



# Western Quarterly News

*of the Religious Society Of Friends*

Western Quarterly Meeting Newsletter

Winter 2025

## ***An Invitation from the Middle East Collaborative***

Why DOES Palestine matter? An invitation to a 6 session course with members of the Middle East Collaborative—invitation by Deb Wood, Westtown MM, and Joan Broadfield Chester MM

As I thought about writing an invitation to the Why Palestine Matters course, I came across the following quotation, which fits the Palestine/Israel situation so well.

The purpose of propaganda is to make one set of people forget that other sets of people are human. — Aldous Huxley

The Palestine/Israeli relationship and conflict can often appear to be so complex and intractable that we don't know how we can ever understand enough to move forward. News coverage often comes without the entire context, so we can end up losing our ability to honor the humanity of all involved. When we stop seeing a person or group as human, we much more easily discount and discredit their experiences and humanity, and makes it much more easy to deny their needs and right to exist.

I think about the ways the US taxes fund the conflict. It's challenging to follow accurate ins and outs of Israeli politics, to follow Palestinian politics in the West Bank and Gaza, sift through: Is it or is it not occupation? Is it, or is it not, apartheid? Is it, or is it not, antisemitism? These questions deflect us from the basic simplicity of the situation.

When I look at this through my Quaker lens, through what value - that there is divinity in each person, which is cornerstone for testimony of equality, cornerstone for our peace testimony - I know that everyone deserves systems that center justice. So how can I stand aside when systems of injustice limit the existence of a people? What can we do to help remove the occasion for war?

It does not require in-depth knowledge on my part to recognize that advocating for a ceasefire is warranted, as we are now over 15 months into this current war. The number of Palestinian killed is over 40,000, and not all hostages have been freed. Settler violence against Palestinians in the West Bank has increased under the cover of the war; and the war has spread to neighboring countries, with international boundaries likely to shift. The resulting humanitarian crisis caused by war needs to be actively addressed, and so we advocate for peace, we advocate for justice.

To advocate for justice, it helps to understand more deeply why these two peoples lay such strong, (con't p. 4)

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### ***1st Month Quarterly Meeting***

***SUNDAY, January 19, 2025***

***At Kennett Friends Meetinghouse—10th Query***

***April 27, 2025 — Mill Creek—1st Query***

***July 20, 2025— Centre—4th Query***

***July is a Joint Quarter Gathering with Concord Quarter—***

***stay tuned for location details***

***October 19, 2025 — London Grove—7th Query***

## 10th Query— Witnessing in the World: Ministry of Outreach

### For the Meeting:

- How does our meeting communicate Friends' presence and principles to the wider community?
- How does our meeting join with other faith communities in worship, in spiritual dialogue and in social action?
- What are we doing to invite persons to attend our meetings for worship, to welcome them when they come, to listen sensitively to their needs and hesitations and to encourage their continued attendance?

### For the Individual:

- *How do I share my spiritual life and experience with others?*
- *Does my life as a Friend attract others to our religious society?*
- *What opportunities have I taken to worship with people from other religious and cultural backgrounds and work with them on common concerns?*

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

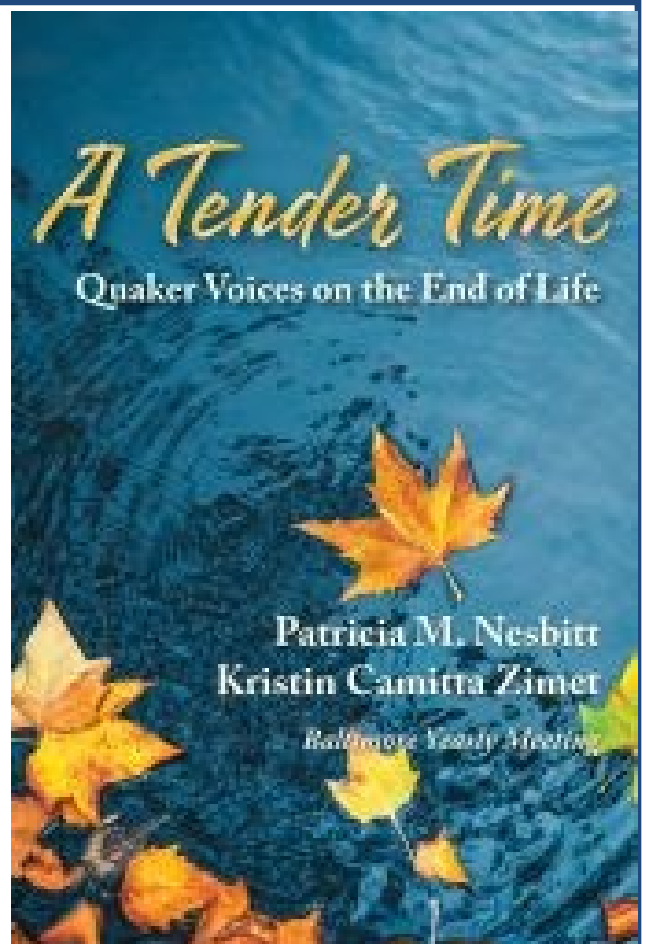
### A Tender Time: Quaker Voices on the End of Life

