



Plymouth Monthly Meeting Newsletter

Meetings for Worship

First Day Meeting: 11:15 am
First Day School: 11:30 am
**Fourth Day Meeting: 7:00 pm
still happening via Zoom**
Fifth Day Meeting with PMFS:
8:45 am
**Music Circle: 2:00 – 4:00 pm
every Sunday**
Address: 2150 Butler Pike,
Plymouth Meeting, PA 19462

Second Month 2021

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February 2021

Tues	Feb 2	7:00 pm	Care and Concern via Zoom
Sun	Feb 7	9:00 am	Quarterly Meeting "at Norristown" via Zoom (contact rhcratin@cratin.com for zoom link)
Sun	Feb 14	9:30 am	Worship & Ministry
Sun	Feb 21	9:00 am	Meeting for Business
Sun	Feb 28	6:00 pm	Virtual Friendly Fourth

March 2021

Tues	March 2	7:00 pm	Care and Concern via Zoom
Sun	Mar 14	9:30 am	Worship & Ministry
Sun	Mar 21	12:30 pm	Meeting for Business
Sun	Mar 28	6:00 pm	Virtual Friendly Fourth

- Due to a resurgence of Covid in the area, all meetings will be conducted via Zoom again until further notice (see third page for log-in information)
- All First Day Meeting for Worship will begin at 11:15. You may join us any time after 11am and settle in.
- Midweek meeting for Worship will begin Wednesday at 7:00 pm
PMM Zoom information always available at plymouthmonthlymeeting@gmail.com or contact Dave Miller

Music Circle every Sunday from 2:00-4:00 pm until further notice via Zoom (contact Bill Alberts for an invitation) billalberts@verizon.net

Queries for February

Nurturing Our Community: Care for the Meeting

Do we help each other to live with integrity and contribute that integrity to the life of our meeting?

How does our meeting learn of members' needs and offer its assistance?

How does our meeting nurture members in all stages of life?

How does our meeting welcome those new to Friends and integrate them into our community?

When a member's conduct or manner of living gives cause for concern, how does the meeting respond?

- *Am I ready both to offer and to accept meeting assistance when needed?*
- *Do I treat adults and children alike with respect and without condescension?*
- *What opportunities have I taken to know, work and worship with Friends in the larger spiritual communities we share?*

Annual Business Meeting

At our Annual Business Meeting this year, Clerk Rebecca Cratin presented The Annual Report to Abington Quarterly Meeting, our own "State of the Meeting Address." It is attached to this newsletter, and is important reading for those wishing to understand where we are as a Meeting community.

Individual committee reports are available on the website to those who are registered.

Zoom Meeting Log-in Information

Request link information by sending an email to plymouthmonthlymeeting@gmail.com.

Jane Addams Peace Association 2021 Children's Book Awards

Our Plymouth Monthly Meeting Library has several past Jane Addams award winning books for our children and youth. This year's winning book for older children is *A Wish in the Dark* by Christina Soontornvat and the winning book for younger children is *We Are Water Protectors* by Carole Lindstrom. Honors Books for older children are *Ocean Speaks: How Marie Tharp Revealed the Ocean's Biggest Secret* by Jess Keating and *Finish the Fight* by Veronica Chambers & the staff of the New York Times. Honors Books for younger children include *Land of the Cranes* by Aida Salazar and *Black Is a Rainbow Color* by Angela Joy.

"The Jane Addams Children's Book Award began in 1953. In 1953, the call went out for books with "humor and imagination" and a strong statement of "faith in people" that encouraged the development of a peaceable person. Now, coupled with literary and artistic quality and the criteria focus on how books effectively engage children thinking about peace, social justice, global community, and equality for all people. It is the nature of the dialogue, response, reflection, and questioning which a book engenders in young readers that is key."

For more information on each book and last year's award winning books go to:

<https://www.janeaddamschildrensbookaward.org/>

Speaking at Gwynedd: Youth Sentencing and Reentry Project, Sat. Feb. 13th, 1:00-2:15 pm

On Sat. Feb. 13th, we are fortunate to have a special Zoom experience. Speakers from the YSRP organization will be sharing with the Gwynedd community. The speakers are formerly incarcerated persons who are now part of the group Intergenerational Healing Circle, which began only last year at the Youth Sentencing and Reentry Project. The speakers will share how the organization works, providing services to incarcerated youth and others, once released, assisting with the needs of persons re-entering community. They will also share their individual stories and the reasons they began the healing circle.

