

Minutes for Western Quarterly Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business

Held via Zoom, April 24 at 1:00 pm

Join Zoom Meeting

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

Present: Margaret Walton, Bob Frye, Edna Collins, and Dave Nuttall (London Grove), Pownall Jones (Crosslands), Nancy Pratt and Karen Halstead (New Garden), Mary Sproat (West Grove), Terry Cannon and Teal Rickerman (Mill Creek), David Elder (Kendal), Shelley Hastings (Newark), and Deb Wood (coordinator)

Regrets: tonya thames taylor (Fallowfield)

Opening Worship

Query Responses - Query #1 - Deepening our faith: meeting for worship

Mill Creek - Members felt that our Meetings for Worship were held with expectant waiting on God, and that our worship was enhanced by worshiping in a community and gathering of seekers. We valued and held in deep reverence both the living silence and vocal ministry at our Meeting for Worship. We encourage vocal ministry by thanking members for their vocal ministry, and often continuing to discuss the messages after worship has concluded. We hold a monthly *Faith and Practice* discussion and worship sharing that enables members to share on a more personal level, and which also enhances vocal ministry in Meeting for Worship. We have respect for our diversity of spiritual beliefs, as some believe in a personal God and are Christocentric and others experience The Spirit through the majesty of creation.

Newark- The first query was considered by Aliza Appel, Ginny Bailey, Annemarie Carr, Gavin Ferris, Lily Grosso, Shelley Hastings, Maggie Ladd, Richard Ladd, Mike McDowell, Sally Milbury-Steen, Trebs Thompson, Treba Thompson, and Wayne Thompson.

One Friend said she never agreed with this query's advice to not have a predetermination to speak before meeting for worship. She finds that sometimes during the week something comes to her that is worth sharing at meeting. However, another Friend feels that the advice works because she thinks that when you come to meeting the spirit will move you to share, or it may move you to share on another occasion.

A Friend feels self-conscious about saying too much during meeting. She says she tends to think of Psalm 19:14, "May the meditations of my heart and the words of my mouth be acceptable to you, Oh Lord." She added that she has gratitude for how we've come together during the pandemic. She's glad we can come together in some way, and for all of the joy she finds in our gatherings.

Another Friend was grateful for the previous appreciation expressed for the meeting, feeling that many times she's struggling rather than contributing. Our group is very important to her too.

A Friend noted that her life as a musician has been full with pain, but sometimes playing together with a group of unlike people shows her what human beings are capable of when working together. She believes that at those times people have chosen to bring something of themselves to something greater.

With the previous response in mind, a Friend added that “the sum of us is greater than us individually.” He also remarked that the part of this query (g) that asks “Does worship enhance my capacity of attentive, non-judgmental listening to others?” speaks to what makes this group of worshippers so wonderful. The people of our meeting will both listen and share their own thoughts.

A Friend would like to add to, or re-write, some of the words of this query. She says she has a problem with waiting for anything, thinking that if God is omnipresent, she doesn’t need to wait.

New Garden - A successful meeting for worship in which all worshipers feel nurtured is difficult to achieve. It requires effort from all. Many come to meeting inspired -while others are unable to respond to their own needs let alone those of others. A successful meeting for worship benefits all, and when this happens everyone feels it. It is worth the effort! We each have a share of responsibility whether through silence or through the spoken word.

London Grove - After a period of silent worship, the query for First Month, ***Deepening Our Faith: Meeting for Worship***, was read aloud. Silent worship continued. The query drew responses from several Friends, all of whom expressed, from individual perspectives, an appreciation of how our practice of gathering together in silent worship has been central to the strength of our community. Our sustained period of silent worship allows individuals an opportunity to not only speak from the heart but to learn to listen without judgment. While deeper connections within the Meeting continue to be an outcome of coming together in the silence; several responses to today’s query suggested that another possible outcome has been gaining an awareness of how we speak or listen to others that can be carried into our everyday lives. With a nod to the new year before us, several responses acknowledged the positive challenges that all of the monthly queries provide- not just in personal challenges, but also the collective challenges that work to bring the Meeting community together.

Report from PhYM’s Anti-Racism Collaborative - Susanna Davison represents Western Quarter in this work; Margaret Walton shared the report.

Friends,

ARC is still considering whether and how to heed suggestions from some Friends who follow our webpage on PYM.org that using Ibram Kendi’s term in our name has been off-putting for some who care about the subject. As you know from my last report to WQM, we are considering adopting a different name for our Collaborative. Some believe the term Social Justice represents our agenda of focusing on sources of structural racism—and invites discussion on how to proceed.(paraphrased discussion at our recent Collaborative meeting 4/19/22).

