



Western Quarterly News
the newsletter of Western Quarterly
Meeting of the Religious Society of
Friends
Spring 2026

from the Kennett Friends Meeting Retreat

To listen another's soul into a condition of disclosure and discovery may be almost the greatest service that any human being ever performs to another.

Douglas Steere

Let me

keep my mind on what matters which is my work, which mostly is standing still and learning to be astonished.

Mary Oliver, from Messenger

*Action on behalf of life
transforms
because the relationship
between self and the world is
reciprocal,
it is not a question
of first getting enlightened or saved and then acting. As
we work to heal the earth,
the earth heals us.*

Robin Wall Kimmerer, Braiding Sweetgrass

I hope you will go out and let stories happen to you and that you will work with these stories from your life - not someone else's life- water them with your blood and tears and laughter till they bloom, till you yourself burst into bloom.

Clarissa Pinkola Ester

You do not need to know precisely what is happening or exactly where it is all going. What you need is to recognize the possibilities and the challenges offered by the present moment and to embrace them with courage, faith and hope.

Thomas Merton

Our deepest calling is to grow into our own authentic selfhood, whether or not it is conforming to some image of who we ought to be. As we do, we find not only the joy that every human being seeks- we will also find our path of authentic service in the world.

Parker Palmer, Let Your Life Speak

In this issue..

2nd Query
11th Query
Responses
Charlotte Moore
Sitterly - video
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from our MMs
Minutes -
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WQM flyer

Quarterly Meeting Schedule

April 19, 2026 - Hockessin - 2nd Query

July 19, 2026 - at Wilmington- 5th Query

July is held jointly with Concord Quarter.

We will meet at Wilmington Friends Meeting, DE.

October 18, 2026 - West Grove - 8th Query

January 17, 2027 - Kennett - 12th Query

April 18, 2027 - Fallowfield - 3rd Query

The next host schedule will be finalized soon.

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.

Query Responses to the 11th Query - Witnessing in the World: Education

London Grove

Mid-way through Meeting for Worship, the 11th Query on Education was read. Several Friends spoke with these responses to the query:

- A Friend who worked for decades as a public educator responded that the way to support public education is to support the public across the wide spectrum, supporting both the families who are holding it together, and the families that are coming apart. Supporting the public is supporting community resources so that families can take advantage of those resources. We are the village that it takes to hold the village together so that public education teachers can do their job.
- Another Friend spoke, thinking about the incredible opportunity she has to get to know children in this area who have received the Helen Corson Peace Award from this meeting through their thank you letters to our meeting. These students are very grateful for the opportunity to further their education and attend college. This Friend is glad our meeting is supporting students at local high schools with this award.
- A third Friend noted his appreciation for the outreach our kindergarten provides for this meeting. He wondered if we should create a scholarship to attract more people to enrich our student body.
- A Friend and parent of young children expressed her gratitude to London Grove Meeting for all the relationships the children of this meeting have with the adults. She has observed that this opportunity for interactions with adults outside of home or school has led to real development in the children. The adults of this meeting treat the children with respect and interact with them in a respectful way. She sees the impact of this in the way the children talk to their peers and to adults outside of this meeting.

Kennett

We spoke of our involvement with Friends schools, and developing a sense of peace for students and families; it is a gift our faith gives our greater community. A member mentioned that the Seeds of Peace committee has an opportunity through Community Rising to introduce others to Quaker process. And another mentioned how we support support applicants of lesser means to area Quaker schools and finally we spoke that our support for Fairville Friends could be a source of our own growth.

New Garden

The 11th Query was read on Education.

Our Meeting has supported public education from its beginning. The Meeting provided a school for children in the area before public education began & turned the school over to the Department of Education upon its inception.

For many years our members have served as school board members & teachers.

We have also provided scholarships to graduating seniors in our 3 local school districts.

When members have been in need of funds to further their education we have provided financial help for them.

Friend's schools also receive funding from both the Meeting & its members.

Query responses cont'd next page

QUERY ELEVEN WITNESSING IN THE WORLD: EDUCATION*Newark*

The Eleventh query was considered by Aliza Appel, Ginny Bailey, Annemarie Carr, Gavin Ferris, Lili Grosso, Shelley Hastings, Diane Kesler, Maggie Ladd, Ariana Langford, Sally Millbury-Steen, Mike McDowell, Treba Thompson and Wayne Thompson.

