

# THE GAZETTE

*"a news-sheet, a periodical publication giving an account of current events"*

West Falmouth Religious Society of Friends

**MARCH 2021**



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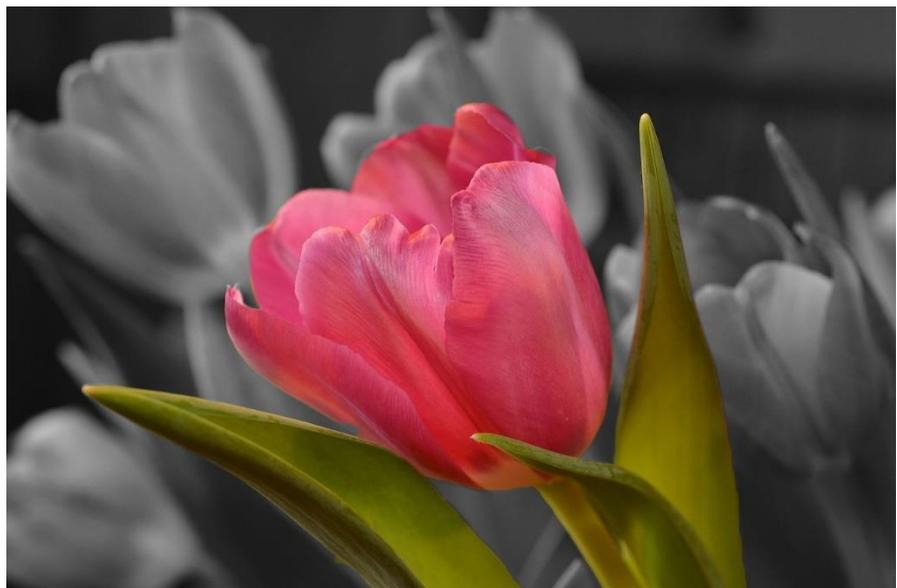
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From ***A Testament of Devotion***\*

Thomas R. Kelly

"A practicing Christian must above all be one who practices the perpetual return of the soul into the inner sanctuary, who brings the world into its Light and rejudges it, who brings the Light into the world with all its turmoil and its fitfulness and recreates it ...."

\*New York: Harper & Row, 1941, p.35.



## Officers

**Fran Lightsom, clerk**

(508-548-9186;

[fran.lightsom@gmail.com](mailto:fran.lightsom@gmail.com))

**Molly Cornell, recording clerk**

**Clyde Tyndale, treasurer**

## Regular Events

**Adult Discussion Group**

Sundays at 9:00 a.m.

**Peace and Social Order**

2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday at 12:00 p.m.

Erica Adams, convener

**Growth and Learning**

3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday at 12:00 p.m.

Sunny Davidson, convener

**Empathy Practice (NVC)**

Usually 1<sup>st</sup> Saturday 9:30–11:45

Brenda Nolan, convener

**Restorative Circle Practice**

Usually 1<sup>st</sup> Saturday 1:00-3:00

Brenda Nolan, convener

**Ministry & Counsel**

Cynthia Rankin, clerk

(508-360-7536)

Sunny Davidson, co-clerk

**West Falmouth Meeting for**

**Worship with Attention to**

**Business**

Usually 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday

(March 28, April 25)

*Note: Due to COVID, many of these events are on hold. Check with committee conveners to be sure.*

## Upcoming Events

### New England Yearly Meeting

**Beacon Hill Friends House – Midweek Experiments in**

**Faithfulness** -- This is a weekly, one-hour, facilitated spiritual practice with Quaker flavor and an experimental ethos.

Upcoming topics include: *Reading the Bible with Empathy* (March 3); *Two Zen Practices to Ground You* (March 10); *Blackout Bible* (March 17); *First we dance, then we write* (March 24). Learn more and register at <https://bhfh.org/midweek/>.

**Beacon Hill Friends House – Simple Morning Meditation Practice**

– Held via Zoom **Monday through Friday** from 8:00 – 8:30 a.m.

