



Western Quarterly News

of the Religious Society Of Friends

Western Quarterly Meeting Newsletter

Winter 2024

PYM Statement on the 2023 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP28)

Written on: **NOVEMBER 30, 2023**

The Religious Society of Friends witnesses to the truth of our times. In this moment, we recognize that we are facing an existential crisis that requires a response greater than individual actions. The systemic structures as well as the daily choices of peoples, governments and faith communities across the globe must act in radical concert to address the climate catastrophe we have created.

As world leaders come together for the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention on Climate Change (COP28), Philadelphia Yearly Meeting calls on them to acknowledge that the burning of fossil fuels is the primary cause of human induced climate change. They must clearly state that addressing the existential crisis of climate change requires ending our dependence on fossil fuels. We call on COP28 negotiators to commit to implementing the global financing fund that was approved at COP27, recognizing that many of the nations that are hardest hit by a warming climate have been the least responsible for the crisis and also are least able to cope with the consequences.

The continued burning of fossil fuels is destabilizing the climate, acidifying oceans, and destroying the natural systems that humans and all living creatures depend on. Friends in the mid-atlantic region are guided by the query on Stewardship of the Environment in *Faith and Practice* that asks how we are concerned that human interaction with nature

In this Issue:
From PYM— Climate Witness
12th Query
First Month QM Flyer
The Peace Testimony and Responsibilities of Citizenship
Snapshot of Colora Meeting
Minutes, including Query Responses

1st Month Quarter Meeting—21 January, 2024
Hockessin Meeting—12th Query

Western Quarterly Meeting Schedule

21 April, 2024—West Grove-3rd Query

21 July, 2024—Kennett-6th Query — Joint Quarter

19-20 October, 2024—Kendal-9th Query

19 January, 2025—Fallowfield, 10th query

***Support Committee typically meets 2nd Sunday in month prior to Western Quarterly Meeting**

****Historic Properties typically meets 3rd Sunday when there is not Western Quarterly Meeting**

12th Query— Witnessing in the World: Witness and Civic Responsibility

For the Meeting:

What is the meeting doing

- To become aware of systemic legal, economic and political injustices in our local community?
- To build relationships with other faith communities around common concerns?
- To reduce polarization within the larger community?
- To work together with others to address injustice?
- How does our meeting assist in restoring public recognition that government fulfills legitimate functions?

For the Individual:

- *Am I mindful of how my lifestyle, work-life and investments affect others?*
- *Am I open to seeking clearness on matters of conscience? Am I open to assisting others in doing so?*
- *Do I fulfill my civic responsibilities when they do not conflict with divine leading?*

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

be responsible, guided by a reverence for life and a sense of the splendor of God's continuing Creation?" Every Friend, household, and meeting in our community is asked to be responsive to this query and we all ask our neighbors around the world to take immediate and practical steps to reverse our dependence on fossil fuels and demonstrate a communal reverence for interdependent life.

This statement is made possible by PYM's Climate Witness Stewards who play the essential role of helping us be accountable to our commitment.

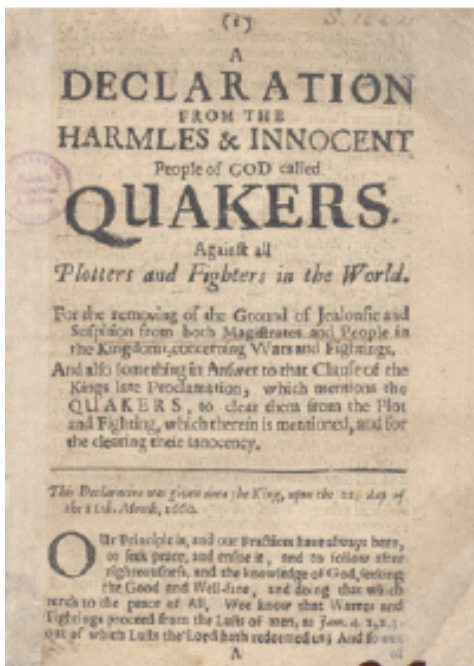
Additional Information:

