

Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business
Asheville Friends Meeting
4th Month 11,2021

Present: Bob Lackey, Clerk; Beth Eddy, Recording Clerk

Present via Zoom: Morgan Murray, Mike Eddy, Margaret Normile, Patricia Johnson, Gita Larson, Patti Hughes, Pat Campbell, Margaret Farmer, Rylin Hansen, Robin Wells, Jim Cavener, Satchel Loftis, Steve Livingston, Jim Barham, Sarah Jane Thomas, Jane Fernandes, Ellen Carr, Bobby Carter

Meeting opened with Silent Worship

The Clerk shared a reading out of silence.

Guide to Quaker Practice by Howard Brinton. Pp. 54-55. Pendle Hill Pamphlet 20, 1955.

“Since the religion of the Society of Friends is based on an inward experience deeper than intellectual concepts, it cannot be taught in a school curriculum. Religion of this type is communicated only through practice. A child observing sincere religious acts performed by parents or elders becomes thereby religiously educated. There is only one Teacher of religion, the Divine Spirit working in the heart, either directly or through others. The meeting for worship and the meeting for business are therefore the chief religious educational agencies in the Society of Friends.”

Minute #1: Friends approved the 3rd month minutes with the following corrections: Minute numbering has two number 4;

Attach the final “state of the meeting” report, which had some minor editing completed after the meeting; Clearly note that this is the **final 2021 budget** in the attachment; In the P&E report clarify that the excess monies collected will be used to provide gifts for the May graduates; Also clarify that the center advertise widely including their FB page; The Indigenous Peoples Study center was formed in 2007; Professor Adcock is the new executive director. He and Pat plan to meet and talk about additional options for support; Pat welcomed other AFM members who are interested to join them; there was some additional editing of capital and lower case and apostrophe’s which need to be corrected.

Announcements:

The two virtual events from UNCA related to Indigenous Peoples occurred as planned. If you missed them, you have another opportunity to hear them as both presentations were recorded. Pat Johnson will send the recording links in the (4/14/21) AFM weekly digest.

Outdoor Meeting for Worship on the lawn of the Meetinghouse began again on April 4 and will continue as weather permits. The outdoor meeting will be connected with our online Zoom worship, so messages and announcements can be shared between groups. An email will be sent out to active members and attenders on Thursday or Friday each week to let them know if we will be holding the outdoor meeting. Please contact Robin Wells at robin.wells.777@gmail.com if you have not been receiving these emails and would like to.

EARTH DAY CELEBRATION; Margaret Normile

In honor of Earth Day, 2021 the Peace and Earth Committee will be presenting a Zoom program on April

21 st from 7-8:30 PM. Steve Livingston is going to honor the beauty of the earth by showing us his slides of beautiful waterfalls and wildflowers around North Carolina. He will lead a discussion during the second half hour with the query, “What beauties of Nature feed your soul and inspire you to be a better steward of Mother Earth?” You who have seen Steve’s photos of his waterfall trips on Facebook know what a special treat his presentation will be. The Zoom invitation will go out to AFM email list before the event takes place.

Committees:

Finance; Ellen Carr, Treasurer, Satchel and Pat Campbell

April Quarterly Report:

Satchel noted that it has been a quiet first quarter with only the normal financial activities. A final quarterly Report will be provided at the 5th month business meeting.

Satchel informed us that he will be around for another month and will be working with Ellen Carr to transfer the financial files and information to her. Based on connectivity in Brazil, he plans to dial in and join us after his move.

Much thanks to Ellen Carr for joining the finance committee, and agreeing to be the treasurer.

Bob Lackey suggested that with the ‘unexpected’ gifts of stimulus checks, individuals may wish to consider donating these monies to the AFM.

Racial Justice Committee: Steve Livingston

**AFM Report for Meeting for Worship with attention to
business from Racial Justice Committee
April 11, 2021**

Here's the list of local org's we support, from our last set of minutes (2021 1st month):

My Daddy Taught Me That (MDTMT)

Based in Asheville, NC, My Daddy Taught Me That is a non-profit organization that provides mentorship programs for middle and high school Black boys. Founded by Keynon Lake, a former social worker, author, and Asheville native, MDTMT's focus is on helping young men transition from adolescence to adulthood by way of good decision-making, accepting responsibility, and taking accountability for their actions.