The meditation is 15 minutes long, and begins and ends with a brief introduction to the practice. Orientation for newcomers begins at 8:00 a.m. and practice begins at 8:10. Join once or join regularly! The meditation is free and open to the public. See <https://bhfh.org/virtualprograms/simple-morning-meditation-practice-5/>.

**Walking with the Bible** – Cosponsored by Woolman Hill and

Beacon Hill Friends House, Sunday, **March 14** from 4:00 p.m. to 5:15 p.m. The guest leader will be Regina Renee Ward who led Bible half hours at the 2017 FGC Gathering and is active in the Fellowship of Friends of African Descent. Open to all. Register at <https://donorbox.org/walking-with-the-bible-winter-2021>.

**Quaker Earthcare Witness in partnership with Friends General Conference** is hosting monthly online worship sharing. The next will be on **March 31** at 8:00 p.m. Learn more and register for any or all of the remaining three sessions at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84481222000>. For additional worship sharing opportunities see <https://www.fgcquaker.org/resources/online-worship-opportunities>.

**Quaker Spring Gathering: Listening to the Inward Christ**

**Together** -- **March 6**, 11:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m. Free, but registration required. See <https://quakerspring.org/>.

**Moving Beyond Noticing Workshop** – Saturday, **March 13**, from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m. Led by Lisa Graustein, LJ Boswell and members of the Noticing Patterns of Oppression and Faithfulness Working Group. This workshop will look more deeply at some of the patterns of oppression and exclusion that we have been noticing in many Quaker spaces. For further information and to register

see <https://neym.org/events-calendar/2021/03/moving-beyond-noticing-workshop>.

**Climate Crisis and Spiritual Wholeness -- March 19 – 21.** Brian Drayton (Souhegan, NH, Friends Meeting) and Jay O'Hara (Portland, ME, Friends Meeting) will present this online retreat, hosted by the Friends Center at Barnesville, Ohio. The cost is \$56 per person and registration is required. Registration ends March 5. See <https://neym.org/events-calendar/2021/03/climate-crisis-and-spiritual-wholeness>.

**Midweek Meditation on Quaker Quotes** – Wednesday, **March 24** at 8:00 p.m. Brian Drayton (Souhegan, NH, Friends Meeting) is offering one-hour midweek opportunities for Zoom-based worship-sharing and conversation, approximately once a month on a Wednesday, until spring. Open to all, but limited to 20 at a time. Friends are asked to RSVP to receive a Zoom link for that month's session, along with the reading—a short quotation from a Friend modern or ancient. Attenders will be asked to read the selection beforehand and reflect in private on four short questions. Each gathering will open with quick greetings all around, then a brief introduction to the quotation, followed by 15 minutes of open conversation about the text. The rest of the time will be spent in worship-sharing. The aim will be for the conversation to be slow, spacious, and centered. The final 5 minutes will be silent, before we depart from our miniature retreat. For further information and to RSVP see <https://neym.org/events-calendar/2021/03/midweek-meditation-quaker-quotes>.

**Reopening and Reconsidering How We Gather: A New Season for Multigenerational Meeting Life -- March 30**, 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. As our local Quaker meetings look towards reopening and returning to in-person connection again, we will be faced with the question of what we are led to repeat from our experience before the pandemic and what we are led to reimagine. Come join our Youth Ministries Committee for a 90-minute workshop on nurturing vibrant, multigenerational connections in our meetings in this season of reconsideration, return, and reopening. Registration required. See <https://neym.org/events-calendar/2021/03/reopening-and-reconsidering-how-we-gather>. On the topic of reopening, see also <https://www.fgcquaker.org/resources/advices-queries-possibly-reopening-your-meeting-house-or-church>.

**Roots of Injustice, Seeds of Change: Toward Right Relationship with Native Peoples** –Saturday, **April 11**, 5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. In this two-hour participatory workshop, sponsored by Friends Peace Teams, we will hear the story of the colonization of this land in the words of Indigenous leaders, Euro-American leaders, and Western historians. We will take part in the story through experiential exercises and share our responses and reflections in small groups. Together, we will explore steps we can take to build relationships with Native peoples based on truth, respect, and justice. Register at <https://friendspeaceteams.org/trr-2021-04-11-workshop/>. Next available workshop is April 11. March workshops are full.

