

**Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business**  
**Asheville Friends Meeting**  
**Ninth Month 10, 2023**

**Present:** Pat Johnson, Clerk, Barbara Burke, Recording Clerk, Steve Livingston, Barbara Esther, Sarah Jane Thomas, Jim Cavener, Rusty Maynard, Katherine Kowal, Robin Wells, Margaret Normile, Margaret Farmer, Zoe Wallace, Suzanne Junkin Friedrichs, Bobby Carter.

**Present via Zoom:** Adrienne Weir, Rylin Hansen, Mike Eddy, Beth Eddy, Satchel Loftis.

The Meeting opened with Silent Worship.

The Clerk shared a reading out of silence.

***Listening Spirituality, Volume 1 Personal Spiritual Practices Among Friends***

By Patricia Loring, copyright © 1997, p. 159.

**Chapter 7 Listening Modes of Communal Support for Personal Growth**

**A quotation from Douglas Steere**

To “listen” another’s soul into a condition of disclosure and discovery may be almost the greatest service that any human being every performs for another...For in penetrating to what is involved in listening do we not disclose the thinness of the filament that separates people listening openly to one another and that of God intently listening to each soul?

Approve Agenda

**Minute #1:** The Meeting approved the agenda.

Approve Eighth Month Business Meeting Minutes:

The Eighth Month minutes have not yet been published in the Digest, so we will read them and approve them at next month's Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business.

**Announcements:** Meeting had approved co-sponsorship of the *Beyond Land Acknowledgement: Towards Reparations and Healing* conference and asked Friends to donate funds as they were led. I'm overjoyed to report that Asheville Friends Meeting has donated \$1,290.00 to support this conference. Thank you for your very helpful generosity. Other sponsors have also contributed to the conference.

Barbara Esther has graciously donated a hanging drying rack that is located on the back porch outside of the kitchen. Please don't put damp cloths or towels in the floor basket but hang them on the rack instead. They get moldy in the basket.

### **Committees:**

Peace & Earth: Mike Eddy

Mike read the following policy proposal:

### **Policy on Native Heritage Claims**

We respectfully acknowledge and celebrate the indigenous heritage of all persons who identify as American Indian, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander by virtue of a known ancestor of indigenous heritage.

We respectfully acknowledge and celebrate the indigenous heritage of all of our Latinx sisters and brothers, whether or not they identify as indigenous, native, or any similar term.

In all of our decision making processes that affect any Indigenous Nations or Indigenous people, we look to that Indigenous Nation or to citizens of that Indigenous Nation for advice, counsel, and guidance. In addition to expression of gratitude for their assistance, we commit to compensating the Nation or the citizen(s) of that nation either monetarily or with appropriate gift(s).

It is not in good Quaker order for us to judge any other person on the basis of their appearance, nor to dictate criteria for self-identification. If a person claims native heritage, whether or not they present evidence of indigenous ancestors, we accept their claim at face value.

A Friend asked what was the motivation for this and asked if it will be posted on our website, if approved? The answer is it is hoped to be a statement from the Meeting. A Friend spoke that he felt led to ask P&E to consider this and to make a recommendation to the Meeting because at Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting and Association, he met someone who identified as being of native heritage, but no longer wished to claim to be. That person was later identified by another as being of Native heritage, and this Friend did not feel it was his place to say that the person was no longer identifying that way. He feels that we as Quakers need to have respect for what a person tells us, that we should accept their testimony and it is not up to us to decide if someone's claims are valid.

A Friend asked if our testimony of integrity would compel us to accept what someone tells us, or if we know something to be untrue, would we be compelled to disallow it. A Friend said that although she concurs with the statement, it is necessary to have it as a policy statement, as we as Quakers, should believe a person's testimony. A Friend said that some organizations want proof, but our Meeting will not. Another Friend is also uncomfortable with the statement because she feels we should not need a statement, that

if she felt or knew someone was misrepresenting themselves as a member of a particular group and speaking for the group, she feels she could not accept this. A Friend felt perhaps the fourth paragraph should be eliminated as it does not seem to add to the statement. Mike proposed the fourth statement could be changed to: if a person claims native heritage whether or not they present evidence of indigenous ancestors, it is not our place to judge their claim. A Friend still feels uneasy, as a person could claim indigenous heritage as a means to claim reparations or benefits that they may not be entitled to. Another Friend feels it is premature to start codifying who meets the criteria of participation in reparations, and who is representing the truth. He questions if we are ready to have a minute on how we are to behave.