,My Sistah Taught Me That (MSTMT)

My Sistah Taught Me That (MSTMT) was created for young girls in Buncombe County and other areas in Western North Carolina to have exposure to professional women in our community who will provide educational opportunities and open dialogue to help them mature. The program launched on Thursday, July 7, 2016 with over fifty participants. Leslie Council.

Positive Changes Youth Ministry

Current project to support vocational training and placement for students of color not interested in college. Past work to support students aspiring to college. Positive Influences Program empowers the youth with the tools and skills needed to be successful in life through skill building, leadership training, tutoring, mentoring, career interest exploration, community service, college exploration and academic success initiatives. Dewana Little.

Youth Transformation League (YTL)

Our goal is to equip youth with the skills needed to be successful in all walks of life. To help close the achievement gap in schools between more affluent and less privileged children, it serves as a structured environment where students can focus on their homework, from reading and spelling assignments to solving fractions and multiplication problems to researching topics online. Libby Kyles is co-founder and former Executive Director of YTL Program (Youth Transformed for Life), an organization that creates bridges for children and families to overcome gaps of disparity.

Umoja Health and Wellness Collective

to address trauma, healing and resilience through creating a community of connections. assist disadvantaged youth in reaching and exceeding their personal, educational, and professional goals by equipping them with effective communication skills; supporting and advocating for them in the school system; investing time and resources; and creating experiences that will enhance their self-worth and improve their vision for the future.

<https://ie.gofundme.com/f/umoja-health-wellness-and-justice-collective>

Building Bridges

Individuals and grassroots groups build analysis and take action through our Popular Education, Language Justice, Racial Equity and Sustainability Circles. We're a democratically run, nonhierarchical, multiracial organization. We collaborate with diverse networks to offer popular education, racial equity, and language justice trainings that have a state, national, and global reach.

Act Out Equity

Anti-racism experienced-based training for white people to improve conversations about race

Ms. Bettie Council, www.actoutequity.com

Hood Huggers International

Historical tours of Avl focus on black history; also manages Burton St Garden

FaceBook www.hoodhuggers.com

-DeWayne Barton

Asheville Racial Justice Coalition

Walk the Walk campaign, new approaches to public safety, reparations

Rob Thomas [www,rjcavl.org](http://www.rjcavl.org)

Racial Justice Committee met on 4/5/21. Present were Gita Larson (co-clerk), Margaret Farmer, Steve Livingston, Rylin Hansen, Adrienne Weir, and Morgan Murray.

About a dozen Friends have participated regularly in the Tuesday night book discussion group. These conversations have nurtured a deepening of self-reflection, of personal relationships, and of our shared commitment to anti-racism work. Once having completed our study of Resmaa Menakem's "My Grandmother's Hands" the group decided to continue meeting in the same spirit, no longer under the direct guidance of the RJC. Anyone who is interested in joining the discussions is welcome to do so. We are now listening to the podcast "Seeing White."

The richness of our committee work is currently being fed by the individual leadings of the active members of the committee, including:

* anti-racism work at the Yearly Meeting and Monthly Meeting levels;

* meeting with and sharing the work of community organizations such as the White Caucus aka Keep It Moving Coalition, the "Just Us" group that advocated for community harm to be addressed by the Courts in the police beating of Johnny Rush, and the Racial Justice Coalition of Asheville, currently lobbying City government to fulfill its commitment to reparations;

* supporting the Paul Cuffee Education Center and the modern day abolitionist movement to strike down the Exception Clause of the 13th Amendment; and,

* advocating for indigenous women who have, or have been, "disappeared".

