



Western Quarterly News

the newsletter of Western Quarterly
Meeting of the Religious Society of
Friends
Summer 2026

An Introduction to Charles Bruder and John Woolman



Charles Bruder has been the director of the John Woolman Memorial in Mt. Holly, NJ for the past 8 years. He has been a member of its Board for 16 years. Charles is a member of Westfield Meeting. He is a popular presenter of John Woolman's life and teachings. He steps into Woolman's persona at many public and Quaker events. He was the presenter at Bucks Quarterly Meeting at Fallsington Meeting in November. Charles will bring John Woolman into our lives at joint quarterly meeting. Come here how Woolman's ministry speaks to our condition in 2026.

John Woolman 1720 – 1772 From the website Quakers in the World Thought by many to be the central figure of 18th Century Quaker faith and social reform, he was an abolitionist, reformer, writer and minister. He was very influential in the anti-slavery movement in America.

Born into the farming family of Quaker Samuel Woolman near Mount Holly in New Jersey, John spent a lot of time helping on the farm and attended school in the local schoolhouse. Later he became a clerk in the local village store and learnt tailoring. As he was an efficient writer he was asked to prepare important documents. One of these was a bill of sale for a slave. He decided that as the slave was being sold to a woman who would treat her well, he could write the bill. He told the seller and the new owner that they were following a practice "inconsistent with the Christian religion".



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John Woolman
5th Query
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Minutes -
April WQM
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Quarterly Meeting Schedule

July 19, 2026 - at Wilmington - 5th Query

July is held jointly with Concord Quarter.

We will meet at Wilmington Meeting.

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.

See the [draft host schedule](#) on the website.

5th Query - Nurturing Our Community: Religious Education in the Home and Meeting

For the meeting:

- How does our meeting prepare its members, attenders and children for worship, for the conduct of its business and for a way of life consistent with the principles of the Religious Society of Friends?
- What opportunities do we provide for all in the meeting to learn about Friends' history, practices and testimonies, the Judeo-Christian tradition, the life and teachings of Jesus, and other religious traditions?
- How does our meeting's religious education program provide experiential learning that enhances the sense of belonging to our worshipping community?

For the individual:

- *How do I help create a home where all members of the family receive affection and understanding and where visitors are welcome?*
- *How does my manner of living enrich body, mind and spirit; enable all to learn what it means to live a life of Spirit-led commitment; and demonstrate a high regard for family, community and the integrity of creation?*
- *How do I engage with my family and others who are dear to me regarding such sensitive topics as death, faith, money, sex and drugs?*

General Queries are taken from the newest version of PYM's Faith and Practice available online.

Query Responses to the 2nd Query - Deepening Our Faith: Meeting for business

Mill Creek:

Is our business meeting held in worship in which we seek divine guidance?

Yes, we begin and end each business meeting with silent worship and usually maintain a thoughtful tone throughout the meeting. Although the members of our meeting each have very different perceptions regarding a higher power, those differences usually impact us positively and are not a factor regarding business. Until recently, we have not experienced disagreements during the business portion of our worship, although cracks in that facade are beginning to appear. Our last business meeting ended in discord with a fundamental disagreement over finances, with one member seeking to cash in the endowment, though there is no reason or need to do so. Needless to say, that caused quite a rift that may need divine guidance as well as guidance from the greater Quaker community.

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 pressure of time?

The members at Mill Creek consider "problems" as opportunities, which, until recently, rarely arise. We talk slowly and carefully. When issues are at an impasse, we hold those over and revisit them for the following business meeting.

Do we recognize that we speak through our inactions as well as our actions?

Yes, we realize that and are reminded often by one member who feels deeply and speaks encouragingly to us about that. We agree that there are actions we could/should be taking; however, due to our small size (5 attenders), the pressures of our modern lifestyles, commutes, and daily chores, we find that much of our engagement in service work is done on a personal level.

