

**Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business**  
**Asheville Friends Meeting**  
**Eleventh Month 10, 2024**

**Present in the Meetinghouse:** Barbara Esther, Interim Clerk, Barbara Burke, Interim Recording Clerk, Katherine Kowal, Pat Johnson, Bobby Carter, Rylin Hansen, Jim Cavener, Nick Mimkin, Ellie Cox, Sarah Jane Thomas, Suzanne Junkin-Friedrichs, Sarah Parker, Jim Barham, DeAnna Hatch, Maureen Pratt, Adrienne Weir, Debra Rice, Steve Livingston,

**Present via Zoom:** Beth Eddy, Mike Eddy, Satchel Loftis

The meeting opened with Silent Worship.

The Interim Clerk shared a reading out of the silence.

From: *The Little Book of Conflict Transformation* by John Paul Lederach , Good Books, New York, NY. Jan. 2003

“Conflict flows from life. As I have emphasized above, rather than seeing conflict as a threat, we can understand it as providing opportunities to grow and to increase understanding of ourselves, of others, of our social structures. Conflicts in relationships at all levels are the way life helps us to stop, assess, and take notice. One way to truly know our humanness is to recognize the gift of conflict in our lives. Without it life would be a monotonously flat topography of sameness and our relationships would be woefully superficial.

Conflict also creates life: through conflict we respond, innovate, and change. Conflict can be understood as the motor of change, that which keeps relationships and social structures honest, alive, and dynamically responsive to human needs, aspirations, and growth.”

Approve Agenda

**Minute #1:** Friends accepted the agenda.

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

[Note: there was no meeting for worship for the conduct of business in Tenth Month, October, due to Hurricane Helene]

**Announcements:** Barbara Esther

**A Thank You:** We want to thank Rusty Maynard for letting a group from Athens, Ohio stay in one of his houses while they were helping with Helene clean-up. This hard-working group is part of a company, Zero Waste Event Productions in Athens. Shannon, one of the clean-up team, is a member of Athens Meeting and reached out to us asking for help finding a place to stay. Rusty stepped up to help us provide hospitality. Rusty's house not only provided heat and flushing toilets, it ended up being a good place for them to park their trucks and trailers overnight. Thanks, Rusty!

**Meetinghouse water:** At the meetinghouse we continue to operate under a boil-water protocol. No dishwashing or food washing can be done in our kitchen. Flush water is fine to use. There is hand sanitizer available in the restrooms to use after hand washing.

**Letter from Chattanooga Friends Meeting:** See the letter below.

We discussed whether we wanted to establish an ad hoc committee, schedule dialogue among interested Friends, or refer the matter to a standing committee. A Friend asked if we wanted to address these issues, or work on improvement within our own meeting. A Friend said she is not familiar with the conflict in Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting and Association (SAYMA), and asked if we desire investing time in addressing these issues or should we address issues within our meeting first. Several Friends feel there has been racism in this meeting for a long time, and we need to focus on eliminating that from our own meeting, although we have begun work in that direction. Many Friends agreed that we should address these queries to our own meeting to clarify our leading before addressing the Yearly Meeting, and feel the queries offer the opportunity to examine our own practices, which has included shutting down marginalized people. Another person asked if we feel led to radical transformation, and is it in an egotistical or spirit-led way? A proposal was made that we should communicate with the Chattanooga Meeting through building relationships rather than by giving advice, or answering questions. Relationships with others in the Yearly Meeting cannot be confined to 5 days a year. Long time Friends offered to

speak after meeting with newer Friends about the SAYMA upheaval. The Clerk sensed a strong desire to take up a response and have communication not only with Chattanooga Friends Meeting, but within our meeting, and asked if we agree to spend an hour or so next week, after Meeting for Worship, in discussion not just of the queries, but of our own understandings of what builds relationships amongst us. A Friend asked to have the term radical transformation explained and a Friend said that many books have been written about conflict transformation as a way to deal with conflict in a deeper and more wide ranging way than conflict resolution. Radical transformation acknowledges that we are all individuals and we come together and don't always get along, so we have to change at the root. A description of radical transformation was given by a Friend and there are several pamphlets available in our meeting library.

It appeared that the Meeting would like to have more than one opportunity to meet, therefore we will have two sessions, November 17 and December 1, to spend time discerning our meeting's work and our response to the Chattanooga letter. Both sessions will be hybrid and a transcript available for those not able to attend. A Friend said that it is important to realize there is more than one way to perceive an issue, and empathy and listening are key. Disruption may be caused by someone trying to bring attention to an issue, as Benjamin Lay did. A Friend felt we should respond to the Chattanooga Meeting, even if we do not have conclusions, to let them know that we acknowledge the work they have done.

The possibility of a meeting retreat was raised, as there has not been one for several years, that would allow dedicated time to address issues such as this, without the pressure of limiting it to an hour.