Recently Pendle Hill hosted a series of discussions on *A Tender Time*. Friends found it quite powerful, moving, and a very useful experience both in practical and spiritual terms. **If Friends are interested in a discussion group with others in Western Quarter, please let Deb know, [coordinator@westernquarterquakers.org](mailto:coordinator@westernquarterquakers.org)**

From the Baltimore Yearly Meeting's End of Life Working Group, *A Tender Time* is a unique collection of Quaker voices, historical and contemporary, that explores practical, emotional, and spiritual aspects of aging and dying well. It moves in widening circles, from aging to dying, and from primary caregiver to friends to the whole faith community. It illustrates how individual Friends make end of life decisions guided by the Spirit and Quaker values.

A few copies are available from WQ. Contact Deb.

[To order — https://pendlehill.org/product/a-tender-time-quaker-voices-on-the-end-of-life/](https://pendlehill.org/product/a-tender-time-quaker-voices-on-the-end-of-life/)



# Western Quarterly Meeting will gather at Kennett Meetinghouse Sunday, January 19, 2025



**9:45-10:45 - tonya thames taylor  
will take us on her Civil Rights  
Tour commemorating the 60th  
Anniversary of Freedom Summer**

**11:00am meeting for worship**

**12:00 - lunch - bring your own!**

**12:45 meeting for business**

**There will be a program  
for children.**

[Zoom](#) link for program,  
worship, and meeting for business

You may also use the Kennett Meeting website and click “Join  
Online” - <https://kennettfriends.org/>

tonya thames taylor is a member of Fallowfield Monthly Meeting, an Associate Professor of History at West Chester University, founding director of the African American Studies Program, and member of the Executive Committee of the Frederick Douglass Institute. She is pictured at the Jimmy Carter Presidential Library with some of her students.



*Kennett Friends Meetinghouse is at 125 W. Sickle St, Kennett Square.*

*Parking is available in their lot and on West Sickle Street on Sundays.*



Cont'd from p. 1

### **An Invitation from the Middle East Collaborative**

valid claims to the land. This can help our understanding as we recognize and sort through the propaganda- decades, centuries of propaganda about Arabs, Palestinians, and Jews. It will help to understand a fuller history of the middle east than we get from the news stories, and what we have been taught, often predominantly framed by western assumptions. Most of us have never truly learned about antisemitism what we learn about Zionism, antisemitism - even apartheid.

To learn more, the stories we hear must come from more than our schools' history books and more than our mainstream journalism. The stories of the people themselves are important. Hearing ideas like apartheid applied to Israel may be shocking, but let's remember that President Carter wrote a book about this in 2006. Even Jews have been and are speaking about this, even some standing as refusers to the war. (Refusers Solidarity Network).

*Why Palestine Matters is a collection of stories - of history, data, experience, and the thinking of a variety of people with the experience of the area and the knowledge of history with a Middle East lens. It is a curriculum that provides context for the challenges of Palestinian lives that have continued to be upended since the 1930s. It adds to our ability to address jus-*

*tice for Palestinians and safety for Israel—issues that have been very hard. The curriculum helps uncover the history of the land that has not been shared broadly.*

Members of the Middle East Collaborative will work with allies from other organizations to present the 6 session course of Why Palestine Matters beginning February 6. See the [PhYM calendar to register](#). To download the book click here - [Why Palestine Matters](#) - scroll down to "Free Digital Version".

The Middle East Collaborative looks forward to growing in understanding and advocacy together with you.



## **Some Quaker Events that may be of interest —**



**Quaker Religious  
Education Collaborative**

Joining Hands in Service to Quaker Religious Education

Conscientious Objection: How can Quaker Meetings support our youth? A Conversation Circle, [Register for January 21 or January 23](#)

### **QUERIES**

- What does your meeting do to nurture the peace testimony in young people?
- In what ways does your meeting address conscientious objection?
- In what ways does your meeting support teens who are COs, and may not know it?
- What has been your, or your meeting's experience with conscientious objection and teens?