We would very much like to hear from monthly meetings in each quarter about their activities with respect to (we’re still calling this) anti-racism. This will update our report from 2021, which polled monthly meetings by quarter, but did not specify such activities by naming meetings.

The topic of reparations was addressed in the report Green Street Monthly Meeting shared at Continuing Sessions 3/26/22. Our website is working on a page to define the term

reparations and report and discuss such activities. Please watch our page for developments—and contribute your meeting’s ideas as you are led.

We are exploring some statements on the subject of past harms acknowledged by other yearly meetings on the eastern seaboard. Although concerns and intentions have been expressed in PYM since 2015, we will compare those with the statements of our “peer yearly meetings.”

Below is an example of such an acknowledgment (found by searching PYM’s website) that originated in Abington MM and was subsequently endorsed by Abington Quarter:

Minute of Reconciliation

Those gathered for the Discernment for Unity session on May 4, 2021 carefully considered the rewording of our minute and came to unity on the wording below.

After considerable reflection and discernment, Abington Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) believes that if we are to truly uphold our Testimony of Equality, Equity and Justice and honor the legacy of Quaker abolitionists and equal-rights activists such as Benjamin Lay and Lucretia Mott, we must also acknowledge and take active steps to redress the evils they fought against. We wish to engage in racial reconciliation and healing through acknowledging, apologizing, and atoning for wrongs our Meeting has committed in the past that influence the present. We acknowledge that the land our meetinghouse and school currently occupy was once home for the Lenni-Lenape. We also acknowledge that early members of our Meeting were members of the white settler population which benefited from the takeover of land and from the violence committed against Indigenous Peoples as a result of such actions as the Doctrine of Discovery, the Walking Purchase and Quaker Indian Boarding Schools. We acknowledge that some early members of our Meeting were enslavers and that the enslavement of Africans contributed to the accumulated wealth we have today. We apologize for these truths not being fully acknowledged by us sooner and because these actions have contributed to the physical and emotional trauma still being experienced today. We wish to atone for these past oppressions and injustices in the hope of bringing healing through retrospective justice to African Americans and Indigenous Peoples. To this end, we have set up the Bothwell Reparations Fund to which members and attenders may contribute. Also, we will continue with our deeper education to better understand and seek a renewed and ongoing right relationship.

With thanks for your attention to this report, I add my apology for not being available to give it—and my thanks to Margaret Walton for reading it.

Submitted by Susanna Davison, London Grove Monthly Meeting

Friends accepted the report.

Treasurer's Report - Bob Frye reported

The fiscal year is 75% complete. In April, PYM withdrew prior authorized funds catching them up through February. Covenant income is at 75% of budget. Payroll is at 70% of budget, and post

office box and website costs are up this year. The bottom line is that we are in a deficit for the year of \$1,080.17. A deficit was budgeted, and with many of the annual expenses already paid, the treasurer expects a smaller year-end deficit than budgeted.

There is one grant pending from the William Jackson Education Fund. No grants were requested from the John Woolman Traveling Minister's Fund.

Friends accepted the report. Discussion of some issues before the Delaware Monthly Meetings around recent insurance coverage changes. These may be due to a change in status to human services nonprofit from religious nonprofit. Teal Rickerman will schedule a meeting with the Delaware Meeting treasurers. Bob Register is the insurance contact with GuideOne.

State of the Meeting Report was **accepted and approved.**

Committee updates - Aging

Bob, Shelley, and Deb met with Sheila Sorkin, Yearly Meeting's new Aging Support Coordinator. She has experience in the field and will initially work with Friends around grant requests. The committee has also done some work for Joint Quarter program, this morning's program. We meet 4th Mondays at 7:30pm via Zoom. All are welcome.

Historic Properties - The Colora visit is scheduled for next first day at 3pm. We meet on 3rd Sundays at 3:00 pm when there is not a quarterly meeting.

Tree removal at Fallowfield Orthodox Burial Ground is on hold.

There are no expenses for the reserve fund to report.

MM updates - *London Grove* reading group recently read through *The Quaker Reader*. It's introductory history is one of the best on Quakerism, and makes a wonderful orientation gift to new members and attenders. It's available through Pendle Hill Publications. We are starting to offer more regular FDS for children. May 7 is the plant sale from 7-1!

Mill Creek will hold an open house and fair April 30 10-2. J Roy Cannon is now clerk and Terry Cannon is recording clerk.

