

Jacksonville Friends Meeting
www.jacksonvillefriends.org

Clerk & Mailing Address
Mike Shell
2798 Forbes Street
Jacksonville, FL 32205



November 20, 2019

Dear Bill,

Since autumn of 2018, I have spoken and corresponded with you and others SEYM Friends about the transitional reality of Jacksonville Friends: there are too few Quakers able to attend regular weekly meetings for worship or to carry out the necessary business of a monthly meeting. Quaker integrity obliges us to acknowledge this truth, even though it saddens us.

On the other hand, way has now opened through Quaker simplicity for us to continue an active Quaker presence in Jacksonville as a worship group, without those monthly meeting responsibilities.

Recorded members: Gainesville Friends Meeting www.quakercloud.org/cloud/gainesville-quakers has offered to receive into membership our seven recorded members, in order to give those Friends continuity with an established monthly meeting.

I have invited those who wish to transfer their membership to Gainesville to write me, so that I can send Gainesville a letter of transfer.

Monthly worship group gatherings: Heidi Lowey-Ball, a meeting member and former clerk, has already hosted two "Second Sunday" evening gatherings for worship and fellowship at her home in Neptune Beach (see inclosed flyer). These gatherings have included long-time Jacksonville Friends, Quakers who have recently moved here from other meetings, and Seekers who have attended Sunday morning meetings for worship and potlucks but cannot usually do so.

There is also the possibility for additional monthly gatherings on the west side of town, should Friends come forward who are able to organize and host such activities.

Finally, we have a sister Friends gathering nearby, St. Augustine Quaker Worship Group www.staugustinequakers.org. They worship weekly on Wednesdays beginning at 7:00 pm at The United Church, 5880 U.S. 1 South, St. Augustine 32086.

Southeastern Yearly Meeting relationship: At its June business meeting, the Executive Committee noted that to lay down a Meeting all that is needed is for a letter to be written to SEYM. Friends minuted the following:

SEC2019.05 We are sad to hear that Jacksonville Friends are considering laying down their Meeting. Friends recall how much Jacksonville Monthly Meeting has contributed to the life of SEYM over the decades.

We agree to place the concern for support of Jacksonville Meeting in the hands of the Worship & Ministry Committee.

I will attend the Winter Interim Business Meeting on January 17-18, 2020, in order to present our letter of intent to lay down Jacksonville Friends Meeting and to advice Friends how we are proceeding with that process.

Meeting financial responsibilities: If we can, we will find a way for the new worship group to retain access to the meeting's small fund (about \$2,500), perhaps under the care of Gainesville Friends.

The liability insurance coverage for our rental space at Florida Christian Center expires on January 31, 2020. Since we do not want to incur further expenses for Jacksonville Friends, the treasurer will allow the policy to lapse. We will also end our lease with Florida Christian Center on that date.

Other business responsibilities: We will discontinue our listings in *Friends Journal* and on the Friends General Conference *Quaker Finder* site www.fgcquaker.org/connect/quaker-finder. We will not renew the meeting's subscription to *Friends Journal*.

For the foreseeable future, we *will* maintain our website www.jacksonvillefriends.org as a way of letting people know about Quaker options in Northeast Florida. A local Friend hosts the site as a gift in kind to Jacksonville Friends, so this is not an ongoing expense.

Last weekly meeting for worship:

The last Sunday 10:30-11:30 AM meeting for worship for Jacksonville Friends Meeting will be at Florida Christian Center on January 26, 2020.

Thereafter, Jacksonville Friends will network with each other to find continuing opportunities for sharing life and worship. I will send local contact information to those who wish it.

As I wrote in January,

In the Quaker way, a monthly meeting or worship group is not the people listed on the roles but the people who participate. This is because the Quaker way is not about an organization or a set of beliefs and practices. It is about the day to day sharing of the present moment by people who know each other and have a commitment to caring for and taking care of each other.

This remains true for Jacksonville Friends as we continue in communion with one another. Way will open.

Love and grace to all SEYM Friends.

Mike Shell, Meeting Clerk