



Western Quarterly News

of the Religious Society Of Friends

Western Quarterly Meeting Newsletter

Spring 2022

Excerpts from a letter from Emily Provance, Fifteenth Street MM, NYYM traveling minister

Dear Friends,

I've been thinking about post-pandemic faith communities. I've [written extensively](#) about what our next steps might look like in terms of worship, pastoral care, membership, multiage community, outreach, witness, budgets, property, neighborhood ministries, institutional relationships... There's one piece that's super relevant to me that I haven't written about: **travel in the ministry**.

A traveling minister may be called to any place to do or say anything. (In theory, accountability to the minister's meeting and elders makes sure that the minister is responding to a genuine call, so there isn't total unchecked freedom, which could be dangerous.) However, it's that very anyplace-and-anything that makes the concept of travel in the ministry important. Yearly meeting boundaries, theological boundaries, cultural boundaries, geographic boundaries, and institutional boundaries do not prevent a traveling minister from visiting a particular faith community. Like birds spreading seeds (and yes, I know that metaphor's a little gross, you can laugh), traveling ministers can carry theological revelations, new practices, and communications from anywhere to anywhere. This matters if we really believe that the Religious Society of Friends is all one people. Somebody has to be moving amongst us all.

We still have not figured out how travel in the ministry works in the 21st century--although a fair number of faithful Friends have been working hard on exactly that question since before I became a Quaker. And travel in the ministry post-pandemic is yet another thing to explore.

So--how did travel in the ministry work "back then"? How do we translate that to now?

Emily will be in our geographical area in June and July if Friends would like to host her. Check out her web blog for more - <https://quakeremily.wordpress.com/resources-for-quaker-meetings/being-the-church/>

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Western Quarterly Meeting— 24 April 2022

**Program and business via Zoom
Worship In person**

8:30 am Sticking Points and Stumbling Blocks: A Primer on Navigating
Conversations about Aging
Led by Sarah Matas of Kendal Communities

10 am Meeting for Worship at West Grove Monthly Meeting
1:00pm—Western Quarterly Meeting for Worship with Attention to
Business

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/92668234836>

First Query-Deepening Our Faith: Meeting for Worship

For the Meeting:

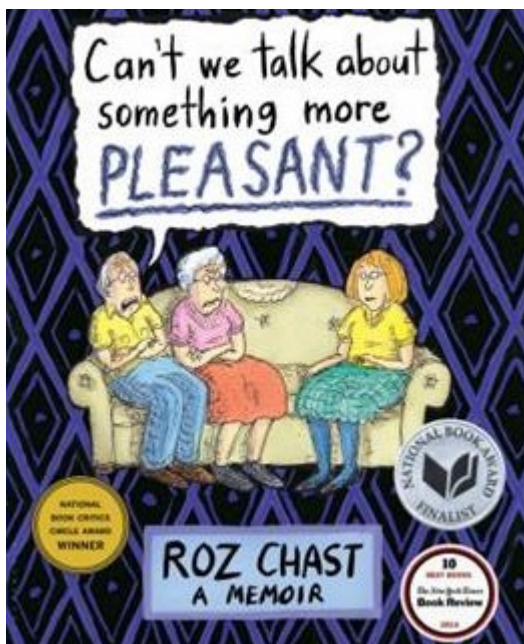
- ♦ Are our meetings for worship held in stilled, expectant waiting upon God?
- ♦ As we worship in the living silence, are we drawn together by the power of God in our midst? Do we experience a deep reverence for the integrity of creation?
- ♦ How does our worship nurture all worshippers, creating a deeper sense of community?
- ♦ How does our meeting encourage vocal ministry that spiritually nurtures the worshipping community?

[*General Queries*](#) are taken from the newest version of PYM's [*Faith and Practice*](#), available online.

For the Individual:

- ♦ Do I faithfully attend meeting with heart and mind prepared for worship, clear of any predetermination to speak or not to speak, expecting that worship will be a source of strength and guidance?
- ♦ Does worship deepen my relationship to God, increase my faithfulness and refresh and renew my daily life, both inwardly and in my relationships with other persons and all of creation?
- ♦ Does worship enhance my capacity for attentive, non-judgmental listening to others?
- ♦ How does participation in meeting for worship contribute to my life-long spiritual journey?

Aging Concerns Spotlight— Some book reviews



Can't We Talk About Something More Pleasant? a memoir by Roz Chast

Published by Bloomsbury in 2014. Check your local library for a copy. It is available in the Chester County Library System.