London Grove:

Two Friends spoke with these responses to the query:

The first Friend spoke connecting last month's query on meeting for worship to this month's query on meeting for business. Last month's query tells us to pay attention in a non-judgmental way. This month's query tells us to pay attention prayerfully. The common thread of both is paying attention. In Meeting for Business, the spirit will come through, but it might be a little quieter than in Meeting for Worship. However, if we pay attention, we will feel it. One is less formal and more improvisational, the other is more formal and requiring a different type of attention to catch the spirit.

A second Friend was moved by the last line of the query asking if we remain open to personal transformation or growth as the community arrives at the sense of the meeting. She doesn't often think of the spirit moving through meeting for business because it is more formal. This Friend sometimes thinks during meeting for worship about questions that were before the business meeting months or years ago, and wonders where the meeting would have gone, and how the way would have opened if she had been more open to the spirit. She appreciates when conversations continue after meeting for business in a friendly way between Friends who are in disagreement. We should work to get to know each other and our differing points of view.

Query responses cont'd next page

QUERY RESPONSES ...*Kennett:*

A member shared thoughts that inaction can be as consequential as action, and that one may wish they had not remained silent, adding that as long as everyone contributes and listens, we can be in worship. Another member mentioned that one of the tools used by the clerk to keep us on track is to call us back to silence, which has been helpful. Another member expressed that Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business has been an important part of their spiritual experience, adding that the work in our committees contributes to the spiritual nature of the entire meeting. Another member expressed that we should think of transformation as a meeting and the sense of the meeting.

A Friend from Centre Monthly Meeting shared in worship:

A Friend from Centre shared that they set the framework for business by naming and voicing the importance of meeting for worship with attention to business, worship is essential to the conducting of business.

Newark:

The second query was considered by Aliza Appel, Ginny Bailey, Annemarie Carr, Gavin Ferris, Lily Grosso, Shelley Hastings, Diane Kesler, Maggie Ladd, Ariana Langford, Sally Milbury-Steen, Mike McDowell, Treba Thompson, and Barbara Ward.

In reply to the question of how she speaks through her inaction, a Friend noted that she may be perceived as a hypocrite: “For example, I eat out and feel tremendous guilt. My family says I’m being a masochist.”

One Friend doesn’t think we need to deliberate about meeting for business while we’re having a meeting for business. Since people are usually constrained by time, she wonders if we could move on rather than consider meeting for business in a query.

Another Friend reminded us that meeting for business is how Quakers have accomplished things for decades. She believes that we need to hold meeting for business in holiness. She also shared that meeting for business is one of the ways she makes decisions. She added that we are not just receiving as Quakers, but giving. And this query helps her hold meeting for business in holiness.

A Friend said she was thinking during worship about how blessed she is to have all of the Meeting community. She thanked our Minute Clerk and Query Clerk for being wonderful note takers, especially when she can’t attend business meeting. She is thankful for meeting for business. She said that we, as a group, accomplish things that she wished she could accomplish as an individual. She said, “I love you guys.”

Reflecting on the previous Friend’s comments, another Friend agreed that we are all together greater than the sum of our parts. Regarding the need for a query on meeting for business, she agrees that we need to balance the need for time and addressing the query.

A Friend observed that there is a kind of awe in the outside world at how Quakers do business. She thinks that how we do business makes a tremendous difference, and leads her to join with the community. It also testifies to the strength of Quakers.

A Friend remembered a late Friend from our meeting, who said we have fun at our business meetings, and that Friend always put a smile on her face when answering questions.

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

John Woolman, cont’d

Later he was required to prepare a will in which he was asked to write the name of the person to whom the Negro slave was to be given after her master’s death. John wrote the will but did not include this instruction. He then read the will to the slave owner and after some discussion it was agreed that the slave should be set free.