The [EcoJustice Collaborative](#) has provided this information for Friends:

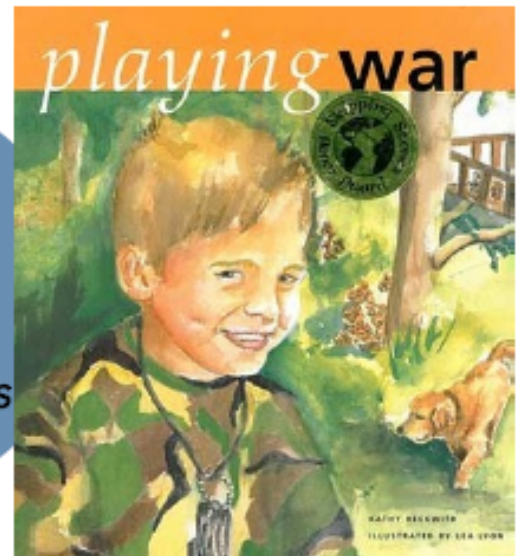
- World Resources Institute offers [six different resources](#) for connecting to COP28
- Friends Committee on National Legislation provides information about [how the United States can support International Climate Finance](#), which will be an important focus of this year's COP



Hockessin Monthly Meeting hosts WESTERN QUARTERLY MEETING



Children's
Program 9:30-
11:10; stories,
games, activities



21 JANUARY, 2024

9:00 Coffee and fellowship

*9:30-10:30 Our Peace Testimony - Reflections and
Leadings - Separate Children's and Adult programs

*10:45 Meeting for worship, children will join
towards the close

Noon - lunch

*1:15 - Meeting for worship with attention to business

*Also available via Zoom

1501 OLD WILMINGTON ROAD
HOCKESSIN, DE

Friends Witness in the World Friends and Peace

Since all human beings are children of God, Friends are called to love and respect all persons and to overcome evil with good. Friends strive to have our words and lives stand as a positive witness in a world torn by strife and violence.

The Religious Society of Friends has consistently held that war is contrary to the Spirit of Christ, as stated in the Declaration to King Charles II made by English Friends in 1660:

Our principle is, and our practices have always been, to seek peace, and ensue it, and to follow after righteousness and the knowledge of God, seeking the good and welfare, and doing that which tends to the peace of all. All bloody principles and practices we do utterly deny, with all outward wars, and strife, and fightings (sic) with outward weapons, for any end, or under any pretence (sic) whatsoever, and this is our testimony to the whole world. That spirit of Christ by which we are guided is not changeable, so as once to command us from a thing as evil, and again to move unto it; and we do certainly know, and so testify to the world, that the spirit of Christ which leads us into all Truth will never move us to fight and war against any man with outward weapons, neither for the kingdom of Christ, nor for the kingdoms of this world.

And as for the kingdoms of this world, we cannot covet them, much less can we fight for them, but we do earnestly desire and wait, that by the word of God's power and its effectual operation in the hearts of men the kingdoms of this world may become the kingdoms of the Lord and of his Christ, that he might rule and reign in men by his spirit and truth, that thereby all people, out of all different judgments and professions might be brought into love and unity with God and one with another, and that they might all come to witness the prophet's words, who said, 'Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more'. (Is 2:4; Mic 4:3)
— Declaration to King Charles II, 1660

Friends know that this historic testimony has become a living testimony as we work to give concrete expression to ideals that often are in opposition to prevailing opinion. The peace testimony is closely linked to the basic Friends commitment to honor that of God in every person, so as to avoid not only physical violence but also psychological, economic or systemic forms of coercion. At the same time, we acknowledge that conflict can be an opportunity to lovingly engage those with whom we disagree and that love can often be expressed to resolve disagreement in creative, nonviolent ways. When we encounter people whose views profoundly differ from our own, we can also manifest that love by affirming the sincerity with which they hold those views, while forthrightly expressing our

own convictions.

