

Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business
Asheville Friends Meeting
Seventh Month 09, 2023

Present: Pat Johnson, Clerk, Barbara Burke, Recording Clerk, Kitti Reynolds, Barbara Esther, Mike Eddy, Jim Barham, Ellie Cox, Wren Hendrickson, Sarah Jane Thomas, Katherine Kowal, Adrienne Weir, Steve Livingston, Margaret Farmer, Robin Wells, Rusty Maynard, Suzanne Junkin Friedrichs, Rylin Hansen.

Present via Zoom: Gita Larson, Beth Eddy, Satchel Loftis,

The Meeting opened with Silent Worship.

The Clerk shared a reading out of silence.

Passage by Passage: A Gospel Journey by Kayla McClurg

(Revised Common Lectionary Year C © 2015 The Church of the Saviour, p 46)

Imaging New Ways

Luke 12:13-21: “A rich man had a fertile farm with fine crops. His barns overflowed.”

He has done nothing wrong exactly, the rich landowner whose crops have yielded abundantly. Nature gives. Shall he regret the bounty? Shall he let it go to waste, proving himself to be a lazy and ungrateful servant? No, the problem for the landowner lies elsewhere. On the far side of bounty, his imagination withers on the vine and dies.

He asks himself, “What shall I do, for I have no place to store my crops.” His first mistake is that he consults himself. A committee of one will never be counted as wisest in the region. His second mistake is his obvious problem with pronouns. “I” and “my” are notorious

troublemakers for those who would follow God's way. His third problem is having a massive failure of imagination. He can imagine only one option for himself, which is self-protection.

Putting our faith in self-protection is the greatest threat to any of us. Even the landowner knows he is in need of some soul talk, and in a hopeful turn, he says to himself, "Soul..." But instead of listening, he advises. How our souls would like to imagine new ways! When seasons of bounty come, what might our souls say? Would our souls prefer bigger barns or bigger community? What might we gain if we could step out of our dangerously small mindset and learn to collaborate with the Soul's imagination?

Approve the agenda.

Minute # 1: The Meeting approved the agenda.

Minute # 2: The Meeting approved the Sixth Month Business Meeting Minutes.

Announcements: Pat Johnson

The youth group, Artisan Collective canceled their events and will not need to rent space from us. We currently have three regular renters: The Zen Center, Mountain Mindfulness, and The Ethical Society.

The Meeting outside workday is scheduled for Saturday, July 15 from 9 to 11:30. Please come help out if you can.

We are currently collecting money for Bob and Donna Smith, to help with travel expenses. There is an envelope in the office if you would like to donate.

Committees:

Communications: Mike Eddy

We currently have 3 main ways of communication: our website, the Digest and our Facebook page. Mike said our Facebook page is out of date and suggested we either keep our Facebook page up-to-date, or maybe remove our presence on Facebook. A Friend suggested we just put a link to the website or Digest on Facebook, so interested people could access further information. Another Friend mentioned that Facebook can be a site for scammers and agreed maybe we should only post a link to the website and our Digest. A different Friend felt Facebook is a forum we haven't used often, and it might be useful in order to reach others. A Friend thought we should use the site for announcements only, and he wants to be clear that we are not using it for conversations or debates. Comments can be turned off, so it can be used for announcements only. Someone present asked if Mike wants to undertake the project of putting announcements on the Facebook page, and he said he could do it. A Friend asked if we might post a picture of the grounds that might include people on the Facebook page. Mike said that there had been a discussion about including pictures but the sense of the Meeting was that no pictures would be posted.

Minute #3: The Meeting approved putting select announcements from our Digest on our Facebook page. After a few months we will reassess how this is working.

Finance: Satchel Loftis

Satchel shared a table of our finances through June, 2023 on the Zoom screen and explained the entries. The reports he used are attached at the end of the Minutes. The overview indicated that regular contribution income is about $\frac{1}{3}$ of the amount of our budgeted amount. This is not unusual as historically more contributions come in in the second half of the year. Rental income is doing well, utilities are higher but mostly related to gas usage, which could be lower in the summertime, and Outreach checks and SAYMA contributions haven't been sent yet. The next report showed the restricted fund balances. The Building Fund amount is lower this year, as is the House and Grounds Emergency Fund, due to recent emergency and other repairs done to the Meetinghouse. Another report was shared which showed cash reserves the Meeting possesses, divided into two categories: general, which is undesignated and available for anything, and the other category which is monies restricted for specific uses. Satchel then asked if there were any questions related to his report. A Friend asked a question about the Indigenous Fund balance and asked if the Meeting has approved that fund. Satchel stated he called the fund by that name as there was money left over from funds raised for UNCA Indigenous speakers, but as there is an item in the agenda

Minute #4: The Meeting accepted the Finance report, with gratitude for all the work done.

