

MIDCOAST MONTHLY MEETING FOR WORSHIP

FOR THE CONDUCT OF BUSINESS

FEBRUARY 15

Twelve Friends gathered in silent worship when Clerk Guy Marsden opened the session. MINUTES for the January Meeting for Business were approved after a small amendment regarding the Clerk's role in posting documents forwarded from Sue and MOPC on the meeting's website. A list of relevant resources on the current crisis with ICE and immigration concerns has been added to our web site in a new Peace and Social Concerns tab.

A sign-up sheet for correct Name Badges is available in the lobby.

PEACE AND SOCIAL CONCERNS Sue Rockwood noted that due to high demand contributions were needed to the local Food Bank and the Diaper Bank. An additional fund to help cover increased heating costs also welcomed donations.

Sue reported that ICE has been active in Knox and Lincoln Counties, not just in the larger cities in Maine. A planned concert with a youth choir featuring students from many countries was canceled due to the threat of ICE intervention. ICE detainees are in need of personal sponsors which can result in release from custody while their case is processed. Sue has information about how to volunteer as a sponsor.

Recently nine clergy were arrested outside Senator Susan Collins' office. A bail fund is helping to meet the \$50 fine on each one. Support may be given through the meeting's Fund for Suffering where contributions can be directed.

Sue also said that the Meeting for Worship for LGBTQ persons meets bi-monthly with regular attendance by Midcoast members. Appreciation was expressed for the new Peace and Social Concerns website. Sally Tukey was commended for her varied service to the meeting.

JUBILEE A general discussion followed about the challenges arising from a relatively small membership to fill out many committees and functions. The suggestion arose to take a break from existing structures—a JUBILEE interval—in order to operate as a “committee of the whole” while discerning how best to staff them. In the end it was agreed to have a full discussion and threshing session of this idea and related concerns on the next Sunday, February 22nd.

Cynthia brought from Quarterly Meeting examples of book place-markers with printed Information about Quaker values that can be used for public information and outreach. Midcoast Meeting could print similar place-markers for public distribution. Friends who are interested this project should speak with Sue.

Friends were reminded that although Midcoast Meeting has suspended payments to New England Yearly Meeting, we remain connected with the larger body with members who participate in Sessions and committees.

As most Friends know, Sue can lock and unlock the front door of the meeting house using her phone. Upon her request, the meeting approved Sue's purchase of 3 smart (Nest) thermostats for the building that she can operate remotely so as to reduce the number of special trips she must make to change the settings for events.

PASTORAL CARE Jean Crawford expressed a concern for effective outreach to members in

need of support. There is an inherent conflict between the wish for Friends to be supportive and the confidentiality required for Pastoral Care discussion. The committee has also been reduced to few active members. Would a regular announcement of “Joys and Sorrows” at the rise of Sunday worship be useful? How can connections be made so that a specific Friend becomes a regular and sustained helper of a member in distress? It was agreed that this concern for sustained support relationships as needed will be taken up in the overall Jubilee discussion next Sunday, the 22nd.

A related concern was raised involving the need for support for longterm caregivers. They themselves need backing and opportunity for breaks in their sustained service. A chance to take part in a face-to-face support group would be most helpful but how to arrange such gatherings? It was suggested that a group might gather at the Meeting House with the “patients” in the Social Room but they would have to be supervised by a trained professional staffer. No resolution emerged for the felt need of assisting long-term caregivers.

After a week during which to read and reflect on the statement from Shepherdstown Friends Meeting—MINUTE ON HARMS CAUSED BY THE ACTIONS OF OUR CURRENT GOVERNMENT—it was approved by Midcoast Meeting. Ways will be found to make known this endorsement and to circulate the text which is appended to the January Minutes on the meeting website.

FINANCE Bruce Rockwood said that no decision had yet been made by the Obediah Brown Fund on the application for a grant to help repay Quarterly Meeting for a loan taken to cover the cost of repairs to Meeting House porches. If refused, the funds can be taken from the meeting’s reserves which now stand at \$218,00. Bruce handed out a text with the adjusted Budget data for the current year. After discussion it was approved to withdraw \$10,000 from the reserves to cover repayment of the Quarterly Meeting loan as well as other current shortfalls in the budget.

Jim Matlack, Recording Clerk