As we reflect further on the sources of violence and war, we may be led to consider seriously our employment, our investments, our purchases, our payment of taxes, and our manner of living. These choices may be a source of harm to others, whether overtly or in the covert forms inherent to some long-established social practices and institutions.

Friends support those who refuse to cooperate with military conscription as well as those who perform alternative service as conscientious objectors. While counseling against military service, we hold in love our members who feel they must undertake it.

We work as we are able to alleviate the suffering caused by war. While military responses in some situations may seem to offer relief of suffering, we are convinced that the real answer lies in the increased capacity to meet human needs and address conflicts before war begins, through diplomacy and humanitarian missions.

We strive to refrain from participating in all forms of violence and oppression while supporting efforts to secure international agreements for the reduction and elimination of armaments and to remove the domination of militarism in our society. We work with others, in our individual lives and in our institutions, to apply proven techniques for the nonviolent resolution and transformation of conflict. We support programs that convert facilities built for war to peaceful uses. We apply our gifts—of spirit, of intellect, of time and energy—to work for an international order that cares for human needs and the earth's resources.

Friends are not opposed to all forms of physical force. For instance, it is sometimes necessary and proper for peace officers to use minimal forms of physical restraint in dealing with persons who do injury to others or who will not cooperate with just law. Friends do oppose the use of either physical or psychological violence in maintaining public order.

- ♦ *How would I describe peace in my heart, in my family, in my community, and in our world?*
- ♦ *When we experience conflict, how do we work through it, remembering that there is that of God in each of us?*
- ♦ *What does it mean to be a peacemaker?*

The queries above were shared this past fall for an all school meeting for worship at Westtown School.

Responsibilities of Citizenship

Friends recognize that the state is a necessary instrument for meeting human needs and for maintaining an orderly society with justice under law for all. As part of our witness to bring about such a society, Friends participate actively in public life. As citizens, Friends bear witness by demonstrating respect for others while faithfully pursuing our leadings. From our earliest days Friends have counseled obedience to

the state except when the law or ruling involved appears contrary to divine leading.

In that case, Friends test any proposed action by seeking clearness and support from the meeting. When Friends decide to disobey the law in accordance with divine leading, it is expected that they will act openly and make clear to the authorities the spiritual grounds of their action. If the decision leads to legal penalties, Friends generally suffer willingly. Friends not personally involved in such actions can strengthen the meeting community by supporting fellow members with spiritual encouragement and, when necessary, with material aid.

In public office, Friends have an opportunity to bear witness to the power which integrity, courage, respect for others, and careful attention to different points of view can exert in creating a just community. If a Friend encounters a conflict between faithfulness to God and an apparent duty as a public official, a prayerful search for divine guidance may lead either to a suitable resolution of the conflict or to a decision to resign.

From pym.org, access ed 2023-12-20

Snapshot of Colora Meeting

From “*Quaker Roots*,” 1975 Maryland Historic Trust application, and a 2018 article in the *Cecil Whig*

Colora Meetinghouse sits on a lovely knoll surrounded by large oak trees. It is a typical one story 19th century meetinghouse: there are separate entrances for men and women, a sliding door to separate the interior, the interior woodwork remained unpainted, and the stucco building is made from local stone. The Colora meetinghouse was built in 1841 by young men in the Friends Meeting, but the Quaker community in the area goes back to shortly after 1701 when William Penn and others came through and set up the Nottingham lots. The lots included a designated area for a meetinghouse, burial ground, and school. A number of Quaker families purchased lots around the designated meetinghouse area in 1702, and the community continued to grow. The first Meeting House was built in 1708 and housed the East Nottingham Preparative Meeting, known to many as Brick Meeting, attached to New Garden Meeting.

William Penn evidently hoped that the Pennsylvania boundary line might be established south of these lots, but the Mason and Dixon line placed the Nottingham lots in Cecil County Maryland with the West Nottingham lots in Chester County, PA.