The statement addressing Latinx is included because many, if not most, are of indigenous heritage. There are many people in all of the Americas who are of Indigenous heritage as evidenced in their customs and culture but cannot “prove” it.

The clerk feels we are not in unity on this statement so this will go back to P&E for further study to see what P&E recommends.

### Declaration of Peace and Non Violence 2023 in Western North Carolina

We, the undersigned proponents of peace, living on ancient Cherokee lands, and working for a world free of the ravages of war, hereby declare our observance of the International Day of Peace and the International Day of Nonviolence on Thursday, September 21, and Saturday, September 23, 2023 in Western North Carolina (WNC).

Both days were instituted by the United Nations. The Day of Peace became an annual event in 1981. The Day of Nonviolence, which falls on Mahatma Gandhi’s October 2 birthday, was added to the UN calendar in 2007. Now in our fourteenth year of celebrating Peace Day in WNC, this year we add the goal of Nonviolence, as well.

We recognize that the weapons industry is the major contributor to climate devastation while profiting from the destruction of life on Earth. Plus the potential use of nuclear weapons can lead to the end of civilization itself. Therefore, we must turn away from this culture of violence and focus our resources on empowering a society free of violence and endless war.

Active nonviolence involves diplomacy, compromise and the right sharing of planetary resources. This requires creative persistence — everyday of our lives.

Thus, we have set aside these two days to imagine a peaceful world where we celebrate our diversity and resolve our conflicts in nonviolent ways. As Gandhi himself reminds us, “An eye for an eye makes the whole world blind.”

Realizing that endless wars are not the path to a lasting peace or to a sustainable future, we call on all people to participate with us in two days of action:

Thursday, September 21 – Walk for Peace. Meet at the corner of Haywood Road and Louisiana Avenue in West Asheville at 5:30 PM to publicly demonstrate our commitment to the ongoing work for a just, peaceful and nonviolent world; and

Saturday, September, 23 – Gather at Land of the Sky UCC, 15 Overbrook Place, Asheville, 2 to 4 PM for announcements of our 2023 Peacemakers of the Year and new Peace Honorees, as well as celebrating the continuing efforts of promoting peace and nonviolence locally and around the world.

Join us as we unite our hearts and voices to imagine a world free of war and to celebrate the possibilities of true peace and disarmament.

As Jeremy Gilley, creator of International Day of Peace says, “We all want a world without war, without conflict, without human suffering.”

Endorsing groups: Asheville Coalition for Palestinian Rights; Asheville Friends Meeting; Beloved Asheville; Catholic Committee of Appalachia, NC Chapter; Community Accounting,

Asheville, LLC; Creative Peacemakers; Dances of Universal Peace; Elder and Sage Community Gardens; Ethical Humanist Society of Asheville Board; French Broad Food Coop; Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) Advocacy Team of WNC; Healing Love Institute; Healthcare for All WNC; Just Peace for Israel/Palestine; Land of the Sky UCC Church; North Carolina Coalition for Alternatives to the Death Penalty; North Carolina Peace Action; NC Physicians for Social Responsibility; Rev. Dr. Audette Fullbright Fulson and Rev. Claudia Jimenez of the UU Congregation of Asheville; Veterans for Peace, WNC; Papa and Mama Bear's Peace Garden; Peace Day Asheville; Peace is Possible NC; Racial Justice Coalition of Asheville, Inc; Rainbow Community School, Reject Raytheon - Asheville; Sahara Peace Choir; Saint Eugene's Catholic Church; Senior Suffrage; The Story Shepherds Project; WNC CPUSA; WNC 4 Peace

A Friend feels she can unite with this, but feels one day is not enough, we need to live this way every day. This Friend feels there will always be conflict but we need to learn to deal with conflict in ways that are not harmful to each other. Another Friend said that this is a statement from an outside organization and not from within the Meeting and are we willing to have our name appear on the document? Another Friend said that sometimes we need to look at the big picture and not pick things apart looking for perfection before supporting an idea.

**Minute #2:** The Meeting approved adding our name to the Declaration of Peace and Nonviolence 2023 in Western North Carolina.