Abolition became one of his main interests. In 1746 he and a fellow Quaker Isaac Andrews travelled in the ministry and covered over 1500 miles in about three months. They travelled through Virginia, Maryland and North Carolina observing slavery at first hand. Woolman was a gentle man who spoke persuasively to slave owners about the evils of slave ownership and was often able to convince them, without causing offence, to release their slaves. At this time he also wrote two essays “On Keeping

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John Woolman, cont'd

Negroes". They were later published in 1754 and 1762 respectively. Although he had become a prosperous shopkeeper and tailor he decided to give up his business activities to allow him more time for his abolition work. Philadelphia Yearly Meeting with which Woolman was closely associated published their own anti-slavery paper "Epistle of Caution and Advice" and urged against the buying and keeping of slaves. Philadelphia Yearly Meeting appointed a committee to visit those Friends who still held slaves. John Woolman was the most influential and active member of this group. By 1758 Philadelphia Yearly Meeting banned buying and selling of slaves and required members who bought slaves to be removed from positions of authority.

John Woolman kept a Journal which tells the story of his struggles to follow the leading of the Inward Light that he referred to as "The Truth". In it he describes his abhorrence of slavery and how he tried to lead by example. He would not willingly lodge in a house where there were slaves or if he was obliged to do so he would insist on paying for his board and lodging. As early as 1762 Woolman and others refused to purchase goods produced by slave labour. He also refused to wear clothes made from material that had been dyed as the dyes were produced by slave labour. The Journal has become one of the world's greatest spiritual autobiographies.

He was very disturbed by the plight of the poor and wrote an essay entitled "Plea for the Poor" that was published posthumously in 1774. Woolman was also concerned about the rights of the Native Americans. In 1761 he visited Wyoming Valley in Pennsylvania to meet with them during the French and Indian War. He met many bands in peace and often forgot to use interpreters. Papunehang a chief of the Native American people, who knew very little English, is said to have listened to Woolman's prayers and then said "I love to hear where words come from".

In 1772 Woolman journeyed to England. He chose to travel in the crew's quarters in keeping with the Quaker testimony to equality. The London Quakers looked askance at him with his strange undyed clothing and unkempt appearance but accepted him after they had heard him preach. For the first time London Yearly Meeting included a statement condemning slavery in the Epistle. He set off to York but refused to travel by stagecoach as he felt that the coachmen drove the horses too hard and overworked the horseboys. It took him six weeks to travel over 400 miles during which he spent time preaching. Soon after reaching York he succumbed to smallpox and died on 7 October 1772 and is buried in the Quaker Burial Ground at Bishophill in York.

Some quotations from Woolman to consider

To consider mankind other than brethren...plainly supposes a darkness of understanding.

If a man successful in business expends a part of his income in things of no real use, while the poor employed by him pass through difficulties in getting the necessaries of life, this requires his serious attention.

O, that we who declare war against wars, and acknowledge our trust to be in God only, may walk in the light, and therein examine our foundation and motives in holding onto money! May we look upon our estates, our treasures, the furniture of our houses, and our garments, and try whether the seeds of war have nourishment in these, our possessions.

Conduct is more convincing than language.

O, that we who declare war against wars, and acknowledge our trust to be in God only, may walk in the light, and therein examine our foundation and motives in holding onto money! May we look upon our estates, our treasures, the furniture of our houses, and our garments, and try whether the seeds of war have nourishment in these, our possessions.

To Turn all the treasures we possess into the channel of universal love becomes the business of our lives.

May we look upon our treasure, the furniture of our houses, and our garments, and try to discover whether the seeds of war have nourishment in these our possessions.

There is a principle which is pure, placed in the human mind, which in different places and ages hath had different names. It is, however, pure and proceeds from God. It is deep and inward, confined to no forms of religion nor excluded from any, where the heart stands in perfect sincerity. In whomsoever this takes root and grows, of what nation soever, they become brethren in the best sense of the expression.

