



# Western Quarterly News

*of the Religious Society Of Friends*

Western Quarterly Meeting Newsletter

Spring 2023

## A Minute of Concern from Caln Quarterly Meeting on Christian Nationalism

As Americans and Quakers, we are alarmed by the Christian Nationalism movement, which falsely asserts that the United States was founded as a specifically Christian nation; that it is necessary to be a Christian to be a true American; and that Christianity should thus be favored and actively supported by the state. In truth, the right of freedom of conscience, assured by the separation of church and state, is enshrined in the First Amendment. Christian Nationalism movement ultimately seeks to erase that boundary. This goal is now being overtly promoted by a number of current office holders and candidates for office. It is a grave threat to freedom of conscience and threatens to incite strife between Americans of diverse religious, cultural, and ethnic heritages. We affirm the right to the free, peaceful expression of religious conscience in all its diversity, and call upon Friends to seek common ground with our fellow citizens. We therefore encourage Friends to inform themselves about the dangerous goals and methods of Christian Nationalism. We further ask that this Meeting, all Quakers, and all citizens, make clear to their government representatives — by phone, text, email, letter, and in the voting booth— our rejection of the divisive doctrine of Christian Nationalism.

From [Continuing Sessions minutes](#):

Caln Quarter Meeting minute of Christian Nationalism presented by Jim Herr, Caln QM Clerk: This minute originated at Lancaster Monthly Meeting. A concern rose about the rise of Christian Nationalism becoming popular. Members of Lancaster wanted to do something with a broad base. Lancaster Meeting distributed the minute to all of the monthly meetings in PYM to encourage Friends to write to their newspapers and legislators to raise the alarm about Christian Nationalism. A Friend asked what the purpose is today? The minute has been presented to Quaker Life Council. It will be included with these meeting minutes. Each Meeting can determine what they will do. We are not bringing this for action by the Yearly Meeting. A Friend said that this minute is being actively discussed in several meetings. A Friend asked about how this minute relates to our policy of our limits on lobbying? We are not lobbying any bill, it is a concept. A Friend hopes that everyone present will take this minute back to their meetings for consideration.

### In this Issue:

2nd Query

Tai Qi and Quarterly Meeting

Greening Sacred Spaces—

Responses to the 11th Query

Green Burial Info

Events

### Mill Creek Friends

hosts Western Quarterly Meeting

on 16 April, 2023 **at Mill Creek Meetinghouse**

8:45-9:30 —Breakfast and Sign in—frittatas, fruit, and more!

9:30-10:15—Tai Chi for all ages! With Tom and J

10:30-11:15—Meeting for Worship

11:15-11:30—Afterthoughts and announcements

1:00— via [Zoom](#)

Meeting for worship with attention to business

## 2nd Query—Deepening Our Faith: Meeting for Business

### For the Meeting:

- Is our meeting for business held in worship in which we seek divine guidance?
- How do we sustain prayerful consideration of all aspects of an issue and address difficult problems with a search for truth that is unhurried by the pressures of time?
- Do we recognize that we speak through our inaction as well as our action?

### For the Individual:

- *Do I regularly attend meeting for business? If unable to attend, how do I fulfill the responsibility to understand and embrace the decisions made?*
- *How do I affirm and support God's presence in the process of discernment and reaching a decision?*
- *Do I remain open to personal transformation as the community arrives at the sense of the meeting?*

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

## Archives reminder

Mary Crauderueff of Friends Historical Library (FHL) shared reminders about archiving materials from meetings. She pointed out that records are “deposited” with the Friends Historical Libraries archives and not gifted. The records remain the property of the meetings. FHL loves receiving anything Friends identify as having *enduring value, records that tell the story of the meeting. These often include minutes, financial summaries, newsletters, birth and death records, deeds, and legal documents.*

FHL accepts hard copy and digital materials. Materials are available for researchers, and almost all of the pre-1935 records are available online through Ancestry.com. (Many public libraries have Ancestry accounts available for library patron use. Check with your public library staff.) Materials are also requested by meetings for use at programs at a meeting or in legal documentation circumstances.

