



# Western Quarterly News

of the Religious Society Of Friends

Western Quarterly Meeting Newsletter Summer 2019

**Words from the Clerk--** Mark Myers, Clerk Western Quarterly Meeting, suggested this letter from PYM's former clerks feature here.

A Letter to Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends from the Former Clerks APRIL 18, 2019 PYM

*The Admin Council received an open letter to PYM from six former clerks of the yearly meeting. It is shared below. The Council read it and has great appreciation for our clerks' care for our spiritual community. We hope that it will be circulated broadly within the Yearly Meeting and that it is received in a spirit of loving reflection. Use this [link](#) for the text at the PYM website.*

April 2019

Dear Friends,

As the six living former Clerks of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, we offer this letter of loving encouragement to our Yearly Meeting. Over the course of our Yearly Meeting's three hundred and thirty-eight year history, we have experienced times when Friends were troubled and exercised about public actions and weighty concerns in Annual Sessions. Nevertheless, we endured and continued with our faith, vision, and love for one another. We have a robust and proven spiritual tradition and we are called to understand and practice it today, even in the face of discord.

**From PYM's Former Clerks**

**July Quarterly Meeting details**

**Fourth Query**

**Events**

**April Quarterly Meeting**

It is our experience that our community has been in a state of contentiousness and unfriendliness that has separated us in what seem to be secular ways. Several factors have contributed to this condition: tensions regarding a vision for undoing racism; adjustment to new structures; abuse of social media; the unfamiliarity that many Friends seem to have with Quaker decision-making practices in large groups; and hurtful behavior that has gone unaddressed. Some Friends stay away either out of frustration or because our public conflict is uncomfortable.

*Cont'd on p. 5*

**Quarterly Meeting – July 21  
at Hockessin Friends Meeting**

**9 am coffee – 9:30 program – 10:45 Meeting for  
Worship – noon potluck – Meeting for Business**

July Quarterly --- Sunday, July 21

at Hockessin Friends Meeting

9:00 am coffee and registration

9:30 am Right in Our Backyard – Exploring environmentally-friendly practices

With

9:30 am Children’s Program – Inch by Inch! (see p. 7 for more info!)

10:45 am Meeting for Worship

noon potluck

Meeting for Business

REMINDER - October Quarterly Meeting will be **SATURDAY, OCTOBER 19** at Kendal MM

Probable Overview with Details to come -

9:00 Registration

9:30 Programming for Adults and Children

11:00 Meeting for Worship with attention to the Query

And Meeting for Fun in the Swimming Pool for the Children

12:00 Lunch (rsvps needed)

### Fourth Query - Nurturing Our Community

For the Meeting:

- Do we help each other to live with integrity and contribute that integrity to the life of our meeting?
- How does our meeting learn of members’ needs and offer its assistance?
- How does our meeting nurture members in all stages of life?
- How does our meeting welcome those new to Friends and integrate them into our community?
- When a member’s conduct or manner of living gives cause for concern, how does the meeting respond?

*For the Individual:*

- *Am I ready both to offer and to accept meeting assistance when needed?*
- *Do I treat adults and children alike with respect and without condescension?*
- *What opportunities have I taken to know, work and worship with Friends in the larger spiritual communities we share?*

## Let's All Be Salt: Reflections on "holding space" - Deb Wood

"Holding space" is the practice of sitting in a state of worship and holding the gathered body in the Light as they conduct business, thresh or in the case of the Quarterly Meeting program, engage in an exploration of new and potentially provocative material. The first time I was in a meeting with a group in this role was a meeting for business of New York Yearly Meeting: a handful of Friends sat facing the body and below the auditorium stage where the clerks sat. They sat in the stances I had seen them take in meeting for worship. I was in my early 30s and a part of my third Yearly Meeting. I had to ask a Friend what was up with that group worshipping in the midst of business meeting. The Friend explained that they were holding space, and added excitedly, they sometimes ask for volunteers, "You could do it!"

I had never done it until a few weeks ago, when the Friend Dr. Kemp asked to take this role was unable to make it to our Quarterly Meeting program. I sat in worship in the meeting room at Wilmington Friends School and pictured light, love, and periodically repeated "let us all hear each other's story," a variation of an old Quaker saying. I drew on what I had learned in Compassionate Listening training to direct the electric energy the heart produces outward. I pictured it reaching out to each individual in the room, and enveloping all of us, and those we loved in more love and Light. I thought of our Quaker endeavor to walk cheerfully over the world answering that of God in everyone we meet, and yes, I pictured a few times that first group of elders I witnessed holding space.