[for more information on  
FGC and to register](#)



*A Spring Whose Waters Never Fail*

**2025 Online Gathering of Friends**

February 1-9



## Western Quarterly Meeting Minutes

Minutes - October 19, 2024 at Kendal

and via Zoom - [WQ Zoom](#)

Friends were present from Kennett, Newark, Hockessin, Mill Creek, London Grove, Centre, and Kendal monthly meetings. We opened with a period of worship to center ourselves for our work together.

### Query Responses to the 9th Query

Mill Creek Friends Meeting Responses to the 9th Month Query —Grounding for Transformed Lives: Equality and Justice

*How does our meeting benefit from established patterns of prejudice, exploitation, and economic convenience? What are we doing to change this?*

We inherited the meetinghouse building and the surrounding property, and investment money that provides convenience and funds for its maintenance. We have enjoyed the benefits of education and generational wealth. However, we have added to our endowment with member contributions. We take loving care of the building and the property.

*How and how often does our meeting engage in a self-examination of its attitudes and actions regarding race, ability, gender, sexual orientation or class?*

We talk about the issue when we have our monthly *Faith and Practice* discussion and when discussing the queries. We come together to strengthen our connection to the spirit which also helps us to go out into the broader world and try to live in accordance with our testimonies.

*What steps are we taking as a meeting to inform ourselves about social injustice and ecological violence embedded in our political and economic systems?*

We don't do a lot as a group, but as individuals we try to stay informed and share things with the meeting to increase everyone's awareness of social injustice issues.

*What steps are we taking as a meeting to assure that our meeting and the committees and institutions under our care are respectful of the earth and its people?*

Because we are a small meeting, we don't have committees, nor do we have a school or nursing home facility under our care. But we are open to attenders and members regardless of their race, ability, gender, sexual orientation, or economic status. All are welcome. We are respectful of the earth and its people by limiting our use of natural resources. We also donate to the Food Bank periodically.

### New Garden Monthly Meeting

The 9th Query was read on equality & justice.

Our Meeting knows of no benefits to our Meeting from patterns of established exploitation. We keep our Meeting's investments with Friend's Fiduciary.

We do often self-examine our attitudes & hope that as individuals, we all are doing the right thing. A life-style of "simplicity" will help in our quest for respect of the earth and its people.

Failure to keep our youth educated of past history has been a terrible mistake. Without understanding the past, we are bound to repeat the mistakes of the past.

Our schools have chosen to condense history subjects to allow more time in the school day for math & science courses. This needs to change.

### Newark Monthly Meeting

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

A Friend commented that she likes this query a lot, and that she thinks it speaks to the very essence of being a Quaker and of "answering that of God in everyone," even people very different from ourselves. She also added that the care of the earth is very important to her, especially with climate change. She is finding it hard to find places to shop which aren't contributing to environmental problems. We're being distracted from these issues by politicians, she says.

Another Friend said her week has been very full, including a Zoom international meeting. She learned that the Swedish government was sued by climate activists for not protecting the climate. She says she can also have a voice by choosing solar power and getting a programmable thermostat. She noted that the Kendal at Longwood retirement community is thinking about how to build for tomorrow in an environmentally responsible way.

A Friend observed that the amount of energy used by some things we do is drop in the bucket, compared to the space program, planes, and other major consumers of energy.

Responding to part b of this query concerning attitudes and actions regarding ability, a Friend recalled offering to help a man in a wheelchair to reach something on the top shelf in a store. He wasn't sure if she could do it because she's short. However, she was able to help. She found that in this case, concern about someone else's ability went both ways. She also shared that, when driving, she often thinks about what it would be like if she were black. She's aware that there is a privilege in driving to meeting as a white person. Another Friend met a black woman with a PhD who confronts prejudice every day. The woman she met is afraid to put out a Harris presidential campaign sign. The Friend also commented that she doesn't know if this query holds our meeting accountable enough for the things we should be doing.

One Friend loved all of our responses to this query. She says that she responds to that of God in everyone. However, she recalled, with humor, that the head of the Friends Hospital was quoted in the Philadelphia Inquirer, saying he finds it hard to find that of God in some people, that maybe it is in their nails. She finished her response by saying that "It's all in a matter of everyday living, and finding the joy."