Guide -<https://guides.tricolib.brynmawr.edu/quakermeetings/home>

<https://www.swarthmore.edu/friends-historical-library/quaker-meetings-meeting-records>



## Mill Creek Friends hosts Western Quarterly Meeting on 16 April, 2023 at Mill Creek Meetinghouse



8:45-9:30 —Breakfast and Sign in—frittatas, fruit, and more!

9:30-10:15—Tai Chi for all ages! With Tom and J

10:30-11:15—Meeting for Worship

11:15-11:30—Afterthoughts and announcements

1:00— Meeting for Worship with attention to business via [Zoom](#)

Mill Creek Meetinghouse  
1140 Doe Run Road,  
Newark, Delaware



Questions—email [Deb](mailto:Deb_coordinator@westernquarterquakers.org) coordinator@westernquarterquakers.org

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/>



## From *Greening Sacred Spaces*—Homegrown National Parks

Shrink the lawn.

Put in yellow lights.

Plant native species, especially caterpillar loving ones.

Remove invasives.

We have more acres in lawns than we do in national parks, so turn your lawn into a park!

These were some of the things that lingered for me in the days after I attended the first program in the *Greening Sacred Spaces Series* co-sponsored by Concord Quarter's Climate Action Working Group and

PhYM's Eco-Justice Collaborative. I signed up in part because of conversations Western Quarter's Historic Properties Group has had about additional uses our burial grounds could have. I also signed up to see if I might pick up some tips for what to do with my little yard in West Chester. The main takeaway of reduce lawn and plant native apply to both situations.

I was very struck by the first part of the program, a video presentation by Doug Tallamy, the founder of the Homegrown National Park movement. Doug Tallamy has taught insect-related courses for over 40 years as the T. A. Baker Professor of Agriculture in the Department of Entomology and Wildlife Ecology at the University of Delaware. The video is available on the [Homegrown National Parks website](#). The gist of his message is that humans need to conserve and live with our local natures very quickly. Since 78% of the US is privately owned we need to focus not just on policies on public lands but what happens on the lands we live, work, and worship on.

The Homegrown National Park website has a range of information and resources. In addition

to the video mentioned above, "What's the Rush?" there are website sections to help identify native plants in your area as well as where to purchase native plants. The "non-profit resources" section includes links to organizations and volunteer opportunities that will provide opportunities to learn skills as well as network with others doing similar work. Even if you don't have a lawn to shrink there is a section for you - "container gardening with keystone [plant]s." The non-profit sections had links to volunteer opportunities. The "removing invasive species" section is still in the works but links to organizations in the non-profit section included removing invasives so there are hands on ways to learn if interested. There is also

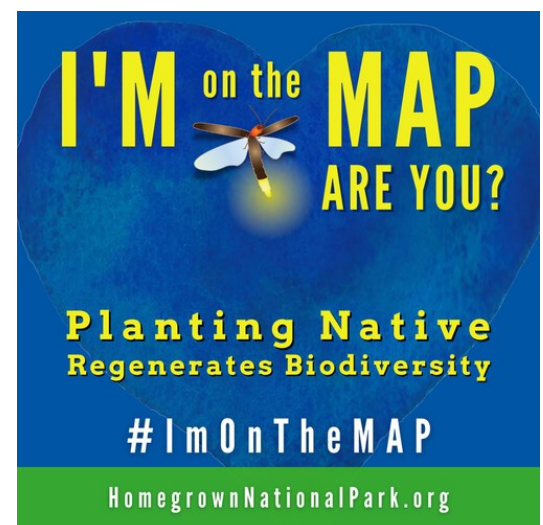
a video on dealing with invasives in the "Videos" section. The other video that may be of interest is the one titled "Here's the best way to kill mosquitos."

**"In the past, we have asked one thing of our gardens: that they be pretty. Now they have to support life, sequester carbon, feed pollinators and manage water."**

**— DOUG TALLAMY**

According to Tallamy, it is not swatting them and it is not using a Mosquito Joe type service. Although Mosquito Joe does offer a natural service.

