

**Jacksonville Monthly Meeting**  
**Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business**  
**February 12, 2017**  
**Minutes**

**Attendees:** Caroline Sheely, Willie Hager, Elaine Martin, Al Geiger, Sue Watson, Danny Geiger, Wendy Clarissa Geiger, Amanda Nelson, Mike Shell

*In the long pull of yielding ourselves to God, of coming under the guidance of the inward Christ, there can be no standing still. The religion of Jesus Christ is not a holding operation....*

*What we secretly long for is to grow into the men and women that God in his infinite yearning means us to become....*

*In religious circles we find today a fierce and almost violent planning and programing, a sense that without ceaseless activity nothing will ever be accomplished. How seldom it occurs to us that God has to undo and to do all over again so much of what we in our willfulness have pushed through in his name.*

–Douglas V. Steere, 1962  
*Daily Readings from Quaker Writings Ancient & Modern (43)*

**Queries:** How do we balance our longing to change ourselves and the world with our need to sit in stillness and wait for a sure leading? How do we help each other to practice this waiting worship?

### **Worship**

**Minutes of January 8, 2017** – Approved.

#### **Treasurer's Report** – Sue Watson

- \$1,983 balance in bank (see [spreadsheet](#) below).
- Liability insurance bill increased from \$325 to \$425. Treasurer will seek less expensive carrier.

#### **ICARE Report** (<http://icarejax.org/>) – Elaine Martin

- Reentry Committee & Restorative Justice Committee had joint meeting with Sheriff over the Jacksonville Reentry Center ([http://www.coj.net/departments/sheriffs-office/departments-of-corrections/prisons-division/jacksonville-reentry-center-\(jrec\).aspx](http://www.coj.net/departments/sheriffs-office/departments-of-corrections/prisons-division/jacksonville-reentry-center-(jrec).aspx))
- Wealth-building Initiative – To open an employee-owned grocery store in the "food desert" around Moncrief and Myrtle Ave. intersection
- Homeless Day Center – Mayor not willing to provide \$311,000 in City funds to reopen and sustain the Center, where client have access to multiple service providers, showers, laundry and internet.
- Restorative Justice Committee collaboration with State Attorney and Sheriff, who agree to allow "battery" offenders (without injury, such as school yard fights) to get civil citation instead of felony.

#### **SEYM Winter Interim Business Meeting** – Mike reported.

- See SEYM Documents Archive <http://seymquakers.org/organization/documents-archive/>
  - Business Documents: WIBM Minutes & WIBM Executive Committee Minutes
  - Finance Documents: FY 2016-17 2nd Quarter Treasurer's Report
- Sabal Trail Pipeline and Florida South Connection
  - WIBM minute: *The Sabal Trail Pipeline and Florida South Connection, which are being built by Florida Power and Light, Next Era, and Duke & Spectra Energy, endanger culturally significant land and also put several Florida waterways, human populations and wildlife in danger. We, Southeastern Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), meeting at WIBM, are called to support the voices and peaceful actions of those who are protesting this pipeline.*

- Willie and Wendy will pool their information to create a fact sheet with information, contacts, and possible support actions, so that Meeting can discuss this query: "What does this minute mean to you in terms of your own commitments?"
- 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment Minute from Committee for Ministry on Racism – We will consider this 2<sup>nd</sup> draft of the minute at the next meeting for business (see [minute text](#) and [Friends Journal essay](#) below).

**Spiritual State of the Meeting, Feb 5 Worship Sharing** – Participants in this worship sharing are asked to send Mike ([bright\\_crow@mindspring.com](mailto:bright_crow@mindspring.com)) their editorial comments so that he can send a final draft to SEYM due February 28<sup>th</sup>.

**Arthur Larrabee workshop on “Quaker decision-making process & clerking”** – Mike shared the spirit of this workshop and will use various parts of the curriculum in future meetings for business.

#### **Announcements**

- March 3-5 – Alternatives to Violence Program (AVP) Basic Workshop, Church of the Brethren, 4554 Prunty Ave., Jacksonville, FL 32205
  - Friday March 3, 2017 6pm – 9pm
  - Saturday March 4, 2017 9am – 5pm
  - Sunday March 5, 2017 1pm – 5pm
- April 12-16 – 2017 Gathering & Annual Sessions, United Methodist Life Enrichment Center, Fruitland Park, Florida
  - Peterson Toscano will lead the Walton Retreat and present the Walton Lecture, "Discerning our collective calling: love, hope, & climate justice"

Submitted by  
Mike Shell & Caroline Sheely  
2/19/2017

Jacksonville Friends Meeting - 2016-17				
Date	Description	Contributions	Payment	Balance
6/1/2016	Balance brought forward			1628.94
6/5/2016	Florida Christian Center		-50.00	1578.94
6/5/2016		25.00		1603.94
6/10/2016		250.00		1853.94
6/10/2016		50.00		1903.94
7/1/2016	Florida Christian Center		-50.00	1853.94
7/1/2016		100.00		1953.94
7/8/2016	Florida Christian Center		-100.00	1853.94
7/17/2016		300.00		2153.94
7/29/2016	Transfer to Property Fund		-100.00	2053.94
8/25/2016	Alfred Geiger-Newsletter		-143.00	1910.94
10/2/2016	Alfred Geiger-Newsletter		-59.36	1851.58
10/16/2016	Florida Christian Center		-50.00	1801.58
10/16/2016	Alfred Geiger-Newsletter		-50.38	1751.20
10/25/2016	SEYM		-750.00	1001.20
10/27/2016`		80.00		1081.20
11/6/2015	Friends Journal		-150.00	931.20
11/6/2016	Alfred Geiger-Newsletter		-56.96	874.24
11/6/2016	Florida Christian Center		-50.00	824.24
11/7/2016		100.00		924.24
11/9/2016	Harland Checks		-91.24	833.00
11/13/2016		100.00		933.00
12/4/2016	Florida Christian Center		-50.00	883.00
12/1/2016		400.00		1283.00
12/30/2016		750.00		2033.00
1/6/2017	Florida Christian Center		-50.00	1983.00
Totals		2155.00	-1800.94	
<b>Property Fund</b>				<b>Total</b>
6/1/2016	Balance brought forward			\$1,150.00
7/29/2016	Specified donantion \$100			\$1,250.00
<b>AVP</b>				
6/1/2016	Balance brought froward			\$590.28
10/16/2016	Alfred Geiger-food of AVP		-\$50.00	\$540.28
10/16/2016	Elaine Martin-AVP training		-\$241.80	\$298.48
11/13/2016	Donations from Training		\$120.00	\$418.48