ANTHONY BENEZET - ANOTHER NOTABLE QUAKER ABOLITIONIST

Lucretia Mott, Levi Coffin, and John Woolman were the three Quaker abolitionists I learned most about growing up in my childhood Quaker Meeting. Even as a history major and a very avid reader, it can be easy to miss that Woolman was far from the only ardent Quaker abolitionist of the 18th century. He was probably not even the most outspoken often being noted for his gentle demeanor. Benjamin Lay and Anthony Benezet made significant contributions to abolition efforts among Quakers, and in the case of Benezet, had a global reach far beyond Quaker communities. His story and example are quite remarkable, and I wonder why I did not know it earlier. Here are excerpts of his story from the website Quakers in the World.

Anthony Benezet 1713-1784

Benezet was born in France and the family fled to Rotterdam when he was two fleeing religious persecution. They moved to London shortly after. Anthony was probably educated in a Friends School there. He emigrated to Pennsylvania in 1731. He tried several professions and eventually discovered his calling as an educator.

His greatest achievement as an educator was with those who had no access to traditional schools. In 1750 he started to offer evening classes to black people, mostly in his own home. In 1754 he started the first Philadelphia secondary school for girls. He always wanted to do the best for his students and to make the school as inclusive as possible. He devised a special programme for a deaf and dumb girl at the school so that she could participate fully in school life. In 1770 he convinced Quakers to build the first free day school for African Americans.

He was also challenged the assertion of black inferiority. At this time many people, including many Quakers, did not regard black and white people as equal. Bénézet testified to his experience of the innate equality of all people. He wrote an epistle seeking to [eradicate slave owning amongst Quakers](#) as he believed it to be inconsistent with Christianity and common justice. He wrote to London Yearly Meeting asking them to denounce slavery and also to Queen Charlotte, wife of George III of England.

He was interested in many social issues and wrote about temperance, pacifism and Native American reform. Upon his death in 1784 he willed his estate to support the education of African and Native American people.

UPCOMING EVENTS in WQM and PYM

Creating our Council: Listening Session 1 - July 1, 2026 | 10:00 am

Creating our Council: Listening Session 2 - July 15, 2026 | 1:00 pm

Creating our Council: Listening Session 3 - July 17, 2026 | 7:15 pm

For the last two years, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting's (PYM) three councils – Administrative, Quaker Life, and Nominating – have met monthly for business together as one Joint Council. After nearly 18 meetings of the Joint Council Experiment, Governance Advisory Committee has proposed codifying the change by merging the three councils into one PYM Council.

These three listening sessions are for PYM members to consider queries and address concerns regarding the proposal, in order to discern the conclusion of the experiment.

July 4 @ 1 pm in-person at Kennett Meeting. Love as Action: A Declaration of Resistance.

We will gather at the Kennett Friends Meeting sign on N. Union Street (Rte 82) in Kennett Square for one hour of collective witness. Together, we will affirm: We will protect people and communities. We will resist authoritarian government. We will build a free, equal and just future. As part of this gathering, participants will be invited to sign a shared, art-based Declaration of Resistance—a visible expression of collective commitment that connects communities across the country and continues beyond this day as an ongoing witness. <https://www.mobilize.us/afsc/event/972278/>

July 16 start - Mindfulness-based Stress Reduction (MBSR) course led by Bill McCracken.

This is an evidence-based course and a wonderful way to both start and deepen one's meditation practice. Bill is offering the class in person in Newark, Delaware, and it starts July 16th. Here is the link for more information: [Summer MBSR Programs](#)

July 19 - Western and Concord Quarters meet at Wilmington Monthly Meeting

See back page for schedule, address,, and lunch details.

CHILDRENS AND YOUTH PROGRAM AT JOINT QUARTER AT WILMINGTON

Service Project: Young Friends will be assembling lunches for Emmanuel Dining Room, a nearby facility that feeds the hungry in Wilmington. Young Friends will be preparing sandwiches, decorating bags, making notes to include in the bags, and assembling lunches. There is a use for all gifts! They will probably begin this project during our worship and then continue it through the program period. This activity is in keeping with John Woolman's commitment to love and equality as guiding principles. Wilmington Friends learned last week that Emmanuel Dining Room's census for children is up from 10-11/day to 35 last week. Because the dining room is only open for breakfast and an early dinner (that finishes at 2:00) there is a long period between meals for these children.

