

Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business
Asheville Friends Meeting
Third Month 12, 2017

Present: Margaret Normile; Bob Lackey; Kitti Reynolds; Alan Robinson; Edie Patrick; Pat Johnson; Sharon Smith; Steve Livingston; Adrienne Weir; Rusty Maynard; Jim Barham; Sarah Jane Thomas; Katherine Kowal; Bobby Carter; David Clements; Rylin Hansen; Patti Hughes, Clerk; Barbara Esther, Recording Clerk.

Meeting began with a period of silent worship from which clerk, Patti Hughes, read the following:

*Have we taken care to examine fully, in a loving and
prayerful spirit, the perspective of those with whom we disagree?*

Southeastern Yearly Meeting Faith and Practice

Friends accepted the agenda as prepared.

Committee Reports:

Ministry and Counsel Committee - Patti Hughes

AFM 2016 State of the Meeting Report (DRAFT)

Asheville Friends Meeting is suspended between where we are and where we hope to be. Being honest about where we are is important to the process of getting us to where we hope to be.

Our struggles: In regard to racism, we are not to the point of unraveling racism in our meeting but rather still struggling to deeply understand and accept our roles as a mostly white community in perpetuating racism both individually and as a spiritual community. We have come to unity at times over specific minutes of support for communities of color and yet sometimes hit painful impasses over terminology and use of resources. Recognizing our differences, the struggle between personalities and the difference between what is personal and what is corporate is all part of our work. We strive to be aware of the brokenness in our world and to respond through educating ourselves, direct service and financial contributions. This work can be more like mending holes in an old moth-eaten sweater than weaving new cloth. This is tedious work, not always the prettiest. New holes come up as soon as old ones are pulled together but through this work is our way forward. Many opportunities arose this last year for the use of our Quaker process as we found ourselves in deep conflict. We have also been reminded not to use Quaker process to avoid difficult concerns. Because of the present racial and interpersonal dynamics some folks have decided to stay away temporarily

or leave Meeting altogether while others have been led to engage more. We have much work to do to strengthen trust in Spirit to lead us to truth as opposed to strong personalities arguing specific points of view. There has certainly been avoidance, denial, arguments devolving to name calling, a sense of distrust and still we come and sit together in worship. The process of returning to silence to reflect as messages are spoken both during worship and worship with attention to business helps us to reflect more deeply.

When we experience how challenging it is for us as a small Quaker community with the values we prize to do difficult work in a loving and peaceful manner it becomes easier to understand the incredible challenges that face our world.

Our successes: Our Racial Justice Committee provides us with ongoing educational programs and discussions as well as adding books and films to our library that we might deepen our understanding of racism in our meeting and community.

Our First Day School Program is flourishing. The joy and bustle we hear from upstairs as we sit in silent worship is music to our ears. They are exploring what it is like to be a Quaker today, including service projects, living the Testimonies and the many Quaker organizations supporting Friends' beliefs. They have begun to study the impacts of racism on people in the U.S. and have decided to hold Junior Meeting for Business.

We recently celebrated our new members, who joined us during 2016. We have quite a few new strong regular attenders as well.

Our house had a much needed refurbishment under the thoughtful care of our House and Grounds Committee.

Other committees are working well for the most part and our outreach supports these efforts.

Our goals: improving our communication, finding ways to have more time together in social gatherings, making time to tell our personal stories, planning a whole Meeting retreat, addressing our conflicts faithfully, and making the Meeting a place that feels safe for all.

Minute 1: Friends approved the State of the Meeting Report with a few changes in wording.

Nominating Committee - Patty Burgess

The Nominating Committee would like to ask for approval of Satchel Loftis for service on the Finance Committee.

Minute 2: Satchel Loftis was approved for service on the Finance Committee

Scholarship Committee - Kitti Reynolds

Our committee would like to keep the General Scholarship Fund as a separate line item from the College Age Scholarship Fund. The GSF has typically been used to help F(f)riends from

our Meeting to attend events like SAYMA or training at Pendle Hill. The CASF has been used to help support college-age children of the Meeting with tuition or work/study programs which embody Quaker testimony.

This year we request \$200.00 for the General SF. We would like Meeting to decide how much to fund the CASF. We propose that the interest (typically \$12 to \$15) generated from the CASF be added to that fund, which presently has over \$2600.

Minute 3: Friends approved applying the interest on the College Age Scholarship Fund money to that fund each year.