The mission statement of YSRP:

The Youth Sentencing & Reentry Project (YSRP) uses direct service and policy advocacy to transform the experiences of children prosecuted in the adult criminal justice system, and to ensure fair and thoughtful resentencing and reentry for individuals who were sentenced to life without parole as children ("juvenile lifers"). We partner with court-involved youth and juvenile lifers, their families, and lawyers to develop holistic, humanizing narratives that mitigate the facts of each case; get cases transferred to the juvenile system or resentenced; and make crucial connections to community resources providing education, healthcare, housing, and employment. We also provide trainings on mitigation, and recruit, train and supervise students and other volunteers to assist in this work. *Our ultimate goals are to keep children out of adult jails and prisons and to enhance the quality of representation juvenile lifers receive at resentencing, and as they prepare to reenter the community.*

Topic: Inter-generational Healing Circles – Youth Sentencing and Re-entry Program
Time: Feb 13, 2021 1:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8046446617?pwd=UG51a1dmTGNPc2t6M1Y4QTJkV0R2UT09>

Meeting ID: 804 644 6617

Passcode: 425895

One tap mobile

+19292056099,,8046446617#,,,,*425895# US (New York)

+13017158592,,8046446617#,,,,*425895# US (Washington DC)

Dial by your location

+1 929 205 6099 US (New York)

+1 301 715 8592 US (Washington DC)

+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

+1 669 900 6833 US (San Jose)

+1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)

+1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)

Meeting ID: 804 644 6617

Passcode: 425895

Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/kco33Ljv16>

Black History Month



FREEDOM'S JOURNAL
THE ART OF JERRY PINKNEY

Black history month brings many opportunities to get to know our African American brothers and sisters who have been a part of the building of our nation and its society. There are many organizations that have programs to provide new and exciting information. Please take some time to read, watch some videos and have conversations this month that are long on listening and seeking to understand the African American experience.

This past year has reawakened the desire by Friends to live more fully into our testimony of equality. The year has placed a discerning light upon the inequalities of all areas of life across this country as people of color, gender, culture, or economic class are systematically excluded from equal treatment. Gun violence, healthcare, police shootings, educational differences and so many more inequalities have been highlighted in recent months. The challenge before us is how do we truthfully live into our testimony of equality. And then, can we live in a way that invites others to do the same?

Our history helps us to know that it is possible to do so. It also shows us how we both succeeded and failed to be faithful to our discerned testimony of equality. Yet we continue to try to be faithful, not giving up. The past is not so different from the present. Slave catchers are

not so different from some of the recent actions of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officers who implement the laws of the Federal government. Fugitive Slave act / family separation and deportation of people seeking asylum due to violence.

What does our past tell us about our present? Attached are two documents that can be used to open thoughtful reflection on these questions separating fact from myth of Quaker history. We have much to be proud about and emulate but also as all people do, at times we have fell short of what we profess.

To help guide our reflection on this topic, below are three opportunities to use or pick from:

The first attachment: The arrest of John and Jim Lewis is a story and is part of our history here at Plymouth. It takes place at the Marble Masters house at the intersection of Spring Mill and Ridge Pike (the large white house with columns on the front porch and summer kitchen in the back). The story is about two African American brothers who have fled slavery in the south. One of them found work with Peter Dager who lived at this residence. The story occurs after the fugitive slave act was legislated and involves members of Plymouth Monthly Meeting who defended the act and members of our Meeting who acted against this law. It also provides a glimpse into relationship between white and black peoples in our community.

The second attachment is an essay from Christopher Densmore Curator, Friends Historical Library of Swarthmore College; Quakers and the Underground Railroad: Myths and Realities. This article is helpful to place Friends role in the Underground Railroad in perspective. "whatever Quakers did for the anti-slavery movement and the Underground Railroad they did not do it alone. In the Underground Railroad, it was the enslaved, the freedom seekers, who took the initiative and took most of the risk. There was far more assistance to freedom seekers in African-American communities of support than has generally been acknowledged. We need to see the Underground Railroad not as safe houses and tunnels, but as support networks of people." A small number of Friends and non-Friends of Plymouth Meeting were part of this support network.

The third opportunity is a YouTube musical reading of The Old African using the pictures of Jerry Pinkney to illustrate the story. The Old African is the hard story of the middle passage and the longing to return to the homeland now far away. It is a story that helps us understand the generational trauma that African Americans, Native Americans and immigrants to our country endure and strive to transform. The YouTube link is <https://duckduckgo.com/?q=Jerry+Pinnkney+Woodmere+Old+African&t=ffab&iax=videos&ia=videos&iai=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.youtube.com%2Fwatch%3Fv%3DtDSNBPqO5u4> 2021 is a challenging year. The pandemic is still mightily with us. Our president has change but the divisions remain. Our communities of color and indigenous peoples suffering is before our eyes. And the climate it is a changing particularly impacting those who are poorer or of color. How will we speak to these conditions as the year unfolds? This is the question of discernment before us today.

Turn inward and seek the Divine guidance that awaits us and turn outward to share your thoughts with members and attenders of our Monthly Meeting and beyond who are also seeking equality in their relationship to the people of this world.



