



## **Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business**

### **Asheville Friends Meeting**

**7th Month 10, 2022**

**Present:** Bob Lackey, Clerk; Barbara Burke, Recording Clerk, Jim Cavener, Barbara Esther, Kitti Reynolds, Steve Livingston, Katherine Kowal, Robin Wells, Joel O'Brien, Jim Barham.

**Present via Zoom:** Chris Foreman, Ellen Carr, Adrienne Weir, Satchel Loftis, Gita Larson, Rylin Hansen, Morgan Murray, Ellie Cox, Margaret Farmer.

Meeting opened with Silent Worship

The Clerk shared a reading out of silence.

### **Quote of the Week (6/26/22)**

[Lansdowne Friends Meeting](#) Quote of the Week Archive

a Quaker Community in Lansdowne, Pennsylvania

“What brings us fulfillment when we find that attaining wealth and status, by themselves, will not? How do we make sense of the lives we are living? What values can give a satisfying shape and purpose to our lives? Where can we find insights on these questions? With whom can we share this search?”

The Religious Society of Friends began with persons (“seekers”) looking for answers to remarkably similar questions. The times were very different, but

the spiritual dynamics were much the same. When one of those seekers, George Fox, encountered the Divine directly, he began articulating a new vision of the Christian faith. He shared that vision with other seekers, and a new religious movement—Quakerism—was born.

That movement and its members were characterized by three vital features. First: an understanding rooted in experience, that it was both possible and necessary to have an immediate, direct relationship with the Divine, with God, that would give one's life meaning, purpose, and wholeness. Second: a fervent desire to live out, to fully embody these spiritual insights—"the Truth"—they had discovered in that relationship. And third: a recognition that they needed one another, and so a commitment to form and sustain the spiritual communities necessary to live such a life of faith and integrity."

*Thomas Jeavons, c. 2002*

**Minute #1:** The sixth month business meeting minutes were approved.

**Announcements:** Laura Maynard has sent an announcement that the Junior Yearly Meeting committee would like to host a family retreat this fall in Asheville. The retreat would be open to any families in the Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting and Association, with children ages 11 and younger. Although all families are invited, the anticipated number actually attending will probably be small. Laura would like to inquire about the best dates for using the Meetinghouse for the retreat. Attenders would not be staying at the Meetinghouse, but having meals there and gathering for activities and fellowship. Members are happy to hear of the proposed retreat. A member pointed out that we currently have outside groups renting the Meetinghouse on Fridays and Saturdays, so that would need to be addressed. Another member stated that we currently do not allow people in the Meetinghouse unless masked, and currently we are not meeting for worship indoors as the infection rate is above 5%, which may cause complications for the retreat attenders. Also, the current number of people

allowed inside is currently capped at 49, by the Fire Marshall. It was also mentioned that the dates proposed by Laura for the JYM retreat should be checked with the SAYF steering committee, to be sure SAYF has not scheduled a retreat with the same or similar dates. A member who attended SAYMA this summer said there was a lot of support for this proposed retreat from JYM and there is talk of another retreat in the Spring in Atlanta. The consensus is that this needs to go to a committee to see if the retreat at the Meetinghouse is feasible.

### **Committees:**

House and Grounds: Jim Barham

An inspection was done by Fire Marshall and the Meetinghouse had 3 violations cited:

1. Fire extinguishers
2. Smoke alarms
3. Emergency lighting and exit signs on the 2 front doors

The emergency lighting and exit signs on the two front doors have been replaced, the fire extinguishers have been serviced and are up to code, and are hanging where required. Nine smoke detectors or carbon monoxide monitors have been installed, and the Fire Marshall will be returning on July 15th to inspect the work done, and verify things are up to code.

Jim was thanked for the hard work he did to bring the Meetinghouse up to code, and a member asked if there was any discussion about the number of people allowed in the building. There was a discussion, but no change was made, as the current certificate lists occupancy at 49. If a change is desired a formal application would need to be made.

SAYMA: Barbara Esther

Barbara Esther read the SAYMA Annual Sessions report to the Meeting, although the number of attenders are not yet available.

Barbara was thanked by the Meeting for the work done on this report. The Annual Sessions report is an attachment at the bottom of the minutes.

Racial Justice Committee: Steve Livingston

SAYMA URJ (Uplifting Racial Justice) Call for Funding.