Finance Committee Report - Pat Johnson

Pat presented a chart of our financial resources. We were asked to hold the treasurer and the Finance Committee in the Light as they continue to try to communicate well with the meeting at large.

General Pooled Fund	Building Fund
Checking and Money Market Fund	Money Market & CD
Operating Fund	\$800 per month added after the mortgage was paid in full
College Aged Fund	
House & Grounds Emergency Fund	
Ministry & Counsel Needs	
Meetinghouse Improvement Fund	
Bequests (Alice Brown)	
Religious Education	
Retreats	
Scholarship FGC Gathering General Scholarship	

Some questions arose regarding how committees can function when the budget is not yet approved. We have a special case this year in that trainers need some advance payment already invoiced for the workshop planned for this spring under the Racial Justice Committee. Finance Committee has already agreed that \$1200 allotted for training in 2016 can be moved to 2017 as long as it is used for that purpose since it was not possible to arrange for the training in 2016. The RJC was reassured that their invoice can be paid now, whether or not the budget is approved today. All committees can operate under the

assumption that the amount of money budgeted for each committee's work last year is available for use until the 2017 budget is approved.

We are grateful to the Finance Committee for their continued work.

Budget 2017 - Pat Johnson

Pat explained that we seek to form a budget based on the amount of contributions during the previous year. This is not to say that we cannot with care decide to increase the amount if budget needs require it. It is difficult to know in advance what all may be needed in a given year. Disagreement regarding how the reports of the budget are prepared and designed was raised. As a result we were unable to approve the budget this month.

Racial Justice Committee - Steve Livingston

Present: Sharon Smith, Margaret Farmer, Steve Livingston, Adrienne Weir

Racial Justice Committee is looking forward to our planned day-long workshop on Racism Awareness with our guest presenters Vahisha Hasan and Holly Roach, on Mar 25. We have arranged for child care and will be providing a hearty lunch and healthy snacks. We encourage Friends to participate so we may all better understand how institutional racism is affecting the life of our Meeting community, and learn how to more effectively acknowledge it and address it.

We will be hosting our monthly film offering on Fri. Mar 31. We have not yet decided what film to offer. We intend to show the documentary film "13th" in April and will have an invited guest who is an authority on incarceration as a form of modern day slavery.

Communications Committee - Steve Livingston

Communications Committee met on 3/5/2017. Present were committee members Sharon Smith, Margaret Farmer, Bob Lackey, Steve Livingston (clerk) and guest Nathan Phillips. The clerk expresses his appreciation to these Friends who have come forward to share the work of the committee, as this is the first time in more than a decade that the committee has consisted of more than two Friends, and there is much work to do.

We will begin by addressing the most utilized aspect of our Meeting's communications, the email listserv. We will be switching over from our current and longstanding, archaic and inadequate system, "Mailman" to the much more up to date and versatile system, "Mail Chimp". Despite the apparent regressive evolution represented by the names, the new system will allow us for example to attach the minutes of the business meeting directly to the email.

In the coming months we will be discerning how to improve our use of our other communications media, such as our website and facebook page. We will be looking at other ways we can serve the Meeting by facilitating wider and more effective communications. To that end we welcome input from other Friends. Please don't hesitate to approach or contact anyone on the committee, subsequent to today's business meeting.

Peace and Earth Committee - Pat Johnson

Friends can sign the declaration on line using the link below before Wednesday at 8 pm.
A DECLARATION OF SOLIDARITY BY PEOPLE OF FAITH IN WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA

(To be released on March 14, 2017 – Deadline for signatures March 13. To add your signature, go to this link: <http://bit.ly/2mnoVRw>)

As members of faith communities and immigrant communities in Western North Carolina, we find ourselves in turbulent times. New policies on immigration enforcement threaten to round up immigrants, split apart families, and deport our neighbors, who have lived and worked as contributing members of our communities for decades.

Recent executive orders on immigration and the implementing Department of Homeland Security's memos dangerously escalate existing anti-immigrant policies. They target all undocumented community members by terminating prosecutorial discretion. They penalize asylum seekers and family members who help children seek safety. They force local police to serve as immigration agents.

By executive order, detainees and deportees now include parents of young children, long-time, well-established residents who hold jobs and pay taxes, devoted moms and dads, and even patients seeking treatment for serious illnesses.