One of the 18th century Friends in the Nottingham area was Thomas Waring. He was born in Wexford, Ireland in 1754 and came to the area in 1775 with his parents and siblings. In the 1780s he moved from the New Castle Monthly Meeting area to the East Nottingham Meeting area and then to the area that

became Colora in 1789-90. Waring held meeting in his home north of the Colora crossroads for a number of years. The arrival of Lloyd Balderston I spurred area Friends to build a meetinghouse for Orthodox Friends. The land came from Thomas Waring, the funds from Lloyd Balderston, and the labor from the young men of the Meeting.

First known as Nottingham Meeting it became Colora Meeting in Baltimore Yearly Meeting. For a while, Colora Meeting was the primary meetinghouse



Atop the mounting block during a May 2022 visit.

for Baltimore Yearly Meeting, Primitive. Over the decades the Meeting became primarily the Meeting of the extended Balderston family. In 1890 Colora Meeting became a part of Western Quarter, and in 1945 became Colora Monthly Meeting. Declining membership led Colora Monthly Meeting to request to return to a Preparative Meeting under the care of West Grove Meeting in the summer of 1980. Western Quarter supported the change in status. The Balderston family continued to tend the meetinghouse and grounds, and open it up for an annual meeting for worship for many years. Colora Preparative Meeting was also laid down, and West Grove Meeting seeks the transfer of the property to Western Quarter.

A small cemetery lies to the east of the meeting house. It has stone walls on the east, west, and north sides with an entrance on the west wall. The southern border to the cemetery was at one time an eight-stall horse shed which was torn down probably in the 1930s. The grave markers are very simple and typically Quaker. The burial places of Betsy Ross's daughter, Jane Canby, and two granddaughters, that of Lloyd Balderston I, who founded and named Colora village and established an early plant nursery, and John Lloyd Balderston famed screenwriter are located here. (John Balderston is noted for his adaptation of *Dracula*.) Other Quaker family names from the area are also present: Michener, Levering, Howell, and Waring among them.

Western Quarterly Meeting DRAFT Minutes

2023-10-15 1:15 pm

Opening Worship

Welcome - Bob Frye, substitute clerk

Responses to the 8th Query - QUERY EIGHT
GROUNDING FOR TRANSFORMED LIVES: Integrity and Simplicity

Newark Monthly Meeting, August 27, 2023

The eighth query was considered by Margaret Badger, Annemarie Carr, Gavin Ferris, Shelley Hastings, Ariana Langford, Mike McDowell, Pascale Pmwavaga, Sally Milbury-Steen, Treba Thompson, and Wayne Thompson.

A Friend expressed appreciation for the integrity and simplicity involved with Newark Monthly Meeting's commitment to avoiding the ownership of excess property by using and supporting the Newark Center for Creative Learning, and an existing structure, the London Britain Meeting-house. Our meeting follows its commitment to the good stewardship of resources by walking in this path.

She also finds that striving to achieve harmony between her inner and outer commitments is the most challenging part of this query. For her, listening to the still small voice is the most helpful response to this challenge.

Another Friend has struggled with time blindness, which could be compared with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). He has difficulty keeping schedules and setting priorities. However, he's found that focusing on the priority of what he calls "do what's next" works best for him.

A Friend feels fortunate that she's been able to work for organizations that believe in what she believes, which complements her integrity. However, she believes that if we only work with organizations that have similar beliefs to our own, there is less chance for us to make a change. Nevertheless, after working for some time for an organization with differing views than her own, she finally felt that she needed to resign after continually being excluded because of her differing beliefs.

A Friend commented that "Given the situation in the world, it's enough to be discouraging," when considering part (c), which asks "How has our

meeting considered humanity's impact on the earth's ecological integrity and the ways in which violence and injustice exacerbate this impact." Another Friend believes that the more important question to ask is how have ecological impacts affected violence and injustice in the world. He noted that on a local level we have a limited impact, but we can still address these issues as best as we can.

