P.O. Box 693
Kennett Square, PA 19348
www.westernquarterquakers.org

Kennett Friends Meetinghouse
125 W. Sickle Street
610-444-1012

Minutes Western Quarterly Meeting
Held 18 October, 2026
At West Grove Meeting
And Via Zoom

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

Opening worship with responses to the 8th Query

New Garden - The 8th query was read on Integrity & Simplicity.

Simplicity is freedom from excess & Integrity is the quality of being honest with strong moral principles.

When we value honesty & integrity in others as well as ourselves many of life's choices are simplified. Therefore, when we consider humanities impact on the ecological integrity of the earth, choices become simple & unarguable.

The Society of Friends has shown the importance of simplicity & integrity by including them in the guidelines & procedures that Meetings & individual Friends may find helpful in deepening their spiritual life.

The queries are a guide for self examination as well as the Meeting community. When we experience a lack of these qualities in others, we must take pause.

Newark Monthly Meeting Query Minutes on 7th query - September 13, 2026
GROUNDING FOR TRANSFORMED LIVES: Peace and Alternatives to Violence

The seventh query was considered by Aliza Appel, Ginny Bailey, Anniemarie Carr, Gavin Ferris, Lily Grosso, Shelley Hastings, Ariana Langford, David Livingstone, Mike McDowell, Sally Millbury-Steen, and Barbara Ward.

Regarding part c4 of this query, which asks what we are doing as a Friends meeting within our community to work towards overcoming separations and work towards wholeness, a Friend said she would personally like to figure out how to participate and help in this year's mid-term election. She will be serving as a poll chaplain and peacekeeper during this election, as she did
for the last election. She wishes we had more opportunities to really listen to people and bring them together. Although she is only able to do these things on a personal level at this time, she believes that some of the items listed in this query require society-level action.

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A Friend thinks that it matters a whole lot when we come together. It brightens her outlook, knowing that when there are terrible things going on in the world, she is not facing that burden alone. This is a community where we can share our burdens. We are all together, and there is so much that needs to be done.
In part a, which asks "How do we help each other face conflicts with patience, forbearance and openness to healing?" another Friend finds the striking word is "patience." She asks how we can face conflict with patience as we're asked to. Another Friend remarked that he thinks a member's work as a poll chaplain and peacekeeper is inspiring. When he is at work and tries to provide care for a person who is really disturbing, he finds it hard to help people who challenge him. Our peacekeeper's message reminds us that we are the Light. And another Friend's message reminds us that we are a community. A third
Friend's message reminds us that patience is the way to contribute.

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

Kennett Monthly Meeting -
After a moment of silence, a member expressed the desire to go back to no technology and its complications, and also remembered their large and elaborate/ornate childhood church, and expressed that our simple environment allows us to connect with the spirit in a way that is simple, beautiful, and effective. Another member express the constant struggle with modern complexity and integrity, and that artificial intelligence allows speed, but thought about who the data centers are empowering (billionaires), and the loss to artists, writers, and musicians. Another member thought about the meaning of the word integrity, perhaps really meaning genuine, something that young people appear to look for, as they see (are conscious of) the bombardment of ideas and agendas; silent meeting for worship influences our day to day lives, asking us to stop and come from a genuine place.

A friend from Hockessin Meeting shared that integrity is what you do when no one else is looking.

London Grove -

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Mid-way through Meeting for Worship, with 37 attending in the meetinghouse, and 7 joining via Zoom, the 8th Query on Integrity and Simplicity was read. Several Friends spoke with these responses to the query:

The first Friend who rose spoke about Integrity and how Jesus' reframing of the commandments in the Gospels can make people uncomfortable. He gave the example of the commandment "Thou should not commit adultery", which Jesus reframes and broadens to be "If you look at a woman with lust in your heart you have broken the commandment". Jimmy Carter, an evangelical Christian, when running for President in the 1970's admitted in an interview to breaking the wider definition of the commandment, and said, "Yes, I've had lust in my heart. I'm guilty of that". He received a lot of derision and comic jokes made about him and his answer, but he was answering with integrity, true to his beliefs. Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount, "blessed are you if people hold you in contempt and revile you because you are following me", meaning blessed are you when you hold to your integrity and they come after you for it. Shakespeare echoed this message in Hamlet when Polonius is counseling Hamlet and says, "to thine own self be true, and then it will follow that thou cannot be false to any man". The cost of one's convictions is that sometimes they are going to come for you. Jimmy Carter felt the cost of his convictions.