Seeing someone holding space helps me to remain open and patient to the Light in each message, and helps me to test my first responses. It makes my composure flow in good order. In contentious moments, I find myself picturing that first group of elders holding NYYM in worship. I have come to think of holding space the same way I think of salt. Food still has taste without salt, but it enhances flavor, and helps to pull together the different flavors in a dish, and it plays a crucial role in many food preservation methods. When salt is missing, it's very often noted, and when added to the dish, all seems right again.

Immediately following our program I was aware of how very different I felt. The whole next week seemed filled with an easy graciousness. I was more patient, cheerful, and positive. An hour of meditating on love and directing it towards a particular group had shifted my whole being. Howard Brinton noted in his *Guide to Quaker Practice* that the role of an elder is not to be passed around but given to those with the gifts of an elder. That said, holding space strikes me as an eldering task we could all gain from doing. Let's all be salt.

### Events and other announcements

June 23 12:30-4:30 [Tubing](#) on the Brandywine! At Mary Etta's! Picnic, Music, Games and more! See Western Quarter Events for more information.

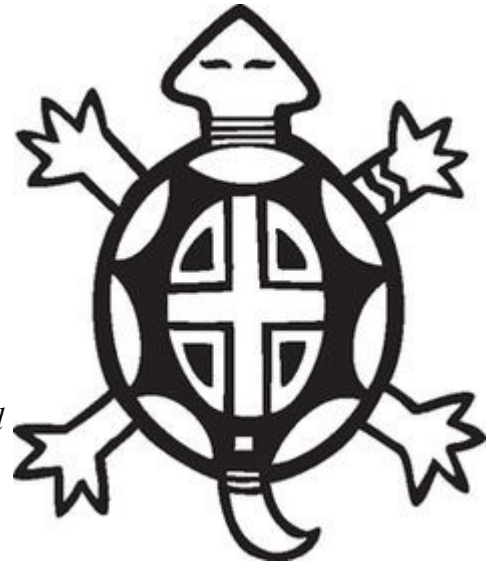
July 24-28 [Annual Sessions](#). See PYM, News and Events, Community Calendar for more information.

August 11 noon-? [Clothing swap](#) and potluck. \$5 swap fee. Hockessin Friends Meeting.

## WQM Kid's Corner

CREATION: a story and an activity

Of the historically documented accounts, one of the earliest recorded tells of how a Lenape Elder answered the inquiry of a Dutchman who wanted to know where the Lenape People came from... *He first drew a circle, a little oval, to which he made four paws or feet, a head and a tail. "This," he said, "is a tortoise, lying in the water around it," and he moved his hand round the figure continuing, "This was or is all water, and so at first was the world or the earth, when the tortoise gradually raised its round back up high, and the water ran off of it, and thus the earth became dry." He then took a little straw and placed it on end in the middle of the figure and proceeded, "The earth was now dry, and there grew a tree in the middle of the earth, and the root of this tree sent forth a sprout beside it, and there grew upon it a man, who was the first male. This man was then alone, and would have remained alone; but the tree bent over until its top touched the earth, and there shot therein another root, from which came forth another sprout, and there grew upon it the woman, and from these two are all men produced."* [Jaspar Dankers & Peter Sluyter, *Journal Of A Voyage To New York In 1679-80.*] <https://naticokelenapemuseum.org/news/1380/creation-stories/> Accessed June 12, 2019



How many turtles can you spot this summer? Say a prayer of thanks for their lifting up the world.

*A mighty wind swept over the surface of the waters. Genesis 1:2*

Make wind socks!

Materials: ribbon or cloth of different colors; 2 strips 3 inches by 10 inches;  
6 strips 1 ½ inches by 12 inches  
Lightweight card board cut to ½ inch by 10 inches  
String, needle, and thread

Process:

1. Sew the two 3 by 10 inch pieces together along the 10 inch side
2. Sew each short side of the 6 strips to an unused side of the sewn-together 10 inch strips.
3. Place the card board strip on one of the 3 by 10 inch strips. Fold over the other 3 by 10 inch strip, and sew the edges together. The card board will be inside the two wider strips.
4. Sew (or staple) the two ends of the 3 inch strips together to form a circle.
5. Tie a string to opposite sides of the circle so it forms a handle.
6. Hang your wind sock up in a breezy spot and watch the wind swirl the colors.