Worship and Ministry Questions to Ponder

As the COVID epidemic follows us into a New Year, there is hope that all will receive the vaccination sooner rather than later and the virus' hold on our lives will recede. We are different in many ways as this New Year

begins. Having been separated from one another for almost a year we know at the heart level the loss of physical community. Some have made the most of our online community and have endeavored to reach across the physical divide to be with one to another. Others have chosen not to participated in the online community, finding the technology to be a challenge or inhibiting their worship and prayers.

As we hopefully approach the post COVID era we will have the opportunity to take with us that which we have found useful in this time and join it with what we long for in a time not defined by physical distancing between people. What are the things we wish to take with us on this journey to post COVID? Perhaps there is a hope that we:

- will take along the wonderful new cooking that we can share widely.
- will continue to take the long contemplative walks that provide relief from being in the home that also became the office.
- will take along the technology of conferencing together across distance. If so how?

The Worship and Ministry committee of our Meeting and the Monthly Meetings of our Yearly Meeting have been discussing the question of technology in a post COVID era. Below are a collection of thoughts from these discussions but mostly questions about what comes next. There is no uniformity across Monthly Meetings. Some continue to meet in their Meeting houses without technology. Some only online. Some are blending their worship using cell phones for each worshiper, or the Owl system or a variety of cameras, speakers, and microphones. Below are some thoughts and comments from almost 100 people who attended a discussion.

What will it be like when we go back into our Meeting house?

- Can the technology follow us there and allow those at a distance to continue to worship with us?
- Will its presence be a distraction to deep centering as groups are meeting in two places at the same time linked together by microphones, speakers and perhaps a video screen or individual cell phones?
- Will the essence of what makes a Friends Meeting for Worship continue when blending the two groups?
- Will the joy and counsel of a wider community be diminished by adding one more form of technology to our worship? Or will we be enriched by that wider community that enables our older members, members at a distance and those who are traveling away from home, to weekly be a part of our Meeting communities.
- What is the essence of our meetings for worship and how can technology disrupt it or enhance it?

Our Quaker meetings began outside in the dells of England's midlands. Smaller groups gathered in homes. With resistance, Meeting Houses began to be built, a first step into the structuralizing of worship. Over the years heat (first), lights, plumbing (for most but not all) were added. For some Friends a minister, music, sound systems and video screens were slowly added. Friends have always made decisions on what became a part of the vessel that holds our worship and what does not. Unprogrammed Friends choose heat, light and plumbing but did not choose music, sound and video. Why?

As the incidence of COVID infection declines we will at some point choose to begin meeting back in our Meeting House. How will we worship? There are possibilities known now of how that will be done and perhaps new ones that will emerge as we continue our discussions.

Ideas that have been lifted up:

- Have an online and an onsite worship that are not connected?
 - o If a small Meeting will there be enough people in both groups to be viable?
 - o How do we remain one Meeting when we worship separately?
- How do we know one another well enough to love and care pastorally for one another?
 - o What activities would join these together?
 - o A blended worship of onsite and online?
- What options are there for people that do not want technology within their experience of worship?
 - o Use technology to join those onsite and those online
 - Does this include video?
 - If not is sound enough to get to know one another in worship. There could be video after worship - would bring more technology in the Meeting House
 - o What about those who do not want to be on the internet?
 - A sign indicating that the worship will be on a video conference will be needed
 - Could a place be made where there is no video?
 - What about sound?
 - o Who will be responsible for the technology?
 - o Are there enough people to make sure everyone can attend Meeting fully most weeks of the month?
 - o In some Monthly Meetings people are suffering burnout r/t tending the technology and not worshipping. "I find that I do not settle into worship like I use to. I am looking to see if someone has crashed the meeting or to allow entrance of someone to the Meeting. When I do center, I forget to allow people into the Meeting"
 - o How do you handle the check in period after Meeting for worship?
 - This has been the period when during our experiment last summer it was demonstrated the weakest link between the two groups. This was truer for the onsite group without the video than for the online group
 - o Will people in both groups yield to structure that keeps the two groups talking together
 - A hybrid of the first two options
 - Have a time of worship without technology before weekly Meetings for worship or once or twice a month at a different time or alternate

technology enhanced and no technology meetings (except heat, light and plumbing)

- If people do not choose to attend both how do you keep those who are attending members one unto another in its fullest sense?
- Will there be enough other activities to join the various groups of the Meeting together?

Hopefully, time will come this spring or summer when we will have the opportunity to worship on site at our Meeting house. How we come together is up to us. There is no right or wrong way to do this. We will however determine how Plymouth Monthly Meeting would like to proceed. Share your thoughts. Be willing to listen deeply to one another. When we do not have unity we know we need to continue to seek God's wisdom to obtain it.