Our current leading as a committee is to maintain personal contact with each and every black-led organization we are supporting financially. We brought this leading to the Tuesday night book discussion group for further seasoning, and we are inviting any and all Friends to help us keep in touch with these groups. Please contact Steve Livingston or committee co-clerk Gita Larson if you are already connected to one of these groups, or if you'd like to be. Bear in mind that different levels of participation are appropriate for white people depending on the organization.

Bob Lackey Thanked Steve and Gita for pulling this list together for our Meeting.

House and Grounds: Jim Barham

Jim is waiting for estimates from contractors on costs to repair roof, windows, and provide treatment for Termites. All contractors are extremely busy as there is currently a housing boom in Asheville. He is hoping to have estimates for these repairs and for renovations of the kitchen space. A Friend pointed out that the foyer to the

kitchen space is also in need of repair, plus a corner of the kitchen is deteriorating. The kitchen work will be discussed and reviewed by the long range planning committee.

Jim reported that the AFM meetinghouse work day (4/10/21) was successful and concluded before the afternoon rain. Most of the wood pile was moved to the street for pickup; the paint chipping in the upstairs school rooms was completed. Those walls now need sanding, wiping down with a damp cloth, and then a primer coat of paint applied.

Peace and Earth: Margaret Normile

In honor of Earth Day, 2021 the Peace and Earth Committee will be presenting a Zoom program on April 21 st from 7-8:30 PM.

SAYMA:

Steve Livingston reported that they have received 20 workshop proposals, all of which look very interesting. Excerpts on the workshops will be coming out soon. He is hoping that with it being virtual, he and others will be able to take in more than two workshops and will not have scheduling conflicts as experienced in previous years.

The Training with Cross Roads on Anti racism will take place later in July and August; This workshop will be virtual. More information will be available later.

Communications: Mike Eddy

Mike reported that the new website is up and running. For the month of March the cost of hosting the new website was \$0.08, however that may be storage for a backup. He reported that AFM owns the "ashevillefriends.org" domain name and it is now pointed

to the new website. One last item that needs to be done is to create a certificate for the “ashevillefriends.org” domain name. Thanks were given to Mike.

The meeting closed with silent worship until the way opens for our next business meeting in the 5th month of 2021.

ATTACHMENTS:

State of the Meeting 2020 Asheville Friends Meeting

The year 2020 was a year of unforeseen challenges that would test our meeting throughout the year. The pandemic, the endless misinformation, the economic downturn, the killing of George Floyd, the endless election cycle, just to name a few. In our shock and grief we have struggled individually and as a Meeting to fashion an appropriate and Spirit-informed response to these stresses. Our Meeting members and attenders have supported one another and responded to these many challenges with appropriate seriousness and caution. As we look back on 2020, we are grateful for the efforts of so many Friends that have helped bring our Meeting and our community through this most difficult year.

Sensing the enormity of the toll that the approaching pandemic was going to take on the world, for many of us this became a more prayerful time. One of the first efforts we took was to encourage folks to join together in Spirit at 7pm daily and hold healthcare and other essential workers in the Light for ten minutes. Being cautious and in light of what we were learning about best practices toward the pandemic, we stopped meeting in person in March. Thanks to the dedication of the tech-savvy members of Meeting, we began holding weekly Meeting for Worship and monthly business meetings on Zoom. Our Ministry and Counsel Committee began the process of maintaining connection by using our directory to create email and phone lists. This gave us the tools we needed to keep in touch with folks regularly. By dividing the phone list up and finding volunteers to make calls regularly we strengthened our individual connections. Members sent cards and visited folks, masked and at safe distance, who were most

isolated or having health concerns. On a handful of joyous occasions when the weather was nice, we met for socially distanced and masked worship on the lawn.

Several in Meeting provided needed transportation for groceries and medical appointments. Boxes of food were delivered to several isolated individuals and families. Families sent cards and visited folks who were most isolated or having some health concerns. It was shared in the Digest for publication the name of a mourning group which was bringing people together to share their grief around losses due to COVID. Inspired by a desire of Asheville Friends to do something for the community, a fundraiser was planned and carried out with great success. The proceeds went to local organizations working with homelessness and food insecurity.