A Friend appreciates the wording of part (i), which asks "Am I mindful that judicial oaths imply a double standard of truth?" The wording helps explain the value of doing this.

Another Friend said she has great faith in the integrity of our meeting, where there is a good and effective interplay between simplicity and integrity. This is made easier by the smallness of our meeting.

On behalf of Newark Monthly Meeting,
respectfully submitted,
Mike McDowell

Below is a summary of responses from Kennett Friends

Grounding for Transformed Lives: Integrity and Simplicity was read.

One member stated that the silence of our worship embodies simplicity and integrity. A new member mentioned that he still receives emails from his former church and is struck with their lack of simplicity, constantly asking for more volunteers and money. He finds the simplicity of Kennett Meeting very refreshing and admirable in regards to how it handles its needs. Another member spoke that in spite of having only a few active committees, they are still able to "hold it together" in a simplistic way.

From Mill Creek

What is the interplay between simplicity and integrity in the life of our meeting? How does our meeting embody simplicity and integrity in its structures and practices? How has our meeting considered humanity's impact on the earth's ecological integrity and the ways in which violence and injustice exacerbate this impact?

We strive to do the right thing, and honor our testimonies by living in simplicity and avoiding extravagance. We don't use plastic silverware at our meetings or events, and we use a composting toilet. Everyone has a voice in decisions being made, anyone can serve on committees, and

being small makes it easier to maintain simplicity. We invest in Friends Fiduciary, which invests in products which are consistent with our Quaker values and peace testimony.

from New Garden Monthly Mtg.

Integrity is the quality in a person to be honest & to have strong moral principles. These are learned skills & attitudes. It is an internal consistent lack of corruption in search of the truth. It means having a moral compass & desire to speak out against that which one knows to be wrong.

Simplicity speaks of the ability to do so in the most easily understood way.

If we hear & obey the voice of God in everything we do & say, and uphold our testimony to truthfulness we will be responding to the voice of god in each of us as individuals.

Quakers are peacemakers and as such we tend to ignore differences in order to avoid conflict, recognizing that words cannot be taken back. However, there are times when we need to become a positive life force!

Auditor's Report - Bob Frye

Report was received. There were no questions. Friends appreciated the auditor's work. Report is attached and on the website.

Treasurer's Report - Karen Conlan, treasurer

The report was received. There were no questions. Friends appreciated the current treasurer's work and the past treasurer's mentoring. Report is attached.

Letter from West Grove Monthly Meeting - re: Colora Meetinghouse

Bob Frye read the letter received from West Grove Monthly Meeting dated 10/8/2023.

The letter is attached and at the website.

A Friend from West Grove Monthly Meeting noted that the letter was signed with the maiden name of the West Grove clerk, Kathy Kirk.

Bob Frye asked if Kathy or other Friends from West Grove had anything to add.

West Grove Friends shared that Steve Balderston has maintained the Colora property for decades. He kept West Grove Meeting well informed of major work so the monthly meeting has had no actual role in care for the property.

West Grove has two meetinghouses and properties to care for and would not be able to provide adequate care for a third property and meetinghouse.

There are no longer any members of Colora Preparative Meeting but it has never been formally laid down.

How can we lay down a preparative meeting without members?

Does that need to officially happen?

The clerk asked if Historic Properties had anything to share with regards to Colora.

Historic Properties planned to meet with Steve Balderston in September and had to postpone that meeting due to a funeral service. We have determined a discernment process to guide us through major decisions about property. That process is outlined in the correspondence from Dick Logan read during the meeting:

"Since we expect West Grove Meeting to formally ask WQM to assume responsibility for Colora and that the committee on Historic Properties will be called on to present the case to WQM as a whole, I suggest the CHP prepare a report encompassing at least these elements and incorporating hard data:

Status of ownership - both legal responsibility and actual effective

control

Financial assets

Description and condition of the property, including:

