

Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business

Asheville Friends Meeting

11th Month 13, 2022

Present in the Meetinghouse: Pat Johnson, Clerk, Kitti Reynolds, Recording Clerk, Barbara Esther, Sara Jane Thomas, Margaret Normile, Zoe Wallace, Kim Wagner, Robin Wells, Jim Barham, Nick Mimken, Rusty Maynard

Present via Zoom: Susan Oehler, Mike Eddy, Ellie Cox, Steve Livingston, Beth Eddy, Rylin Hansen.

Meeting opened with Silent Worship.

The Clerk shared a reading out of silence.

We Who are Becoming by Noam Sandweiss-Back from *We Cry Justice*, Edited by Rev. Liz Theoharis; P. 227

"The shepherd wanders far into the wilderness. Through the rust-colored granite, the sun casts a slanting glow. The mountain brush looks ablaze. He walks further and is startled to discover that this is no trick of the light- a bush is burning. He looks closer. The flames are crackling, and yet the bush is unconsumed.

He hears his name: Moses. He calls back with a question, and a voice answers: I am the God of your ancestors. I know the pain of your people, those now held in bondage. I've come to deliver them to freedom. You will help.

Moses is hesitant. He pushes back, equivocates. Finally, overwhelmed he asks what he should say when his people demand the name of this God.

In English, God's response is often translated as "I Am Who I Am." But the Hebrew declares something else entirely "I Will Be What I Will Be." Moses then

returns to slaveholding Egypt with a simple and explosive message for his people: I will Be What I will Be has sent for your liberation. The mysterious truth of this name gets clearer with each day. Moses is awakened. He becomes a speech maker, organizer, militant. A whisper of dissent turns into a movement that swells across the enslaved multitude. Plagues of hunger, sickness, and death strangle the soul-sick society of the Egyptian Empire, and the Israelites discover an urgent and sacred call to be free. As they begin to take action together, and as the promise of emancipation blooms, God emerges through them.

God's presence expands as their action intensifies, and they are emboldened through this renewed relationship with the divine. After much struggle, they make a break for freedom and arrive at the shores of a great sea: an impassable expanse ahead and only death behind. They are trapped. The rabbinical commentary teaches that as the prospect of escape dwindles, one among them, an elder, walks into the sea until the salty water nearly fills his nostrils. Only then, on the edge of the man's last breath, does God spit the waters.

Here is the truth of the name: God becomes as the people -poor, dispossessed, divided- become. God will be as the people will be. When the people find their voice, when they begin to unite and fight for their lives God's voice echoes thunderously. Listen, God tells them. I will lead you out of Egypt.

Today we live in another kind of Egypt. The plagues of our day are poverty and precarity, hunger and homelessness, deep prejudice and hate. They are worsened by pandemics, not caused by them. In the richest country in history, we have been robbed of what should be universal rights to health, safety, and the fruits of our labor, and we have been dispossessed of the power to make it otherwise.

Did others before Moses stumble on the burning bush, see only a desert fire during the dry season, and move on? Is that not the same for so many of us today? We see the fire as fire and nothing more. We continue to march through the wilderness and toil in the shadow of empire, possessed by the belief that nothing can fundamentally change, that this is the best we can do.

But some stop and look closer. Some, out of necessity, are pulled toward the flames. These people recognize that within the communities- abandoned by the government and the wealthy- there is a spark, not only of combustion but of deep transformation.

These are the Moseses of our time. They are the fast-food workers fighting for living wages and a union, the tenants leading rent strikes, the unemployed pulling together organizing councils, the water protectors, and so many more. Like Moses, they are orphaned, disabled, homeless, refugees, and the leading edge of hope and new vision for us all. And just like that ancient prophet, they see a burning bush in every corner of this nation and hear their name called. They turn toward the ruling class to demand not small reforms but a complete reconstruction of society around the needs of all people.

When the Israelites arrive on the other side of the sea, it is no coincidence that they go to the mountain of the burning bush. They arrive on its dusty slopes to begin a new covenant with God and construct a social order founded on justice.

Perhaps, while camping there, they again see a bush on fire and glimpse within it their own becoming. Perhaps they hear a voice reminding them that the kind of revolutionary action they have taken has always been synonymous with the very name of God.”

*** Approve Agenda**

Minute #1: Draft Agenda approved

*** Approve 10th Month Business Meeting Minutes** with addition of M&C approved COVID statement for our website documents.