Peace and Earth: Mike Eddy

- Unite with Chester Meeting's Minute of Love for the Ugandan LGBTQAI community;

The Chester Meeting's Minute was read aloud to the Meeting by Mike as well as an introduction to the minute. The Peace and Earth Committee asked if our Meeting felt moved to unite with this minute. A Friend said she felt that anti-LGBTQAI philosophy of African Christians is a result of proselytizing by Western churches, including evangelical Quakers. She feels we as Quakers have a strong moral connection with the results. Another Friend stated that there are currently tax-exempt groups in this country, supported by politicians, with anti- LGBTQAI agendas who export their beliefs to countries in Africa. A Friend pointed out that many if not most roots of these aggressions are in European colonialism and white supremacy. A Friend asked if this could be sent to the Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting and Association and a Member responded that it would be first sent to SAYMA's Peace and Social Concerns Committee. Another Friend said if we unite with this Minute from Chester Friends Meeting, it is an opportunity to let other communities see where we stand.

Minute #5: The meeting approved uniting with the Chester Friends Meeting Minute of Love for the Ugandan LGBTQAI Community. This minute will be published in our Digest, and on our Facebook page and website. It will also be sent to the Peace and Social Concerns committee of SAYMA.

A Friend expressed joy that the Meeting could unite with this minute, as in the past it was a contentious subject.

- Request to co-sponsor UNCA Conference *Beyond Land Acknowledgement: Towards Reparations and Healing*.

A Friend has been working on a conference to be held on Saturday, September 30, 2023, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the University of North Carolina-Asheville. The title of this conference is Beyond Land Acknowledgement: Towards Reparations and Healing. The Friend has been working with local Indigenous advisors and the conference will include a community of speakers, conversation, and artists. The morning will include presentations on tribal history and intergenerational trauma and grief. There will be music, possibly

artists and their handicrafts, and an artistic panel with cultural specialists in the afternoon who will talk of healing through art. This is a work in progress and a Friend from the Swannanoa Valley Friends meeting and members of the Unitarian-Universalist church in Black Mountain have been involved in the planning. As with any conference, expenses will be involved, and P&E is asking our Meeting to co-sponsor the event. In addition to providing funds for the conference, people can aid by helping at the conference itself and spreading the word about the event.

A Member asked if there is written information that could be presented to local religious organizations to encourage them to co-sponsor the conference, and this will be emailed to those who have contacts with other congregations. P&E asked Meeting to consider making a donation as a co-sponsor of the conference. A discussion followed as we discussed our Land Acknowledgement statement and our commitment to making reparations, healing, building relationships and community within our faith groups and other organizations. This will not be a one time event.

There was a discussion as to whether funds should come from individuals or from Meeting funds. A Friend felt this should be a Meeting donation and another felt it should be individual donations. A third thought we should have a fund within the Meeting for this type of event and individual donations could be made also. A member proposed \$1000 as our contribution from the Meeting.

The Meeting decided the co-sponsorship funds would be from individuals, earmarked for this conference, and sent as a gift from the Meeting and not initially coming from the General Fund. The treasurer said that a restricted fund could be set up that individuals or the Meeting could contribute to for this type of event. In the future, as funds accumulate in that fund, money would be available to add to amounts donated by individuals for a specific event. Unrestricted donations could initially be used to build this proposed fund. A Committee should be in charge of this fund and responsible for distributing the money, as restricted funds are meant to be used, and not just accumulate.

Minute #6: The Meeting approved being a co-sponsor of the UNCA Conference: Beyond the Land Acknowledgement: Towards Reparations and Healing, with a guaranteed financial donation of \$500. If there is a shortfall the balance will be made up from the General Fund. If writing a check, it should be made out to the Asheville Friends

Meeting with “September Conference” in the memo line. Please submit donations by August 5, 2023.

- Request to approve restricted Indigenous People’s Fund

P&E would like to establish an Indigenous Peoples Fund that is managed by the Indigenous People. The fund would first be started, then a mechanism for turning it over to the Indigenous peoples would be determined. To address non-profit concerns AFM could be the umbrella organization for the Fund and AFM would contribute annually to the fund and perhaps pay the equivalent of rent for the house and grounds.

A discussion followed as to who would own the fund after control is relinquished and how it would operate. A Friend asked how the fund would differ from the Meeting sending a check to an Indigenous Peoples’ entity where the money would then be under the control of the group that received the money. Money from Outreach is currently sent to an organization for it to use as they want. If we want a fund that is under the control of an Indigenous Peoples group, it could be a restricted fund for that purpose, and it may be simpler to just send money on a regular basis. The group receiving the check then has control of that money. What committee will have responsibility for collection and distribution of this money and do we want to seed this Fund with money from the General Fund or some other fund? A Friend asked if P&E would look into our role as a non-profit and disbursing money from the new fund, as we usually give it to an 501c3 organization. The treasurer stated that the general guideline is the distribution should be in check form, go to an organization, not an individual and cannot enrich the group making the disbursement.

A Member asked if the Meeting could have more time to think about this, and others agreed. The suggestion presented today is whether to establish the fund but the sense of the Meeting is that we need further discussion and discernment on this matter.

The Meeting closed with silent worship until the way opens for our next Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business in the Seventh Month, 2023.

Attachments:

📄 Sponsor Invitation.pdf

<http://www.pym.org/chester-meeting-minute-ugandan-lgbtqai-community/>

Operating Activity through 06/30/2023

Restricted Fund Balances