



January 8, 2023

# Minutes & Reports

## Friends Meeting at Cambridge

### Meeting for Business in Worship

January 8, 2023

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Friends Meeting at Cambridge (FMC) gathered in a Meeting for Business in Worship on Sunday, January 8 at 1:15 pm. The Meeting was convened by Ariel Maddocks, Co-Presiding Clerk, after a period of silent worship, with 33 people present on Zoom and 17 people in the Friends Room.

The Clerk opened the Meeting with some reflections. In search of a reading for today she drew on her memory of Michael Birkel's forum on *Quakers and Discernment* as she sought a reflection on how, as Quakers, we make Spirit-led decisions. The importance of feelings in Quaker practice stayed with her, how much feelings played a role for early Quakers, how we talk about "feeling led," and that when a clerk has a "sense of the Meeting" that is also a feeling.

She invited Friends to pay close attention to what they feel and the source of those feelings—Spirit or a made-up mind and to feel our connection to one another and all present for this worship. As Clerk, she will listen deeply for how Spirit speaks through the Meeting during this time.

She then shared a passage from Chapter 3 of the new New England Yearly Meeting *Faith & Practice*:

*Our business meetings begin and end with worship, framing the work at hand with centered awareness in the divine presence. Although the business to be addressed requires attention to facts, details, and varying options, we seek to remain spiritually grounded throughout the discernment process. Our decisions do not rely on majority rule, but rather on a unity found through calm attention to the Light Within. The Spirit may speak through anyone present, and it is our task to listen and speak with humility and to trust in the Spirit's guidance.*

Lynne Weiss, Co-Presiding Clerk, led the Meeting in introductions of all present.

***Announcements******2023-001***

The Clerk read an abbreviated version of the Land Acknowledgement we approved at our February 13, 2022 Meeting for Business in Worship.

The Clerk reported that our member Claudia Troyer Miles died on August 16, 2019, at her home in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. She was born in Newark, New Jersey, on December 4, 1942. She joined FMC on January 11, 1987 when she transferred her membership from North Columbus (Ohio) Monthly Meeting.

Elizabeth Claggett-Borne, Co-Clerk of Marriage, Family and Relationships Committee, with Leo Bray translating, announced that the time for the wedding of Yaniré Zamora-Rodriguez and Leo Bray has been changed to 6 pm Cozumel time (7 pm Eastern US Daylight Savings Time) on Monday April 3, 2023. It will be held in Cozumel, Mexico and on Zoom.

Tom Sander, for the Interim Coordinating Team, announced that the members of the Interim Coordinating Team, who originally agreed to serve for a one-year term two and a half years ago, are now planning to conclude their service before the summer this year. Friends held the Interim Coordinating Team in the Light in gratitude for their dedicated service to the Meeting.

Lynne Weiss announced the formation of a working group composed of Lynne Weiss, Susan Davies, and Mary Spitzer to formulate a process to discern how to use the \$400,000 received in a bequest in 2021.

The Clerk asked Friends to follow these guidelines:

- The Clerk has endeavored to send out the advance documents in an accessible format. If you have personal needs that are not met by the documents, please let the Clerks Team know after this meeting so that your needs can be better met next time.
- When our Recording Clerk reads Minutes, please only raise substantive corrections, not minor editing concerns. Wordsmithing takes up precious time and can be raised after the business meeting with the Recording Clerk directly.
- We need the active discernment of all in Meetings for Business in Worship. Friends, please make allowances for conversations with vision- or hearing-impaired participants who might need something described to them. The clerk will attempt to call on people by name; please consider introducing yourself if the clerk does not identify you or identifies you incorrectly.
- Please actively seek the Light before speaking and listen for the Light in others' comments. Please keep in mind that the topics we consider this afternoon are topics that have brought forth strong feelings in the past. Consider carefully whether you can find your way toward unity despite individual reservations.
- Finally, please hold all of us in this Meeting for Business in Worship, whether physically in the building or on Zoom, and the Meeting as a whole in the Light as we sit together to seek unity.