- A Friend expressed joy that a young Friend in our meeting has been given a grant from Philadelphia Yearly Meeting supporting her higher education. She also appreciated our support for a Kenyan Friend, a graduate student, who attended our meeting. Our Friend hopes there will be more opportunities for us to support education.
- We're happy to see our First Day School teacher return, still recovering after she suffered a broken leg. And we're committed to supporting people who are physically limited. The subject of this query, education, seems like it has been on the back burner because of the many other challenges we're facing. We hope it doesn't stay that way.
- Another Friend is very excited to have discovered a curriculum called Odyssey of the Mind, a program that teaches students how to develop and use their natural creativity to become problem-solvers. She likes this forever-learning, intergenerational movement to teach one another, and is getting enthusiastic about the program.

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

Mill Creek

What does our meeting do to support and improve public education?

- As individuals, we pay our property taxes.
- We keep informed by reading our local school districts' newsletters. Every member lives in a different district until they are combined.

What help do we provide for the children and adults in our meeting to pursue their educational goals?

- We sent a member to a Pendle Hill Workshop
- We try to do multi-generational activities during the Quarterly Meeting to encourage our youth to be part of the larger group.
- We express interest when members share personal learning opportunities.

What is our meeting's role in support of 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?

- Our meeting contributes supplies to Friends School's Visual Arts Dept.
- We allow Friends School students to achieve their service hours by helping us with yardwork and clean-up.

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?

- We do not have any children in our meeting.

West Grove provided their response to the 1st query:

The First Query on the Meeting for Worship was read. We have little to no vocal ministry. Friends expressed that Meeting gives them strength for the coming week.



STARS & SPECTRA
THE LIFE & LEGACY OF CHARLOTTE MOORE SITTERLY
America250 Speaker Series

MARCH 12, 2026 @ 12PM

GUEST SPEAKER:
Jacob Nibauer, Astrophysics PhD Candidate
at Princeton University

Chester County Archives recently presented a webinar on Charlotte Moore Sitterly - a Friend from Western Quarter. See it on their [YouTube channel](#).



Minutes of Concern, from [PYM's Faith and Practice](#)

“Monthly meetings may be asked to consider minutes of concern relating to current issues regarding peace and social justice. Such minutes may come from an individual with a leading, or from a committee such as the peace and social concerns committee. It is helpful if a minute of concern includes a set of one or more action steps: for instance, that the minute, if approved at a meeting for business of the meeting be submitted to the appropriate quarterly meeting and then, after seasoning and approval, submitted to the yearly meeting for consideration and approval. There should also be a clear statement of what each body—the monthly, quarterly and yearly meeting—is being asked to do in order to support those seeking to address a concern. It is also expected that the minute will include a statement of the concern itself, the origin of the concern, and the person or committee which is seeking approval of the minute and support for whatever action steps are involved.”

---- Minutes of concern may be used as outreach to area faith and civic organizations to indicate the Meeting's stance and as an invitation to partner in action. They may also be used in whole or part in op-ed letters, and communication with legislators. Many meetings share minutes of concern with Friends Committee on National Legislation as a sign of support for their efforts and as an indication of what is important to the meeting.

Kennett Friends Meeting and Hockessin Monthly Meeting shared minutes of concern with Western Quarter. Discernment of each will be part of April's meeting for worship with attention to business. The minute of concern from Kennett is an open letter penned at least in part by Friends in Media. The minute from Hockessin originated in South Central Yearly Meeting (meetings in Texas, Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Louisiana.) Abington (PA) Monthly Meeting approved the minute. Hockessin made a few slight changes to the original before approving it. Hockessin shared their minute with Western Quarter and with Friends Council on National Legislation (FCNL). Meetings in Western Quarter may want to approve this minute or make slight changes.

from Kennett - Our Call to End and Reform Unjust Immigration Enforcement Practices and Laws

As people of faith who believe that the Divine dwells within every human being, we bear witness to the devastating injustices perpetrated by current immigration enforcement practices in the United States. These oppressive actions and the legal regime that supports them profoundly betray our most sacred spiritual truth: that every person is inherently endowed with dignity and worth.