Chast's memoir provides us with a look into how her life changed as her parents aged. She and her parents had avoided talking about and preparing for one reality of life: aging. We see and read how the physical, mental, and emotional health of her parents changed and how those changes impacted Chast's daily routines, outlook, and relationships. As a graphic novel there is a wealth of description in the images and text. I found it to be an insightful read and reminded me of what my mother, a retired family physician, tells me often about aging: there are general experiences most everyone has, but each person's journey through aging is different, so stay open to anything.

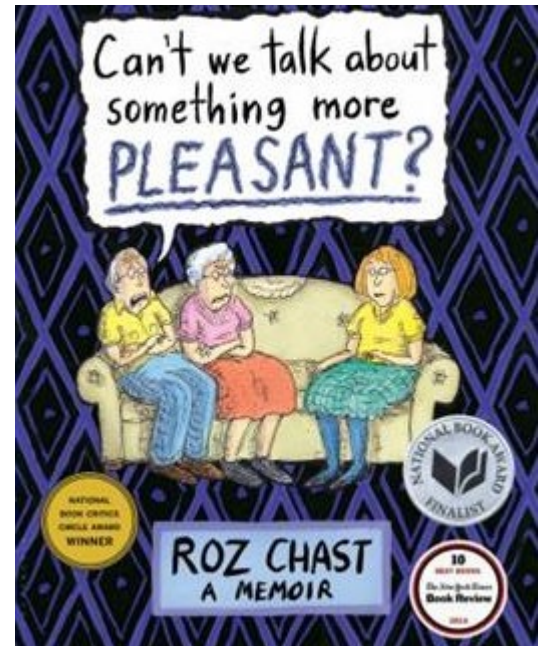
Western Quarterly Meeting

April 24, 2022 hosted by West Grove Monthly Meeting

Sticking Points and Stumbling Blocks: A Primer on Navigating Conversations about Aging With Sarah Matas of Kendal-Crosslands Communities



"When you said you were getting a mobility scooter, Dad, this isn't what I had in mind."



Cover illustration. *Can't we talk about something more pleasant.* Roz Chast.

Tips – Strategies – Practice – and Benchmarks
for setting the tone and

8:30 am Program with Sarah Matas [via Zoom](#)
(program will be recorded and posted and broadcast at
West Grove)

**10:00 am IN-PERSON Meeting for Worship
AT West Grove Meeting House**

Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business 1:00 pm
via Zoom <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/92668234836>

Dying to Move On

Thoughts from Susan Scott,
West Grove Meeting

Author of *Still Praying After All These Years: 52 Meditations for Later Life*.
Upper Room Books. 2019.

In the past six months I've re-located and re-married. My youngest grown son and his partner recently visited us over the holidays. As my new husband, Ray, and I drove them around town, I sensed they were adjusting to seeing me both with a new man and in a whole new physical context. I quipped: "Since you saw me last, I've died and moved on to Doylestown."

Having spent 8 years in ministering to the dying, I'm often asked: "What helps prepare us for our own dying?" The folks I accompanied to death's door used to ask the same question. I'd ask: "Have you ever re-located in your life? Are there ways your experience of moving has prepared you for dying?"

I've re-located 15 times in my 75 year lifespan. Though I don't yet know what it is to die, I suspect death asks of us a similar kind of trust and relinquishment as moving does. It's no small thing to leave the familiar context of "the known" and trust that a relatively new and unfamiliar context will make provision for us.

How the chaos of packing disrupts soothing routines! Finding needed objects in our familiar setting can become a real challenge! In moving, we also relinquish deeply-rutted patterns of life suited to the specifics of our context. We may no longer live so close to the library that we can walk there or have easy access to a nearby playground where the grand-kids can let off steam.

In moving we let go of natural features to which we've become attached — a favorite tree in the backyard, or the nearby lake with the walking paths. We let go of a human landscape as well: like treasured, trusted relationships built over time with professional providers, and friends. We have no guarantee that the next doctor, repairman or neighbor will be as helpful or supportive. Often, our moves entail letting

go of "stuff" — mementos of our past, photos, collectibles for which there is no room in our new setting. All this relinquishment comes with a boatload of mixed emotions.

