winter Solstice	Powell House	
	December 28 – January 1	Awaken Your Creative Heart	Pendle Hill	
	December 28 – January 1	Music in Nature	Pendle Hill	
	December 28 – January 1	Open Heart, Peaceful Mind	Pendle Hill	
	December 30 – January 1	Annual New Year's Celebration	Powell House	
	January 17 – 20	Dwelling Deep: A Contemplative Retreat	Powell House	
	January 31 – February 2	Friends Decision Making and Clerking	Powell House	
	February 2 – 4	Aiming for Justice: Race, Reparations and Right Path	Pendle Hill	
	February 7 – 9	Beauty, Truth. Love & Life	Powell House	
	February 14 – 16	Annual Winter Wonderland	Powell House	
	February 21 – 23	Embracing our Inner Critics	Pendle Hill	
	March 6 – 8	Journey Toward Wholeness	Pendle Hill	
March 20 – 22	Facing Transitions Together: Couples Enrichment Retreat	Pendle Hill		
March 22 – 29	Perfection of the Moment: 7-day Mindfulness Retreat	Pendle Hill		
March 27 – 29	The Sankofa Path: Healing from the Traumas of Racism	Pendle Hill		
April 2 – 10	The Student Dharma Project,	Powell House		
April 3 – 5	Opening the Heart of Worship	Pendle Hill		
April 17 – 19	The Meaning & Challenge of Resurrection with John Dominic Crossan	Pendle Hill		
April 24 – 26	Bless the Night	Pendle Hill		

Remember to check the Calendar and the Bulletin Board at www.morningsidemeeting.org

Newsletter Submission Guidelines: The purpose of the newsletter is to inform members, attenders and other interested people of Meeting news, including member interviews, news of Friends, other Quaker-related subjects, news of Quaker organizations, upcoming events, Meeting-sponsored projects, book reviews, etc. Articles and pictures are welcome. The deadline for the newsletter is the Sunday of the Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business. Please e-mail your material in Word or text format to morningsidequakermeeting@gmail.com by the end of that day. Past issues of the newsletter are archived at www.morningsidemeeting.org.

Reflection:
*Those who contemplate the beauty of the earth find reserves of strength
that will endure as long as life lasts.*

Rachel Carson

**Morningside Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends
Minutes of the Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business
December 1, 2019**

1. The Meeting began with worship at 12:35 p.m. and Jane Alexandre read a selection from Celeste Snowber, *Embodied Inquiry*:

“Welcome back to the familiar
the land of the perplexed
where paradox reigns
and heart, mind, and body
are not in sync,
harmony, congruence or flow
and no matter how diligent you are to reflect,
problem solve, brainstorm or bodystorm
it sits as a big mountain
in front of you
and cannot be climbed with bare feet...

“Breathe into uncertainty
knowing this is the
essence of life
and when it comes
know you are invited
once again into
the spirituality of practice:
loving-kindness towards
all that is not resolved
in your heart.”
2. Daniel A. Seeger gave the Treasurer’s Report. Friends accept the report, and the written report is attached.
3. Sally Campbell gave the Peace and Social Concerns Report. The next regular meeting of P&SC will be held on January 12, 2020 at 1:00 p.m. The meeting regarding Amnesty International Write for Rights will be held on Sunday, Dec 8th. Friends accept the report. The written report is attached.
4. Pamela Wood read a draft of a letter regarding our position on solitary confinement to Governor Andrew Cuomo. Clarifying questions and suggestions followed. Friends approve the letter to be sent from the Meeting.
5. Tom Goodridge read the report for Ministry and Counsel. M&C met on November 25th, 2019 at the home of Pamela Wood. The next meeting is scheduled for December 30th at 7:15 at the home of Pamela Wood. All are welcome to the first part. Please RSVP to Pam. On December 15th M&C will hold a “state of the meeting” worship sharing at 1:00pm.

Friends accept the report. The written report is attached.
6. Jane Alexandre gave the second reading of the letter requesting membership by Scott Blumenthal. Friends approve the membership of Scott Blumenthal. Tom Goodridge, (convener) Bryan Wigfall and Richard Schmidt will serve on Scott’s welcoming committee.
7. Corona Macheimer gave the Communications Committee report. Clarifying questions and suggestions followed. Friends accept the report. The written report is attached.
8. Pam Wood gave a report from the Naming Committee with a nomination to the Nominating Committee. Bryan Oettel was named to the Nominating Committee. Ernestine Buscemi has been released from the Nominating Committee.
9. Friends made announcements.
10. Friends approved these minutes. The meeting ended with worship at 1:30p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Bernard Winter, acting recording clerk

Present: Jane Alexandre (clerk), Joyce Richardson, Richard Schmidt, Pamela Wood, David Fletcher, Peter Beck, Charlene Ray, Ernie Buscemi, Bryan Wigfall, Daniel A. Seeger, Robert Schwab, Tom Goodridge, Kathy Stackhouse, June Tano, Corona Macheimer, Sally Campbell, Ronald Rieder, Robert Renwick.