**Ministry and Counsel:** Robin Wells, Barbara Esther

### **Christopher Foreman's Memorial**

On 9-9-23 we said our farewells to Christopher Foreman, a member of our Meeting. His interment was at the Carolina Memorial Sanctuary, a local green-burial cemetery. He was surrounded by family and friends as he was laid to rest. It was a beautiful service and a poem read. The interment was followed by a memorial in the Meetinghouse. It was a full community effort and about 50 people attended. Individual Members were recognized for the efforts put in by them by cleaning up, in organizing the set up of the Meetinghouse, arranging flowers, providing music, and supplying food. We

will continue to hold Becky Ledbetter, Christopher's partner, and the rest of his family in the Light.

### Request for Funds

M&C is continuing to explore the liability our meeting faces in the event of someone suffering injury on our property. We know what our insurance is but don't know our full liability. The Committee has identified an attorney to work with us at a cost of \$250 per hour. This is considerably lower than another attorney we contacted. The Committee would like to move ahead with this and ask for approval to meet with the attorney for up to two hours. If more time is needed, the Committee will return to MFB. Robin requests the money come out of the Building Fund, as it affects our house and grounds, and it was not budgeted for.

**Minute #3:** The Meeting approved \$500 from the Building Fund to consult a lawyer for 2 hours concerning our potential liability for an actual injury on our property.

### SAYMA Request for Funds

A budget was approved at SAYMA relatively easily, but it is a reduced budget. Barbara read the many funds that SAYMA supports. We are being asked to increase our personal donations, and Meeting donations, to support these funds, and personal donors are encouraged to choose a particular project they would like to see supported. For example, Ministry and Nurture asked for funds to be put back into the Released Friends fund as they were unable to fund two requests made this past year. Donations can be made to the SAYMA Treasurer, or by check or credit card through Square, or via Zelle. The new SAYMA budget will start on October 1.

A Friend whether we pay SAYMA quarterly or yearly. The Treasurer indicated we pay it in one or two payments, but all is paid by the end of September. Barbara suggested we send our payment in quarterly if possible, as it sustains the SAYMA treasury over the year instead of them receiving it once a year. A Friend asked why SAYMA was asking

for donations instead of raising assessments. That is a possibility, but the hope was individual meetings might increase donations or assessments on their own. A Friend explained that some Meetings have had a loss of Members due to death and/or moving, and several are in poor financial shape. Barbara said that multiple factors have prevented us doing all we would like to do, and this is a seed being planted.

August 2023

Dear Friends,

As the clerk of the SAYMA Finance committee, I am sharing important finance news from June's Yearly Meeting sessions. Please share widely within monthly Meetings, worship groups, and committees. PDF files of this letter and the contribution form are attached to this email. The letter and link to forms are also posted on the SAYMA website.

First, a huge thank you to the body for approving the fiscal year 2024 budget, the "minimal budget, which begins on October 1, 2023, and runs through September 30, 2024.

Thanks also to the many participants in the "open" Finance meeting who shared their thoughts, concerns, and suggestions for ways to help SAYMA address the expected revenue deficit in Fiscal Year 2023 and 2024.

We heard comments about

- ★ the importance of the racial justice training modules and the affinity groups;
- ★ the value and importance of supporting and growing our Monthly Meetings;
- ★ noticing the more active participation of YAF's in Yearly Meeting and how

YAF



participation is growing more vibrant Meetings; and,

- ★ nominating YAF's for committees and positions of responsibility in SAYMA.

We heard many suggestions for increasing SAYMA's income:

- ★ Asking Meetings and individuals to contribute generously to particular set-aside funds: Released Friend, Racial Conflict Transformation, Southern Appalachian Young Friends, Uplifting Racial Justice, Spiritual Development, FWCC 3rd World Delegate, FWCC Conference, and the General Fund;
- ★ Encouraging donations from participants in the SAYMA affinity groups that were offered for free in the first year of the racial justice transformation program;
- ★ Raising the assessment rates for members/attenders in monthly Meetings, and/or asking larger and growing monthly Meetings to increase their contribution levels;
- ★ Considering a suggested scale for Meeting assessments so that Meetings may discern the appropriate rate for their contributions.
- ★ Continuing growing the Young Adult Friends program through the Kenworthy Trust;
- ★ Continuing the work of applying for grants for racial justice training; and,
- ★ Reaching out to older Yearly Meetings, such as Philadelphia, New England, And Baltimore, to support SAYMA with funds for racial justice transformation and antiracist training.