While we can take a certain amount of initiative in entering a new community, as a newcomer, we are still somewhat dependent on the graciousness of those who already live there. Will they share the information we need to make our way in a new setting? Can we trust them and will they trust us? Will they be open to friendship? In all this we must either exercise faith that our supports will be restored over time, or else become exceedingly anxious and try to control in situations where it's bound to backfire.

In making geographical changes, re-location specialists and real estate agents act as transitional figures, accompanying us as we let go of the familiar and welcome the new. Similarly, hospice personnel accompany the dying as they leave their "familiar" and welcome the holy mystery of what lies beyond death.

Is it any wonder that the dying sometimes report dreams or waking visions about travel, packing suitcases, and getting on forms of transportation? Just as our lives are richer by learning to live as if we are dying, so may our deaths be enriched by dying as if we're moving on!

Read more at Sue's Word Press site -
<https://www.stillpraying.com/>

From Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Continuing Sessions

Continuing Sessions were March 25-27 this year. Friday evening we shared music and fellowship via Zoom and at Arch Street Meeting House. We were led by Old Haverford MM member Molly Hicks. The next morning Francisco Burgos, Executive Director of Pendle Hill and Providence MM member led us through a sharing on the theological roots of social justice. Both of these sessions are available on the yearly meeting's YouTube channel ([Friday](#) and

[Saturday](#)). During the meeting for worship with attention to business session in the afternoon, Friends were quite moved and energized as three Friends from Green Street Meeting shared about its leadings on reparations. The minutes from the session about Green Street's ministry are below:

Green Street Meeting about its work on Reparations: Jean-Marie explained that [this Monthly Meeting is doing something creative and bold as part of the witness on racism](#). (Link to Zoom recording on YouTube.) She then introduced the presenters from Green Street. Lucy Duncan is a member of Green Street Meeting, a Truth and Reparations Fellow with the Truth Telling Project, the co-chair of the Philadelphia Mayor's Commission for Faith Based and Interfaith Affairs Reparations Campaign, and a former clerk of the Undoing Racism Group of PYM. Gabbreell James is a member of Green Street Meeting, a Member of Reparations working group and a Former co-clerk of Undoing Racism Group. Eppchez Yes is a member of Green Street Meeting, a member of Green Street's Reparations Working Group and co-clerk of the FGC Institutional Assessment Implementation Committee.

Gabbreell explained that the Meeting is old, in an old meetinghouse, that needed great repairs. An estimate for repairs was for hundreds of thousands of dollars, which could be paid without difficulty. Many in Meeting were surprised to find they had so much money. The next step was a series of workshops on spirituality of money. From this, the reparations working group was born. Gabbreell told us that Green Street is growing, appealing to many more.

Eppchez Yes explained that the first part of this work was to understand the meaning of reparations and the exact amount of money involved. In 2020, they decided that it doesn't matter who was responsible for the wealth. Any African

American in the neighborhood in need was owed.

Lucy explained that the Meeting has been having serious work on racism. A group of 12 people took a course on reparations. She explained that reparations is a vehicle for communications and support. We saw a powerful video with an African American woman talking about the enormous economic disparities in our society.

Eppchez explained the budgeting formula is fairly simple—fund your needs and give 50% of any excess to those in need. When considering Green Street, the Working Group decided the Meeting could give \$50,000 per year for 10 years. The idea that came forward was to create a fund for Black Germantown homeowners to be assured of owning property in perpetuity.

Eppchez reminded us of the history of Quakers

in this area, including the holding of people in slavery. In 1975, PYM was asked for reparations and turned it down.

Lucy asked us all to work toward repair without feeling shame or despair. She named a few of the patterns faced by White people for fearing and resisting change. We need to change our relationship with the Black community all

around us.

Gabbreell told us that the Meeting had agreed to put money aside, and then there were Black members and attenders trying to determine how to spend it. The hope is to be able to look back at the end of 10 years and see great improvements in their community.

Jean-Marie reminded us that there can be many different paths to the same goal. She acclaimed the richness of the path of Green Street Meeting. Considering the time, the clerk expressed her feeling that much more can be said, but we need to have more deep discussions at annual sessions.

Full minutes: <https://www.pym.org/2022-spring-continuing-sessions-minutes/>

REPARATIONS

The act or process of making
amends for a wrong

Excerpt from the UN

reparation is intended to promote
justice by addressing gross viola-
tions of international humanitarian
law

The Value of Sacred Places

-summary from a presentation by Bob Jaeger, founder of Partners for Sacred Places
hosted by Merion Monthly Meeting

Religious properties are civic assets and thus they have a public value. Even when faith populations are going down, our need for the spaces and resources that religious communities have is greater than ever.