## **West Falmouth**

**Weekly Sunday Worship** continues to be held via Zoom. We invite Friends from Yarmouth and East Sandwich to join us. An e-mail with the specifics on connecting to this virtual format will be sent a day or so before. The Zoom meeting opens at 9:30 a.m. Starting at 9:50, we settle into worship.

**Quaker Women** – We continue to meet weekly via Zoom on **Thursdays** at 7 p.m.

## Also of Interest

**Weekly Taizé service.** Thursday evenings in **March** (4, 11, 18, 25) at 7:00 p.m. This is a style of worship that comes out of an ecumenical monastic order in central France with a strong devotion to peace and justice through prayer and meditation. The service will include recorded chants, spoken prayers and readings, and about twenty minutes of traditional Quaker silent waiting worship. See <https://neym.org/events-calendar/weekly-taize-service-online>.



### AFSC News and Updates –

**Survey: Tax dollars should fund restorative justice and community needs over incarceration** -- Incarceration doesn't keep us safe. The United States has the highest incarceration rate in the world, with 2.3 million people behind bars—disproportionately people of color and poor people—while doing little to stop harm or help survivors of violence and

communities heal. See <https://www.afsc.org/blogs/media-uncovered/survey-tax-dollars-should-fund-restorative-justice-and-community-needs-over>.

**Why we should rethink calling white supremacist violence “terrorism”** -- If you think white supremacist violence should be regarded as “domestic terrorism,” there are a few things you might want to consider. See <https://www.afsc.org/blogs/news-and-commentary/problem-labeling-violence-domestic-terrorism>.

**Standing up to anti-Asian racism** -- Reports of anti-Asian attacks and harassment are once again on the rise—after being fueled earlier in the pandemic by xenophobic rhetoric by then President Trump. Here are some ways you can help respond to racism and build the safe and peaceful communities we all deserve. See <https://www.afsc.org/blogs/news-and-commentary/standing-to-anti-asian-racism>.



### FCNL Virtual Events –

**Witness Wednesdays**, Silent reflection, together, in community. 5:15 – 6:15 p.m. Registration required.

**March 3** – See <https://act.fcni.org/event/witness-wednesday-virtual-events/2018/>.

**March 10** – See <https://act.fcni.org/event/witness-wednesday-virtual-events/2019/>.

**March 24** – See <https://act.fcni.org/event/witness-wednesday-virtual-events/2046/>.

**March 31** – See <https://act.fcni.org/event/witness-wednesday-virtual-events/2047/>.

**Thursdays with Friends**, A discussion of current events and their impact.

**March 11**, 4:00 – 4:30 p.m. – *Young Adults Building Movements for Change*. Register at <https://act.fcnl.org/event/thursdays-with-friends/2049/signup/>.

**March 25**, 4:00 – 5:00 p.m. *Opportunities for Nuclear Disarmament and Nonproliferation*. The extension of the New START treaty, the only treaty limiting U.S. and Russian nuclear arsenals, bodes well for nuclear disarmament and nonproliferation. Yet, there are other opportunities today. Diane's guest will be Emma Belcher, a nuclear nonproliferation expert and president, Ploughshares Fund. Register at <https://www.fcnl.org/events/thursdays-friends-opportunities-nuclear-disarmament-and-non-proliferation>.

### FCNL News and Updates –

Read *Inside the Greenhouse*, a monthly newsletter reporting on FCNL's environmental work, ways to engage members of Congress, and related stories. The most recent issue includes a link to Amanda Gorman's 2018 poem, "Earthrise," a moving call to action on the climate crisis. See <https://www.fcnl.org/updates/2021-02/february-2021-inside-greenhouse-0>.

### Pendle Hill Events --

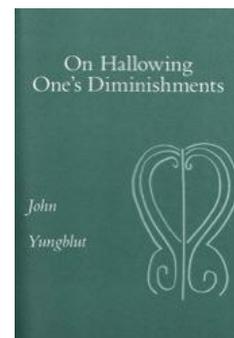
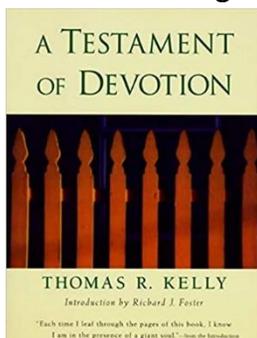
**Daily worship** via Zoom from 8:30 – 9:10 a.m. See <https://pendlehill.org/explore/worship/join-us-online-for-worship-in-the-barn/>.