Longer process with photos from wiki how <https://www.wikihow.com/Make-a-Windsock-for-Children>

### UPCOMING YOUTH EVENTS in PYM!

July 24-28 Plan for [Annual Sessions](#) with program for youth of all ages! See PYM, News and Events, Community Calendar for more information.

## Meeting Houses Open for Summer Worship

[Pennsgrove Meeting for Worship](#) 10 am June 23, July 28, and August 25

725 Pennsgrove Road--- Rt. 1 Bypass to Rt. 896, turn right (north). Left onto Pennsgrove Road, Meeting House is on the right.

[Old Kennett Friends Meeting](#) 9:00 am, June 30, July 28, and August 25

Meeting House Lane, Kennett Square.

Bear right upon entering Kendal at Longwood.

[Homeville Meeting for Worship](#) 2:00pm August 25

4904 Homeville Road, Cochranville, PA

Directions: Rt. 1 Bypass to Rt. 896, turn right (north 896) into village of Homeville, turn left onto Homeville Road and almost immediately turn right into Meeting House area.

[Parkersville Meeting for Worship](#) 2:00 pm September 8

1232 Parkersville Road, Kennett Square

Directions:

Take Parkersville Road 1 mile north of Rt. 1. It is on the right 1/4 mile before Rt. 926.

Via Route 926, turn south onto Parkersville Road. It is on the left 1/4 mi. south of Rt. 926.

[Colora Meeting for Worship](#) 2:00 pm September 15

Google Address: 22 Corn Cake Row, Colora MD --

Directions: Rt. 1 South to Tome Highway, take a left onto Tome; Take Rising Sun Road at roundabout; Left onto Harrisville Road, in half mile take Right onto Nesbitt Road; Just over a mile take Left onto Colora Road; Just under half a mile take Left on Corn Cake Row

## April Quarterly Meeting

107 people signed in throughout the day for some or all of the events. There were concurrent meetings for business, Concord and Western Quarters, Meeting for Worship together, a delicious lunch provided by Newark MM and Wilmington MM, and the afternoon program featured Dr. Amanda Kemp from Lancaster MM. She ministered to us on the topic of implicit bias. Her program drew community members from Wilmington Friends School and Westtown School to join us. Claire Brandenburg worked with a dozen or so youth throughout the day. Check out the photos of their mandalas on the Western Quarter [blog!](#)

## PYM Clerks Letter, cont'd from p. 1

It can be hot and messy when we do not manage conflict well. When we are challenged, it is essential that we stay in relationship with one another while seeking the way forward and resolving individual differences. Love still abides in and with us. We can, in all humility, love one another even when there are painful differences.

We unite in encouraging each of us to stay in relationship, to hear one another, and to move forward with love and respect. Our Yearly Meeting is a spiritual community; with God's help, we can transform these struggles into something new—strong, penetrating and effective to address all matters before us, including our concerns with racism.

Our decision-making is a spiritual process that calls us to hold our meetings for business in a spirit of worship, seeking and being open to the leadings of the Spirit. We know that together in waiting worship and with Divine assistance many things are possible; we will be astonished at what unfolds. It takes all of us: we who pray, we who listen, we who heal, we who witness for peace and

justice, and we who have voice and vision are needed now. Now is a time for us to join together, humbly finding our way, sharing kindness, and uniting as a community in Spirit-led witness. On the following page, we suggest some of the shared practices that can be useful to us as we travel with one another for Truth.

In tenderness and love,

Arthur M. Larrabee (1991 – 1995)    Gretchen Castle (2002 – 2005)

Martha B. Bryans (1995 – 1999)    Thomas Swain (2005 – 2012)

Arlene Kelly (1999 – 2002)        Jada Jackson (2012 – 2015)

### **Reminders of Good Business Meeting Practices**

When we as a spiritual, deliberative body understand and adhere to our shared practices and discipline, Friends decision-making processes work well.