People are finding joy in responding to challenges, and we can find joy in ways to respond in a positive response.

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

#### Kennett Monthly Meeting.

One member replied that KMM is most active and effective with immigration support (political and economic systems). We ebb and flow into race issues, FFIS is the most effective action. Another member reports that he watched a documentary on Quakerism where a story was told about Quakers laying down in front of a bank due to their investment in fossil fuels. Their action brought about economic change and Quakers could instead invest in Friends Fiduciary which does NOT invest in fossil Fuel industry.

His second response focused on self-examination of actions regarding ability, race, and gender, describing his family experience with neurodiverse people. He believes that children are also a class

that needs a voice and should be heard. He told his daughter that she can share her voice with PYM to describe what is needed by children in response to a query sent by PYM. He appreciates that he can worship with those who want to be inclusive.

Another member stated that Friends excel at self examination and appreciates that friends are talking to their families regarding self examination. He wishes there was more self examination in the public, noting that it is almost as if some people are proud of their ignorznce. He believes that if there was more self examination among people, maybe our society would be more willing to examine social and economic inequities. One member replied that the Hadley fund support of community / cultural programs is an example of how KMM supports efforts that address social and ecological injustice.

**Treasurer's Report** - see attached for full report; the coordinator shared the Highlights

Highlights:  
We are 25% through the fiscal year, and have received 28% of contributions toward our budget, and have spent 22% of our budgeted expenses.

-Most of the WQM funds are now held in a High Yield Savings account at Citadel, earning 4.16% interest. This has generated \$571.74 of income so far this fiscal year. (This is very good and in line with our budget estimates).

-One of the meetings in the Quarter has contributed an extra \$1000 towards the Coordinator's salary for FY25. (Deb's hours were reduced for FY25 in order to balance the budget. With this contribution her salary is increased to just under the original 21 hours a week level.) The budget has been updated to reflect this increased salary.

-A few individuals donated \$170 to make up the projected shortfall (\$170 deficit) in the FY25 budget. We now have a balanced budget with a \$0 surplus/deficit. The budget has been updated to reflect this donation and reflect the balanced budget.

-A couple of meetings have increased their contributions for FY25 above amounts given for FY24 based upon the discussions at July Quarterly Meeting concerning the need to increase contributions towards WQM's annual budget. Any monthly meetings that have not yet approved their covenant for FY25 and are able to do so are asked to consider an increase in their contribution towards Western Quarterly Meeting.

### **Update on California Heritage Indigenous Resource Center -**

At our last meeting for business Newark Monthly Meeting shared their minute and financial contribution in support of a land transfer.

*Here is an update on the initiative:*

The California Heritage: Indigenous Research Project (CHIRP) and the College Park Friends Educational Association (CPFEA) AKA Woolman are deeply proud to announce their successful endeavor to transfer 232 acres and the site of the John Woolman School into the hands of CHIRP and the Nevada City Rancheria (NCR) Nisenan Tribe. The escrow completed on September 27, 2024 and was the result of significant and inspired effort of all parties. The land, located on the historic Nisenan village site of Yulića, will once again become a landbase for the Tribe—and provides an opportunity for the NCR Nisenan Tribe to reclaim a piece of their land-based ceremonial and Cultural practices, Elder housing, and renewal of the Tribe's relationship with their Ancestral Homelands and its more-than-human kin. It is hoped that by once again having land the tribe will be able to regain federal recognition.

**Historic Properties Update** - the following minute is to meet a request to Philadelphia Yearly Meeting for a written request of assistance. In case Western Quarter or one of its monthly meetings needs to repurpose or sell physical assets, we wanted to have some guidance on the practical and legal steps involved. We read and Friends approved the following minute.

*Western Quarterly Meeting seeks the assistance of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting to understand the legal and practical to-dos involved in the laying down of a meeting and the selling of meeting property.*

Background:

Western Quarter consists of 10 monthly meetings and one worship group in western Chester County, PA and New Castle County, DE. The Quarter has eight active meeting houses, six historic meeting houses, five support buildings, and eighteen burial grounds under the care of the Quarter or one of its Monthly Meetings. While we are not actively in the process of laying down a meeting or selling property, we want to be knowledgeable about the process in case circumstances

change. We do expect that to care for the perpetual commitments for burial grounds under our collective care, we may need to repurpose or sell some of the properties in our care. We are not well-versed with the legal and practical to-dos of selling or repurposing the property of a religious organization, and the implications of some properties being on a variety of historic registers. We do not want to create additional challenges for Friends and neighbors by missing or misunderstanding needed steps.

