



Western Quarterly News

of the Religious Society Of Friends

Western Quarterly Meeting Newsletter Fall 2019

Report on PYM Sessions, July 2019, by Lynne Piersol, Swarthmore MM, Concord Quarter Coordinator

I attended PYM Annual Sessions on behalf of Concord Quarterly Meeting. It was a grounding, productive, spirit led week, with some hard sharing and listening and some progress in the Yearly Meeting's desire to become an anti-racist organization and really become a blessed community for all. I heard there were about 300 people who attended overall.

This was the second time the Spiritual Formation Collaborative offered a one-day pre-session retreat from. This year it featured a workshop led by Valerie Brown on "Centering in Trust and Love" which was wonderful. We also spent a section on how to carry forth our groundedness into Yearly Meeting.

The overall schedule for Sessions was designed with more flexibility to accommodate the possible needs for listening sessions and/or more time for business. One listening session drew 50 people who talked about the sustainability of The Religious Society of Friends. We heard from the Councils, from the Treasurer and from some external organizations. It was noted that the Councils are currently operating at about 60% capacity; there are openings. We also had some time to share what meetings and Quarters are doing in the areas of anti-racism work. Quarter Clerks and Coordinators present met Saturday afternoon. The PYM Clerk is interested in helping Quarters. We have some asks for PYM and plan to meet another time.

There were also opportunities to speak out of spirit on questions of race, inclusion and diversity. Friends were "invited to share what is weighing on their hearts and lift up prayer for beloved community, naming those concerns which most threaten that vision." Deep sharing and listening followed described in the minutes as "We want to acknowledge the pain we have caused to those in our community and work toward healing within and beyond." On Friday evening there was a session on discerning our collective next steps and living into our need to act. Out of that session two proposals were sent to the Clerking Group (Clerk and alternate Clerks of PYM, Clerks of Councils – who planned the agenda and met each morning).

1. "- that we charge the clerks' group to find a process and a body to take up this work, reviewing the Undoing Racism Group proposal from 2016 and propose a way to fold this work into the structure of the Yearly Meeting, as well as revisit our multi-cultural audit. **Cont'd on page 3 - Annual Sessions Report**

Annual Sessions

Quarterly Meeting details

Youth and Events

AVP

Queries

More Events!

**Quarterly Meeting – SATURDAY, October 19
at Kendal**

**9 am coffee – 9:15 program – 10:45 Meeting for
Worship – noon meal– 1:00 Meeting for Business**

REMINDER - October Quarterly Meeting will be SATURDAY, OCTOBER 19 at Kendal**October Quarterly Meeting Program - SPIRITUAL JOURNEYS**

At Quarterly Meeting in October, several Friends from Kendal Monthly Meeting will engage us in exercises and discussions to help us share and/or explore where we are on our own spiritual journeys. The exercises and discussions are shaped by their work with the School of the Spirit.

"The School of the Spirit Ministry serves all those who wish to be more faithful listeners and responders to the work of the Inward Teacher. The ministry is grounded in prayer and offers programs rooted in the Quaker contemplative tradition of the living silence.

"The place of prayer is a precious habitation ... I saw this habitation to be safe, to be inwardly quiet, when there was great stirrings and commotions in the world. – John Woolman (1770)

From <http://www.schoolofthespirit.org/>

As I looked through School of the Spirit's website and read definitions and reflections on spiritual journeys from a few other sources, I found myself circling back to the George Fox quotation that always strikes me as central to Quakerism:

Be patterns, be examples in all countries, places, islands, nations wherever you come; that your carriage and life may preach among all sorts of people, and to them; then you will come to walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in everyone; whereby in them you may be a blessing, and make the witness of God in them to bless you. (George Fox, 1656)

Along with meeting for worship, and cycling through queries, here is another way to reflect on cheerfully walking.

Seventh Query - Grounding for Transformed Lives**For the Meeting:**

- How do we help each other face conflicts with patience, forbearance and openness to healing?
 - To what extent does our meeting ignore differences in order to avoid possible conflicts?
 - What are we doing as a Friends meeting within our communities:
- 1) To recognize and correct the causes of violence?
 - 2) To understand the impact of the global military-industrial complex on all aspects of life?
 - 3) To increase the understanding and use of alternatives to violence?
 - 4) To work toward overcoming separations and restoring wholeness?
 - 5) To support the constructive use of authority?
 - 6) To promote the sustainability of the earth?