RJC asks that this be included in the Monthly Meeting Meeting for Business notes

*Dear SAYMA Friends,*

*Great news!!! The Yearly Meeting has achieved a Sense of the Meeting around releasing the SAYMA Uplifting Racial Justice (URJ) donor-restricted fund which had been frozen. The URJ donor-restricted fund is once again accepting donations and will disperse these to URJ to support work aligned with the committee's mission, vision, and goals.*

*Please Friends, we are seeking donations from Monthly Meetings, families, and individuals to support the work of SAYMA URJ. Instructions on how to contribute to the URJ donor-restricted fund can be found [HERE](#)*

*Let's be clear: URJ does not have any funding this coming year through the operating budget of SAYMA. The committee is entirely reliant on donations to the URJ donor-restricted fund for the financial resources it needs to make an impact. URJ has requested \$10,000. Let's try to meet this request through donations. It seems like a big amount but it really should not be a stretch for an organization of our size. For example, we could meet it through just 100*

*individuals/families donating \$100, or through 10 Monthly Meetings donating \$1000. Please Friends, will you do what you can to help us meet this target of \$10,000?*

*Additionally, we are incredibly grateful to our two plenary presenters at this year's SAYMA gathering. The shared knowledge, the times of fellowship, and the deepening of our connections with each other will have lasting impact across our Yearly Meeting as we move forward in our work. We would like to encourage Friends to financially support the continuing efforts of Max Parthas and the [Paul Cuffee Abolitionist Center](#) , as well as Angela Hopkins and the [Friends Center for Racial Justice](#) .*

*The Paul Cuffee Abolitionist Center is a registered non-profit. If you'd like to support their work you can send a donation to:*

*CashApp: \$AbolitionCtr*

*Paypal: [AbolitionistCenter@gmail.com](mailto:AbolitionistCenter@gmail.com)*

*Or checks can be mailed to 1163 Furman Drive. Sumter, SC 29154*

*Friends Center for Racial Justice, a ministry under the care of NYYM, has information on how to donate [HERE](#)*

*Thank you for your consideration, Friends. There is so much good work happening. Let's support it to the extent that we can.*

*With deep gratitude,*

*Shannon Roberts Smith*

*Acting Clerk, SAYMA Ad Hoc Racial Justice Working Group*

A member stated she is happy to hear the fund has been released, although there is no funding within the SAYMA budget. She feels as individuals, if not as a Meeting, we can support this initiative, and reminded Meeting that we do have a Racial Justice Fund, and that money could be allocated for the URJ

fund, in addition to individuals' donations. Another member recalled for the Meeting that URJ did provide a family member of hers with funds when that family member was dealing with the criminal justice system and appreciates that the fund was able to help an Asheville Friends member.

### **Peace and Earth:** Steve Livingston

We have received the following letter and 'Urgent Call to the Religious Society of Friends' from a group of Friends concerned about the present and future threats to our US democracy. Click on the [quakercall.net](https://quakercall.net) link (below) to join one of the national conversations or to add your name to the list of concerned Friends.

*May 2022*

*We Quakers, members of the Religious Society of Friends, hold strongly to the principle of speaking truth with integrity. We ground our speaking truth in our worship and our searching of ourselves, as we listen deeply and honestly within and across all differences. Our testimony to the world includes standing up for spiritually discerned Truth, the equality of all persons, the peaceful resolution of conflicts, and respect and care for our neighbors and the earth. Right now, we see many forces at work in our country and the world that are undermining these basic values. Accordingly, we call on Friends everywhere to act.*

*In this country, in 2020, we witnessed an attempted coup. The January 6 assault on the Capitol was a deliberate, violent attempt to prevent Joe Biden — the clear winner of the 2020 election — from taking office and keeping then-president Donald Trump in power. To maintain that the last election was riddled with fraud is demonstrably false. This politically motivated movement has now embarked on an orchestrated campaign to suppress voting by black, brown and young people and to pass new state election laws giving the power to throw out huge numbers of valid ballots to highly partisan legislatures,*

*governors, and state attorneys general. Thus, this lie is being used to deprive people of their constitutional rights and constitutes a major injustice.*