PYM Sessions July 22nd – 26th at Cheyney University or come virtually from home or meeting

See the [Annusals Sessions Webpage](#) to get your tickets and learn more about speakers, workshops, volunteer opportunities, and more. Register with the discount code MECollab (Deb is co-leading a workshop on Gaza-Israel-Lebanon). You don't have to come to my workshop to use it! Download the [PYM Sessions Planner](#) for detailed information. Check out the [Sessions Table Fair](#) information and request a table for your meeting, committee, group, etc.

Sunday, August 16 3pm - Western Quarter Historic Properties meeting

Monday, August 17 7pm - Western Quarter discussion of Racial Wounding and Racial Justice in Quaker Communities round 2 of the discussion - where are our meetings - at Status Quo or Love and Liberation? See the [Western Quarter events](#) page for more details.

Minutes - April 19, 2026 at Hockessin Friends Meeting

Friends present from Centre, Hockessin, Fallowfield, Kennett, London Grove, Mill Creek, New Garden, and West Grove Monthly Meetings.

Opening Worship with sharing of responses to the 2nd query.

Introduction - Jim Nelson introduced himself to Friends. Jim is the clerk of Kennett Friends Meeting and is now also the clerk of Western Quarterly Meeting.

Treasurer's Report - Karen Conlan

We received the report with gratitude. The treasurer asked if Friends gathered had a recollection of how we were to refill the \$25,000 historic properties reserve. Past minutes indicated that the initial fund was set up with reserves and no specific fund source was indicated for replenishing the \$25,000 to be set aside for Historic Properties fund.

We did not feel the need to refill the historic fund at the moment but to refill in the next budget cycle.

It was noted that the recent Parkersville Committee property purchase used funds from their checking account.

Report Back on WQM Donations Process - Support Committee

An adhoc committee met in February to discuss a donations process and the quarter's reserve funds. The quarter will continue to address specific needs on a case-by-case basis. We encourage Friends to take funding for specific organizations and needs to their monthly meetings. If we know of expected donations in the form of honoraria we should do our best to account for those in annual budgets. Friends emphasized the importance of being mindful of financial constraints, notably related to potential property expenses, when considering donations.

Minutes of Concern - Kennett, Hockessin, London Grove

Friends approved all three minutes of concern. Approval will be noted with Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, Friends Committee on National Legislation, and with regards to the signers of the letter in the Kennett minute, we will communicate with Providence Meeting and Francisco Burgos, letter author.

Coordinator Report - Deb Wood

Deb has arranged to pick up physical copies of titles for Western Quarter's and it's monthly meetings properties from Friends Fiduciary in the coming week. Deb will communicate with the meetings regarding any of their titles and where they'd like them kept.

Yearly Meeting wants to remind monthly meetings they should periodically review their child safety policies.

There is a new PYM collaborative - [Ending Mass Incarceration](#). Check out the yearly meeting website for more information.

Plans are coming together for a one pamphlet-one yearly meeting read. There will be some discussions at PYM's annual sessions.

Western Quarter will gather for a discussion of the pamphlet around Juneteenth. Friends recalled how much value they took from last year's discussion of readings on Bayard Rustin

Sensitive Locations [signs for meetinghouses regarding lawsuit](#) are good witness of our testimonies to our neighbors. London Grove Meeting had signs made at compuSIGN and Graphics in Toughkenamon. They have the template on hand and could make more.

Friends should share the draft host rotation schedule with their meetings and expect to consider approval at our next meeting for worship with attention to business: [draft for review](#).

