



AMESBURY FRIENDS MEETING
120 Friend Street, Amesbury, MA 01913
amesbury.monthly.meeting@gmail.com
www.amesburyquakers.org

November 2017

**“Ring and swing,
Bells of joy! On morning’s wing
Send the song of praise abroad!
With a sound of broken chains
Tell the nations that He reigns,
Who alone is Lord and God!”**
John Greenleaf Whittier, “Laus Deo!”

Dear Friends,

We do not need reminders that this year has been a tumultuous one. Our national political reality has undergone tremendous change, placing many of our neighbors in danger and threatening our laws, our freedoms and our very existence.

Many of us have found these changes to challenge us to the core. We might think that these are the very worst of times, and yet we know better. Our small Amesbury Friends community has experienced other crises, and has risen to the challenges before us. During slavery days, Friends discussed and worshiped in our meetinghouse how to respond with love to slavery sympathizers in our community. They considered whether to disobey unjust laws forcing return of escaping former slaves, and seem likely to have secretly harbored many such people in our building on their way north. And when Friends sat in our meetinghouse in 1865, listening to the church bells ringing to celebrate the end of the Civil War and the abolishment of slavery, John Greenleaf Whittier penned the poem you see above, stating: “It wrote itself, or rather sang itself, while the bells rang.”

Famous poets, and doubtless many others who were not quite so famous, have found our community to be a place of solace and inspiration in troubled times. In the last year, we have likewise come together to find a spiritual presence in worship, to share meals and conversation, and to consider how to respond respectfully and with love to those who disagree with us.

Amesbury Friends Meeting - ANNUAL APPEAL LETTER 2017

We have practiced such conversations in social media, in print media, and in face to face communications. We have practiced ways to reach across divisions of race and age, when we were approached by students of color at Sparhawk School to start a dialogue, and when we reached out to the Muslim community to offer our support. Several of us spent time with Friends in Cuba, continuing to build our “Puente de Amigos” or bridge of Friends. We continued our program of sharing our spiritual journeys, listening to each other’s experiences and deeply held beliefs without judgment. Not all our initiatives have been successful – our efforts are a work in process. But our meeting community has been a place where we can find support and strength, and take up the work together.

Not all our work has been about struggle! We have shared books, knitting projects, lunch dates, and walks on the beach. We have made soup for those who needed a warm meal, and we have learned from those among us who are artists, novelists and educators. We have found many reasons for celebration, large and small, as giving thanks is often the reason for and result of our worship time.

So, dear Friends, we ask you at this time of year for donations to help the meeting continue to provide a place where we can love and be loved, from where we can “send the song of praise abroad”. We send only one appeal for financial contributions each year. Some respond by making a pledge (see **note** below), others by a one-time donation, and still others use the donation box in the front hall. Gifts of any size are much appreciated. We hope you will consider a generous donation this year to enable us to continue doing the work we are called to do as faithfully as we can.

In Peace and Light,
Priscilla Jones and Em McManamy
Co-Clerks, Finance Committee

Note: To make a pledge, indicate your desired monthly or quarterly pledge amount in a confidential email to Jo Megna Wallace, Treasurer, at jmegnawallace@gmail.com, or fill out and leave a pledge card for her in the donations box at the meetinghouse (you’ll find cards beside the box). Alternatively, send your check or pledge to:

Jo Megna Wallace
120 Friend St
Amesbury MA 01913