There are two more programs in the *Greening Sacred Spaces Series*. The next is a virtual program on Wednesday, April 5 and will feature the Audubon Bird Friendly Certification. The final program will be a field trip to sites in the area that provide bird, bee and habitat friendly grounds. See more at the yearly meeting [calendar](#).



## **Responses to the 11th Query—Witnessing in the World: Education**

### ***For the meeting:***

- What does our meeting do to support and improve public education?
- What help do we provide for the children and adults in our meeting to pursue their educational goals?
- What is our meeting's role in support for Friends' education? If our meeting is connected to a Friends school or schools, does this relationship nurture spiritual life and the manifestation of Friends principles?
- Do we enable children in our meeting to attend a Friends school? Does our meeting work with the family to consider all available means of support?

### ***For the individual:***

- *How do I show my concern for the improvement of public education in my community?*
- *Do I demonstrate my encouragement and support for Friends education through awareness and service?*

### **From New Garden Monthly Meeting**

Several of our members have served with active roles in public education both as teachers and as board members

We continue to provide scholarships to a graduating senior from 3 of our local school districts.

We contribute financially to London Grove Kindergarten, The Westtown Friends School, and The George School.

This Meeting has always placed a priority on education. We continue to help supplement our members financially to enable them to achieve their educational goals.

An educated society is necessary for survival of democracy.

### **From Newark Monthly Meeting**

The Eleventh query was considered by Aliza Appel, Ginny Bailey, Annemarie Carr, Gavin Ferris, Lily Grosso, Shelley Hastings, Diane Kesler, Ariana Langford, Mike McDowell, Trebs Thompson, Treba Thompson and Wayne Thompson.

Our meeting recently collected donations for the Brummana High School, a coeducational Quaker school in Lebanon that serves both day and boarding students from kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade. The need for support is great at the school this year due to the financial crisis in the country.

We can help our public schools by looking into the candidates running for school boards or possibly becoming candidates as individuals.

A Friend observed that our business meeting is a place where people and children sometimes show up, and when they do, it's fun, all part of camaraderie. She noted that we can extend our opportunities for education. She also appreciates our recent fall festival / birthday celebration, which was multi-generational. We thank Lily Grosso, our childcare provider, who has really dedicated herself to the children.

Another way we support the education of children is by supporting the Newark Center for Creative Learning, where we hold our meetings for worship in the fall and winter.

In comparison to other queries, we may support other concerns more actively, but when the need for education comes up, we support it. For example, we have an opportunity fund for supporting members' interests in Quaker education opportunities.

A Friend noted that experts think that, besides not supporting public schools, there is a larger agenda on the part of some conservatives to close libraries as part of book censorship. We need to support public libraries and school libraries.

## Green Burials - Some Basics and Resources for Consumers and Burial Ground Caretakers

Green burials have come up in both Historic Property committee and Aging Concerns committee discussions. Here are some snippets of things we've learned as well as some resources that may be of use whether you are considering what happens to your body when you're gone or if you help manage and maintain burial grounds in the quarter. The information below is gleaned from the Green Burial Council - <https://www.greenburialcouncil.org/> click on the "Education" tab and "Learn." A planning guide is available - [https://www.greenburialcouncil.org/your\\_green\\_burial\\_planning\\_guide.html](https://www.greenburialcouncil.org/your_green_burial_planning_guide.html)

A green burial is a way of caring for the dead with minimal environmental impact. Aims include conserving natural resources, reducing carbon emissions, protecting worker health, and restoring and/or preserving natural habitat. There are four main things to do to "go out green."

### #1 Forego Embalming

Embalming uses a toxic chemical that may negatively impact the health of funeral workers. Depending on the circumstances of death, a dead body poses no health risk when kept in a 65° room for up to three days, and decomposition is slowed by natural cooling.

### #2 Forego Concrete Vaults

Concrete vaults house caskets in the ground and help maintain a level soil surface. The production of concrete and its ingredients requires significant energy, resulting in the generation of carbon dioxide. Vaults also create a barrier between the casket and the earth, prohibiting the natural decomposition process.