***IFSWG Report******2023-002***

Patricia Wild, Clerk of the Imagining Faithful Structures Working Group (IFSWG), identified the other members of the working group (Chris Maddocks, Elizabeth Moore, Alasdair Post-Quinn, Clark Redner, Betsy Roper, and Kim West). She recalled her feeling after last month's Meeting for Business in Worship that we need to trust the process. The group decided we first need to

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decide if Meeting wants to create the proposed Meeting Administrator position. She then presented IFSWG’s focused proposal for a 7/8-time Meeting Administrator position. A three-person committee would supervise the Meeting Administrator, and the position, its hours, and the supervisory function would be reviewed six months after the position is filled.

The Meeting Administrator would have the following responsibilities:

- Staff supervision
- Managing space and schedules with outside groups
- Coordinating social media
- Childcare (ensuring FMC-provided childcare conforms to FMC child safety policies and coordinating nursery coverage both paid and volunteer)
- Financial management
- Attending relevant committee meetings

In response to a question, we were reminded that last month’s proposal stated the supervisory committee would include a representative from Trustees Committee or Ministry and Counsel, a First Day School parent, and an “at-large” representative of the community. There was discussion of the number of hours specified for the position. Friends asked questions about how the Meeting Administrator position would impact the responsibilities of the Facilities Manager position, and IFSWG and other FMC Friends will work to make necessary clarifications and adjustments.

Patricia reported the estimated payroll expenses with the Meeting Administrator would be about \$187,600 compared to the current budgeted payroll expense of about \$184,600 and the Fiscal Year 2020 (the last year with a Resident Friend) payroll expenses of about \$278,000.

After some clarifying questions were answered, there was a period of discernment, after which Friends approved the proposal, recognizing this as a first reading of a budget increase of about \$3,000. The full proposal will appear in the January 8, 2023 edition of *Minutes & Reports*.

***Nominating Committee report***

**2023-003**

David L Myers, for Nominating Committee, presented two nominations for their second reading: Mary Spitzer to Fundraising Committee through June 2025 and Gail Rogers to Nominating Committee through June 2025. Friends approved these nominations.

David also presented a first reading for Nancy Frost to serve on the Fundraising Committee through June 2025.

***Ad Hoc COVID Response Listening Group Report***

**2023-004**

The Clerk reported the HEAlthy Reopening Team (HEART) approved at last month’s Meeting for Business in Worship is in the process of being established by the Clerks Team.

Tom Sander, for the Ad Hoc COVID Response Listening Group, reviewed the decisions we made at last month’s meeting and presented the following proposals from the Listening Group:

- When the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) COVID-19 Community Level for Middlesex County is red, all meetings on the second floor of the Friends Center will require masks until the risk level is lowered.
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- There will be continued masking for Forum, Afterthoughts and Family Worship in the Friends Room and Parlor.
- When the CDC COVID-19 Community Level for Middlesex County is not red, to create an option for those who are unable to mask or who feel that it dramatically worsens their experience, we recommend that the balcony be a mask-optional space during Meeting for Worship (and Meeting for Business in Worship). We will ask people passing through the entry area of the Meetinghouse to wear masks until they get upstairs. There will be two benches in a corner of the Meetinghouse (likely to the left of the fireplace and near the side door by the parking lot) designated mask-optional for those who require a mask-optional environment and cannot comfortably access the balcony.

After some consideration of the impacts of the pandemic, masks, and vaccines upon FMC, children, and society, and with three Friends standing aside, Friends approved this proposal, with it taking effect in two weeks. The Clerks Team will work with the Facilities Manager and the Publications Team to set up procedures to alert the Meeting when the CDC COVID-19 Community Level for Middlesex County changes. The complete Ad Hoc COVID Response Listening Group proposals approved at last month's Meeting for Business in Worship and today will appear in the January 8, 2023 edition of *Minutes & Reports*.

### *Closing Worship*

Meeting for Business in Worship adjourned at 4:00 pm, with Friends intending to gather next in a Meeting for Business in Worship on Sunday, February 12, 2023, at 1:15 pm on Zoom and in the Friends Room.

Ariel Maddocks, Co-Presiding Clerk  
Ian Harrington, Recording Clerk

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## *Imagining Faithful Structures Working Group's Proposal for a Meeting Administrator position*

(This was approved by Meeting for Business in Worship on January 8, 2023.)

### **Proposal in brief:**

- That FMC create a Meeting Administrator (MA) position
- That this MA position be 7/8 time
- That a three-person committee supervise the MA
- That in six months, FMC reviews this position, its hours, and supervisory function.