Four Important questions a faith community should ask of its physical assets:

Who is served by the programs housed in our sacred places?

Does our congregation open their buildings sacrificially?

What cultural value do our physical assets bring to the community?

Do our sacred places strengthen and stabilize their communities?

A 1998 study of urban religious communities indicated the following reality, one which has not shifted in the following 20+ years: 76% of all uses in a congregation's own buildings are for social services work; 81% of people using the space are not members; 93% of urban congregations open their doors to serve their communities. The most frequent type of community support work at urban congregations are as hosts and/or managers of clothing and food pantries, community cultural events, and partnerships with neighborhood groups. Most often these programs are oriented to women, children, and youth. Very often these are people who basic needs are going unmet.

A study of rural congregations in North Carolina indicates a similar reality. The economic impact of the social services work in rural areas is often greater and more essential as the only local site hosting social services.

Designing Community-Oriented Uses and Renovations

Faith communities must engage with members and stakeholders in the community when designing or redesigning the community use and the physical spaces. A congregation may like a contemplative garden but the neighborhood may have greater need for a children's play area. Always think in terms of how is and how could this property be a positive asset to the community as everyone together brainstorms and envisions new uses of the spaces. Often times financial contributors for community-oriented renovations will come from across the community and not just the host faith community.

---Reflections from a workshop attendee---

Quakers have felt that the sacred is present in the people gathered and not the physical place where they meet.

Some Quaker Meetings across the country are exploring how to return, or pay fair rent, for their properties with the indigenous peoples whose land the meeting house is on. (North Pacific Yearly Meeting Minute, Working Group on Anti-Racism, Minute of Support for Indigenous People)

What un- or underfunded liabilities do we have as we hold onto properties not in active use?

How do we use our spiritual and capital assets to live in right relationship with all our communities?



EVENTS AROUND PYM AND THE QUARTER

More events and details are available at <https://www.pym.org/calendar/>

Quaker College Fair— March 31, April 4-7, April 9, April 10 - virtual
PYM Policy on Advocacy- Review and Discussion- April 4 7:30pm - virtual
Wednesday Worship Sharing via Zoom hosted by Moorestown Meeting 7-8pm
EQAT – Vanguard’s Big Climate Problem Walk – April 18-22 – Chester to Malvern
Interfaith Street Seder Protesting Carbon Pharaohs – April 20 3:30pm – Chase Bank, Wayne
Lenape Nation Reflections on Culture and Nature – April 24 7:00-8:30pm– virtual
What White People Can Do About Racism– April 28 7-8pm – virtual
YOUTH AT CAMP SWATARA – Caln Quarter and PYM staff - April 29-May 1
SPRING FAMILY OVERNIGHT at Camp Dark Waters – April 30-May 1

Come visit Mill Creek Friends Meeting for some Quaker fellowship between **10 am - 2 pm, Saturday, April 30th!** We are hosting a Fair and Open House with a bake sale, used books table, lawn games, jewelry-making, and kids’ craft table, etc. Hope to see you!

DRAFT Minutes of Support Committee of Western Quarterly Meeting March 13, 2022 meeting held via Zoom at 3:00pm

Present: Mary Sproat (WG), Shelley Hastings and Ariana Langford (N), Deb Wood (coordinator), Terry Anderson, Bob Frye, and Margaret Walton (LG), Pownall Jones (NG, Crosslands), Stan Glowiak (C), Dave Elder (Kendal), Dick Logan and Emma Parker Miller (H)

Regrets - Karen Halstead, tonya thames taylor

Opening Worship

Updates from Monthly Meetings -Newark - Friends have given individually to support Ukraine, as a meeting we will contribute to World Central Kitchen; There will be Easter worship at London Britain and we will pass the hat for contributions in support of a group; We have also contacted a Jewish group in Wilmington that houses refugees to offer housing; We also continue to contact our legislators in keeping with our consciences.

Centre - We will no longer require a COVID vaccination for attendance in the meeting house; Ukraine has been prominent in worship; Earlier today we approved holding our usual Easter egg hunt.

London Grove - approved a \$10,000 contribution to the Mennonite Central Committee to support people in Ukraine; in the 1930s MCC helped to get Jewish refugees into Great Britain with Quaker families; MCC’s focus is humanitarian relief; We’ve also completed a state of the meeting report and shared it with the Quarter; Recently we adopted a masks optional policy as long as people are vaccinated or have a recent negative per test.