For the Individual:

- *Do I "live in the virtue [power] of that Life and Spirit that took [takes] away the occasion of all wars"?*
- *How do I maintain Friends' testimony that participation in war and its preparation is inconsistent with the teaching of Jesus?*
- *Do I treat personal conflict as an opportunity for growth?*
- *How do I face my differences with others and reaffirm in action and attitude my love for those with whom I am in conflict?*

From *Faith and Practice*

<https://www.pym.org/faith-and-practice/guidelines-and-procedures/general-queries/grounding-transformed-lives/>

Annual Sessions Report, cont'd from p. 1

2.-that we charge Quaker Life Council to make available a Truth and Reconciliation process to support Friends of Color who have experienced trauma from our Yearly Meeting.”

The Clerking Group came back to us on Saturday morning with the following minute, feeling an urgency to move this work forward: “We charge the Administrative and Quaker Life Councils to come under the weight of these proposals and discern a path forward. We charge them to include their progress in a report at the end of September and bring an update back to the body at our Continuing Sessions in November.” When we were asked if others would like to join in this work, 15 people stood, and their names recorded.

There was also a gathering of Friends of Color on Saturday afternoon to look at the FGC Institutional Assessment results with the assistance of Vanessa Julye, FGC staff for their Ministry on Racism.

We also heard from the PYM General Secretary, sharing about nurturing connections in the Yearly Meeting between meetings, Quarters, and other Quaker bodies, and also her journey to learn more about becoming anti-racist, acknowledging the hurt that has occurred sometimes due to her own actions.

In addition to business sessions, there was all together time before the morning business sessions began. These were multigenerational programs planned by staff and the young people themselves. There were “Vespers” programs each night after the sessions were over. Vespers are brief programs planned by the Youth staff and/or an age group (Middle School). They are always wonderful... Afternoons featured a variety of activities including workshops on Thursday and Friday. And there was an Artist in Residence who worked with the children, but also had an art project open to anyone. And we got to see the One Quilt One Yearly Meeting quilt squares sewn together (33 so far). You can still make a square and they plan to expand the quilt.

Saturday evening, we heard from Valerie Brown, who offered an interactive program on centering in trust and love and we explored the questions: *What does it mean to you to center in trust and love? Why is this meaningful?* I came away feeling very connected to those in the room.

Sunday morning, we finished worship, and with epistles from the various age groups including elementary school children, middle school, and young friends. Young Adult Friends had earlier shared their epistle from their April retreat about membership concerns and how this sometimes is a barrier to participation. And we approved the PYM outgoing epistle.

All minutes are on the PYM website - <https://www.pym.org/annual-sessions/minutes/>

All the 2019 epistles can be found here: <https://www.pym.org/category/epistle/>

Historical Meeting Houses Open for Worship

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

Address: 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

"Spiritual Journeys"

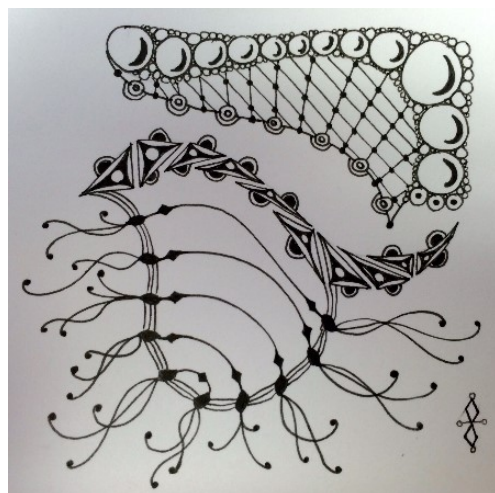
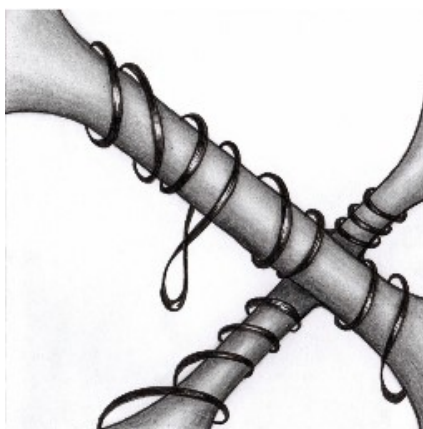
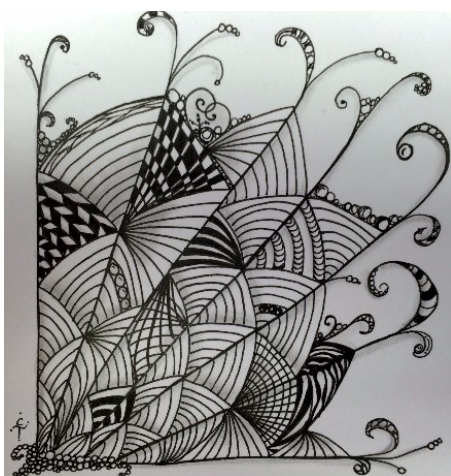
Have you ever gotten really quiet? Not just on the outside, but on the *inside*, too? If you've ever sat with your parents in Meeting for Worship, you've probably experienced this once or twice. People who grow up Quaker usually have a better understanding of what it means to listen for "the still, small voice" – that of God in each of us.