Under the guise of lawful authority, our government is damaging communities, separating children from their parents, tearing the sacred bonds of family, and leaving wounds that scar the soul and psyche. Current immigration enforcement unjustly singles out communities for oppressive and traumatic action based on race, creed and national origin, stripping away basic rights and privileges without due process. Vulnerable souls are thus condemned to persecution, oppression, poverty and even death within and beyond their home countries, sometimes using foreign prisons that practice torture.

Such cruel enforcement practices intentionally sow fear and spread terror in our communities — a violation of both human dignity and fundamental rights. Moreover, these actions blatantly breach our nation's binding commitments under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Convention Against Torture, and the Refugee Convention and its Protocol, all of which affirm our sacred duty to protect human dignity and uphold the right to asylum.

Illuminated by the divine Inner Light, our consciences declare that human laws draw their legitimacy only from higher, divine truths. When human statutes defy these eternal truths—when they spread wanton suffering, division and despair—they cease to command obedience. This foundational principle resonates deeply with the core ideals upon which our nation was founded: Certain rights, inalienable and sacred, flow directly from our Creator and are entrusted forever to the people, beyond the whims of government to grant or withhold.

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History reveals that spiritually awakened communities possess the clear moral vision to challenge, defy and transform unjust laws and customs. From the abolition of slavery to the dismantling of segregation and apartheid, from the advancement of universal suffrage to ongoing struggles for racial, gender, LGBTQ+, reproductive and religious freedoms, and freedom of expression, courageous souls have stood firm, willingly enduring unjust earthly penalties to uphold divine justice. Our faith communities embrace this legacy of bold advocacy, remaining steadfastly committed to nonviolent resistance and reform in the service of divine truth.

Compelled by our commitment to radical hospitality and by our sacred calling to "welcome the stranger" and to love our neighbors as ourselves, we urge all spiritually guided communities and individuals to rise courageously alongside immigrants facing persecution. We demand swift legal reform and an immediate cessation of oppressive, unjust enforcement. Together, let us build a genuine beloved community where the human and civil rights of immigrants are fully honored, protected and upheld. In this endeavor, we affirm the divine presence within each person and embrace the eternal spiritual truth upon which our faith—and our shared humanity—depend. With radical hope,

Individuals:

Br. Francisco J. Burgos, Pendle Hill

David Castro

Rabbi Aviva Marchioni, Congregation Beth Israel of Media

Rabbi Nathan Martin, Congregation Beth Israel of Media

Rev. Edward J. Hallinan, Pastor, St. John Chrysostom Catholic Church

Rev. Jill LaRoche Wikel, Rector, Saint John's Episcopal Church, Concord, Glen Mills

Dr. Sam Lemon, Providence Friends Meeting

Rabbi Kelilah Miller, Congregation Ohev Shlom

Rev. Andrew Jacob, Executive Director, Chester Eastside, Inc.

Rev. Jennifer Casey, Pastor, Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Wallingford

Sister Theresa Marie Firenze OSF – Congregational Minister, Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia

William J. Oberfield, Md, Providence Friends Meeting

Joyce Ajlouny, General Secretary, American Friends Service Committee

Organizations

American Friends Service Committee (AFSC)

Providence Friends Meeting

Radnor Friends Meeting

**from Hockessin - Minute regarding the current executive, legislative, and judicial branches
of the United States government**

As members of Hockessin Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) from Delaware, we are guided by the Light within, seeking to live in accordance with our testimonies of peace, integrity, equality, simplicity, community, and stewardship. Our faith leads us to uphold the inherent worth and dignity of every person and to act with compassion, justice, and nonviolence in all areas of life regardless of race, nationality, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, or immigration status. We are moved to speak plainly at this time, as we witness policies and rhetoric from the current federal government administration that contradict our most deeply held religious beliefs. When a government disregards constitutional norms and the rule of law, attacks the legitimacy of elections, or acts with impunity; it breaks the sacred trust between citizen and state. We are called by the Spirit to witness against such abuse with steadfast love.