**A First Monday Interactive Program with Jesse White: *Returning to Creative and Spiritual Playfulness***, Monday, **March 1**, 7:30 – 9:00 p.m. via Zoom. Free and open to the public, but registration required. See <https://pendlehill.org/events/returning-to-creative-and-spiritual-playfulness/>.

**Online Reading Group** – This monthly online reading group, free and open to all, focuses on a mix of

Pendle Hill Pamphlets and other Quaker materials. On March 10, 6:30 – 8:00 p.m. via Zoom, the text will be Thomas R. Kelly's *A Testament of Devotion*. Register at <https://pendlehill.org/events/pendle-hills-reading-group-march/>.

In April, the group will read *On Hallowing One's Diminishments*, John Yungblut's Pendle Hill Pamphlet #292. Register at <https://pendlehill.org/product/hallowing-ones-diminishments/>.



**The Inner Guide vs. the Inner Critic: The Journey from Judgment to**

**Love.** Three evenings in March with Christine Wolff, **March 1, 3, and 5** from 6:00 – 7:30 p.m. Learn more and register at <https://pendlehill.org/events/the-inner-guide-vs-the-inner-critic-the-journey-from-judgment-to-love/>.

**Perfection of the Present Moment** -- A Five-Day Virtual Mindfulness Meditation Retreat, Wednesday, March 24 (7:00 p.m.) – Sunday, March 28 (4:00 p.m.). For more information and to register see <https://pendlehill.org/events/perfection-of-the-present-moment/>.



## **Remembering Friends**

### **Death of Alta Mae Stevens**

Friends are deeply saddened by the loss of our beloved Alta Mae Stevens. Alta Mae died at home the night of February 20. Alta Mae was a vital presence in our meeting and she will be greatly missed. Plans for a remembrance gathering will be announced at a future date.



Alta Mae at the Meetinghouse, January 13, 2019, shortly after her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday.

### **Memorial Minute for Rudolf Siegfried Scheltema**

Coming out of WWII as a foot soldier and newly convinced pacifist, Rudolf Scheltema pursued his love of biology through graduate school. While finishing his PhD, he fell in love with Amelie Haines while they were both doing initial graduate work at Harvard. They would discover the Society of Friends together, as well as a way of life dedicated not only to scientific truth but also the holy perspective of being and doing good gently in the world.

In the mid-sixties, the West Falmouth Preparative meeting of Sandwich Monthly meeting had resumed unprogrammed meeting for worship year-round without a pastor. Rudolf and Amelie now had two boys to raise and Rudolf had acquired a position at the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution studying planktonic larvae. They had been attending the Falmouth Unitarian Universalist meeting, which at the time was sharing the meeting house with the much smaller Friends meeting. Once they discovered Sandwich Monthly meeting, Rudolf and Amelie joined without hesitation. Quaker pacifism and the active commitment to a life of non-violence and justice was compelling to Rudolf. Also, the silent form of worship, where personal responsibility, modesty of expression, and communal support represented the most valid expression of a religious life for him. This became the foundation for the rest of his life, often referred to in conversations with him where religion was a topic.

Quakerism nurtured the whole person for Rudolf. Not only was he a scientist, he was also his own illustrator for his papers. His work included, for him, the necessary component of teaching others. Love

for the arts, love for learning, pushed the violent and authoritarian experiences of his youth away from him as a regretted and damaging period. Having experienced what war does to everyone, Rudolf was often involved in counter-recruitment visits to local schools, draft counseling, and peaceful protests. He was also a longtime supporter and member of veterans for peace movements, except when the fact of being a veteran became a badge of honor and authority. Then his modesty and reason made him step back. For many years he and Amelie sponsored the Veterans for Peace Poetry Contest on Cape Cod, giving voice and encouragement to young people in the schools, and to older voices often marginalized or muffled by a public society obsessed with patriotism and military "service." However, he rarely if ever made himself the center of a rational critique of war and violence. He felt that good, comprehensive reasons would have weight that other rational people would see and be able to own for themselves. The fact that he was present as a committed Friend made the point more finally than any words could.