We have found the *Life Cycle of Meetings work of Emily Provance of great help in the spiritual side of this work.*

Task: the coordinator will send the minute to yearly meeting leadership and staff the week of October 21.

### **QM changes –**

1) Host for January: we need a host or shall we Zoom?

We do have ideas for a program that could easily be virtual or hybrid. Kennett offered to provide a facility if others did the program and hosting. Friends agreed to a brown bag lunch for the day. The coordinator will work with tonya thames taylor to see if she can do a program on January 19, 2025 about her Civil Rights/Freedom Trail tour or about AFSC programs. Friends expressed interest in the Freedom Trail and thought it could be a wonderful public program.

We will move the April 20, 2025 quarterly meeting date to April 27 in order to avoid Easter. Mill Creek Meeting looks forward to hosting.

### **PYM Nominating Council minute - Approved.**

Friends approve the voluntary service of the coordinator, Deb Wood, as a representative of Western Quarterly Meeting on the Nominating Council of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting.

### **Western Quarter nominating need - auditor/assistant treasurer**

Bob Frye has served for several years as auditor and assistant treasurer. He is the rising clerk for London Grove so will step back from these roles for Western Quarter. He has set up the work of an auditor to be done periodically across the year. The assistant treasurer's primary responsibility is



to help gather data to draft the budget in May and early June.

*Please share this need with your meeting's and let the coordinator know of anyone who is interested.*

### **Invitation from Kennett - additional Education Grant**

The Samuel Martin Trust of Kennett Monthly Meeting awards grants to families of children attending Quaker schools in pre-school through grade twelve who are in need of financial assistance. The awarded funds are to support academic programs. We would like to cast a wider net and invite families in Western Quaker to apply. Their application will be gladly received and considered if there are any funds available after grants have been awarded to active members and attenders of Kennett Monthly Meeting, and if they have applied and qualified for financial assistance from the School. Applications for the upcoming school year for Samuel Martin grants are available on the Kennett Friends Meeting website the middle of January of the current school year and are due March 15. ([ken-nettfriends.org](http://ken-nettfriends.org) - Click on 'about', 'financial topics', Samuel Martin Fund Application). Notifications of awards usually go out by the end of April/beginning of May. If you have questions, please contact Linda Traver at [lmht912@gmail.com](mailto:lmht912@gmail.com).

### **Friends approved the following thank you minute for West Chester and Kennett Meetings.**

Western Quarterly Meeting expresses deep gratitude for the hospitality of West Chester Monthly Meeting and Kennett Monthly Meeting for hosting Western and Concord Quarterly Meetings in July 2024. Worship with the combined quarterly meetings was moving, the program by Bob Fest on talking to children about climate change was enlightening and encouraging, and the presentation by the children of their learning and work was inspirational. It is a blessing to hear and see their voices emerging.

### **Upcoming at Continuing Sessions**

### **[Philadelphia Quarterly Meeting Minute - LGBTQIA](#)**

The coordinator will share the minute with monthly meeting clerks. Philadelphia Quarter asked to have the minute be shared and endorsed by yearly meeting at continuing sessions. We noted that Quakers need to be mindful of dangerous and divisive rhetoric.

### **[Moving PYM to carbon net zero - Threshing Session](#) - from PYM calendar:**

A proposed benchmark for our witness to address climate change will be on the agenda at Fall Continuing Sessions in November.

Friends are invited to a threshing session to consider the benchmark prior to Sessions. The session will be held via Zoom on October 29 at 7:00 PM.

The coordinator will attend and will send a summary to monthly meeting clerks and anyone else interested. Please let Deb know if you'd like that update.

Friends were curious to hear if meetings in the quarter had established a climate steward at their meetings. It was one of the queries to respond to in the recent state of the meeting report. Several meetings shared the climate related work they did, but none present spoke to having identified a climate steward.

Yearly meeting is developing a private access online director of Friends. Check out the news article and volunteer to test it out. <https://www.pym.org/exploring-pym-connect-features-for-connection-and-community/#more-41845>

### **Other/New business**

We noted that this was the last quarterly meeting before the general election. Are there resources to help Friends with any anxiety?

One meeting shared that writing a letter to yourself to be opened after the election about feelings, hopes, aspirations, and actions they have or will take.

FCNL and Emily Provance are hosting a Zoom next week. The coordinator will share the information with meetings.

Respectfully submitted,  
Anna Medeiros, Centre MM

**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/>**