West Grove- The Ace Hardware in Kennett Square has a Ukrainian manager so they are accepting donations to support Ukrainian refugees. We continue to worship in person and without masks required as we can safely distance.

Kendal - continues to worship on Zoom so we can include more in the community during worship; we are investigating technology options for hybrid worship; we recently engaged in FCNL priority setting; We are looking at the overall pattern of our giving.

Hockessin- We are meeting in-person and hybrid and will transition to more in-person including meeting for business; we are mask optional as of today with mask use pegged to local infection rates; we will share news from Newark and London Grove on Ukraine; in our budget process upcoming we will likely include a review of processes of our giving and who we give to; hopefully we will resolve the status of the caretaker house

soon; Emma Parker Miller will step off of Support Committee upon her upcoming graduation from Swarthmore.

New Garden - did not meet this past month.

Crosslands - is now meeting in-person; masks are required indoors; we recently did our FCNL priority setting.

Aging Concerns Committee – Update Shelley - Shelley shared the history of the group from its origin of Friends responding to a member need at Fallowfield Meeting to work preparing for the upcoming quarterly meeting. Friends shared how useful the work is and asked *how do we get people to follow through with document preparation, etc.*

We will share this concern when the group next meets.

We meet on the 4th Mondays via Zoom at 7:30pm. All are welcome to join.

Fallowfield Orthodox Burial Ground –Bob Frye reported back on an issue raised at 1st month meeting for business about tree maintenance needed at the Orthodox burial ground at Fallowfield. The Fallowfield and quarter clerks have not been able to reach the church whose property surrounds the burial ground, and someone has since cleaned up part of the area of concern. West Grove actually has oversight of Orthodox historical properties and records seem to indicate that property may no longer be owned by West Grove. Mary Sproat will check records at Friends Historical Library. We do have a reasonable quote of \$4500 for the tree work.

Designated Funds update –Our treasurer transferred \$25,000 from checking into a designated savings account for use of the Historic Properties committee as they undertake their work.

Historic Properties –The coordinator shared that the group is focusing on the three properties under direct care of the Quarter - Pennsgrove, Parkersville, and London Britain. The other three historic properties are under the care of West Grove and Kennett meetings. While we will focus on the three properties in our care, we should also stay abreast of the other three - Colora, New West Grove, and Old Kennett- since properties under a monthly meeting's care may become the concern of a quarter's.

The coordinator attended a program hosted by Merion Monthly Meeting titled Preserving Sacred Spaces. In both urban and rural areas religious buildings may provide an important social and cultural benefit to their communities. Many provide space for needed services or as an arts venue.

There was interest across the quarter in this group's work; the committee welcomes direct or relayed suggestions, questions, and concerns. None were shared at this time.

State of the Meeting Reports -Two suggestions were made regarding the draft state of the meeting report for the quarter.

1) Mention of youth programming and 2) a brief financial report focusing on where money comes from, where it goes, and whether we are in a sound financial position.

Quarterly Meeting at West Grove –We hope to have some technology available to support hybrid programming for 4th month, but it is not certain at this point. Meeting for worship will be in person at West Grove at 10am. The best time for a program is 8:30 but we are waiting for confirmation from the presenter and West Grove. Meeting for worship with attention to business will be at 1:00pm and via Zoom. The presentation will follow up on the programming on estate and life care documents from first month. Sarah Matas, staff at the Kendal communities, will present on how to talk with loved ones about health care and estate decisions. She is an experienced presenter and again, the quarter encourages Friends to invite friends and family to the event.

Coordinator Report –Deb did submit a proposal for Shoemaker Grants to support hybrid programming needs or outreach efforts. We were awarded one but have not yet received those monies. To date we have received education grant requests from one family in the quarter. The coordinator attended the Preserving Sacred Spaces program and the Feb. 5 Thread Gathering Restorative Racial Justice: From the Personal to the Systemic.

The fall Support Committee Meeting date will be Sept. 18, third Sunday instead of the usual 2nd Sunday.

We closed with a period of worship.

Respectfully submitted, Deb Wood, coordinator

To read the complete Minutes, and the Minutes from the WQM Support Committee Meetings, please visit our Business Resources page online: <http://westernquarterquakers.org/business-meeting-info/>