

Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business
Asheville Friends Meeting
Sixth Month 12, 2022

DRAFT

Present: Bob Lackey, Clerk; Barbara Burke, Recording Clerk, Margaret Normile, Steve Livingston, Jim Cavener, Adrienne Weir, Kitti Reynolds, Pat Johnson, Zoe Wallace, Sarah Jane Thomas, Jim Barham, Rusty Maynard, Susanne Junkin-Friederichs, Barbara Esther, Sarah Shipe.

Present via Zoom: Beth Eddy, Mike Eddy, Margaret Farmer, Ellie Cox, Rylin Hansen.

Meeting opened with Silent Worship.

The Clerk shared a reading out of silence.

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

“Since the religion of the Society of Friends is based on an inward experience deeper than intellectual concepts, it cannot be taught in the same way that subjects are 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 deeply 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: The Fifth Month business meeting minutes were approved.

At the Fifth month Meeting for Business we discussed the use of Alice Brown Funds for members to attend SAYMA and FGC conferences.

Minute #2: We approved the use of Alice Brown Funds for Sayma and FGC registrations

Announcements: Bob Lackey

George Oldham

Martha Huggins let us know that there will be a memorial service for George Oldham (long time member, former co-clerk of AFM) at 2:00 pm on Sunday, June 26th. The service will be held in the Village Hall at Carolina Village Retirement Community in Hendersonville and will be followed by a reception at the Edneyville Community Center. The Community Center has an outdoor covered patio so folks who are uncomfortable with indoor gatherings can be part of the celebration of George's life.

Asheville Friends Meeting will be helping with the reception. Details will be made available soon. Please contact Bob Lackey or Robin Wells if you are able to assist.

A Friend informed the Meeting of the suicide of an inmate at Anson Correctional Facility and asked that the inmate, her friends, and family be held in the Light.

Reparations Fund Caretakers – Steve

Donation to the Poor People's Campaign.

Caretakers want the Meeting to hear, and for Meeting's records to show, why money that has passed through our Reparations Fund was an appropriate use of the Fund. We will ask Friends present to unite with this statement we are presenting, so that it will be a Minute of the Meeting rather than simply a statement of the Caretakers.

The funds used were for a donation of \$660 to the Poor People's Campaign.

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Minute #3:

After centuries of free labor that fueled the commercial and industrial revolutions in the U.S., enriching those at the helm and creating opportunities and a sense of privilege for Europeans of every socio-economic stratum, enslaved Africans were emancipated without being granted a material stake in the economic juggernaut that they were instrumental in creating. Formerly enslaved Africans were not only excluded from government programs that benefited poor and working class Whites, but those who managed to accumulate wealth or property were often persecuted for their success, and their wealth was often stolen through trickery, unjust laws, and mob violence. As a direct result of these injustices, a vastly disproportionate number of African-Americans are to this day counted among America's poor.

The Reparations Caretakers are led to answer to these injustices by supporting the demands of the Poor People's Campaign to:

* fully address the interlocking injustices of systemic racism, poverty, ecological devastation, militarism and the war economy, denial of health care, and the false moral narrative of religious nationalism;

* change the narrative and build the power of those most impacted by these injustices;

* realize a "Third Reconstruction" agenda that can build this country from the bottom up and realize the nation we have yet to be.

We answer to these injustices by word and deed: by acknowledging the wrongs that were done, by affirming the right of the people to demand redress for their resultant suffering, and by providing financial support to enable people to bring their demands to the seat of government.

Committees:

Ministry and Counsel: Barbara Esther

There is some lack of clarity regarding mask wearing.

A question came up after Meeting for Worship on 6-5-22 about our wearing masks during Meeting for Worship on the porch. We have not been requiring masks outside, but have encouraged them due to the rise in COVID metrics. We emphasized that people without masks should keep a respectable distance from others. Is this how we want to proceed? Is this the same for the children's program?

Currently policy is we're mask-optional on the porch. We have been encouraging people to wear masks. The metrics have increased to 21% positivity for COVID this week. Should we request masks be worn on the

porch, with mask-free activity on the lawn? Wearing a mask protects us and those around us, particularly those who are immunocompromised. Do we want to alter our policy for Meeting for Worship on the porch? Do we want to meet on the lawn (weather permitting)? How difficult would it be to have the whole video set-up on the lawn?

A member said that activities outdoors that he is involved in are unmasked, but there is social distancing, which is not happening on the porch. In the past ZOOM, with Meeting on the lawn, it was not helpful as people on ZOOM could not hear.

Another member suggested the refreshments may need to be served elsewhere, as we remove masks when eating.

Thoughts were shared with the following points made:

- Outdoors is outdoors, whether the Meeting is on the lawn or on the porch
- The number of people attending on the porch is increasing, making social distancing difficult. Perhaps we should require masks on the porch.
- There has been discussion in the past of having a permanent outdoor structure built, such as a gazebo, that could allow meeting in a circle instead of in rows on the porch, and this might permit more social distancing.
- We have some members who are advanced in age, and others who are immunocompromised, and want to avoid exposure to the Covid virus. As people can have the virus and show no symptoms, this can put others at risk.

After careful consideration, members felt that it would be in the best interest to strongly suggest masks while on the porch, and to continue to require masks while in the Meetinghouse.

Minute # 4: People attending Meeting on the porch are strongly encouraged to wear a mask, due to the difficulty of social distancing.

The problem with social distancing was also discussed. A member pointed out that we are limited by the architecture of the building where Meeting is held. Some feel that because we are out of doors while on the porch, we have less risk than when we are indoors. Others feel that because we are unable to social distance from each other due to the number of people on the porch, we are still at risk. The Covid virus has undergone several mutations, and though people fully vaccinated and boosted have a lower risk of dying from the current variations, the virus could and probably will continue to mutate, and put members at further risk. A member pointed out that metrics currently used could be skewed, as the people being tested may be tested because they feel they have been exposed. Others may be positive, but not tested, as they have no symptoms, and free testing at testing centers has ended, unless a person suspects exposure. A more precise metric to follow would be the testing of waste water by the County Health Department.

Barbara Esther reread the statement we have decided on in the past concerning masks, and said that M&C has revisited this monthly, and will continue to do so.

Some members felt that masking on the porch is overly cautious, and not scientifically sound, while others appreciate the cautious approach, and shows our care for one another.

Minute #5 : Ministry and Council will meet and discuss what metrics will be used and revise their recommendations as needed.

The issue of our food being served on the porch, leading to people removing their masks, and not social distancing while eating and visiting is a concern. Several suggestions were made, including having the food served on the lawn and people eating there, having a tent erected where the food could be served, though this may slow down getting the food ready, or having the food served on the porch and people then moving to the lawn to eat, though this may delay the start of second hour presentations, or the start of MfB. After thoughtful discussion and consideration, it was agreed that snacks can be set up inside (and windows can be opened during nice weather) and then people will move outside to the lawn area to eat. As weather can affect people eating outside, the people in charge of snacks can elect to cancel snacks according to the weather prediction.

Minute # 6: Food will be served in the Meetinghouse, masks required, and people will be asked to eat on the lawn.

Ministry and Council will also look at the use of a pop up tent for the lawn. Any suggestions should be sent to Bob Lackey or Robin Wells on M&C.

Nominating: Kitti Reynolds

Kitti nominated herself to be on Peace and Earth Committee,

Minute #7: Approved the nomination of Kitti Reynolds to the Peace and Earth Committee.

Meeting closed with Silent worship until the way opens for our next Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business in the seventh month of 2022