For your information, there are donor-restricted funds for each set-aside fund in the Yearly Meeting to which individual Friends and Meetings may specifically contribute by indicating the name of the fund on the contribution form. For

example, a specific contribution can be made to the Donor Restricted Racial Justice Transformation fund, for participating in the SAYMA Affinity groups.

General donations for all of SAYMA's work may be earmarked for the General Fund.

The Ministry and Nurture committee also has separate donor- restricted funds for Released Friend and Spiritual Development. During this Fiscal Year (2023), two Friends were approved as released Friends by Ministry and Nurture, and the funds in those accounts need more donations to reach the level of funding promised.

The Racial Justice Transformation set-aside fund needs \$4,000 more for 2024, to completely fund the 3 Racial Justice training modules for the second year.

Donations can be made through the SAYMA website, either by check or credit card with Square. To pay with Zelle, contact the SAYMA treasurer ([saymatreasurer@gmail.com](mailto:saymatreasurer@gmail.com)) for instructions.

We encourage MM's and worship groups to consider these suggestions in Spirit-led worship and business.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Morris

Clerk of Finance

The Meeting was asked to consider where we are led on this request, and we will discuss it at a future MFB.

It was also announced by a Friend that our Meeting needs a representative to SAYMA.

Racial Justice Committee: Steve Livingston

At the last MFB, the Meeting considered how to gather and move forward with learning the history of the Black community in Asheville and how white people have benefitted from decisions made that adversely affected the community. Part of the process for reparative justice involves white people engage in a truth and reconciliation process in which we examine the history of our organizations, structures, and individual lives and relate that to the way African American people in particular have been impacted by white supremacy culture to our advantage. This is often referred to as a Truth and Reconciliation process, and ultimately results in a Statement of Apology. We recently have begun to engage in this process in terms of our relationship to Native American peoples and the Meeting has united in a Minute of Support for Indigenous Peoples. The RJC has been examining the process and how to move forward with it and this has led to a relationship with Dr Melchor Hall, of the African American Education and Research Organization (AAERO). As we discussed recently, there are two options that Dr. Hall suggested for our work: either a weekend retreat-type setting or a series of discussions over a longer time period to engage in the process of identifying the history of Black community in Asheville and the impact of white supremacy culture on their economic and personal wellbeing. In a subsequent conversation, Dr Hall suggested that we engage in a process over a longer period of time instead of a weekend retreat or three consecutive Saturdays. Our weekly racial equity discussion group meeting might be used in conjunction with this approach. Steve will find , in advance of the next MFB, how this would fit in with her proposal and where our time with her would fit into her schedule. She is not asking for monetary compensation but ultimately part of our process is going to involve money for the African American community in Asheville. RJC is requesting the Meeting's approval of this process and asking for participation of Friends in the Meeting.

A Friend asked what the frequency of the meeting would be. Dr Hall's original proposal for a three day retreat would amount to about 24 hours. The newest proposal is a once a month meeting, for about 2 hours, for an indeterminate period of time.

A Friend stated that many do not drive at night and asked if these meetings would be on Zoom, and Steve indicated they would be.

A Friend asked us to consider the possibility of a retreat, as there is really something about the intensity of being together that can bond people together and give energy and momentum to the process.

Steve has given this some thought, but is concerned it may leave people out, such as families who have children in school, but a Friend stated we have always had children at retreats. Another Friend brought up that some people work weekends, but added that if children are coming, she would like to see the children involved in the process. A Friend mentioned the Narrow Ridge, TN retreat center is an environmentally focused retreat center, and might be considered if we do plan an environmentally themed retreat.

**Minute 4:** The Meeting approves the request to move forward with the truth and reconciliation process facilitated by Dr Melchor Hall.

**Reparations Caretakers:** Steve Livingston

The Reparations Caretakers recommend that at the end of each year we hold over \$1500 in the Reparations Fund on an annual basis so that we will have some money to compensate the BIPOC speakers or presenters who share their expertise and experience . Any funds remaining after holding over the \$1500 will go to the Reparations Stakeholders Authority of Asheville. We will have a Second Hour with RSAA on September 17th so the Meeting is not asked to come to a decision today. We are allowing some time today for clarifying questions and observations/reactions. A Friend asked that it be made clear that this Reparation Fund is not part of the annual budget, but it is a reserve fund maintained by individual contributions.

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