**SEYM Committee for Ministry on Racism  
Winter Interim Business Meeting  
January 14, 2017**

**END SLAVERY FOR ALL  
Second Draft**

**Action Request on the Thirteenth Amendment, for Further Seasoning for Suggested Approval at  
SEYM Yearly Meeting Sessions, 2017**

The SEYM Committee for Ministry on Racism asks Worship Groups, Monthly and Yearly Meetings to affirm, and publicize the need for:

1. The removal of the exception clause of the 13th Amendment to the US Constitution which otherwise abolishes slavery. Exception clause has been put in bold below.
2. Knowledge that the purpose of prisons should be to protect members of society and to prepare those imprisoned to return as productive members of their community through provision of comprehensive education and training.
3. Persons formerly in prison to have full restoration of constitutional rights, including access to housing and jobs.

§§§

**The 13th Amendment reads:**

Section 1. Neither slavery or involuntary servitude, **except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted**, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.

Section 2. Congress shall have the power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

§§§

We seek this in the light of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) testimony on equality and our history of seeking to honor that of God in everyone through justice that restores. Currently, persons in prisons are coerced into working in what amounts to slavery. They leave prison with severely restrictive conditions of freedom that shackle their efforts for normalcy, often for the rest of their lives.

## End Slavery for All

<https://www.friendsjournal.org/end-slavery-for-all/>

John Andrew Gallery, *Friends Journal*, September 1, 2016

During the past two years I have become much more interested in criminal justice reform as a result of visiting an inmate serving a life sentence, seeing how greatly he has changed, and hearing about others who have also made positive changes in their lives. Throughout this time I have wondered what Quakers might do to support criminal justice reform that would also contribute to ending the racial bias inherent in the current system.

Recently, I was asked if I knew that slavery was still legal in the United States. Of course I said no, that's not possible. I then read the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution, and when I did I was shocked. Yes, it does permit slavery in the United States. Don't believe me? Here it is:

*"Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction."*

What this says is that anyone convicted of a crime—even something minor resulting in as little as one year in prison—can be treated as a slave. And it does not say that this treatment is limited to the time in prison. It is an open-ended statement that could be interpreted to mean that anyone convicted of a crime can be punished by being treated as a slave for their entire life, forever.

I am sure you are saying, well, that might be what it says, but no one is actually being treated as a slave. Think again. Just compare how inmates are treated today with how African Americans were treated before the Civil War.

- Inmates are forced to work at producing goods for which their “masters” (the prison system) earn money, while being provided with minimal food and shelter and nominal payment for their time.
- Inmates are subject to the total control of an “overseer” (in this case a guard in the prison system) and are required to do whatever that person says, with even minor violations subject to cruel and unusual punishment (as defined by the United Nations). Placement in solitary confinement, a standard disciplinary practice, does as much mental and physical damage as physical beatings did.
- Inmates can be sold from one “master” to another (in this case moved from one prison to another) without consent or without consideration of the disruption to family connections.
- Inmates are not allowed to maintain normal family relationships.
- By federal law, inmates have almost no ability to seek legal protection for their treatment while in prison.
- In some states and for some crimes inmates are denied voting rights.

In addition, the conditions of “slavery” persists beyond the period of confinement: former inmates convicted of certain crimes are subject to long periods of supervision with even minor violations resulting in a return to prison; they are prevented from obtaining federally subsidized housing and other benefits available to others, not allowed to vote in some instances and handicapped in their ability to find employment.

The status as slaves allows abuse in the prison system to exist—including the abuse of using inmates for labor without being paid fairly, which was in fact the intent immediately after the Civil War when inmates were hired out to provide labor formerly provided by slaves. And it allows these conditions in spite of the Fourteenth Amendment requirement of “equal protection” of all citizens.

It's time, and in fact long overdue, that this portion of the Thirteenth Amendment be eliminated. And it is fitting for Quakers to lead the effort to do so. It would be an appropriate conclusion to the long Quaker commitment to end slavery that began with the Germantown protests in 1688 and that continued through

the Society of Friends' struggle to end slavery among its members. Such a change would not only provide a strong basis for reforming the criminal justice system, it would also have a direct impact on racism since a large percentage of inmates and former inmates are African American men and women.

Friends have the ability to organize a broad base of support for such a change and build public awareness through such organizations as Friends Committee on National Legislation and American Friends Service Committee. But the real base should come from monthly and yearly meetings as a reflection of Friends' spiritual commitment to equality, making it clear that equality applies to all citizens and that no one should be treated as a slave or forced into involuntary servitude for any reason.