Asheville Friends Meeting Masking and Vaccination Policy During the COVID-19 Pandemic

In our 10th Month 2022 business meeting, Asheville Friends Meeting approved the use of the CDC COVID-19 Community Level for Buncombe County to determine our masking policy. Our masking will follow the following guidelines:

LOW—When the CDC COVID-19 Community Level is low, we will meet indoors for Meeting for Worship and first day school with masking optional. Snacks will be served and may be eaten indoors.

MEDIUM—When the CDC COVID-19 Community Level is medium, we will meet indoors for Meeting for Worship and first day school. Masking will be mandatory for meeting for worship, but as long as children are not required to mask in school, masking will be optional for first day school*. Everyone must wear a mask when downstairs. Snacks will be served indoors, but must be eaten outdoors.

HIGH—When the CDC COVID-19 Community Level is high, we will continue to meet indoors for Meeting for Worship and first day school. Masking will be mandatory for Meeting for Worship, but as long as children are not required to mask in school, masking will be optional for first day school*. Everyone must wear a mask when downstairs. Snacks will be served indoors, but must be eaten outdoors.

Masks are available upon request. A limited number of N-95 masks are available for those who need one.

COVID vaccination is not required for participation in Meeting for Worship or first day school, but it is encouraged. We ask that people not attend in person, if they have COVID 19 or do not feel well. Meeting for worship is available on Zoom during all COVID-19 Community Levels.

* Children are not required to wear masks in school, so their parents asked that we make mask-wearing optional during First Day School at all COVID levels.

Minute #2: The Tenth Month business meeting minutes approved as amended.

* **Announcements:** Pat Johnson

Old Correspondence -our Meeting Needs an Archivist. We have contacted Guilford College to determine how to archive our material and

get it to them. The Clerk asked us to reflect on what we gain by doing the work of an Archivist. A Friend spoke about the historical interest found in our Archives. It can go back decades or even centuries. A Friend pointed out that with community comes responsibility. A Friend reminded us that with these connections there is a spiritual element.

Submit 2023 Budget Requests to Ellen or Satchel by Thanksgiving or certainly by the end of November!

Eleventh Month, 20. Second Hour Presentation: Dr. Juan Sanchez Martinez, Director of American Indian & Indigenous Studies at UNCA.

*** SAYF Request for Background Checks**

We received a request from Autumn Woodward, Program Coordinator for SAYF, to have background checks for Robin Wells and Pat Johnson as well as anyone else who plans to work with the youth. The background check process has four steps:

(1) we submit a Minute of Approval from our Monthly Meeting (2) the individuals complete a "Youth Worker Application" form; (3) Autumn calls individual's references; (4) Autumn sends a link to fill out background check information on ESR's (our screening company) secure website.

Our Meeting doesn't require background checks for our childcare folks, but we always have 2 adults with the children. The Religious Education acting clerk thinks we just need to have the Meeting approve our members who will work with SAYF. However SAYMA does require a background check for adults working with youth. Zoe Wallace, Barbara Esther and Susan Oehler would also like to have background checks. Our Youth Group leader, Kim Wagner, already had a background check.

We will ask our Recording Clerk, Barbara Burke, to submit this list along with our Minute of Approval from our Meeting showing that all are in good standing within our Meeting and are appropriate to work with the SAYF

program. She will Email the minute to SAYF Administrator:
awesomesayfers@gmail.com.)

Minute #3: The Asheville Friends Meeting supports and approves background checks for Robin Wells, Pat Johnson, Susan Oehler, Zoe Wallace, and Barbara Esther in order to accept them for work within the SAYF program as requested by Autumn Woodard, SAYF Program Coordinator.

***Committees:**

Finance: Satchel didn't give a report due to COVID vaccine reaction. Pat prepared a report & passed out copies of our current budget standing. (The report is appended at the end of these Minutes.) Finance committee is working on an appeal for folks to make their contributions if they are able. We are \$10K away from our approved budget, including our outreach. Clerk explained to new members what is included in our Outreach.

Jim Barham asked about House and Grounds funds for roof (\$40,000) and driveway paving. He asked if this would come from the H&G budget. Clerk noted that we put \$2400 per year in the Meetinghouse Improvement Fund and the Building Fund has \$23000 in it. We also have an Emergency Fund. A Friend reminded us that we need to cover these issues in Long Range Planning. That committee will meet next year.

Minute #4: The Meeting accepted the Finance Committee report.

Peace & Earth: Mike Eddy & Steve Livingston

Quaker & General Outreach Report. Our General Outreach contributions totaling \$4,000.00 for 2022 were presented on a shared screen, as were our Quaker Outreach contributions totaling \$2,000.00. (Documents are appended at the end of Minutes.) This data along with previous year's contributions are on our website.

We will have another worship sharing on the war in Ukraine on First Month 1, 2023.