What if you could take that feeling of quiet, and the voice of God within you, and translate it on paper, as a work of art?? At our next Western Quarterly Meeting on October 19, you will have a chance to practice that very thing!

There is no right or wrong way to create what's called "Zentangle". All you need to do is quiet your mind and open your heart, listening for what some Quakers call a "leading," and let it flow out of your pen onto a small piece of paper.

Below are some examples. Every creation is different, and there is no such thing as a mistake. This makes it a lot easier to let your heart and Spirit lead the drawing.

In addition to this project, of course we will go SWIMMING, play some music, *and*, if the weather cooperates, we may have time to create a giant mandala *made from yarn* on the grounds of Kendall, for all the residents to observe and enjoy. Some of you have done this project with me before, and I'll need your help to pull it off again, so please come to Quarterly Meeting in October!



UPCOMING YOUTH EVENTS in PYM!

Fall 2019 Quaker Family Meetup and Youth Programs Kick-off!

6-7:30 pm Friday, Sept. 13 at Chestnut Hill MM

Quaker Family Meetups are an opportunity for PYM Families of infants to teens to join together for fellowship, play, snacks and spiritual refreshment. *Child care and program for young people will be provided — Attend with or without the kids!*

For more: <https://www.pym.org/event/quaker-family-meetup-fall2019/>

Young Friends at Bucks Quarter Peace Fair 2019 - Buckingham Friends Meeting

4:00 pm Friday, Sept. 20 to 9:00am Sunday, September 22

For more: https://www.pym.org/event/young-friends-at-bucks-quarter-peace-fair-2019/?instance_id=2325

More Quaker events p7-8!

Introduction to Alternatives to Violence Project shared by London Grove Friends Gail Newbold and Susanna Davison

Alternatives to Violence Project – is for participants from all walks of life and across the globe. The project began in the 1970's following the Attica, NY prison riots. It was founded by Quakers and Attica prisoners experimenting together after a few prisoners asked, "So how do we *DO* nonviolence?" Today, AVP USA has become an association of community-, school- and prison-based groups offering experiential workshops in personal growth, creative conflict management, and community development.

AVP is a program for everybody. Participants and trainers ("facilitators") come from all religions, races and walks of life. This springs from the Project's beginnings: At Attica Prison, each group, prisoners and Quakers, needed to learn together, through interaction: what are the most basic turning-points, between the Quaker belief in an inborn power of peace in everyone, and the widely-used habits in a violence-based society? How does one meet the ongoing challenges of life, and make the turn toward a peaceful approach, when what's needed is that special instant of transformation?

AVP workshops seek to assist people in developing skills of personal growth and change. This is not psychotherapy, but an intensive learning experience based in personal and interactional "exercises." Three-day workshops are available on three levels: Basic, Advanced, and Training for Facilitators. A Basic AVP Workshop teaches interpersonal conflict resolution by offering situations in small groups and one-to-one interactions. A sense of trust develops out of exercises focusing on Affirmation, Communication, Cooperation, and Creative Conflict Resolution. Typically, 12-20 participants do the workshop, although numbers may vary.

According to the Annual Report for 2018 of AVP's Committee of Local and Regional Groups (CLARG), published in May 2019, AVP groups in PA/NJ and the MidAtlantic region sponsor community programs in Williamsport and Philadelphia and in the "New Start Re-entry" program for returning citizens in Claymont, DE. There is a program on the Wilmington campus of Widener University Law Center. Workshops are offered in DC's South Sudanese community. AVP workshops are part of Pendle Hill's core curriculum. Volunteer energy is at the heart of AVP; thus motives are heartfelt and not based on distractions outside of creating ourselves, homes and societies.