Treasurer's Report

The attached sheet shows income and expenses by category for the first eleven months of the fiscal year.

When we adopted the budget, we anticipated contribution income for the entire year of \$39,000. A month ago, at the end of ten months, we had received only \$23,893.17. Ten twelfths of \$39,000 is \$32,500. So, a significant shortfall was looming. Happily, the eleventh month income was \$10,312.11, bringing the total for the year up to \$34,205.28. This is just slightly short of the \$35,750 which would be 11/12ths of the \$39,000 annual goal. So, we have made up a lot of ground. If we can pull in \$4,795 in December, we will meet our budgetary goal for general fund income.

On the expense side, all major items have been paid, including the \$17,325.00 we scheduled ourselves to allocate to New York Yearly Meeting as a covenant contribution. There remains \$1,400 worth of Peace and Social Concerns disbursements to be made as soon as the contact information for the related organizations is provided to the Treasurer. There are probably some additional minor bills to be paid to members who have incurred expenses on behalf of the meeting and who have accumulated them for

payment all at once at the end of the fiscal year. I do ask that people who incur expenses for the Meeting ask for payment rather than claiming such expenses as a contribution. Such people can enlarge the contribution checks they write to the Meeting by an equivalent amount. Not to run all the expenses and income through the books in this way masks the true cost of operating the Meeting and greatly complicates the bookkeeping.

So, the overall picture at the end of the eleventh month allows some optimism that we will end the year in fiscal balance. The Finance Committee has worked hard this year to get appeals out in time, and this certainly seems to help. The willingness of members to respond to the appeals, and the steadfast support of those members and attenders who program automatic monthly contributions from their bank accounts helps keep the finances in a healthy state.

On the 29th of November the checkbook register balance was \$51,186.95. The bank balance was \$51,966.18.

Respectfully submitted,
Daniel A. Seeger, Treasurer

Income/Expense by Category 1/1/2019 through 11/30/2019 (Cash Basis)

Category	1/1/2019- 3/31/2019	4/1/2019- 6/30/2019	7/1/2019- 9/30/2019	10/1/2019- 11/30/2019	OVERALL TOTAL
INCOME					
General Fund Contribution	6,909.40	6,874.33	6,667.33	13,754.22	34,205.28
Interest and Dividends	6.14	6.49	6.34	0.00	18.97
Retreat Fee Income	0.00	0.00	3,630.00	460.00	4,090.00
TOTAL INCOME	6,915.54	6,880.82	10,303.60	14,214.22	38,314.25
EXPENSES					
Huntington House	0.00	0.00	143.09	0.00	143.09
MMM Oper. - Hospitality	0.00	0.00	400.00	0.00	400.00
NYYM Allocation	4,331.25	4,331.25	4,331.25	4,331.25	17,325.00
Operations - Breakfast	0.00	10.00	0.00	175.00	185.00
Operations - Finance	0.00	156.48	0.00	110.65	267.13
Operations - First Day Child Care	0.00	0.00	1,205.00	0.00	1,205.00
Operations - Literature	0.00	0.00	146.51	0.00	146.51
Operations - Ministry and Counsel	0.00	0.00	0.00	50.00	50.00
Operations, Comm. - Website	120.00	100.86	0.00	0.00	220.86
Outreach - Friends in Unity w Nature	0.00	200.00	0.00	0.00	200.00
Outreach - Peace, Social Concerns	1,300.00	4,080.00	3,300.00	2,800.00	12,080.00
Outreach - Scholarships, Relief	0.00	0.00	0.00	460.00	460.00
Retreat Expense	1,200.00	0.00	3,630.00	0.00	4,830.00
TOTAL EXPENSES	6,951.25	8,878.59	13,755.85	7,926.90	37,512.59
OVERALL TOTAL	-35.71	-1,997.77	-3,452.18	6,287.32	801.66

Morningside Meeting's Letter to Gov. Cuomo

**Morningside Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)
c/o NY Quarterly Meeting
15 Rutherford Place
New York, NY 10003**

December 1, 2019

Governor Andrew Cuomo
633 Third Avenue, 38th Floor
New York, NY 10017

Dear Governor Cuomo,

Morningside Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) would like to express some concerns over the new rules proposed by the Department of Corrections and Community Supervision (DOCCS) in response to the need to change the way the State of New York is using solitary confinement and segregated housing (SHU). We encourage you to sign the HALT Solitary Confinement Bill when it is passed, which provides safer rules for those who are incarcerated.

