

Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business

Asheville Friends Meeting

1st Month 11, 2015

Co-Clerks: Gail Hipkins, Alan Robinson

Recording Clerk: Steve Livingston

Attendance: Kitti Reynolds, Patti Hughes, Gjeorge Gjelfriend, Joy Gossett, Chris Howells, Bruce Howells, Angela Sullivan, Lauren Adams, Adrienne Weir, Jim Cavener, Ruth Stewart, Sarawila Villatora Weir, Rusty Maynard

Meeting began at with a moment of silence at 12:07 p.m. Clerk read from “The Growing Edge” by Howard Thurman:

I have only one basic statement to make about the love of God and that is that it is always concerned with breaking the sense of isolation that the individual human spirit feels as it lives its way into life.

Clerk added the concern about the Keystone XL pipeline to the agenda and Friends approved with this addition.

Approval of minutes of 12th month 2014 was postponed until next month's meeting, as they have not yet been posted on the website.

Treasurer's Report

Adrienne distributed the Treasurer's Report in the absence of Pat J. and asked if there were any questions. At clerk's request she reported that our current fund balance is \$12162.68, and our net income was \$2839.23. Friends expressed their comfort with leaving this excess in the General Fund.

Friends accepted the Treasurer's Report.

Budget

Adrienne distributed the proposed budget. She pointed out that our income this past year was higher than expected, and noted that as a result our proposed budget reflects a slight increase in income over this year's budget, but, she pointed out, the amount was less than our actual income had increased.

In response to a Friend's inquiry, Adrienne pointed out that the budget allows the appropriate flexibility to Peace and Earth in discerning what organizations our Meeting will support, and in what amount.

Friends approved the proposed budget for 2015.

Care and Nurture Committee

Clerk Gail Hipkins read the report in the absence of committee clerk.

Care and Nurture committee met on January 4th after the Meeting for Worship at 12:15 until 1:15. Margaret led the discussion. Jim Cavener and Jim Hipkins were present and Robin Wells sat in and offered suggestions. Nick Wells was unable to attend.

We discussed the purpose of the Care and Nurture committee and agreed that it was to take care of members who were sick, grieving, had short term problems we could help with. We also agreed to pay attention to needs that were expressed by people in the meeting. Jim C will cover the back of the meeting hall, Jim H will cover the front and Margaret will cover the middle of where people are sitting. We will talk with people who have expressed a concern and report it to the Care and Nurture committee. Other members of the Meeting need to be aware of and offer assistance to those in need. We will be aware of new members/attenders and introduce ourselves and give basic information about the meeting to newcomers.

We discussed people of the meeting who had certain problems and decided who would talk to them. We will send a condolence card to Scottie and family and also a card to Rebecca Jackson who had surgery in December. Jim H will plan to meet with Edwin Brown to see if he can be of assistance. We will continue to monitor Marcie Thaxter.

We discussed the updating of the Emergency Contact list. Marcia Master will provide the typing needed. We will do the "buddy system" first and then more extensive information of the members. We are asking Ministry and Counsel to give us an updated list of the members and attenders of the Meeting as a first step in this procedure.

She reported as an example of their work that Care and Nurture had come to the aid of a Friend who could not close a window on their home. A committee member went to the home and took care of the problem.

Proposed Racial Justice Committee

No further action was brought to the Meeting regarding this proposal.

Letter of introduction for Friend Sharon Smith

Clerk Alan Robinson reported that Sharon has begun holding worship sharing meetings at her home around the concerns of racism. Philadelphia Yearly Meeting is currently struggling to come to terms with several serious episodes of racism in its midst, one of which was recounted in the 10th month 2014 issue of *Friends Journal*, in which Sharon's article about her experience in New England also appeared. Sharon was asked by Philadelphia Yearly Meeting to participate in a called Meeting for Business.

Alan read the letter of introduction provided by the clerks for Sharon.

To Friends of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting,

Greetings on behalf of Asheville Friends Meeting, Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting and Association. We ask that you welcome Friend Sharon Smith in your efforts to resolve the issues surrounding racial justice and equality for all. The values speak (or ought to speak) to all Friends considering our testimonies of Equality, Peace, and Community.

Friend Sharon Smith has awakened within all of us in Asheville Friends Meeting a renewed awareness that we have a responsibility in these issues that so clearly affect our entire community. We are certain that she will make a valuable contribution to the discussion, even though some of the things she will say will undoubtedly be difficult to hear. May everyone listen with open hearts and ears. We are certain that much will be accomplished during your Called Meeting for Business.

Yours in Friendship

A Friend questioned whether it is true that Sharon's presence in our midst has awakened something within all of us. Clerk shared that her ministry is a powerful one and has affected all who have participated, and hoped that all Friends would be able to share in this awakening. Another Friend shared that her feeling in Sharon's presence was more one of relief than of awakening. She shared her personal experience as the mother of mixed race children, having to deal with issues of racism concerning her children that she herself as a White woman never faced.

Another Friend expressed that it seems easy for us White Friends to live in a bubble of privilege, and her gratitude that Sharon has brought a new level of awareness of the challenges faced by persons of color, and Quakers of color.

Clerk asked for a moment of silence.

Membership transfer for Jennifer Walker

Clerk reminded Friends of Jennifer's history of frequent attendance and enthusiastic and rewarding participation in the life of our Meeting prior to going to graduate school in Athens GA. Clerk explained that she had chosen to retain her membership in Asheville Meeting through her school career, and through her years of settling into her adult life. She has landed in Durham Friends Meeting, and has found there a home suitable to fill the space that our Meeting once occupied in her life. Jennifer has requested a letter of transfer to Durham Meeting, which letter our clerks have provided.

State Of the Meeting report

Clerk asked that we have a committee clerks' meeting to determine what needs to be reported, and how to report it, suggesting that the meeting take place on a Saturday. Clerks will call or email to set a date.

Pipeline Issue

Friends were reminded of a vigil coming up next week in Asheville to oppose the construction of the pipeline. Clerk reminded Friends of the current state of the legislation, and some of the problems with extracting and transporting the tar sands crude oil.

A Friend queried whether the XL pipeline is a moot point at this time due to the low price of cleaner crude oil, and whether Friends are expressing a genuine concern or if it's "just theater". Another Friend pointed out that the pipeline is routed through sacred lands of native people, some of whom consider its construction to be an act of war.

Closing worship

There being no further business, meeting adjourned with silence at 12:57 p.m.