When Rudolf traveled in the interests of science, he and Amelie would attend Friends meetings all over the globe. They made lifelong friends among Friends everywhere they went. When he and Amelie sponsored weekly bible studies (Sharman's synoptic gospel records book), they would bring pikelets as a snack, having learned how to make them from scientific and Quaker sojourns in Australia. Their travels brought a cosmopolitan perspective to the West Falmouth meeting, partly because it seemed natural to Rudolf to share time with Friends wherever they went, thus connecting disparate places and experiences. For Rudolf, the worship discipline of the silent meeting was universally understandable and communicative.

Born in 1926 to a Dutch-American family, Rudolf was brought up bilingual. His father was a research librarian for the Library of Congress. He went to war at eighteen, became a convinced Friend at forty, lived his entire life as a research scientist (even coining a term that is part of the science lexicon, "teleplanic" or far-wandering, to help describe planktonic movement in the oceans), gave himself over to human generosity and scientific rigor, and died on 5 August (eighth month) 2019, at home with his children and grandchildren in attendance.



## **Marilee Wheeler: Remembrances from Friends**

August 31, 1933 – June 10, 2020

Marilee Wheeler was a member of the Friends Meeting at Cambridge and a summer sojourner at West Falmouth Friends Meeting. West Falmouth Friends will miss her quiet presence and lovely home and garden, where she has hosted many a gathering of Friends over the years. Our women's group especially

loved to meet up over the water on her patio, surrounded by the breeze and the flowers. Marilee was ever the quiet, gracious hostess – even having a “secret” recipe for “emergency pie” should unexpected guests wind their way up the hill to her home. There she gave one of her last beautifully prepared dinners when she heard that Martin Fido’s children had briefly come to Falmouth from England, Barbados and Trinidad after his sudden death. Not knowing these guests but wanting to share their grief in the kindest way possible, she welcomed them to her home.

Marilee felt a deep sense of place at her home in North Falmouth. Here she was surrounded by woods that gave off a pine scent and the sound of wind in the branches that was typical to Cape Cod, a garden filled with summer lilies and colorful dahlia blossoms, and an ever-changing view of sky and salt water from the bluff overlooking Squeteague Harbor. Not wanting to leave a legacy of house lots, she worked with the Falmouth Land Trust to place a conservation easement on the seven acres surrounding her house to ensure the perpetual protection of the land’s open space. By her initiative, other land owners have followed her example. Below this bluff, Marilee enjoyed a daily swim in the ocean — not your usual “paddle around” kind of swim, but a purposeful, put-on-your-goggles swim along the coast for a half a mile or more, immersing herself with both joy and discipline in the waters of Cape Cod.

Marilee’s love of beauty manifested itself in her life-long appreciation of art and music. Her family were collectors of 19<sup>th</sup> century American Art. In 2007 she authored an introduction to the catalogue for an exhibition of valuable oils at the Boston Public Library, including a warm tribute to their once owners, her parents. Her spirituality seemed deeply rooted in her awareness of beauty. Marilee traveled far and wide to attend music festivals and performances at the world’s great opera houses. A fellow opera traveler wrote, “Marilee combined the best of a cultivated Bostonian with the independence of a woman who refused to be categorized as a “cultivated Bostonian.” She was “cultivated” in the best sense – well-traveled, worldly, well-informed, and a lover of “culture,” especially music.”

Marilee had a quiet and kind exterior, but that kind, pacific and Quakerly exterior hid a woman with an exciting past and a strong will. She was a witness as a student to campus protests at Berkeley, California. Trained as a lawyer after graduating from Wellesley College, she did not practice law, rather spending time as a young person teaching in Turkey. Her experiences in Turkey resonated deeply with West Falmouth Friend Maggie Saab, who attended Aleppo College where Marilee had stayed. Maggie reminisced, “Whenever I saw Marilee, I had a nostalgic feeling about my dearest city, Aleppo, which lies in ruins today.”