### #3 Replace Toxic Burial Containers

Too often, caskets are made using toxic chemicals that may be harmful to workers, and some caskets are made with materials that require large amounts of energy, either because of their content such as metal, or because they have been shipped long distances or have not been harvested in a sustainable manner.

### #4 Maintain and Protect Natural Habitat

One of the most compelling reasons to choose green burial is the promise that it preserves or restores natural habitat.

*What you can do:*

- Ask for use of refrigeration unit, dry ice or Techni-ice; use nontoxic embalming agents

## Online Resources

### Green:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/22/smarter-living/green-funeral-burial-environment.html>

<https://www.greenburialcouncil.org/>

[https://www.greenburialcouncil.org/recommended\\_reading.html](https://www.greenburialcouncil.org/recommended_reading.html) - great page to get resources on a variety of green burial topics

<https://www.orderofthegooddeath.com/resources/green-burial/>

<https://nfda.org/podcast/going-green-another-funeral-option> podcast from National funeral directors association

<https://www.eternalreefs.com/> - concrete ball with ashes, etc goes on ocean floor

<https://letyourlovegrow.com/> - alternative to cremation burials and scattering

### General Regulation Related:

<https://www.nhfuneral.org/legal-requirements-by-state.html> for home burials

<http://www.phmc.state.pa.us/portal/communities/cemetery-preservation/laws/pennsylvania-laws.html>

<https://www.fcapa.org/cemeteries/> - PA funeral consumers alliance

- Use a shroud instead of a vault and casket - regulations require depth below ground not particular containers
- Choose a green cemetery with legal protections that prevents the land from becoming (or returning to) a conventional cemetery and that has established a fund for long-term maintenance
- Ask if the cemetery has a *restrictive covenant or a conservation easement on the property*

Digging by hand is certainly more green than using a backhoe, but consider which green aspects of grave preparation make sense at burial grounds you maintain. Consider also which methods of lowering bodies and containers will be respectful to worker health and to those gathered for the interment. When you refill graves include stones removed with the dirt and sticks from local woods. The presence of both helps keep the soil in good health. Greens may be repurposed to cover the grave mound, or other native material, such as leaves or pine needles, may be spread as a final step once the grave has been filled. Consider adjusting guidelines about markers and plantings for burial grounds you maintain may be made more supportive of native plants and provide a rich habitat for insects, birds, and animals.

### Some Q&A's from Green Burial Council's website that we raised and heard often

#### **Q. Is there a universal definition of green burials?**

A. The Green Burial Council provides nuanced definitions of green burial in its [Glossary of Green Burial Terms](#). These terms have been devised and evaluated by leaders in the field at all levels. In terms of certification, each level—hybrid, natural, and conservation—must meet specific standards to qualify.

#### **Q. Since burial vaults are made from concrete, shouldn't they be considered green?**

A. While the concrete and metal in vaults may be considered "natural" to some, the manufacturing and transporting of vaults uses a tremendous amount of energy and causes significant carbon emission. In the US, vault manufacturing requires the production of 1.6 million tons of reinforced concrete annually. No state or province legally requires vault purchase to implementation—individual cemeteries determine their own vault requirements.

#### **Q. What is required for a shroud burial? And are burial garments required?**

A. A shroud burial is usually just that — a body wrapped in a biodegradable shroud lowered into a grave. While burial garments may be used, often by followers of certain religious customs, they are neither required or discouraged as a matter of course. Some shroud burials also include a casket for ease of processions and lowering, but the main determining factor is the cemetery's own policy and guidelines, usually written into their bylaws.