Historic Properties update - Deb Wood

Friends from PYM Property Advisory joined the most recent committee meeting. This group provides advice and help as they are able. Discernment and decision-making is left with meetings. We discussed the basic process for establishing a trust with community partners. Trust would take ownership of the property.

New Garden Meeting is considering such a civic trust for the property. Deb will assist them in setting up meeting with lawyers to learn more about such a trust.

Volunteers or temporary paid role may be available for some of this process. New Garden would appreciate support from Friends living in New Garden township or with relevant experience. Please connect with Deb.

Thank you minute - Friends noted appreciation for the committee discussions and hoped we could do that periodically. Friends also appreciated the food and fellowship.

Margaret Walton will draft the minute to approve at our next session.

Jim and Deb will work on a schedule for periodic cross quarter committee discussions.

Other/New items- clerk Jim Nelson noted his appreciation for clerk emeritus, Margaret Walton. Friends wholeheartedly voiced their gratitude for Margaret's two or more years of service.

Respectfully submitted, Deb Wood, coordinator



Sunday, July 19, 2026
at Wilmington Friends
Meetinghouse

10:00 Meeting for Worship

**11:00 AM Hands-On Children's Program
and MEET JOHN WOOLMAN**

**aka Charles Bruder - Charles will share
Woolman's Thoughts on Our Time**

[Wilmington MM Zoom Link](#)

ID: 896 3427 4927 Code: 302 529

12:00 - 1:00 Lunch

**1:00pm - meeting for worship with
attention to business**

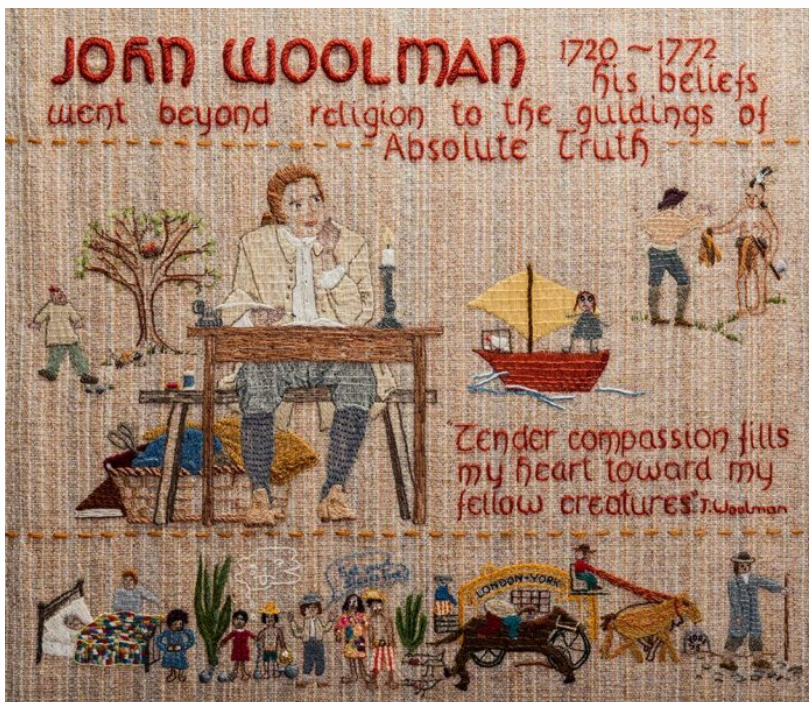
Business Meeting Zoom Link:

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



Charles, Bruder, pictured above,
as John Woolman, is the
Executive Director of the [John
Woolman Memorial Association](#)
**Children's Program will
prepare lunches and
materials for Emmanuel
Dining Room.**

*For our lunch, Wilmington
will provide sandwiches and
drinks, CQ salads, WQ
desserts.*



Wilmington Meetinghouse - 401 North West Street, Wilmington

This is the corner of 4th Street and West Street.

Parking available along the street. Limited parking is available on the
meetinghouse grounds.