Marilee Wheeler came to Quakerism as an adult, worshipping quietly in Cambridge and West Falmouth, and enriching both Meetings with her gentle presence and a life lived in harmony with Quaker values and the beauties of earth, art, and music.



## Readers Write

### **Beacon Hill Friends House Course: Responding to the Call**

Rod Zwirner

Meditating on the first page of the February *Gazette* would have been a wonderful preparation for the BGFH course on the Call. There, in living color and words, was the Source for all the Calls that Life might present to us.

As it was, course participants were drawn into action by Nina Simone's rendition of Langston Hughes' *Backlash Blues*.<sup>\*</sup> Now, it is possible that this performance was more prophetic than the course organizers had imagined. Yes, in the aftermath of the MLK assassination one could expect reactive violence that has been repeated for over fifty years. However, from my perspective, chasing every perceived expression of racism has led to some further disunities that might have been healed by less pushy tactics.

For instance, in New Hampshire we are now faced with new Republican legislative majorities that have submitted legislation that would prohibit any semblance of Critical Race Theory because of its teaching of "divisive concepts."<sup>\*\*</sup> So, Friends taking a course somewhat based on Critical Race Theory that is aimed at developing unity are faced with the dilemma of just how far and when to follow a leading that seems needed and true in the long run. This social theory and its intersectionalities bring depth to a cause, but there are Black conservatives who see it as creating too much victimhood.

So, if Friends taking the course decide on a follow-up project, going back to the *Gazette* with its poems and pictures might be very helpful. Actions that visualize more Being are always in order.

<sup>\*</sup>See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H0W7K8tYK-Y>.

<sup>\*\*</sup>See <https://legalinsurrection.com/2021/02/new-hampshire-state-rep-introduces-bill-to-ban-critical-race-training/>.

**Ed. Note:** A day after Rod Zwirner sent me his article, Michelle Goldberg of *The New York Times* wrote, "And so, around America and even overseas, people who don't like cancel culture are on an ironic quest to cancel the promotion of critical race theory in public forums." See *The Campaign to Cancel Wokeness: How the right is trying to censor critical race theory*. See <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/02/26/opinion/speech-racism-academia.html>. Michelle Goldberg may have made her deadline, but Rod Zwirner beat it.



## **A Poem of Healing- Voice of our Forsaken Church**

I strolled by the church of my childhood  
Our Old Indian Church at Mashpee.  
And it spoke to me in a voice so tender  
As it murmured so wistfully.

I have shared your joys and sorrows  
Welcomed you each Sunday morn  
In the sunlight of the summers  
And in the winter's wind and storm.  
Although I'm old I still remember.  
The horse and buggies I recall  
Filled with many happy faces  
Of the families large and small.  
Out of the trails they come to worship.  
The Spirit of the Sabbath they did not lack  
As they traveled through the forest  
Some with papooses on their back.

... Out of the past a handbell is ringing.  
Calling them to come inside.  
And they filled my pews and gallery.  
How my old beams creaked with pride.  
The old clock struck the hour of worship.  
A few dogs nestled round the stove.  
Waiting for their masters.  
To hunt in the surrounding grove.

...

Time is fleeing oh my loved ones.  
You are getting older too.  
And I bid you be ever ready.  
And to your faith be true.

I have taught you how to love Him.  
And I'll always be your friend.  
Ever ready to protect you.  
While I linger to the end.

*by Mabel Nookmis Avant (1892-1964)*

*Grandmother of Joan Tavares Avant*

*Excerpt from a poem written many years ago after  
the meetinghouse had been closed down for a time.*



Photo from <https://mashpeewampanoagtribe-nsn.gov/old-indian-meeting-house>.



Watercolor by Sunny Davidson

**Next Gazette Deadline  
Thursday, March 25**

*The Gazette* is a publication of West Falmouth Preparative Meeting  
*Rita O'Donnell, Editor; Alta Mae Stevens, Editor Emerita;  
Stephen Gates, Photographer; Brenda Nolan, Transmitter*

On the next page: Footprints from the last  
snowfall. Photos by Gail Melix, 2021.