These extraordinary actions divide children from their parents, and siblings and spouses from one another. Aggressive raids by ICE agents (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) are instilling acute fear and anxiety throughout the immigrant community. They threaten to impede not only the American spirit of neighborliness and good will but also the industry and commerce of our nation.

As Americans, we are dismayed. As people of faith we are also committed to taking action. As Protestants and Catholics, Buddhists and Jews, Unitarian Universalists and Muslims, Bahá'í and Pagans, Quakers and others, we share at least two spiritual imperatives: to love our neighbors, and to welcome those who come from far off lands seeking shelter.

In the Hebrew Scriptures it is written "*You shall love your neighbor as yourself.*" (Leviticus 19:18)

Jesus cites this text and proclaims love of neighbor as one the two greatest commandments. (Mark 12:31) In the Quran we read: “*if relatives, orphans, and needy persons are present, you shall treat them kindly.*” (Quran 4:8)

As people of faith, we must therefore stand in solidarity with the approximately eleven million people who are living in this country peaceably and productively and whose status is now threatened by these unprecedented actions.

We pledge to do everything in our power, as individuals and as faith communities, to protect the immigrants among us from hostile action by our government. Working alongside our immigrant neighbors, we will create sanctuary spaces and raise money for legal assistance. We will urge and pursue federal, state and local actions* that will open the way for immigrants to achieve their full potentials as sojourners in this land. God protect our neighbors, and God grant us one and all the courage to stand with them.

***Federal, State, and Local Governments Actions we will urge and pursue:**

- Our Senators and Representatives in Congress to recognize that these dramatically expanded efforts to deport peaceful residents are not supported by the majority of Americans and to not fund the expansion of immigration enforcement in our communities or at our borders.
- The Departments of Justice and Homeland Security to instruct Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents to treat potential deportees with dignity and respect, and not as criminals, and provide them with access to legal counsel and the benefits of due process to which they are entitled as residents in this county.
- WNC municipal and county law enforcement agencies to focus on keeping our communities safe, not on assisting ICE efforts to deport peaceable residents.
- The North Carolina General Assembly to repeal the state law making sanctuary cities illegal.
- The U.S. Congress to enact bipartisan comprehensive immigration reform.
- Local law enforcement agencies and ICE to respect of our religious liberty to offer sanctuary.

Minute 4: Friends approved our solidarity with the Declaration. The clerk will sign the declaration on behalf of the meeting. One Friend pointed out that another quote from Leviticus 19, verses 33 and 34 would also be appropriate for this declaration.

Treasurer's Report - Alan Robinson

This item was passed over due to the previous discussion under Finance and Budget. After asking for his report to be addressed, although the clerk had already postponed further work on budget and treasurer's report until April, the treasurer tendered his resignation from the office of treasurer. Cooperation between the treasurer and the Finance Committee, which has not been effective, is a necessary component for the way forward. Friends took some time in silence to hold the meeting and the outgoing treasurer in the Light.

Announcements:

Christopher Foreman wrote asking for a letter of transfer to Swannanoa Valley Friends Meeting.

Minute 5: Friends approved commendation for transfer of Christopher Foreman to Swannanoa Valley Friends Meeting.

All-Meeting Retreat - thoughts were requested and the following ideas were shared: Light-hearted interaction such as eating together, making music, and other activities were recommended. A consideration of what has transpired in our meeting beginning with the Ministry and Counsel Committee was called for. Because we have such strong individuals in our midst we have perhaps encountered personal supremacy as opposed to racial supremacy. Hearing from those who are not in our midst anymore without any assignation of blame or without naming the source could help us to understand better what has transpired in our meeting.

50th celebration - After the Easter egg hunt on April 16, 2017, we will celebrate the 50th birthday of this monthly meeting. Pictures and stories are requested. They can be directed to the clerk.

We received an invitation from Martha Huggins to a celebration of George Oldham's 95th birthday on Saturday, April 15th from 3-5 pm at the Magnolia Room at Carolina Village Medical Center (drop in). No gifts, please. Your presence is the best present. RSVP marthaohuggins@yahoo.com Both George and his daughter, Martha, are members of this meeting. They formed a worship group to serve the Hendersonville area when George moved to Carolina Village. Martha's sister, Ellen, is also a member of our meeting.

A Friend expressed his love and appreciation for all of us in the meeting. As we move forward we are urged to discern together what our tasks are, relying on faith and love with the search for truth underlying our proceedings.

We closed with a moment of silence to meet again as way opens on Fourth Month 9, 2017.