We affirm that:

- Peace is not compatible with the glorification of military force, the erosion of diplomacy and cooperation, or the targeting of marginalized communities through rhetoric or action whether through foreign policy or within our own borders.

Integrity cannot flourish in an environment where falsehoods are routinely disseminated, public trust in democratic institutions is undermined, and accountability is disregarded. • Equality is denied when policies promote the discrimination of people of color, intolerance of religious diversity, restrict immigration and asylum, and marginalize LGBTQIA+ individuals, women, and the poor.

- Simplicity is intentionally replaced with chaos and confusion when officials use inflammatory rhetoric, barrage us with contradictory statements, engage in outright lies, and rely on social media and executive fiat to willfully bypass the deliberative processes that are the cornerstone of our democracy.
- Community is broken when leaders sow division by implicitly and explicitly bullying and threatening those with whom they disagree, scapegoat vulnerable groups, and reject collective responsibility for public health, climate stewardship, and the common good.
- Stewardship is abandoned when we fail to nurture all that has been entrusted to us — not for personal gain, but for the well-being of all, including generations yet to come. The failure to uphold this responsibility reflects not care, but consumption. Not service, but self-interest.

We recognize that no political administration perfectly reflects our values. However, we find the words and actions of the current executive, legislative, and, too often, the judicial branches of our government cruel at their core and in their disregard for truth, embrace of violence, and the dehumanization of others purposefully, egregiously, and harmful.

We speak from a place of profound religious conscience, not from partisanship. We call on all people of faith and goodwill to examine the spiritual cost of complicity and silence. We seek to live out our testimonies not only in worship, but in public witness, advocacy, and loving resistance. We reaffirm our commitment to justice, compassion, and nonviolence, and we invite others to join us in building a more just and peaceful world.

Minutes - January 18, 2026 at Kennett Friends Meeting and hosted by Newark MM

We opened with worship and sharing of query responses.

Treasurer's Report - Karen Conlan, London Grove, WQ treasurer

Friends received the report with gratitude.

The treasurer clarified that there are two funds connected to Parkersville Meeting: Parkersville Behest which we understand included gifts from families connected to the meeting, and the Parkersville Property fund which has customarily been used for non graveyard-related property expenses.

The grand total of Western Quarter's unrestricted funds is about \$132,000.

Contribution Request - Jim Nelson, Kennett Meeting

At the October 2025 quarterly meeting we agreed to consider the amount of contributions to the agencies referenced by the speakers at that day's program, and the addition of an immigrant related support fund overseen by Kennett Friends Meeting. The suggestion is for \$500 each to

Serving, Inspiring, Loving Others (Oxford), Kennett Area Community Services, La Comunidad Hispania, Friends Fund for Immigrant Support

Friends approved the contributions.

Friends also approved the formation of an ad hoc group to draft a policy to guide a donations process and policy. Ariana Langford (N), Jim Nelson (Knt), Shelley Hastings (N); Carol Lorah Bland (Knt), and Dick Logan (H) volunteered to be a part of this ad hoc committee. During discernment friends suggested several other organizations providing valuable support in our communities. Also lifted up were the Kennett Area Senior Center; Kennett Y; Share the Love Family Boutique in Oxford. We want to support our neighbors in need but need also to be able to meet our obligations. One Friend shared a custom at their meeting that we could perhaps adopt: a hat would be passed by the host meeting to collect donations to an organization of the host meeting's choosing.

WQM, Inc - Margaret Walton, London Grove, WQ clerk

Margaret Walton called the annual session of Western Quarterly Meeting, Incorporated into session at 2:08pm.

Penns Grove - Bob Frye presented the report. The committee membership is the same and stable; funds saw

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growth; no property expenses other than regular lawn care, etc. The building does not need repairs at this time, but likely will in the not too distant future.

The report was received with thanks.

London Britain - Kelley Grosso, Maggie Ladd, Matt Zellner, Wayne and Treba Thompson, Mike McDowell, Ariana Langford, and Shelley Hastings.

Work on building in 2025 was largely an outgrowth of items that needed to be done through the assessment of the source of water damage that was done in 2024 with the help of WQ. The committee requested that anyone with any experience with brick sealing, especially salmon bricks to be in touch.