*As Friends, we feel called to speak out against these falsehoods and anti-democratic actions. We encourage Friends to seek spiritual guidance on any actions that you and your meetings might take to witness against this gross injustice. If this politically motivated movement succeeds in its anti-democratic takeover attempt, any hope of making significant progress on racial and economic justice, the equality of all people, the climate crisis, gun violence, and other urgent issues of our time will be gone.*

*We know that democracy in the United States has many flaws. During the past 100 years, our local, state and federal governments have acted to prevent formerly enslaved people and other communities of color from voting. It was not until 1920 that women finally won the right to vote, and their equality is still being challenged. We call on Friends to act — first, to resist all efforts to undermine our current democratic processes, and second, to support true democratic reforms to our still flawed election system. We cannot allow a government that is built on lies and injustice.*

*We the undersigned are encouraging Quakers throughout the country to work in their local communities, states, and the national arena to take critical actions to prevent an authoritarian takeover of our democracy. We urge Friends to discern the deep truths that provide a foundation for active love, wisdom, compassion, and a truly democratic electoral system—and then to actively support such changes. We know that love conquers fear. Let us lean into Divine Love and find ways forward in Truth.*

*On the reverse are two queries for you and your meeting to consider in response to this call. We've also included a list of specific actions that Friends could begin taking now. Some actions may become necessary later if there is another attempted coup during the next presidential election cycle.*

*Queries & Actions*

*Some queries and suggestions regarding what Friends and meetings might do in response to the **Urgent Call to the Religious Society of Friends***

## **QUERIES**

- 1. What, if anything, is the Light Within calling Friends to do in response to the unprecedented rise of domestic extremism, white supremacy, and authoritarianism that is threatening the destruction of (our) democracy at home and abroad?*
- 2. How can I/we respond with resolute love even while I/we may be struggling with fear, anger, apathy, or hate?*

## **POSSIBLE ACTIONS**

### *Defending Truth*

*We urge all Friends to discern the deep truths that provide a foundation for active love, wisdom, compassion, and peace in the world — and then to defend them. We ask:*

- Individual Friends to search yourselves about the threats to our country, and the world, and to witness publicly to the truths that you discern are grounded in your experience of the Spirit.*
- Quaker meetings and organizations to issue public statements calling out lies and the purveyors of lies, all in the context of our understanding of love, equality, and justice for all.*

### *Working for True Equality and Justice for All*

*We urge Friends to act for equality and equity within our diverse society:*

- Join or support organizations led by people of color which are working for the empowerment of black, brown, indigenous and Asian people and communities.*
- Speak, write, and protest in support for full equality of all people in American society, whatever their racial or sexual identity, gender, or class.*

- *Support legislative and economic changes that would lead to actual equity among all peoples.*

### *Promoting Free and Fair Elections*

*Stemming from our testimonies of Integrity and Equality, we urge Friends to:*

- *Support non-partisan voter-registration drives, particularly in communities under attack from those seeking to prevent them from voting.*
- *Publicly condemn partisan efforts to restrict access to voting.*
- *Confront partisan efforts to seize control of the election administration apparatus.*
- *Support conscientious, non-partisan election officials in our communities.*
- *Volunteer as poll workers, election monitors, and drivers to get people to the polls.*

### *Preparing for Non-Violent Resistance*

*We believe that as a religious society grounded in nonviolence, we can:*

- *Initiate discussions on the impacts of voter suppression and new laws enabling partisan actors to legally throw out ballots and change the results of elections, then garnering support for nonviolent resistance against all this, and forming community-based networks of support for such actions.*
- *Arrange for nonviolent direct-action training in our Quaker meetings and organizations, as well as with others in our larger communities.*
- *Form small “affinity groups” that can prepare to carry out direct actions in support of free and fair elections and the state and local officials who support them.*
- *Support wider efforts to plan and organize nonviolent resistance on a state and nationwide level, as needed.*

*You can endorse this Quaker message, find additional resources, register for national conversations on these issues, report on specific actions that you, your meeting, or your organization has undertaken, and sign up for continued updates at [www.quakercall.net](http://www.quakercall.net).*

*We also welcome your questions, suggestions, and resources at [info@quakercall.net](mailto:info@quakercall.net).*

The 'Call to Action' led to a lively and insightful discussion in the Asheville Friends Meeting. A member felt led to say she feels that we are not political, that we can step up as individuals and act as we feel called, but the Meeting should not present itself to the community at large as political, as having chosen one side over another and we need to be careful as to how we as a Meeting respond. This Friend feels we need to sit and study the queries and carefully determine our responses.