1. Our first concern is that the gradual step down in the use of solitary confinement outlined in the proposed rules, limiting it first to 90 days, then after a year to 60 days and after another year to 30 days, does not take into account that more than 15 days of solitary confinement has been defined as torture because of the effect of isolation on the brain. Anyone confined for more than 15 days runs the risk of trouble, especially those under the age of 25 years. Longer than 15 days runs also runs the risk of aggravating what might be mild mental illness into something worse.*
The increasing focus on suicide prevention in Correctional Facilities and the introduction into the training of correctional volunteers in suicide warning signals may be partly attributed to the use of solitary confinement and SHU.
2. Secondly, there is no provision for guaranteed legal assistance to those who are sentenced to solitary confinement or SHU. Mistakes of fact and mistakes of judgment can be made. Currently it is almost impossible to challenge a placement in solitary without some legal help. While some people who are incarcerated are able to mobilize outside legal assistance to challenge a decision, to question the placement of someone in solitary is a torturous process. Those with limited education, those with some degree of mental illness or dementia are much less able to do so.
3. People of color and people with some degree of mental illness are disproportionately assigned to solitary confinement or segregated housing.
4. The provisions for food deprivation and turning off water seem cruel and inhumane. In addition, when people who are incarcerated wish to contest the food deprivation, they have to make a written statement requesting a change. What happens if the person cannot read or write well enough to make such a request or who has disabling dementia or mental illness.

**“There are few, if any, forms of imprisonment that appear to produce so much psychological trauma as isolation.” Dr. Craig Harvey quoted in apa.org*

“Compared with individuals who were incarcerated and not placed in restrictive housing, individuals who spent any time in restrictive housing were 24% more likely to die in the first year after release, especially from suicide (78% more likely) and homicide (54% more likely); they were also 127% more likely to die of an opioid overdose in the first 2 weeks after release.” “Association of Restrictive Housing During Incarceration with Mortality after Release,” JAMA, October 2019

5. There is an increased awareness of the need to make allowances for mental illness in the rules, as there is presently in DOCCS rules. It is not clear whether even the rules currently in place are adequately followed. The judgment of what constitutes severe mental illness is subjectively decided by DOCCS employees who are not professionally trained. These more complex rules may be even more difficult to put in place.
6. **The regulations continue to permit people to be locked in solitary confinement for years:** The proposed regulations do NOT prevent incarcerated people from being endlessly cycled back into solitary after each 30-day stint. This means that a person could be held in solitary confinement for 30 days, let out for a day, put back into solitary for 30 more days, let out for a day, sent back for 30 -- and on and on in a cruel and inhuman cycle that could last years or decades. *The HALT bill protects against this “indefinite cycling” by limiting the amount of time an individual can spend in solitary to no more than 20 days in any 60-day period.*
7. **Jail administrators can override solitary confinement time limits:** While the proposed regulations do set the above time limits for jails, and also limit the total time a person can be kept in solitary in jails during any 6-month period, a procedural loophole has been added to allow all of these limitations to be broadly circumvented. The jail’s chief administrative officer is granted sole license to hold someone in solitary confinement indefinitely based on criteria that are vague and subject to wide interpretation (a person must be deemed a "safety threat" though what constitutes a threat is never defined). This exception to the rule and the ambiguous language with which it is worded opens the door wide for potential abuses, and no procedural protections are in place to challenge or appeal this decision.
8. **Indefinite solitary to continue via keeplock:** The proposed regulations would allow people to be held in keeplock for any reason – even the most minor rule violations – and with no time limits whatsoever. The “keeplock loophole” contained in the regulations is particularly egregious, as the Department of Corrections is not required to report data on how many people are held in keeplock in their own cell, why they are being held there, and how long they have been confined. Keeplock is a way to perpetuate the gruesome practice of solitary confinement but keep it “off the books” and out of the public eye. *The HALT bill, alternatively, provides protections for ALL forms of solitary, regardless of what name is used.*
9. Finally, what has been proposed are rules, which do allow for some change, but which can be changed with little fanfare. The HALT Solitary Confinement Bill would provide better protection both for those who are incarcerated and the Corrections staff.

Jane Alexandre, Clerk
Morningside Monthly Meeting

cc. Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins
Speaker of the NY State Assembly Carl Heastie

Peace & Social Concerns Committee

We met on November 10th. Attending were: Jane Alexandre, Dave Britton, Sally Campbell (clerk), David Fletcher, Jerry Reisig, Bob Schwab, Kathy Stackhouse, June Tano, Bryan Wigfall and Pam Wood.

Kathy Stackhouse told about the FCNL letter writing request for this month. **By funneling school and disaster relief funding to border wall construction and immigration detention**, the Trump administration violates our core Quaker beliefs and ignores Congress's constitutional power of the purse. She and Pam will be going to Washington for the FCNL lobby days November 14-17 which is focused on ending Authorization of the Use of Military Force.