1. Be present in a spirit of worship, holding the meeting, each speaker and the clerks in the Light.
2. Seek the good of the meeting as a whole and God's truth for it; be prepared to change your mind and to let go of personal preferences and ego.
3. Listen carefully to the person speaking, particularly holding in the Light those people and ideas with which you disagree. Consider an attitude of curiosity rather than an attitude of judgment.
4. Challenge yourself to trust the Light that is given to others; be open to new truth, revelation and insight; be teachable.
5. Seek and wait for the clerk's recognition before speaking; address the clerk or the meeting as a whole, not individual Friends. Not everyone who wishes to speak will be recognized.
6. Speak in the hope of serving the meeting's search for Truth. Your personal opinion, or your feelings on an issue, are relevant only to the extent that they help in that search.
7. Share the truth that is given to you. After you have spoken, release what you've said to the meeting. Releasing is as important as what you have to say.
8. Let your speaking be simple and concise. Debate and appeal to emotion are out of place in a meeting for business.
9. When tensions arise, consider how they might be used creatively in the search for Truth. While we belong to a community committed to loving fellowship and unity, we know experientially that the "third way" we seek often emerges from engaging tensions.
10. Participate with clerking consciousness, thinking about the meeting and the process through the eyes of the clerk.
11. Respect the authority of the clerk and the elders. We have given them special responsibility to guide us in supporting the meeting and our decision-making. When the clerk is standing or speaking, deference to the clerk is expected.
12. Acknowledge, with gratitude, the opportunities we have to do the work of the Spirit in community.

**Minutes of the Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business of the Western Quarterly Meeting held on 28 April 2018 at Wilmington Friends School will be forthcoming. Check the website prior to July Quarterly Meeting.**

### **New Garden Monthly Meeting's Response to the 1st Query - on Meeting for Worship**

We strive to hold our Meeting for Worship as a living silence where we are drawn together in a stilled expectant waiting which nurtures all. We hope that this is the experience of everyone but it requires effort from each of us individually, and this is difficult. We encourage vocal ministry, but this rarely happens.

### **West Grove Monthly Meeting Query Answer for First Quarter 2019**

The First Query, Deepening our Faith - Meeting for Worship, was read. Attending Meeting helps maintain focus during the week. Words spoken during Meeting can trigger a response in other Friends. The fact that we are sharing more during Meeting is appreciated by everyone. The answer to the question of whether to stand or remain seated when you speak in Meeting seems to be that staying seated makes for a more intimate experience in a small group but when in a larger group it is better to stand so that all can hear. One of the Advices in the new *Faith and Practice* recommends that Friends develop a daily habit of quiet/prayer/meditation so that when they come to Meeting they are prepared to settle into the silence.

## **Children's Program for July Quarter!**

Hello, families of Western Quarter! We are excited to present to you the theme for our July session: "Inch By Inch". Older children can "buddy" with younger children to help them plant flowers and herbs at Hockessin Friends Meeting. Anyone who would like to take a "garden" home with them may plant herbs in an egg carton. As always, we'll have music and story to complement the activity, and also a *surprise activity that we know the older kids will enjoy!*



## Summer Music with Friends!

### Featuring the Nearly Valentines

Join Jeanmarie and Chris for a fun and engaging summer evening as they present a lively program of music for violin and voice, accompanied by classical and 12-string guitars, dobro, mandolin and more.

You will hear everything from modern bluegrass and New Orleans-style jazz to Greek and Celtic folksongs, as well as original compositions that fuse classical, world and other musical elements.

Grab the kids and pack a picnic! This is not to be missed.

When: Saturday August 17, 2019; 6pm

Where: Centre Friends Meeting, Centre Meeting Road, 19807

OPEN AND FREE TO THE PUBLIC

#### **To Parents from Claire Brandenburg Taylor, Youth Coordinator-**

We continue striving to find ways to attract young people to events. It is our great desire to “build up” the youth program of Western Quarter, making it a place where Quaker youth of all ages feel welcomed and excited to engage and participate, growing and ultimately preserving our Quaker roots. Please watch for a survey coming soon to your inbox. We appreciate you taking 5-10 minutes, *with your children, to answer the questions. We’ll use your responses to help us make decisions about program offerings. We welcome all young people to Western Quarter!*

#### **Update and Question from Deb - Interested in [AVP](#)?**

I have had a chance to visit only a few Western Quarter Meetings so far. I look forward to visiting more. Old Kennett this Sunday and Kennett Friends after.

At several Monthly Meeting events, I have heard some talk about possibly having an Alternatives to Violence Project workshop. Western Quarter has several AVP facilitators. Test the interest levels in your Monthly Meeting, and let Deb know if there is interest in a weekend workshop or just learning more about AVP. E-mail [wqmfriends@gmail.com](mailto:wqmfriends@gmail.com).