Another Friend feels we should support the work of Paul Cuffee Abolitionist Center to remove the exception clause of the thirteenth amendment that deprives some people of their personhood and rights, such as the right to vote. Supporting people and their rights is resisting the suppression of democracy and not necessarily political.

A member spoke to the feeling that a guiding light or principle for her is to ask what is the issue and what does her faith and discernment lead her towards? She feels we don't need to isolate ourselves from politics, but perhaps should be in the middle of it because of the issues involved.

Others spoke of feeling that they themselves are political and call on Quakers to take risks as they haven't done before, to support causes that are important to them. Another Friend feels a call to action is meaningless unless we know what the actions being proposed are. A Friend who returned recently from overseas reported being surprised how fear seems to have overtaken people in this country, and he did not sense that fear in other countries. Another

Friend agreed that preaching to the choir is not effective and we need to carefully listen and not shut out others who may hold different beliefs.

It was agreed that a second hour devoted to worshipful discernment would allow us to examine our faith deeply and respond to the “Urgent Call to the Religious Society of Friends.”

**Finance:** Ellen Carr, Satchel Loftis

We have reached the end of the second quarter of the fiscal year. Ellen reports that our expenditures and income are in line with our operating budget. Insurance, utilities, and usual expenses are paid and current.

Satchel reports that with a 2022 target for Unrestricted Gifts of \$28,278, the meeting has received approximately 40% of that goal, with a total of \$11,341. This is a reasonable amount for this point in the year (50%), as we historically have received a greater proportion of gifts closer to year-end.

The attached report covers the regular operating activity for the first six months of 2022. Take note of page three, which displays gift totals for recent years as of the end of the sixth month. Our current gift total is greater than the previous six years.

**Ministry and Counsel:** Robin

**Providing Sun and Rain Protection for Meeting for Worship on the Lawn- -**

Friends, the Test Positivity Rate for Buncombe County is currently at 20%. This is high and experts suggest that cases are being significantly undercounted. As a Meeting, we want to be careful and limit possible exposure should someone attend Meeting while infected with the virus. Our policy has been to only meet indoors when the positivity rate is 5% or lower.

Ministry & Counsel recommends keeping that policy. This means we will be meeting outdoors for a while.

In our last business meeting, we reinforced our policy of strongly encouraging mask wearing during meeting for worship on the porch, but not mandating it. We also decided to change how we serve and eat our refreshments after meeting for worship. We will serve food indoors with Friends wearing masks. Friends will carry their food to the lawn before removing their masks. People are asked to keep a safe distance from each other while unmasked.

Ministry & Counsel would like to also propose moving Meeting for Worship onto the lawn, when possible. On the lawn, people can spread out and lower the risk of virus transmission. In order to do this, we would need to provide some sun protection and possibly some rain protection. This would require making some purchases as a meeting. Here are some costs to consider:

- 1) 15 x 32 foot tent \$853
- 2) 20 x 40 foot tent \$1,270
- 3) Wooden pavilion kit 20 x 30 feet approximately \$36,000 plus installation
- 4) A barrel of "golf" umbrellas at \$13.00 each or donated by individuals in Meeting.

We do not have to make a decision today, but we want to begin the conversation. We could begin with some umbrellas and move to something more substantial later, if decided. Do we want to find a way to support Meeting for Worship on the lawn?

Responses to these proposals included concern for people using a walker or cane having to also contend with an umbrella if we needed to move indoors suddenly, and whether people on Zoom would be able to hear Members on the lawn and vice versa. Suggestions for having Meeting outdoors on the lawn included erecting a semi-permanent structure such as a carport, purchasing a “Sun Shade Sail” to protect attenders from the sun (this would require the installation of permanent support poles), and the use of golf umbrellas. The metrics quoted as being at 20% are probably inaccurate, as this is based on reported cases. A more accurate metric to use might be waste water testing.

We will try the meeting on the lawn next week, unmasked, to see if the sound quality is acceptable for people on Zoom, and attenders are comfortable. Those more comfortable out of the sun are welcome to sit on the porch, where masks and social distancing are strongly encouraged.