Meetinghouse

Burial ground

Nature of the terrain

Accessibility

History of major events leading to current conditions

Identity of stakeholders and their interest level in the future of the property

Why WQM needs to plan for future disposition of the property

The CHP has reviewed a variety of information, insights and opinions about the Colora property, but it lacks specific facts needed to enable WQM to make an enlightened decision about assuming responsibility for it. The only hard data the CHP has are found in the initial report by Mark Myers et al., and those were minimal with respect to Colora. What I'm suggesting requires a great deal of research and volunteer time; even defining the details of the elements I've cited will prove challenging. Yet the matter and WQM's necessary involvement won't go away, although at least we could focus on solving one problem

rather than spreading attention over six.

We can also hope others in WQM with enthusiasm for such research can be recruited to tackle pieces of the project.

Friends concurred that the process outlined above should meet the quarter's needs to ascertain future disposition of the property.

Friends felt a need for clear sense of who had legal and effective control of the property and financial assets set up to maintain it.

Steve Balderston is not planning to move and is willing to engage with us in the beginning of this discernment.

Survey and deeds are available through Cecil County records. An LLC is listed as owner on some records available online.

The coordinator will be sharing histories and photos of Colora in the coming months via the newsletter.

We are not ready in this moment to say what Western Quarterly Meeting would do with the property. That is a key question to be addressed.

Western Quarter requested a minute from West Grove Monthly Meeting laying down Colora Preparative Meeting.

A Friend suggested that fees for surveys and deed acquisition, etc. would be covered by the monies that Western Quarter agreed be used for historic properties. These funds were not to be used to physically maintain a building but to assess buildings, properties, and cover legal needs with regards to care.

Historic Properties Committee - coordinator and committee

In addition to the work noted above, Historic Properties noted that a group from Historic Properties visited color in May 2022. Two were able to meet with Steve Balderston at that time.

It is a lovely site and was part of the 300th anniversary tour of Western Quarter in 2014.

Historic Properties notes that all our meetings should know where boundaries and key legal documents are; every meeting needs to have more than one knowledge/record keeper/record location for each meeting.

We have begun to do some research of records available at Friends Historical Library on Colora Meeting. Margaret Moore is the key receiver and

sorter of those documents. She and the coordinator plan to set up a shared folder of sorted records.

2023-07-16 Joint Quarterly Meeting Thank You minutes - Deb Wood, coordinator

For Kennett Monthly Meeting

Western Quarter minutes its appreciation to Kennett Monthly Meeting for standing in the breach and sharing their meetinghouse, helping with dishwashing and technology and quietly aiding London Grove Meeting to host Western Quarter in a meetinghouse that wasn't their own. We were in Kennett meetinghouse with London Grove hosting because of ceiling repair in the London Grove meetinghouse. Kennett's hospitality was a gift that enabled London Grove to host the joint gathering of Western and Concord Quarters. Approximately 100 gathered in person from across the two quarters.

Friends Approved.

For London Grove Monthly Meeting

Western Quarter minutes its appreciation to London Grove Monthly Meeting for its hosting of the joint gathering of Western and Concord Quarters in 7th month 2023. We were joyfully if soggly greeted on a morning that featured heavy rains and downed trees on the routes many took to the Kennett Meetinghouse that morning. Hot drinks and homemade coffee cake were welcome sustenance. Our worship together was deep, and the program with Christie Duncan-Tessmer generated lively sharing, lunch with the homemade rolls was a delicious repast, and the children's programming by Kim Brosnan-Myers engaged our lively and thoughtful youngsters.

Minute of Appreciation for the life of the London Grove Oak Tree

Western Quarter minutes appreciation of the life of the London Grove Oak Tree. For centuries it provided friends with shade, play, and spiritual nurture. Standing when William Penn visited London Grove Meeting, it has long connected Friends in the present, in the past, and to our past. It came down on September 19, 2023, a quiet end-of-summer-day, between 9:30-10:00 am.

Respectfully submitted, Deb Wood, coordinator

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