

Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business
Asheville Friends Meeting
Twelfth Month 30, 2018
(Meeting was postponed due to snow)

(DRAFT)

Present: Robin Wells, Clerk, Pat Campbell, Recording Clerk. Barbara Ester, Beth Eddy, Mike Eddy, Steve Livingston, Margaret Normile, NancyLynn Sharpless, Pat Johnson, Katherine Kowal, Sarah Jane Thomas, Rylin Hansen, Bobby Carter, Jim Cavener, Rusty Maynard, Jim Barham, Annika Schauer, Edie Patrick

Meeting began with a period of silent worship from which clerk, Robin Wells, read the following query from SAYMA, after stating that AFM Meeting will be exploring this Query this upcoming year:

How does our meeting remain in a spirit of worship when conducting business? How can we in Meeting for Business open ourselves to differing views, search for a sense of the meeting, and be guided toward resolution in the Light?

The Meeting accepted the agenda.

Minute #1: Friends approved the 11th month minutes with a correction in the attendance list.

Announcements

Our meeting will be hosting SAYMA Representative Meeting on the 15th and 16th of third month, 2019. As a host meeting, we agree to provide housing for out-of-town Friends. Please consider opening your home to one or more Friends during this meeting. A clipboard is being passed around for you to let us know how many beds you can provide. This signup sheet will be available for a few more months.

It is time to begin writing our State of the Meeting report. Committees will be contacted to participate in this valuable process. The first draft of the State of the Meeting report will be presented at the 2nd month business meeting.

The 2019 Secret Pal program begins in January. Everyone is invited to participate in this fun multi-generational activity. To join in the fun, fill out a card and wait to get your Secret Pal assignment. Once you get the information for your secret pal, you will bring in a small gift for that person each first day for four weeks. On the last week, we will have a reveal party where we will give our last gifts. This is a wonderful way to get to know others in Meeting, both young and not-so-young.

House and Grounds Committee announced that the back deck and stairs project will commence shortly; the Contractor is late starting.

Treasurer Report: The Proposed 2019 Budget--Satchel Loftis was not able to be here today and so will present at the 1st Month Meeting for Business. If any Committee budget request has not been submitted, please get them in to Satchel or Pat Johnson.

Committee Reports

Peace and Earth Committee--Steve Livingston provided copies of the following proposed minute to be considered at the following Meeting for Business:

We of Asheville Friends Meeting (Quakers) feel led to share our deep distress over the conditions in Gaza brought about by 51 years of occupation and oppression by a close ally of the United States. We are convinced that we must speak the truth as we know it, and we must act upon what we have discerned to be true.

1. Gaza is a prison, everyone there is serving a life sentence for the crime of being born there or having fled there during the Nakba (Palestinian Holocaust).
2. Government policies of denying basic human rights and withholding essential human needs such as water and electricity are forms of collective punishment and as such are violations of international law and deeply antithetical to our Quaker principles.
3. Military actions such as destruction of residential buildings, cultural centers and TV stations are forms of collective punishment and tantamount to ethnic cleansing.

4. We condemn the ongoing oppression of the people of Gaza and the violence that it perpetuates.

5. We stand in solidarity with the oppressed people and are committed to making investment and purchasing decisions to avoid support of these human rights violations and to promote peace, cooperation, self-determination, and reconciliation in the region.

When bringing forth this proposed minute, Steve explained that there is a movement in the federal legislature to make it illegal for organizations and corporations to participate in the BDS (boycott, divestment, sanctions) movement.

SAYMA Queries-Edie Patrick/Robin Wells

All revisions sent to the SAYMA query were approved through our business meeting. Any proposed revisions not approved by Meeting were not forwarded to the committee.

Peace and Earth Committee has written an additional query that we reviewed added. It is in the section, "Queries for Living in the Wider Community."

SAYMA Queries --to be included in our Faith and Practice

(Version Following 12-30-18 Business Meeting)

SAYMA Committee to Revise the Guide to Our Faith and Practice

Revised Queries (Draft B)

As of the end of September 22, 2018

“Queries are understood to have three distinct values: the personal value, as we find the answers in ourselves; the interpretive value, by which the progressive application of our religious principles to life is disclosed; and the corporate value, by which the state or the Society can be appraised. At

the reading of them, let us search our own hearts in the Light of the Holy Spirit and carefully ponder these questions for our personal answer.”