### A New Representative to the SAYMA Ministry and Nurture Committee

As many of you have likely heard, Margaret Farmer and Daryl Bergquist are now co-clerking SAYMA. We are grateful to Margaret for agreeing to be named to this position. Margaret will remain on SAYMA Ministry & Nurture, but as an ex-officio. This frees up a place on the committee for a representative from Asheville Friends Meeting. Ministry & Counsel would like to propose that Barbara Esther represent us on that committee. She brings a wealth of spiritual gifts that would make her a valuable member of the committee, especially at this time. She also has experience on the committee and understands the commitment it requires.

**Minute 2:** Approval of Barbara Esther as representative to M&N at SAYMA.

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

 **Report of SAYMA Annual Sessions and Retreat 2022.rtf**

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Asheville Friends Meeting  
2022 Operating Activity

	2022 Actual	2022 Budget	Actual / Budget
<b>Operating Activity</b>			
<b>Income</b>			
Contribution Income - Unrestricted	11,341.11	28,278.00	40%
Rental Income	48.75	-	---
Interest Income - Unrestricted	44.65	50.00	89%
<b>Total Income &amp; Transfers from Other Funds</b>	<b>\$ 11,434.51</b>	<b>\$ 28,328.00</b>	<b>40%</b>
<b>Expenses &amp; Transfers</b>			
<b>Transfers TO Other Funds**</b>			
Meetinghouse Improvement Transfer	2,400.00	2,400.00	100%
College-Age Support Transfer**	17.00	17.00	100%
M&C Needs Fund Transfer**	400.00	400.00	100%
Scholarship Fund Transfer**	200.00	200.00	100%
<b>Total Transfers TO Other Funds**</b>	<b>3,017.00</b>	<b>3,017.00</b>	<b>100%</b>
	28%		
<b>Meeting House</b>			
<b>House and Grounds</b>			
Cleaning	480.00	960.00	50%
Maintenance (+Landscaping)	1,050.00	2,259.00	46%
<b>Total House and Grounds</b>	<b>1,530.00</b>	<b>3,219.00</b>	<b>48%</b>
<b>Insurance</b>	<b>3,897.00</b>	<b>3,954.00</b>	<b>99%</b>
<b>Total Utilities</b>	<b>899.73</b>	<b>1,681.00</b>	<b>54%</b>
<b>Total Meeting House</b>	<b>6,326.73</b>	<b>8,854.00</b>	<b>71%</b>
	58%		

\*\* These items are transfers to/from other funds, not cash out/in.

Asheville Friends Meeting  
2022 Operating Activity

	2022 Actual	2022 Budget	Actual / Budget
<b>Meeting Support</b>			
Care and Nurture Committee	-	110.00	0%
Communications Committee (website)	329.00	-	---
<b>Total Finance Committee</b>	297.52	300.00	99%
Hospitality Committee	-	137.00	0%
Library Committee	-	85.00	0%
Ministry and Counsel Ctte	-	25.00	0%
Peace and Earth Ctte	-	100.00	0%
Racial Justice Committee	-	450.00	0%
<b>Total Religious Education Ctte</b>	900.00	2,150.00	42%
Spiritual Enrichment Ctte	-	50.00	0%
<b>Total Meeting Support</b>	1,526.52	3,407.00	45%
	14%		
<b>Outreach &amp; SAYMA</b>			
General Outreach	-	3,000.00	0%
Racial Justice Outreach	-	3,000.00	0%
Quaker Outreach	-	3,000.00	0%
SAYMA Assessment	-	4,050.00	0%
<b>Total Outreach &amp; SAYMA</b>	-	13,050.00	0%
	0%		
<b>Total Expenses &amp; Transfers TO Other Funds</b>	<b>\$ 10,870.25</b>	<b>\$ 28,328.00</b>	38%
<b>Net Operating Surplus/(Deficit)</b>	<b>\$ 564.26</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	

\*\* These items are transfers to/from other funds, not cash out/in.

Asheville Friends Meeting  
2022 Operating Activity

Year-to-year Comparison		2022 Actual	2022 Budget	Actual / Budget
		Actual, as of 6/30	Budget	
Unrestricted Gi	2022 - Current Year	11,434.51	28,278.00	40%
	2021 - Prior Year	10,790.00	23,800.00	45%
	2020	10,602.00		
	2019	9,832.00		
	2018	8,673.00		
	2017	7,456.00		

\*\* These items are transfers to/from other funds, not cash out/in.