### **Responsibilities:**

1. Staff Supervision (5 hours/week):
    - Supervises Friends Meeting at Cambridge's (FMC) paid staff: Office Manager, First Day School/Youth Programs Coordinator, Center Residents, Facilities Manager/Handyperson.
  2. Manages space and schedules with outside groups (10 hours/week):
    - The "face" of FMC to outside groups
    - Schedules use of FMC facilities with outside groups
    - Coordinates schedules, contractors
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3. Coordinates social media (5+ hours/week):
    - Manages FMC's presence on social media
    - Coordinates with committees, individuals, and staff doing outreach such as Fellowship and Outreach, Adult Spiritual Education, our website and Announcement Sheet, First Day School/Youth Programs Coordinator, etc.
  4. Childcare (5 hours a week):
    - Ensures FMC-provided childcare conforms to FMC child safety policies, coordinates nursery coverage both paid and volunteer.
  5. Financial management (3 hours a month):
    - Reviews monthly FMC credit card expenses, checks that credit card expenses are authorized and approves expenditures
    - Reviews what bills have been paid each month and scheduled for coming month to ensure that key bills are paid
    - Provides budget oversight to ensure that expense line items are not projected to exceed budget
    - Notifies Treasurer if any line items are in danger of exceeding budget
  6. Attends relevant committee meetings (4 hours/week):
    - All-Clerks meeting, outreach committees (Fellowship and Outreach, Publications, etc.), Trustees, Ministry and Counsel, etc.
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## *COVID Listening Group Proposal: Optional Masking*

(This was approved by Meeting for Business in Worship on January 8, 2023.)

### **Background and Recommendations from the Ad Hoc COVID Response Listening Group**

The ad hoc COVID response listening group included Jo Ellen Hillyer, Ariel Maddocks, David L Myers, Alasdair Post Quinn, Tom Sander, Elise Springuel, Lynne Weiss, and Kim West.

- The Ad Hoc COVID Response Listening Group planned and then held three listening sessions involving a bit over 60 Quakers.
  - We discerned themes from the FROG (Facilities Reopening Group) Survey conducted in late August, and we discerned themes from the listening sessions.
  - We presented the themes to the meeting community on October 20 and received further input.
  - Our ad hoc group met three times to integrate all this input into a recommendation.
  - We sought feedback on our recommendations from Ministry & Counsel and Fellowship & Outreach committees.
  - We presented our proposals (below) for a first reading at the November and December Meetings for Business and heard support for the work of the Listening Group. We also heard a concern in that Meeting for Business that masks and vaccinations are dangerous to health, as claimed by a small minority of scientists. The Listening Group does not find this perspective credible according to mainstream science, nor does it reflect the sense of the community.
  - The Listening Group met again following the November Meeting for Business and further refined the proposals for reopening, based on our sense of that meeting.
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- At the December Meeting for Business in Worship proposals 1, 2 and 3 were approved. Proposal 4 was in discernment and Friends felt more time was needed than that day allowed so it is being brought back in January.

### **Proposal 1: Use of the Second Floor**

We propose that the August 8, 2022, guidelines currently in place for FMC groups accessing the lawn, the Meetinghouse, or the Friends Center for their meetings be modified to include the second-floor meeting spaces of the Selleck Room and the Committee Room. This will allow small groups meeting in those rooms to make the decisions appropriate for their group regarding masking and social distancing while adhering to guidelines for hosting. This was modified in the January Meeting for Business in Worship to require masking on the second floor when the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) COVID-19 Community Level for Middlesex County is red.

### **Proposal 2: Coffee Hour**

We propose that Friends Meeting at Cambridge resumes Coffee Hour in a mask-optional setting following Meeting for Worship. Our ability to resume Coffee Hour is dependent on building up a team of volunteers willing and able to take responsibility for making this happen. If we have sufficient volunteers to allow us to resume Coffee Hour gatherings, we will encourage people to wear masks when not actively drinking coffee or eating snacks. Not everyone will want to participate in the Coffee Hour since it will involve unmasked people. The open discussion time after Afterthoughts and the Conversation Pits provide an alternative online social connection opportunity. We hope that when weather conditions allow, coffee hour will be offered outside to maximize the number of individuals who feel they can safely participate. This has also been modified to limit indoors Coffee Hours to when the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) COVID-19 Community Level for Middlesex County is red.