Kendal continues to work on their hybrid format. PhYM resource friend John Marquette was helpful. We've been doing a lot with FCNL mailings.

Centre continues to use Zoom for hybrid worship and we recently had some visitors present in the meeting house. We had an Easter egg hunt for all ages and advertised in the broader community. Wintertur will not have carriages go by Centre Meeting Road so we will not do our typical picnic gathering to watch that. Folk and bluegrass aficionados have been gathering periodically at our meeting house.

New Garden is meeting in person and we discuss business as needed. We are thriving!

Newark - is meeting at London Britain when the temperature is above 60. We had 7 children for our Easter egg hunt. We have done some take home potlucks.

West Grove is focusing on repairs to the meeting house - roof, flooring, and some work on the playground with the day care.

Announcements -

Judy Hinds is the incoming clerk for Kendal MM. She will begin her service in January 2023. A friend shared appreciation for the "Sacred Places" article in the recent quarter newsletter. He found the last paragraph especially noteworthy and added that many meeting properties were from donated land by a family in the meeting community, and that many meeting houses are on sites important to indigenous people.

Margaret Walton thanked Bob for his service as our clerk. There was much Zoom applause. Bob shared that a Quaker message important to him was "Let your life speak." Clerking the quarter has let his life speak.

The Deep Listening and Trust Circle workshops at YM sessions organized by Jean-Marie Prestwidge Barch and Clinton Pettus will be very useful for Friends and Meetings working on important topics such as race.

We closed with worship.

Respectfully submitted,
Deb Wood, coordinator

Next Query - #4 Nurturing Our Community: Care for the Meeting

Upcoming Meetings -

April 25 - Aging Concerns 7:30 pm

May 15 - Historic Properties 3:00 pm

June 12 - Support Committee 3:00pm

FOR APPROVAL - State of the Meeting, Western Quarter, 2022-03-28

There are strong relationships and partnerships among Friends and Meetings in Western Quarter. Gathering for worship, programs, and business is a springboard for deep connection. One of the first things we do, and perhaps with the most enthusiasm and spirit, when we gather for meetings for worship with attention to business is to share updates from our meetings. Updates on worship times and formats are given along with pastoral and witness work. Meeting in virtual and hybrid formats has not changed the depth of our connections, the celebration of spirit and friendship when we gather in whatever number and format.

Evidence of those strong concerns was apparent in the forming of our Aging Concerns Committee. About a year ago, a Friend in one of our smaller meetings, experienced a sudden health change. A Sunday morning email to some Friends across the Quarter asking for help, resources, and suggestions received numerous responses within the hour. That email brought out a shared leading, and ultimately grew to become a committee. The aim of the group is to arrange programming at quarter gatherings and compile resources to help Friends attend to their own, a family member's or dear friend's needs as they age or are in a moment of transition. We have completed just two programs so far, and suggested Friends invite family, neighbors, and friends, and we did; we recently turned out in one of the largest numbers for a quarter program in recent years. As Way opens, we plan to hold two more gathered programs to complete a 'Year on Aging Concerns', and then determine how else to continue with this vital

program. The growing online Resource Center has been well received and will no doubt continue as a legacy of Friends' community response to the original need.

As a Quarter we are also beginning another endeavor together: what to do with the historic but memberless properties connected to the quarter. Some of the meeting houses and burial grounds are under the care of the Quarter, some are under the care of one of our monthly meetings. With each property we are aware of how the communities who gathered there influenced the communities we are today and our broader communities, yet we are also aware that it is not the physical spaces that are sacred but people who come together in worship. To that end, a standing Historic Property Committee has formed, emergency funds have been set aside to support assessment needs, and the work of determining the structural and disposition needs of these properties has begun.

One service the Quarter has often provided for its Monthly Meetings is youth programming. Our Youth Activities Coordinator resigned after the 4th month meeting. She had done intergenerational programming prior to worship via Zoom that was well-received by all participants. We have not filled the position. We were able to do a joint youth program in early December with Concord Quarter, and are most appreciative of the opportunity to connect with Yearly Meeting staff for programming and staff support for the 7th month Joint Quarterly Meeting with Concord Quarter.

Western Quarter is financially sound thanks to healthy reserves that were accumulated years ago. Our annual budget typically slightly exceeds our annual income from covenants, however we have rarely had to dip into reserves. For example, the past two years we budgeted for in person quarterly meetings which have been held largely virtually. We have also struggled to fill a very part time position of youth coordinator, thus spending under budget in this category. We continue to try to balance the needs of our member meetings and families with a sustainable approach to spending.