#### **Q. Won't wild animals dig up corpses?**

A. No. Burials occur 3.5 feet under the ground with, at minimum, an 18-inch smell barrier. Animals are much more interested in living prey above ground than in working that hard. We're just not that delicious. (See [Real Answers to Questions Real People Ask](#))

#### **Q. Do green burials contaminate the water table or drinking water?**

A. No. With burials at 3.5 feet deep, there is no danger of contaminating potable water that is found about 75 feet below the surface. Mandatory setbacks from known water sources also ensure that surface water is not at risk. (See [The Science Behind Green Burial](#))

#### **Q. Can cremated remains be scattered in green burial cemeteries?**

A. Because of the density and nonbiodegradable content of cremated remains, many green burial cemeteries do not allow scattering. Cremated remains consist of calcium phosphate and sodium and are heavy, apt to smother foliage on the surface. Underground cremated remains create what is essentially a nutrient-deficient salt lick that has no environmental benefits.

#### **Q. What about essential oils and green embalming fluid?**

A. Fortunately, there are now several formaldehyde-free embalming fluids, including one made entirely of nontoxic and biodegradable essential oils, which recently earned the GBC seal of approval. The sanitation and preservation of a decedent can almost always take place without the use of chemicals, as is done in just about every nation in the world. To find a green embalmer, go to [Funeral Home Providers](#) to locate a certified funeral director near you, or go to [Product Providers](#) to inquire of a product manufacturer.



**EVENTS at [Arch Street Meetinghouse](#)****March 23—Penman of the Revolution 5-7pm**

Enjoy a cocktail hour and presentation by John Dickinson, portrayed by historical interpreter and friend of ASMHT, Doug Thomas.

**Register:** <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/annual-spring-kickoff-penman-of-the-revolution-tickets-519795431127?aff=meetings>

Join the "Penman of the Revolution" as he discusses his role in the journey that took us from colonies to country. John Dickinson used his wit, intellect, and faith to guide his actions as one of our lesser-known Founding Fathers. Although he refused to vote for the Declaration of Independence, he was instrumental in the creation of our national government and drafted many of our founding documents, including the First Amendment. This public devotion caused Thomas Jefferson to eulogize him, saying: "A more estimable man, or truer patriot, could not have left us. Among the first of the advocates for the rights of his country when assailed by Great Britain, he continued to the last the orthodox advocate of the true principles of our new government and his name will be consecrated in history as one of the great worthies of the revolution."

**May 3—Reaching Out to Each Other—Workshop 3:30 – 5:00 pm Art Exhibit Opening**

Reaching Out to Each Other: [Allah is Merciful: Perhaps Allah Needs Me](#) is an interactive, intergenerational Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) mini-workshop. The story is by Patricia Cockrell set in Chechnya with facilitators from Ukraine, Britain, Indonesia, and the Philippines. Interpretation will be available in English, Ukrainian, and Indonesian. For other languages, please bring your own interpreter.

**Reception 5:00 – 6:30 pm**

Visit with peace and justice workers from around the world – Asia, Africa, Ukraine, and the Americas. An informal discussion with light refreshments will follow the workshop.

[The Power of Goodness](#) is a collection of true stories from around the world of how people have reacted peacefully and nonviolently in the face of prejudice and violence. They depict instructional moments in how to rely on the power of goodness in difficult situations and the amazing results of doing so.

**May 7 - Friends Historical Association  
Spring Outing—****Black Founders: The Forten Family  
of Philadelphia  
10:30 am-2:30 pm**

at Arch Street Meetinghouse and the Museum  
of the American Revolution

Worship—BYO lunch—tour of exhibit

Register by 4/23/23

For more information and to register -

Click [here](https://quakerhistory.org/2023-spring-event) —quakerhistory.org/2023-spring-event

**EVENTS around PhYM for Families****April 16 and May 21—Quaker Parent Postlude—**

**April 22-23 Middle School Friends Spring Overnight—** GRADES 5-8 WELCOME at West Chester Friends Meeting—please register by April 14

**April 29-30 Spring Family Overnight—** FAMILIES WITH 8TH GRADERS AND YOUNGER WELCOME at Camp Dark Waters for fellowship, food, and a campfire! Stories, games, and outdoor fun!

**May 5-7 Friends Gathering at Camp Swatara—** organized by Caln Quarter and open to ALL FRIENDS!!!

For more information on any of these gatherings and to register—click [here](#)—pym.org/