Faith and Practice, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting (1935)

“Quakers use queries for personal reflection, self-examination, or spirited discussion.

American Friends Service Committee “An Introduction to Quaker Testimonies (2011)

A: Queries for Monthly and Yearly Meetings:

1. * In our Meeting for Worship, in what ways are both silent and vocal ministry rooted in a shared experience of the Light? During meeting for worship, do we search for guidance from the Light? Do we begin silent worship and stay centered despite distractions?
2. * How can I build community through my thoughts and actions regarding being on time to Meeting for Worship?
3. *How does our meeting remain in a spirit of worship when conducting business? How can we in Meeting for Business open ourselves to differing views, search for a sense of the meeting, and be guided toward resolution in the Light?
4. *How can we each use our individual gifts in the work of maintaining our meeting? In what ways can we honor the wide range of contributions from individual Friends to the meeting? How do we help Friends recognize their own gifts?
5. *How do we build community through monthly and yearly meetings for fellowship, service, and learning? How do we seek peace and unity in our meeting? How do we address discord and conflict in our meeting? (Approved 11-11-18)
6. Are we sensitive to the spiritual and physical needs of those making up the meeting community? How do we lovingly respond to the needs of homebound, distant, or lonely members and attenders?
- 7.* How are members and attenders and their meetings using clearness committees as a way of gaining clarity in personal and corporate matters?
8. *How does our meeting provide for continuing religious education in the manner of Friends?

9. Do we individually assume our rightful share of responsibility for the work and the financial support of the monthly meeting? How does the meeting support and provide resources for those with special needs?
10. *How does our meeting support those who are struggling with addiction? In what ways does our meeting address the systemic causes of those addictions?
11. (Added to number A. 4)
12. (Added to number A. 1)
13. *Am I open to insights from other Friends in the meeting? Do I seek guidance from meeting members and others who share Friends' beliefs?
14. *How do we use technology to enhance, detract, or distract from the spiritual life of the meeting?
15. * How can I speak so that Friends can better hear messages? How can the Meeting improve the meeting?
16. * How do we show that we value older Friends among us?
17. How do we support Friends who require extra care? How do we support those giving the extra care?
18. How does the meeting use the Meeting for Threshing?
19. What is our understanding of eldering? How do we as Friends use eldering to provide guidance and/or encourage one another to share our gifts? Do we test our leadings to elder with other members of the meeting? (Approved 11-11-18)
20. *How do we individually identify and reach out to absent and present Friends whom we find difficult, unlikeable, or challenging? How do we, individually and collectively, support the care and nurture of our meeting community?
(Approved 11-11-18)

(NOTE: Our Care and Nurture Committee isn't responsible for this in our meeting, so we suggest removing the committee name and focus more on the action.)

21. How do we interact with those who have been hurt by the meeting community? How do we support and learn from those Friends who have left the meeting in painful circumstances. (Approved 11-11-18)
22. *How does our meeting attract new members? When new people attend how does our meeting help them feel welcome? How does our meeting respond when members stop attend meeting?

B: Queries for Personal Discernment

1. How do I minimize distracting others during Meeting for Worship? How can I minimize my reaction to distractions during Meeting?
2. * Do I hold in the Light the responsibility to share my views even though I perceive I may be a minority of one? How do I discern when to stand in the way and when to stand aside? (Approved 11-11-18)
3. * How have my unspoken assumptions about individuals or groups of people caused them pain? How has this awareness changed my behavior?
4. * What yearly meeting or monthly meeting responsibilities are mine to do?
5. * When I see Friends engage in actions or words which seem inconsistent with the testimonies of the Religious Society of Friends, how do I season my reaction to be sure it does not come from lack of understanding or unrecognized prejudice? How do I respond?
6. * What are some of the distractions that keep me from the right ordering of my life?
7. * In what restorative activities do I take part in that are restorative? How do I develop my physical, emotional and intellectual abilities? How do I care for my body as a gift from the Spirit? (Approved 12-30-18)
8. *How is fun a part of my life?
9. * How does my expression of sexuality reflect love and respect?
- 10.*How do we make use of the Bible, the writings of Friends, and other inspirational literature? Are we open to new Light from wherever it may come? Do we seek to understand and appreciate those of other faiths?
11. *_What is my daily practice of meditation, prayer,or worship? What spiritual guidance do I seek in making decisions, especially in difficult times? (Approved 11-11-18)
12. * How do I/we, individually/collectively sought to understand the discomfort thst often accompnies the perception of the feeling of “other?” How have we individually or collectively sought to understand the discomfort that often accompanies the perception of feeling “other?” (Approved 12/30/18)
13. * What does it mean to me to look for that of God in every person?
14. How has continuing revelation informed my spiritual journey?