Currently, Gail Newbold's name and address pop up when a person searches for a Chester County, PA, contact in the AVP-USA database. Having made arrangements for previous workshops, facilitating, and following (at a distance) twenty years of news about workshops in central Africa (Great Lakes Region), in Central America-Colombia-Ecuador, and in the Asia-West Pacific region, Gail is "humbly amazed" that people all around the world find AVP a powerful tool for building lives of respectful family relationships and community and ecological healing. People are working toward gentle lives rather than communities of hubris and violence. Gail suggests we are all looking for these same values, long-held by Friends. In our own tri-State area, AVP may help us some more, again, toward what we need in our time. Together with various participants, we may build skills, connections and inspiration or enthusiasm. As is said in AVP, "Expect the best!"

To check out more about AVP, here's the AVPUSA website: <https://avpusa.org/>

July Quarterly Meeting

Over 30 Friends signed in for Quarterly Meeting and many others were present for different events during the day. Hockessin Friends greeted us with smiles, coffee, fruit, and baked goods on a very warm day. Friends from other Meetings oohed and aahed about all the renovations, and especially the new cooling system! Carol Bernard led the adults through a Q&A and informative session on sustainable yard practices. My favorite tip - use cardboard to crowd out the invasives and reclaim garden beds. Claire, our Youth Coordinator, and Rose, part of the FDS team at Hockessin, led the youth in several activities and planted take away gardens. Several messages arose during worship. We then gathered for a wonderful meal in the fellowship room, had tours of the renovated areas, and reconvened for business.

Query Responses

QUERY SEVEN GROUNDING FOR TRANSFORMED LIVES: Peace and Alternatives to Violence

From Newark Friends Meeting

One of our Friends is always heartened going to meetings of organizations such as the Delaware Coalition to Dismantle the New Jim Crow, and seeing Friends from our meeting there. As a meeting, we can do more and should do more, but we're making a good start in it.

We find that social media has become a place that underscores differences between people and that it is so easy to avoid meaningful conversations there. We are grateful that Friends hold discussions that are respectful.

One Friend would like to help with the border issue, but feels that she would be no help if she didn't know Spanish. She would at least be able to communicate if she had the time to learn Spanish. Another Friend offered to help her practice Spanish.

In response to question [d], a Friend recalled the story of Jesus overturning the tables of the money changers in the temple. He feels that refusing to use violence doesn't equate to non-violence.

Another Friend told of how her grandfather served in the First World War as a sharpshooter, but avoided hitting anyone. She also mentioned that her father wouldn't let her or her siblings play at war as children.

Commenting on the question "What are we doing as a Friends Meeting?" a Friend noted that we are a small group, and that since larger Quaker organizations deal with these things, we could work through them. She suggested maybe we could choose one or two things to concentrate on.

A Friend remarked that some members of the meeting have been trained in alternatives to violence strategies.

Since we are living in a powder keg situation, she wonders whether alternatives to violence training would be

useful to more of us.

A Friend was encouraged after reading an article about the recent power outage in Manhattan that strengthened the unity of the city: the atmosphere was peaceful, and people made an effort to do things to help each other through the outage. Articles by military people talking about the damage caused by war based on their experiences is encouraging to another Friend.

The intergenerational cycle of violence is a great concern. A Friend is disheartened by how far we have to go, saying it's hard to know how to make a difference.

QUERY SIX NOURISHING OUR COMMUNITY: Stewardship of Resources

From Newark Friends

One of our Friends remarked that our meeting is blessed with people who are good at balancing all of the functions needed to nourish our meeting and the greater community. As one example, a Friend recently brought a flyer for a spiritual retreat to meeting, helping to provide for the spiritual growth of our meeting.

Our Care of Members Committee decided to expand the mission of their committee and rename it the Care of Members and Social Justice Committee. Light the Torch, the Families Belong Together March, and Hope Dining Room are examples of our meeting members' involvement in efforts for social justice. Wilmington College's plan to bring a trafficking survivor to speak addresses another social justice concern of our meeting.