### **Proposal 3: Recommendation about who would implement COVID policies approved by Meeting for Business in Worship**

FMC community responses to the FROG survey and in listening sessions have aided the efforts of the ad hoc COVID response listening group in our efforts to discern recommendations regarding COVID policies for FMC, but this process has been time-consuming for everyone involved. Those who have planned these events will have spent 2½ months planning these sessions, extracting themes, feeding these themes back, and discerning recommended changes. This process is not practical for responding to rapid changes in the COVID situation as may occur this winter.

Thus, we recommend that a new group (HEART – HEALthy Reopening Team) make decisions regarding the details of implementing the policy once it has been approved by FMC Meeting for Business. This group will also have the authority to tighten COVID restrictions if warranted by a worsening COVID situation in the Middlesex County area (e.g., suspend any optional masking or coffee hour or possibly temporarily suspend any events at 5 Longfellow if warranted). HEART could also be a resource to committees that want guidance on additional details that the recommended changes from the COVID Listening group did not provide, or in other words to “fill in the gaps.”

**Composition:** HEART would have representatives from Fellowship & Outreach, Ministry & Counsel, Trustees, First Day School/Youth Programs, Clerks Team, and ideally at least one

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person with medical or public health expertise (or, if not available, someone with a strong science background). The Facilities Manager would sit on HEART ex officio. If no one with medical/public health or a strong science background is willing to serve, Clerks Team would endeavor to find such a person who is willing to be “of counsel” to HEART. Former members of FROG (Facilities Reopening Group) would be asked to serve to preserve institutional memory.

**Who appoints:** Clerks Team would appoint these members, in consultation with the Ad Hoc COVID Listening Group and Trustees Committee, and the relevant committees from which representation is sought.

**Term:** people would agree to serve for one year and after that year would be asked if they wished to serve for another year. The goal of specifying such terms is to avoid participant burnout and open such service to a wider number of people in the community.

**Data Benchmarking:** HEART would make decisions to temporarily suspend on-site activities or optional masking only in response to significant changes in underlying data in the CDC COVID-19 Community Level for Middlesex County based on cases and hospitalizations (yellow at time of adoption of these recommendations) and in changes to COVID concentrations (RNA copies/ml) in MWRA wastewater tracking under the “Recent North System RNA Signal by Date” (which was about 800 at time these recommendations were made).

**Decisions:** HEART would make any decisions regarding policy implementations, along with the reasoning behind these decisions, widely known through the listserv, the email database, and notifications on the FMC website when appropriate.

#### **Proposal 4: Recommendation for Masking Policy in Meeting for Worship**

Throughout, the Ad Hoc COVID Response Listening Group has worked on discernment about masking options within Meeting activities and tried to balance the range of concerns and desires in a manner that focuses on simplicity with a solution that is clear, consistent and doesn’t increase the complexity of what volunteers and staff need to manage, offers a solution that helps us be at peace together, that considers the integrity of how we care for one another in community, that creates more equality for those in the community whose needs are not met if we make no changes and those who will be affected by our proposed changes.

We considered two approaches to bringing more people into the Meetinghouse. One was to make Meeting for Worship mask-optional and mask-required on alternate weeks. Our discernment led us to believe that this would be confusing to those coming to the Meetinghouse to worship and to volunteers who might bear the brunt of explaining which policy was in effect on a given week.

In our small group discernment, the Simplicity testimony was especially significant in exploring a solution. We felt the experience of a consistent set of mask expectations in Meeting for Worship in the building will allow us to each prepare ourselves more fully for the experience. We also felt that a policy that was consistent from week to week would make things easier for our committees, employees, and volunteers by alleviating anxiety and confusion. In our search for a solution, we searched as well for ways to honor our testimony of Community. Knowing that no solution would make everyone happy, we searched for a way forward that would build community and allow the community to feel safe.