C. Queries Based on the Testimonies (Approved 11-11-18)

1. * How do we distinguish between needs and wants? How do we decide how much is enough?
2. * How do I/we address conflict? How am I led to work toward unity and harmony in my personal life and in my meeting? What kind of risks are we willing to take to resolve conflict?
3. * How does the way I live my life help eliminate the causes for all wars?
4. * How do I practice Friends' testimony against military preparations and all participation in war?

5. How do I center my life in the awareness of the presence of God or Spirit so my life that do not bear the same witness? (Approved 11-11-18)

6. * Do I attempt to tell the truth at all times. Under what circumstances is it difficult for me to tell the truth?

[The following was a suggested change but there was no unity regarding this suggestion. However, there was unity in passing this on as an alternative suggestion: How do I discern when it is better not to tell the truth? How do I assess when it is better not to say anything?]

7. * Am I honest in all areas of my life? How do I discern right action when the truth is unclear?
8. * How do I bring nonviolent practices to all my relationships? Where there is hatred, division, and conflict, do I seek to be an agent of reconciliation?
9. * How do I show respect for all people, especially those I perceive as different or "other"? (Approved 11-11-18)
10. * How do I address inequality in all forms? What am I doing to bring about equal opportunities for those who suffer discrimination?
11. * How do I recognize and celebrate the diversity that exists in my meeting?
12. * Do I search for that of God within all persons regardless of their differences?
13. * Do I consider Friends' beliefs and testimonies in my life choices? What are my priorities with respect to how I use my time and treasure?
14. * How do my Quaker values inform my choice of work? How do I conduct my business and financial affairs so they are consistent with Friends' testimonies?

D: Queries for Families

1. * How do I grow in love and understanding with my children and with all other young people? In what ways am I an example for them? How do I seek out and learn from their insights and concerns? (approved 12/30/18)
2. * How do I make the presence of the Light felt in my home?
3. * How does my family use Quaker process to build community and grow in the Spirit? How does my family address difficult topics in a way that encourages honest and respectful communication?
4. * How do I as a parent prepare my children to be responsible in an ever-changing world?
5. * How do I recognize marriage as a loving and sacred relationship requiring mutual consideration and continuing adjustments?
6. * How do I practice the art of listening in my family, even beyond words? How do I show respect and understanding for everyone? How do I plan activities that will include all members of my family? (approved 12/30/18)
7. * How do I balance the need for privacy and intimacy in my family life with my desire to make my home a center of hospitality?

E: * Queries for Living in the Wider Community:

- 1.* How does the meeting offer young people opportunities for fellowship and service? In what ways do I help them assume responsibilities in the home, the meeting, and the larger community?
2. * Deleted query about Schools after considering Columbia's minute.
3. * Why is addiction so pervasive in our culture? How do our laws affect issues of addiction?
4. How does your meeting maintain its integrity as it participates in the wider community? (approved 12/30/18)
5. * In what ways does your understanding of current issues inform your participation in the wider community?
6. * How do I affirm my commitment to influencing governmental actions through informed witness and/or considered resistance? (approved 12/30/18)
7. * In what ways do I discern that my actions result from leadings of the Spirit?
8. * When Friends are led to participate in civil disobedience, how does our

meeting encourage them to seek clearness about their action? Does the meeting then decide whether or not to support that action? (approved 12/30/18)

9. * How can I alert myself to the subtle as well as obvious injustices which may exist in my social and economic life? (approved 12/30/18)

10. * How do I support fair and equitable use of resources?

Can SAYMA consider repeating this query in the Earth Care section?

11. * How can I seek to further understand and remove systemic causes of misery and suffering? How do I offer refuge and support to those who are oppressed and/or ostracized, and yet seek that of God in their oppressor? (It is suggested to put a comma after "ostracized.")

12. * In what ways do I and my meeting support young people faced with the possibility of being recruited for military service?

13. * How does being known as a Friend help me on my spiritual journey?

14. * How does awareness of the living conditions of people in my local and global communities affect my purchasing choices? In turn, how do these choices affect the well-being of others?

