

Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business

Asheville Friends Meeting

12th Month 14, 2014

Co-Clerks: Gail Hipkins, Alan Robinson

Recording Clerk: Steve Livingston

Attendance: Kitti Reynolds, Edwin Brown, Jim Cavener, Nancy Kuykendall, Lauren Adams, Ruth Stewart, Jim Hipkins, Gjeorge and Kristi Gjelfriend, Katherine Kowal, Pat Johnson, Patti Hughes, Sharon Smith, Desaray Smith, Margaret Normile, Gita Larsen, Rylin Hansen, Robin Wells, Bobby Carter, Adrienne Weir

Meeting began at with a moment of silence at 12:11 p.m. . Clerk Alan Robinson read from The Growing Edge by Howard Thurman:

Christmas is a mood, a quality, a symbol. It is never merely a fact. As a fact it is a date on the calendar – to the believer it is the anniversary of an event in human history. An individual may relate himself meaningfully to the fact or the event, but that would not be Christmas.

The mood of Christmas – what is it? It is a quickening of the presence of other human beings into whose lives a precious part of one's own has been released. It is a memory of other days when into one's path an angel appeared spreading a halo over an ordinary moment or a commonplace event. It is an iridescence of sheer delight that bathed one's whole being with something more wonderful than words can ever tell. Of such is the mood of Christmas.

Friends approved the agenda as presented.

Treasurer pointed out regarding the minutes of 11th month's Meeting for Business that the moneys for the ad in the Martin Luther King Breakfast program would come from Peace and Earth's general outreach funds, not from the General Fund as reported.

Friends approved the minutes of 11th month with this revision.

Treasurer's Report

Pat J reviewed the 2014 budget and expenditures. She reported that we got a lot of contributions and that brought us “into the black” by over \$500.

Clerk asked if Treasurer preferred cash or check contributions. Pat replied that she had no preference, except that if a Friend wanted acknowledgment of donations, it would be best to write a check.

Pat reminded Friends that the draft budget presented to Meeting today is subject to

change and will be reviewed in more detail next month, and asked that Friends acquaint themselves with the draft budget and give it some thought in the interim.

Reviewing the insurance costs, Pat recalled that when she and Adrienne sought a different provider, the first question they asked was whether, and when, there had been upgrades to our building, e.g. heating system, roof, etc. Friends suggested that there was some documentation about this, in David Clements' possession.

A Friend suggested that the funding for the MLK ad be moved from P&E's budget to the advertising budget.

A Friend asked whether there should be funds in next year's budget for expenses associated with the FGC Gathering in Cullowhee. Another Friend inquired whether we should budget some funds to advertise in the Gathering program. A friend suggested that given the proximity of the Gathering, we should consider setting aside funds to help local Friends who otherwise could not afford to attend.

Friends united with enthusiasm in gratitude for Pat's faithful stewardship and cogent presentation of our Meeting's financial reports.

Peace and Earth

Katherine K presented P&E's end-of-year report:

In 2014 Peace and Earth did the following:

- 1. Distributed \$3,000 in Quaker outreach and \$3,200 in general outreach (See handouts for specifics.)*
- 2. Met jointly with Finance committee to find a way to continue to be able to make large donations for special projects. We recommended that a threshing session be held within the next year to decide how to use the building fund and that in the meantime Friends could make designated contributions to large projects. Meeting for Business was not in unity with these recommendations.*
- 3. Sponsored 2 food drives for MANNA Foodbank*
- 4. Sponsored two spiritual enrichment sessions on the Middle East - one by Patti Hughes and one by Jim Barton, substituting for Ahmad Amara who sadly died before his scheduled presentation.*
- 5. Presented to Swananoa Valley minute on boycott of Israeli products manufactured in the West Bank. The meeting was not in unity with this proposal.*
- 6. Sponsored 3 letter-writing campaigns on 5th Sundays, including on coal ash clean up, repeal of mandatory minimum sentencing, and for vetoe of the keystone pipeline proposal.*
- 7. Sponsored a trip to Snow Camp to see the pagent, Pathway to Freedom, about the Quakers' role in the underground railway.*

8. *Sponsored two discussions on racism led by Adrienne Wier and provided books for our library on White Like Me and The New Jim Crow.*

9. *Participated in the AFSC Liaison program and appointed a liaison (Patti Hughes.)*

10. *Offered hospitality at the Meeting House for vets attending the Vets for Peace conference.*

11. *Placed ads in the programs of the Vets for Peace Conference and the Martin Luther King breakfast.*

With regard to our donation to Madison Quakers, Katherine described our relationship with them in support of reconciliation with Vietnam.

In response to an inquiry about our involvement in Hope to Home, Katherine explained that we are continuing to sponsor the same individual, and the committee is still active even though Meeting's one year commitment has elapsed. The woman we sponsored has become part of our community, it is fitting that we continue to provide the friendship and support that she needs. Clerk described that she is alienated from most of her family.

Vets for Peace were enormously grateful for the \$400 we donated, along with the hospitality we extended for their annual meeting here.

Proposed Racial Justice Committee

A proposal written by Sharon Smith was distributed among Friends. Clerk Alan Robinson noted how Sharon's words tied in to experiences shared by Nancy K in talking with young boys of color at the "Black Lives Matter" rally, as well as the racially charged termination of Asheville's police chief. Sharon explained that most of what she wrote was taken from the "Showing Up For Racial Justice" group. Alan also acknowledged the perspective of ongoing discrimination against differently gendered people. He spoke of his recollection of reading "Black Like Me", relating to his own experience of coming out.

Does our Meeting have sufficient energy to establish a committee for racial justice? Such a committee would be charged with address issues within our Meeting as well as our larger community.

A Friend described that Atlanta Friends Meeting already has a committee devoted to work on racial justice. Also, Meeting will be reviewing "Cracking the Code" (a film about systemic inequality) in adult Spiritual Enrichment.

A friend suggested that we have a rap session, and offered her home as a locale, as it seems Friends need an opportunity to share. Clerk suggested that she settle on a date and promote it through our Meeting listserv.

Other Business

SAYMA has request that we submit our State of the Meeting Report for 2014 by end of third month 2015. A Friend suggested that we have an “all clerks” meeting next month to work on this. Clerk offered to facilitate this.

Steve L. remarked on how uplifting and enjoyable was the Meeting's annual holiday gathering, noting especially the number and enthusiasm of the youngest Friends among us. Friends joined in expressing gratitude for their presence in our midst.

AFM extends its appreciation and gratitude for the presence and participation of our Meeting's youngest attenders and to their parents. We are deeply blessed by their presence. Additionally we acknowledge our gratitude to our First Day School Committee, clerk Elizabeth Davis, and to Robin Wells, who contribute generously of their time, energy, and gifts to organize and inspire our youth programs.

Katherine K informed Friends that Judy Sheckel of Celo has invited us to see/hear David Zarembea of Friends Peace Camps in Kenya. He will be in the area from 4/27 to 5/3/15 and speaking on the topics of reconciliation after deadly conflict (Rwanda, Burundi, DR Congo), the work of the Africa Project of the Great Lakes Region, and homophobia in Uganda and Kenya: a Quaker response.

Kathering conveyed his need for hospitality while in our area, and asked if Friends felt led to attend a presentation on one of these themes.

Friends agreed to invite David Zarembea of Friends Peace Camps to our Meeting, with a proposed date of 5/3/2015, to speak to us on one of his chosen topics.

Closing worship

There being no further business, meeting adjourned with silence at 1:20 p.m.