The second Friend said she was thinking about the young Hoopes man, spoken of a few meetings ago, a Quaker man, who was following his convictions, his belief that injustice was being done to his neighbors, and participated in a demonstration against ICE. He threw rocks, hit an ICE agent, was convicted and sentenced to 900 days. The young man wrote and stated he was wrong to use violence, and that is unacceptable. His parents are putting out a request for others to do good, to do kindness during those 900 days of his sentence. It is more than that – it is about living up to our convictions and our truth, and our integrity. As we stand up against something, or for something, to do it in a way that is Quakerly.

The last Friend spoke on how the wording of the query leads us to believe that a static place exists where consideration of the environment and integrity exists and we have reached the pinnacle where everything is perfect. In her mind, that static place does not exist, and what Jimmy Carter proves to us is that the challenge exists every day to act with integrity, true to our beliefs. For example, she believes that the Quakers who owned slaves hundreds of years ago didn't think they were acting in any way against integrity. That caused a division in Quakerism. Quakerism brings us the belief of continuing revelation – the gospels and Jesus'

teachings, are guidelines to consider every day. You don't ever get to a place where you sit and say, "I've done it!" I'm the perfect person; I've done everything right for the environment. If we realize that, we don't have to feel bad about not doing everything perfectly at the right time. This query is about learning. She hopes that she can learn every day.

West Grove –
At West Grove Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends held at West Grove, PA the Ninth of Eighth Month 2026. The Eighth Query on Simplicity and Integrity was read. It is hard to know truth today; the political situation makes it difficult to know what is truth. We must listen to candidates for office and pay attention to what they do, not only what they say. Integrity starts with ourselves. A Friend noted that living simply means partly enjoying what is around us, not needing to leave home to find enjoyment. Another Friend mentioned on an earlier First Day that he is happy being in a group where he can trust in the integrity of others.

Treasurer's report - report from treasurer Karen Conlan
See attached. Report received with gratitude.
John Woolman Traveling Ministers Fund - Since July Support Committee received and approved a grant in support of a QM family who attended FGC in 2026; they also received support from their monthly meeting;

We recently received an inquiry for Friends intending to join the 2027 Quaker Pilgrimage to England; we also suggested PYM Travel and Witness Grants as a source of funds.
William Jackson Education Grants - applications for 2027-28 school year will be available probably in January; as reported in July the quarter disbursed funds to two families in support of six students altogether.

Property Leading - As Friends in a few monthly meetings consider perpetual care for burial grounds across Western Quarter, the possibility arose of the consolidation of burial grounds into a Friends Cemetery Association. This is an emerging idea within Western Quarter. There are a few Friends Cemetery Associations across Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. They enable a smaller number of people to manage the administration and care of the burial grounds. Some even have a paid staff person to assist. There is also Quaker Green Burial, http://www.quakergreenburials.org/. Western Quarter has at least 18 burial grounds. The placement of monthly meeting burial grounds into a cemetery association would also separate and protect non-burial ground related monthly meeting funds in the case of liability. An increasing amount of time is spent on

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property management in some of our meetings. This is a challenge to the worship and witness part of our Quaker lives.

Faith and Practice provides Friends with this query:

> Are the meeting's burial grounds simple in style and carefully maintained, with accurate records that are up-to-date and accessible?

And this advice:

> Quarterly meetings maintain a structure of administrative officers and committees. The officers generally consist of a clerk, a recording clerk and a treasurer, with duties corresponding to those of officers in a monthly meeting. There may be committees to assist the clerk, to plan gatherings, to conduct routine business between sessions, to prepare the annual budget, and to provide sensitive oversight of programs and staff. Such committees may include:
>
> > …A committee or trustees to assume responsibility for property such as meetinghouses or burial grounds under the care of the quarterly meeting.

Could we find a simpler way to manage our burial grounds, and in doing so make a better, more relevant connection with each other?

Questions and comments in response:
Would it be mandatory?
What would the level of control be, would monthly meetings cede all their authority?
How would each monthly meeting work with the association when each monthly meeting is different?
It would be a benefit to have shared resources about burials.
One meeting has one person who tends to all the burial ground matters and would benefit from a team.
How would finances work?
Friends' families/ancestry are across the quarter's meetings not just all in one monthly meeting.
This is a great idea and there are friends who will be challenged by it.
How do we make sure it stays Quaker and never Quaker adjacent or based on Quaker values as interpreted by non-Quakers?
Administrative support help would be good.
We need to tend to our burial grounds, to our connections.
We cannot be motivated by our fear.
We are thankful for the discernment and care Historic Properties provides for our burial grounds and properties.