15. How can we model right use of electronic devices so that both our personal lives and the life of the meeting are enhanced? (approved 12/30/18)

16. * How do electronic devices contribute to or interfere with my relationships with others and with my participation in the face to face activities of my community? (approved 12/30/18)

Suggesting an additional, new query: How do I and my meeting interface with other cultural/racial groups in my community and in the wider world? (approved 12/30/18)

Suggesting another additional, new query: How do we acknowledge and honor Indigenous Peoples whose land we occupy? How do we connect with and solicit truth from Indigenous Peoples whom we have impacted? How do we promote healing of those impacted? (approved 12/30/18)

Section F: Queries for Care of the Earth

1. How do I express my gratitude for Creation?

2. How do I honor all living things, including myself? Do I seek God in the entire world?

3. How mindful am I that actions for peace and justice are interwoven with the

right sharing of Earth's resources? How much is enough?

4. How do we hold in the Light the impact of climate change on the "least of these" –the vulnerable members of the human, animal and plant communities?
5. As we integrate care for the Earth into our lives, how can we seek ways to share with our Meeting and others the values of ecological concerns?

It was suggested to add a new query to Care of the Earth:

6. How do I seek to reduce my use of fossil fuels? How does my meeting seek to reduce its use of fossil fuels? (approved 12/30/18)

Section G: Queries for Young Friends (This is the committee's reworked version. It is being looked over by SAYF. Note that it has not been edited yet.)

1. How can we create peace in a hostile world?
2. How do you stand firmly against inequality? How do you peacefully challenge [problematic social norms] discriminatory social institutional practices?
3. How do you create and nurture community?
4. How do you practice good social work while nurturing your well-being? What avenues exist between those?
5. What do you do that harms/affects the Environment? How can you lessen your impact?
6. In what ways do you use your voices and express your opinions? *When do you reevaluate your perspective? (SAYF: Please consider changing "opinions" to "views" as the original word "perspectives" can include facts and not just "opinions")
7. How can we be supportive of each other's identity and growth?
8. (Moved to be the 2nd sentence in number 6.)
9. How do you remain grounded in a materialistic society?
10. How do you reconcile simplicity and self-expression?
11. How do you apply Quaker values to your social media presence?
12. How does your energy change as you enter adulthood?
13. What is the Light? Where do you find that in your life?
14. How do you identify as Quaker, and how do you explain that to your peers?
15. To whom do you extend your compassion?

We want to honor the Young Friends' role in writing their own queries and we hesitate to offer changes. However, we want to suggest that the Young Friends consider what pronouns they use. Only 2 of the 15 queries use the first person. More than one in the Asheville discussion preferred "I/we" to "you." One said that the use of "you" is loaded with separation, the "other."

Section H:* Queries for a Preparative Monthly Meeting

1. * Does the meeting have an understanding of Quaker history and practice? How does this understanding contribute to the life the meeting?
2. Does the meeting study Friends' literature and SAYMA's Guide to our Faith and Practice?
3. Is the meeting able to carry out usual organizational functions such as appointing a clerk, maintaining a treasury, and recording business meetings? Does the meeting seek and listen to Spirit-led guidance in making decisions?
4. * Are there enough Friends and/or regular attenders to support a monthly meeting? If two or three of these were to stop attending, what would happen to the meeting? Is there ongoing outreach for new attenders?
5. How does the meeting face its challenges, seeking assistance from Spirit, the sponsoring meeting, and yearly meeting?
6. How does the meeting have programs of religious education for all ages?
7. How does the meeting build community other than in Meeting for Worship?
8. * How does the meeting encourage visitors and regular attenders to increase their involvement with Friends?
9. Does the meeting interact with Wider Quaker Organizations (Friends General Conference, American Friends Service Committee, Friends Committee on National Legislation, Quaker Earthcare Witness, etc.) through conferences and other means? Does the meeting support the yearly meeting through financial contributions and attendance at yearly and representatives' meetings?
10. Does the meeting follow Friends' practice of service through faithfulness to the Spirit?
11. Is the preparative meeting receiving adequate spiritual and practical support from the sponsoring meeting.

Approved changes will be sent to the SAYMA query committee for their discernment as they prepare the final queries for SAYMA's Faith and Practice.

Minute #2: Asheville Friends Meeting wishes to minute their appreciation for the hard work of the SAYMA Query Committee and especially for Edie Patrick's work on these queries here and on the SAYMA Committee.

We closed with a moment of silence to meet again as ways opens in first month, 2019.