The FCNL Statement on War in Ukraine, published on-line on Tenth Month 26, 2022, will be included in our minutes. (See Statement at end of the Minutes.)

No Cost Rental. In Fourth Month, 2017, P & E requested a change in our rental policy for events sponsored by a Meeting committee. P & E believes that such events are continuing the work of the Meeting so the group should not be charged to use the Meeting House. In 2017, Meeting approved changing our rental policy to allow Meeting committee-sponsored events to occur without charge for use of the meetinghouse. Do we wish to continue offering our space for free for groups which are sponsored by a Meeting committee? Meeting again approved this policy.

Mike encouraged us to read the VFP website statement on the war in Ukraine.

Minute #5: The Meeting accepted the Peace and Earth Committee report. Meeting approved free rental space for groups that are sponsored by a Meeting committee.

House and Grounds: Jim Barham.

In the budget for 2023, H and G recommended approval to pay Laura her requested wage of \$25/hr. Finance committee has requested all Meeting workers to keep a timesheet since we are again paying by the hour. The Finance Committee will present her request as part of our budget discussion. A Friend reminded us that we would want to include other Meeting workers at the same increased rate. A Friend pointed out that with so few people left at MFB by this time (1:40), we should let the Finance Committee present any wage increases as part of their report. Laura is currently paid for 4 hours/month.

Minute #6: H&G request will be part of the 2023 budget discussion.

Wi-Fi. Kim requests that we get Wi-Fi for the MH. As the new MH rental coordinator, she said it would be beneficial for renters with Zoom members. The Ethical Humanist Society would like to continue renting this space but they need reliable Wi-Fi for their Zoom participants. Kim sometimes needs the Internet for activities with the youth. In addition, because connections have been lost during Zoom meetings, she feels WiFi is essential so that Friends who choose to be part of our community via Zoom will feel they can reliably participate. Getting WiFi honors their commitment to health and safety and would allow them to feel more like part of the Meeting. Mike knows what it would cost. A friend sent a message that AT&T is present in the neighborhood and will connect us to their fiber-optic for free, but will have a monthly fee of about \$80/month. Mike said Skyrunner will put an antenna on the roof. Mike asks what do we mean by Internet in the MH? If we get hardwired, they would probably use the same poles as electricity. It would probably come in through the kitchen and we'd need routers in various spots in the MH. We need a plan. We could use Eero amplifiers. Kim reminded us that most computers now don't use ethernet. She opts for Wi-Fi. Mike says we might be paying for more than we need. But we can reduce the amount of bandwidth in our building. Steve points out that we need to clarify what our potential renters mean by hardwired. Do they mean ethernet? Steve says SkyRunner is owned by Baha'i people. SkyRunner is not a wired internet - it's over the air broadcast. Could Mike talk directly with the Ethical Society folks about their needs? WiFi and ethernet don't preclude one another. But wiring older buildings for ethernet is difficult. We need to make a timely decision because of the budget for 2023. A Friend proposes a small committee with H&G and Communications. Mike wants to get a commitment for some amount of money in the budget to show how serious we are. Costs of routers could come out of the MH improvement fund. A Friend asked for this to be included in the Communications budget. Mike will contact AT&T and submit a budget request. We could split up what would be allocated to the reserve fund and what would be a monthly fee. Cost could be \$900/year

by second year if we select Spectrum. Zoe Wallace will work with Mike on this issue.

Meeting was closed with silent worship until the way opens for our next Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business in the twelfth month of 2022

Attachments

 [10- 31-2022 General Operating Income & Expense.pdf](#)

 [10-31-2022 Fund Balances.pdf](#)

Quaker Outreach

Quaker Earthcare Witness	\$ 260
AFSC	\$ 260
FCNL	\$ 260
FGC	\$ 190
Quaker House	\$ 190
Right Sharing	\$ 190
Madison Quakers	\$ 110
Ramala Friends School	\$ 110
FWCC	\$ 110
Friends Journal	\$ 110
Pendle Hill	\$ 110
Friends Peace Teams	\$ 100

Total 2022 Quaker Outreach \$2,000

General Outreach

Native Health Center	\$ 660
12 Baskets	\$ 660
Homeward Bound	\$ 560
BeLoved Asheville	\$ 560
Manna	\$ 430
Clean Water NC	\$ 270
Pisgah Legal Services	\$ 270
CIMA	\$ 200
Center for Participatory Change	\$ 130

Creation Care Alliance	\$ 130
Green Works	\$ 70
Veterans for Peace	\$ 30
Just Peace for Israel/Palestine	\$ 30
Total 2022 General Outreach	\$4,000

[FCNL War in Ukraine Statement](#)