June Tano has added another sponsor to The 2020 Ribbon International event, World Friendship Center in Hiroshima. It was founded by an American Quaker in 1965. She and Sally attended "Meet the Author" event at the UN Bookshop, and gave two Ribbons to the author, Kathleen

Burkinshaw, who wrote *The Last Cherry Blossom*, a novel about her mother as a teenager in Hiroshima.

Pam Wood sent the letter we discussed at last month's meeting indicating our objections to the proposed administrative rule changes to solitary confinement. The committee approved her proposal to send one directly to Governor Cuomo on the same topic. She will be sharing it with the business meeting today.

David Fletcher spoke about preparations for the Amnesty International Write for Rights on December 8th. Kathy Stackhouse has agreed to assist him.

P & SC budget allocations - we began looking at the budget of donations to organizations for 2020. Sally will reach out to liaisons who were not present for their recommendations.

Respectfully Submitted
Sally Campbell, clerk

Ministry and Counsel Committee Report

1. Next Meeting of M&C is scheduled for 7:15 pm, Monday, December 31, at Pam's
2. On December 22, Ministry & Counsel's Fourth Sunday breakfast will be hosted by Charlene Ray, beginning at 9:30 am.
3. On December 15, at 1 pm, Ministry & Counsel will sponsor the State of the Meeting worship sharing. We are exploring dates for a discussion of End of life decisions and Quaker values, as Quarterly Meeting is on January 19th.
4. Moving with Spirit will meet Sunday, December 1, at 10 am and Sunday, January 5, at 10 am.
5. Bible Study will take place on December 8th, beginning at 9:30 am. If you are not on the email list, please let Jerry Reisig know you are interested.
6. M&C is looking into finding ways to have more comfortable lighting in our Meeting room.
7. Ministry & Counsel forwards Scott Blumenthal's request for membership in the Meeting for a second reading with a recommendation for approval.
8. We are going to experiment with having a member of M&C over by the signup table for people who may have questions for them. We hope in this way to make the availability of M&C members to new attenders more noticeable.
9. Currently Ministry & Counsel has 8 clearness and support committee.

Respectfully Submitted
Ed Elder, Clerk

Communications Committee

The Committee met on Thursday, November 21. Attending at Bryan Oettel's home were Bryan, Richard Schmidt, Kathy Stackhouse, and Corona Machermer (acting as clerk).

1. The new Address Register is almost ready to distribute. The database has been updated. There was considerable discussion about distribution of the Register in the context of a consideration of the 2020 budget. The question is whether we should continue distributing hard copies of the Register to all Morningsiders, since it is the one bit of communication the Communication Committee now man-

ages that is the same for all--that is, does not require some facility with the internet. However, it is fairly expensive, with costs for paper, envelopes, printing, and postage expected to total up to \$500. The alternative is to distribute it as a PDF by email, and print only a few copies for the Meeting room and those who specifically request a hard copy. (The current Register is also available on the website to members only.)

The committee invites input from Morningsiders on the subject.

2. The Communications Committee budget for 2020 was discussed, but no final decisions were reached. We are inviting Vonn New to submit an invoice for the work she did for us during 2019.
3. The Facebook Ad campaign scheduled for September never happened because of the over-commitments elsewhere of the committee members involved. Despite reservations about Facebook, the committee believes we should run the campaign early next year, in the context of the New Year. We plan to use New York Yearly Meeting's platform, but use pictures and text relating specifically to Morningside, not one of NYYM's boilerplates. The funds for the campaign will come from the 2019 budget. (We expect to place the ads in December, to run in January.) Whether we continue to run Facebook ads in future will be for the Committee and the Meeting to consider in 2020.
4. We spent a good bit of time discussing the website, which continues to be under-used. We looked at the website of Valley Friends Meeting in Valley Forge, PA, of which Corona is a member, and invite Morningsiders to do the same (valleymeeting.org) and let us know what you think. In general,

our feeling was that our site was designed in a different time (long ago in terms of the pace of change nowadays). Its elegant, "classic Quaker" opening page doesn't change, and there is no color except for the "Quaker Lady" flower. The type is relatively small, and the use of both tabs and quick links complicates navigation—issues that have become limiting as people increasingly use their tablets and phones, with small screens, to navigate the internet. On the other hand, the information "behind" the opening page, when kept up to date, is very useful, though the navigation issues mean that people may have trouble finding what they're looking for.

In addition, there are matters related to our server, our operating system, and our relationship with the NYQM website that complicate how the committee may deal with these matters.

All these concerns will come before the Committee in 2020.

Respectfully submitted,
Corona Macheimer, acting as clerk