#### **Recommendations:**

1. Continued masking for Forum, Afterthoughts and Family Worship in the Friends Room and Parlor.

2. Meetinghouse: To create an option for those who are unable to mask or who feel that it dramatically worsens their experience, we recommend that the balcony be a mask optional space during Meeting for Worship (and Meeting for Business in Worship). We will ask people passing through the entry area of the Meetinghouse to wear masks until they get upstairs. There will be two benches in a corner of the Meetinghouse (likely to the left of the fireplace and near the side door by the parking lot) designated mask optional for those who require a mask-optional environment and comfortably access the balcony. We anticipate that the number of individuals who require a mask-optional environment and can't get to the balcony will be very few.

**Considerations:**

1. Each person will have to individually evaluate factors in what masking practice they follow. We have no way to determine the risk levels for each person, but we believe that the fans in the balcony and the general movement of air within the space minimizes the risk to all involved. We note that as of November 27, the CDC has rated the COVID risk in Middlesex County as low. We will see whether this rating changes following the Thanksgiving holiday. (As of January 7th, the risk has returned to high.)
  2. When possible, we will follow our current policy of asking latecomers to sit in the balcony or to wait until doors open to allow First Day School children and teachers to exit before taking a seat on the main floor of the Meetinghouse. When that is not possible (i.e., because Family Worship is taking place in the Friends Center or the children have already exited), we suggest that those who do not wish to be in a mask-optional environment be offered seats on the main floor.
  3. We anticipate the use of signage and printed materials to clarify the seating options and expectations within the building and notices on our website, announcement sheet, and other materials to alert people to this policy.
  4. Concerns about cold in the Meetinghouse are likely to significantly decrease the number of people attending Meeting for Worship in the building, which will allow for greater social distancing.
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# Friends Meeting at Cambridge

5 Longfellow Park, Cambridge, MA 02138-4816 [www.FMCQuaker.org](http://www.FMCQuaker.org)

Co-Presiding Clerks: Ariel Maddocks, Tom Sander, Lynne Weiss

[clerks@FMCQuaker.org](mailto:clerks@FMCQuaker.org)

617-876-6883

Interim Coordinating Team: Deborah Colgan,  
Jan Nisenbaum, Tom Sander, Jonathan Vogel-Borne

[ict@FMCQuaker.org](mailto:ict@FMCQuaker.org)

Amy Mercure, Office Manager

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617-876-6883

Kathleen Wooten, Facilities Manager

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617-354-3383

Patricia Wild, Interim First Day School/Youth Programs Coordinator

[fdsypcordinator@FMCQuaker.org](mailto:fdsypcordinator@FMCQuaker.org)

413-251-6512

To receive links to publications or to join the community listserv, email to: [office@FMCQuaker.org](mailto:office@FMCQuaker.org)

## Meetings for Worship at FMC

### 5 Longfellow Park, Cambridge

Sundays 10:30 am

Wednesdays 8:30 am to 10 am

### South Shore Preparative Meeting

155 Washington St. (Rt. 53), Pembroke

Sundays 10:00 am

Jim deVeer

781-982-0653

### Worship Group at Brookhaven

1010 Waltham Street, Lexington

Sundays 10:30 am

Elisabeth Cotten

781-862-7578

## Other Nearby Worship Opportunities

### Acton Friends Meeting,

Contact Clerk, [acton@neym.org](mailto:acton@neym.org)

### Amesbury Monthly Meeting, 120 Friend St., Amesbury

Sundays 10:00 am

### Beacon Hill Friends Meeting, 6 Chestnut St., Boston

Sundays 10:30 am

### Cambridge Friends School, 5 Cadbury Rd., Cambridge

Tuesdays 8:30 to 9:00 am

### Framingham Friends Meeting, 841 Edmands Rd., Framingham

Sundays 10:00 am

### Fresh Pond Monthly Meeting, CFS Cambridge

Sundays 10:00 am

### Lawrence Monthly Meeting, 15 Forest St., Methuen

Sundays 6:30 pm

### Mill City Quakers, [millcityquakers@gmail.com](mailto:millcityquakers@gmail.com)

### Nashoba Worship Group, [nashobaquakers@gmail.com](mailto:nashobaquakers@gmail.com)

Sundays 10:30 am

### North Shore Monthly Meeting, 74 Hart St., Beverly Farms

Sundays 10:00 am

### Three Rivers Worship Group, [info@threeriversmeeting.org](mailto:info@threeriversmeeting.org)

Alternate Thursdays 9:30 am

### Wellesley Friends Meeting, 26 Benvenue St., Wellesley

Sundays 10:30 am