Friends noted that costs are going up for building repair and regular maintenance and asked if the committee expected to request funds from Western Quarter to help keep the meetinghouse in sufficient condition.

Committee members responded that they will need to let the meetinghouse go when it can not be reasonably repaired. Newark Friends has a deep connection to the meetinghouse. The restoration of the meetinghouse was undertaken and financed by Newark Friend Bob Johnson who lived near the London Britain Meetinghouse.

Margaret Walton closed the annual session of WQM, Inc. at 2:26pm.

Parkersville Property - Mary Sproat, West Grove

Mary reported that the final paper work was signed and the final fees are to be set, paid, reimbursed and the purchase of the neighboring property will be completed soon!

Coordinator's Report - Deb Wood

In addition to the office duties and those related in earlier reports today, the Coordinator updated the applications for the education grants available through Western Quarter. The updated applications are available at the website. Deb also sent a letter to monthly meetings to share with friends about the quarter education grants. This letter also included information about education grants available through Friends Council on Education. Deb also attends PYM's Nominating and Joint Council meetings. At the close of the minutes are draft queries from a PYM Sprint on the yearly-quarterly-monthly meeting relationships. Please share and consider these with your meetings. (Available at the website-<https://westernquarterquakers.org/business-meeting-info/>)

There has been some planning for the Joint Quarter gathering in July. Wilmington Monthly Meeting is the cohost with Kendal Meeting. Wilmington would like us to gather there. They have arranged for Friend Charles Bruder to give his John Woolman presentation as John Woolman! Friend Charles does not accept a fee but encourages donations to the John Woolman Memorial - Their mission is "To share the spirit, vision, integrity and writings of John Woolman. The Association maintains historic documents, family artifacts, the gardens and the brick dwelling built in 1783 on property once owned by John Woolman's daughter, Mary Comfort." (website 2026-01-17)

Update from Addressing Racism Collaborative - Susanna Davison, London Grove

Addressing Racism is one of two witnesses lifted up by PYM for all meetings and Friends to be giving attention to. Wanda Wyffles, a member of the Addressing Racism Collaborative, will be reaching out to meeting clerks to ask that time be set aside in February-March for meetings to record and share responses to queries. Friends could hold worship sharing for the queries, hold a called meeting to respond to them, respond at a meeting for business or hold a potluck and share queries on the tables for discussion. This is part of an effort to update a survey done in 2020/1. That report is on the [ARC page](#) at the PYM website www.pym.org/addressing-racism-collaborative/

Thank you minutes - WQM

Western Quarter and Newark Meeting give thanks not just for Kennett Meeting's willingness to provide a physical location for our meeting today, but Kennett Friends set up and began hospitality. Newark Friends came prepared to do those things and instead were the first recipients of the morning hospitality. Friends also deeply appreciated the well-shoveled and repeatedly shoveled walks throughout the day, the physical and spiritual warmth of the meeting, and the well-tuned piano. We entered an active meeting in action.

Western Quarter extends its appreciation to Newark Friends Meeting for arranging such wonderful programs: Clem Bowen, a storyteller for the children, and Chris Mohr, our new yearly meeting General Secretary. Friends found it wonderful to meet him as evidenced by our large showing on a very snowy day.

Respectfully submitted, Deb Wood, coordinator



Sunday, April 19, 2026
at Hockessin Friends
Meetinghouse

9:30-10:15 AM Altogether (all ages) Worship - HYBRID

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

10:30-11:30am Programs - IN PERSON

Communal Committee Discussions

Witness/Peace & Social Concerns – Connecting to Community –
Membership Development – Religious Education - Property
Children’s Program - “that of God” in nature: pot decorating and
planting, seek and sleuth nature walk

11:45-12:30pm Lunch - Taco Bar and Dessert

Hockessin Friends will provide proteins, greens, chips, wraps, and
drinks. We ask Friends to share a favorite taco topping or dessert.

1:00pm Meeting for worship with attention to business

HYBRID - Zoom Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/92668234836>

Hockessin Meetinghouse - 1501 Old Wilmington
Road, Hockessin, DE



Accessibility details: there is
some parking at the
meetinghouse. More parking is
available across the road by the
burial ground. Please cross at
the stop sign.