The COVID pandemic has caused some unanticipated consequences to the environment, some of them positive. The decrease in air travel has lowered carbon emissions. Once we realized that we could not meet at the Meetinghouse, our House and Grounds committee did what they could to shut it down; setting the thermostat at 55 degrees and turning off the refrigerator. Several folks in Meeting made cloth masks to help with supply, which also reduced our use of disposable masks. Individuals in Meeting concerned with the abundance of take-out containers being used, have approached local restaurants. They have been encouraging the use of compostable containers rather than plastic and styrofoam that cannot be recycled.

Inspired by the work of our Racial Justice Committee we are building on the work begun in the past with the book [Becoming An Anti-Racist Church](#), by reading and discussing through the year Robin DiAngelo's [White Fragility](#) and Resmaa Menaken's [My Grandmother's Hands](#), an amazing

work on racialized trauma. These readings and discussions helped us to grow our understanding of systemic racism, the language of white supremacist culture and ways of mending within ourselves, our meeting and the community around us. Having a safe place to share deeply and emotionally, practice language and make mistakes has opened us up to a deeper level of connection. Participation in these discussions has increased through the year. Over time more and more individuals in our meeting are finding ways to work in the community at large toward a more racially equitable culture.

While we were horrified by the very visible murder of George Floyd, we realized that this is one of so many unjust deaths in our society. In response to racial injustice in our own community, we began talking about reparations and other actions that we can undertake by supporting on-going work in our Black and Brown communities. We have chosen to prioritize contracting needed work with businesses owned by People of Color.

We have learned more this year about the history of Quaker boarding schools and their cruel methods of making Native American children give up their culture and native language and learn English. We acknowledge the great harm that has been done to the Cherokee and other indigenous people. Unfortunately it continues today as we see the high incidence of COVID in the indigenous populations during the pandemic.

The quality of the virtual Meeting for Business has been maintained, allowing lengthy discussion which allowed all who wanted to share to give their opinion. Our business meetings have been almost as well attended as before quarantine. In some cases committees have met via conference call to accommodate individual needs. Committees have

cooperated, allowing outreach to be maintained. Our one week fundraiser made it possible to contribute \$6,600 to the homeless and food insecure. The weekly email Digest has helped folks to be aware of business being conducted. We feel it is important to continue paying the workers in our Meeting, whether or not they are working during the pandemic. We have supported organizations that are helping the homeless and food insecure, many of them people of color, who are residing in our community. We also organized a food collection to go to MANNA food bank which is distributed to people with food insecurity.

We were grateful for the caution and leadership of many of our leaders, especially our governor. At the same time, the toll that the pandemic was taking on the emotional health of our children was on the minds of many in our meeting. Our Religious Education Committee set up and hosted weekly First Day meetings. All of the children were invited each week to a virtual check-in on First Days, allowing children to stay in touch with each other. Individual families did outside visits with each other. This became a real joy for many of us. They also arranged a socially distanced picnic at the Meetinghouse to follow one of the First Days that we met on the lawn for worship.

Maintaining traditions has proven to be important, perhaps especially for our youth. We were able to continue our annual Simple Christmas by making up and delivering kits to those wanting to participate and scheduling Zoom meeting time to work together on the projects. We were also able to have our Nativity Play on Zoom. We enjoyed singing together during this, mostly with us all on mute. In this way we were able to continue providing the long-lasting connection between the adults and children in Meeting that has developed over the years. As the holidays approached the younger families put

together stockings and packages for those in Meeting who would be alone at this special time. They were delivered with some carol singing at a safe distance.

Our members have lost parents, other family members and friends due to COVID. We have been cautious. Our Meeting for Worship has been virtual since March but has about 20 attendees who meet weekly. Friendships have been maintained and the depth of our friendships has been revealed. With time on our hands relationships have been developed and maintained, but some opportunities have been missed. Some of us have felt overwhelmed to varying degrees. Through understanding, caring, and kindness we have grown stronger. We have learned some ways to work through some of our differences and challenges. Our worship has grown deeper as we have come together to help each other through this very scary and trying time.