Coordinator report - Deb Wood

Here are highlights, those things beyond the routine office duties:
Committee Meeting Learnings: the virtual committee gatherings drew in about a half dozen friends to each session. Sharings and discussion were helpful to friends and all are looking forward to further similar gatherings.

Religious Education - friends asked for a monthly gathering for middle and high school friends in the quarter; having them simply hang out and get to know each other, and perhaps to build to service or learning activities they initiate; including Wilmington MM and others in Concord Quarter who feel able to gather.

Kennett will host Friday, January 22- Friday evening snacks, board games, movie; we may reach out to PYM children and youth staff to help facilitate.

Share the event with Concord Quarter and nearby Friends meetings.

Friends interested should reach out to Samantha Park, samanthampark@gmail.com.

Pastoral Care - we talked of what this work was and that this is perhaps the more daunting aspect of Friends getting rid of the laity; some meetings have members who are or have worked in counseling and social work roles and are able to assist friends in need more comfortably than others; it is important to note that some of that work is important to keep confidential; there are resources at the yearly meeting level to support Friends in need of physical, spiritual, mental, and financial need: https://www.pym.org/counseling/; https://www.pym.org/grants/ ; https://www.pym.org/case-management/ .

Witness and Social Concerns - Hockessin Meeting is working on a minute on AI and they have also had concerns for some years on the unhoused population in their area; letter writing campaigns do have an impact with legislators; friends were reminded of the monthly vigils at Kennett Meeting on third Saturdays and were encouraged to spread the word and to come; one friend wondered if meetings in the quarter were engaged in reparations work and we spoke of "conciliation" as a part of that, efforts to build a positive relationship since initial relationships with indigenous and African Americans were rarely positive.

Properties and Burial Grounds - we focused primarily on burial ground issues; some tips included lightning rods in legacy trees to lessen the insurance burden, although there is initial cost to lightning rod installation, pollinator or native plant gardens are much more involved greening of burial grounds, trees are more low maintenance especially in historic/filled in areas of burial grounds; yearly meeting's Property Advisory Committee suggest monthly meetings separate their burial grounds and funds to remove non-burial ground assets from anyone seeking damages from mishaps in the burial ground; there was also brief discussion of pooling human resources together to care for the active and non-active burial grounds in the quarter by forming a Friends Cemetery Association which could be managed by fewer Friends than currently are serving on property and burial ground committee.

Patterns of Racial Wounding and Racial Healing - we had two discussions of this pamphlet; friends valued sharing and hearing the experiences of others; good, deep spiritual listening is important across our meeting experiences. We commend to Friends the coming yearly meeting virtual discussion on October 29.

Minutes of Concern - Western Quarter shared 3 minutes of concern with yearly meeting in spring 2026. At Annual Sessions, Friends approved compiling all five minutes of concern received into one. I believe there will be a draft of these coming to Fall Continuing Sessions.

Colora Update - a transfer letter has been drafted with brief history and reference to minutes from July 2026; we have also recently learned of someone at

Cecil County Historic Society who might be interested in helping to find a new caretaker for the property, and we have a list of nearby Cecil County cemetery associations to approach.

Combine Support and Historic Properties in November to avoid the busy holiday season?

Friends approved having both groups meet on November 15 at 3pm via Zoom. Feel free to email Deb to join, coordinator@westernquarterquakers.org.

Upcoming Events:

Saturday, Oct 24 1pm - at Kennett Meeting, Friends Fund for Immigrant Support hosts friend Lucy who will share the story of her husband's detention at Moshannon and its impact on their family; also letter writing
October 29 7pm - PYM Virtual Discussion with authors of Patterns or Racial Wounding and Healing
November 14 - Continuing Sessions at Arch Street and virtually
November 15 3pm - Historic Properties and Support Committee
November 17 6:30pm - fundraising bingo at Stubborn Goat to support the daycare at West Grove Friends Meeting
West Grove Meeting will host a caroling evening in early December

January 17 - Western Quarterly Meeting! At Kennett Friends Meeting - 12th Query

Announcements:

tonya has an article in *Friends Journal* on Mary Ann Shadd Cary, https://www.friendsjournal.org/self-reliance-is-the-true-road-to-independence/
tonya is also now on the Kendal-Crosslands board!

Respectfully submitted,
Deb Wood, coordinator