At the Care of Members Committee meeting it was suggested that our meeting have a letter writing session. People could then suggest subjects and who to write the letters to. A Friend suggested holding these letter writing sessions monthly. Whoever has a concern can address it in a letter.

A Friend noted a number of faith groups give LGBT support, but then also provide funds for organizations who oppose LGBT rights. He added that, as far as he knew, our meeting did not do this.

We depend on the support of current members. The general fund relies solely on donations.

MORE YOUTH EVENTS from PYM!

PYM Families Autumn Community Playdate - Solebury Orchards, New Hope, PA

9am to noon Saturday, October 12

For more: https://www.pym.org/event/pym-families-autumn-community-playdate/?instance_id=2341

Middle School Friends Fall Gathering at West Chester Friends Meeting

7:00pm Friday, October 18 to noon Sunday, October 20

The weekend will include small group worship sharing, lots of laughter, group games, and new friendships as we build our MSF community.

For more: https://www.pym.org/event/middle-school-friends-fall-gathering-2019/?instance_id=2339

2019 Quaker College Fair at Friends Center, 1500 Cherry St, Philadelphia, PA 19102

September 28, 2019 @ 12:00 pm – 3:00 pm

A free event designed for students engaged in the college search process. Registration, though not required, helps us prepare for your attendance.

For more: https://www.pym.org/event/2019-quaker-college-fair/?instance_id=2336

More PYM Events

Book Launch: Money & Soul by Pamela Haines - September 15, 2019 @ 1:15 pm – 2:15 pm

Friends Center, Monthly Meeting Room, 1515 Cherry St, Philadelphia, PA 19102

"If money troubles your soul, try this down-to-earth Quaker perspective on economies large and small. In Money and Soul this search for answers, through a Quaker lens, gives a taste of the power of applying faith values to our economic story."

For more: https://www.pym.org/event/book-launch-money-soul-by-pamela-haines/?instance_id=2342

Women's Meeting for Worship - October 2, 2019 @ 7:00 pm – 8:00 pm

Abington Monthly Meeting, 520 Meetinghouse Rd, Jenkintown, PA 19046

The women of Abington Monthly Meeting invite you to a multigenerational Women's Meeting for Worship. Bring a f/Friend...women of all ages enjoy time spent together regardless of religious affiliation. [https://](https://www.pym.org/event/womens-meeting-for-worship-2/?instance_id=2330)

www.pym.org/event/womens-meeting-for-worship-2/?instance_id=2330

Deepening Our Practice in Clerking and Recording - October 12, 2019 @ 10:00 am – 4:00 pm

Providence Friends Meeting, 105 N Providence Rd, Media, PA 19063

Gain skills and practice clerking meeting for business and recording the minutes of our business.

For more: <http://www.pym.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Thread.jpg>

Call To Action: Redressing Inclusion & Equity - October 13, 2019 @ 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm

Friends Center, 1515 Cherry St, Philadelphia, PA 19102

The First Contact Reconciliation Collaborative is hosting a call-to-action. After screening the landmark documentary, Doctrine of Discovery: Unmasking the Domination Code, participants will reflect & thresh "decolonizing" practices using small group "civil conversations." Registration is encouraged, yet not required.

For more: https://www.pym.org/event/call-to-action-redressing-inclusion-equity/?instance_id=2328

Friends in Fellowship: What will it take to get the US to act on Climate Change?

October 24, 2019 @ 6:30 pm – 9:00 pm AT Arch Street Meeting House, 320 Arch St, Philadelphia, PA
Join [Solebury Meeting](#) member Taiya Smith. Taiya leads the nonprofit [Climate Leadership Council's](#) China Program. She works with governments and corporations to speed up the adoption of a meaningful price on carbon. Concurrently, Smith is CEO of Phyllis Technologies, a start up company that creates an independent assessment of carbon emissions at the facility level. Previously, Smith worked in the private sector advising clean technology companies wishing to gain access to Chinese markets.

For more: https://www.pym.org/event/friends-in-fellowship-what-will-it-take-to-get-the-us-to-act-on-climate-change/?instance_id=2344

Fall 2019 Continuing Sessions - November 2, 2019

Arch Street Meeting House, 320 Arch St, Philadelphia, PA 19106

For more: https://www.pym.org/event/continuing-sessions/?instance_id=2118

Call for submissions – want to share your spiritual journey, witness or an upcoming event?
Please e-mail coordinator@westernquarterquakers.org or call the office and leave a message, 610-444-1012.