### **Committees:**

Finance Committee: Satchel Loftis

Satchel gave the Finance report and he asked Committees to work on their budget request for 2025 and to communicate with the Finance Committee and the Treasurer. The budget was shown on a shared screen and is shown in an attachment at the bottom of this document. The table shows the current budget as of November 9, with the exception of recently received monies. Unrestricted gifts to the Meeting are about 60% of our budgeted amount, which is on the low side, but in the past more donations often come in towards the end of the year. There is a \$12,000 goal to be reached by the end of December to reach our budget. Our rent income is a bit ahead of last year's, House and Grounds costs are a bit lower, but can increase in the next 2 months, but our insurance costs increased by about 25% this year.

Religious education covers our younger Friends and Southern Appalachian Young Friends (SAYF) expenses. It is currently under budget but SAYF activities tend to occur towards the end of the year, but things are currently in some upheaval due to the recent hurricane. Under Outreach, we have paid our SAYMA assessment, and the other Outreach disbursements will be paid at the end of the year. These numbers follow the trends of the past years, other than the exceptions pointed out by Satchel. A member thought that we did not meet our budget last year (2023) as far as income is concerned. For the 2024 fiscal year, the Meeting approved an aspirational budget that was higher than previous year's income. When asked how the 2023 budget deficit was resolved, Satchel explained that the 2024 budget was based on 2023's income, but the expenditures approved were \$2000 more than 2023's expenditures.

Ministry & Council Committee: Pat Johnson

### **Hurricane Helene Relief**

As we continue our recovery from Helene, we recognize that Spirit is alive and well within our communities. We are so grateful for the care, concern, and generosity that we've received from many sources. We're inspired by these efforts from Meetings and individuals from all over the country and even other countries such as Canada and England. This is a report from M&C on what we've received so far and how we've dispersed it. Some donations are specifically designated to particular needs while others ask us to discern Spirit's leading. We've been very clear that we're sharing our donations with Swannanoa Valley Friends Meeting (SVFM) and Celo to help them respond to the needs of their Meetings and individuals within their community. We're doing the same for our AFM folks but also want to share some of the funds with trusted organizations such as Beloved Asheville and Equal Plates. The report starts with a summary of receipts and disbursements and then gives more specifics. We still have funds to share so this is an opportunity for the Meeting as a whole to give some guidance as you are led on further disbursements. As a reminder, we feel it is prudent to keep some amount for future needs both anticipated and unknown.

## Hurricane Helene Relief and Recovery Summary

7 checks totaling \$3,900.00 plus an additional \$1,000.00 for SVFM

Maui Worship Group asked where they should donate, and they sent a check for \$1000. It was divided between AFM and SVFM, as Celo felt they were in good shape.

M&C suggested \$200.00 for AFM and \$800.00 for SVFM.

27 Just Giving Gifts totaling \$2,935.24

Additional Just Giving gift of \$300.00 from Atlanta Friends designated to Celo and SVFM for \$150.00 each.

	<b>AFM</b>	<b>SVFM</b>	<b>Celo</b>
<b>Checks</b>	\$3,900.00	\$1,800.00	
<b>Just Giving</b>	\$2,935.24	\$ 150.00	\$150.00
<b>Total Receipts</b>	<b>\$6,835.24</b>	<b>\$1,950.00</b>	<b>\$150.00</b>

**Disbursements** 9 individuals assisted for a total of **\$3,113.22**

**Net Balance** **\$3,722.02** (**\$6,835.24 - \$3,113.22**)

A check for \$500 was recently received bringing AFM net balance to \$4222.02


The question was asked as to how we wish to disburse this balance.

Ministry & Council suggested \$1,242.02 for AFM\* & \$1240.00 each for SVFM & Celo (based on the original net balance of \$3722.02)

\*We anticipate at least \$800.00 more in needed assistance in the AFM community and the rest could be shared with

local organizations doing relief work.

## Hurricane Helene Relief and Recovery

NAME	ORGANIZATION	AMOUNT		
		AFM	SVFM	CELO
<b>Checks</b>				
	Boise Valley Friends Mtg (ID)	\$ 150.00		
Anonymous		\$1,000.00		
Peter Jaquette	Fidelity Charitable	\$ 50.00		
Robert Kinsey	Maui Worship Group	\$ 200.00	\$ 800.00	
Gary Farlow	Xenia Friends Meeting (OH)	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00	
Mary Simmons	Winston Salem Friends	\$1,000.00		
Joe Uknalis	Upper Dublin Friends (PA)	\$ 500.00		
<b>Total Checks</b>		<b>\$ 3,900.00</b>	<b>\$1,800.00</b>	

## Just Giving

Nanette Polk	
Ruth Flower	Takoma Park, MD
Mary Hillstrom	Rockville, MD
Kristin Loken	Sandy Spring, MD
June-ETTA Chenard	Niagara-on-the-Lake Ontario
Betsey Collins	Arnoldsville, GA
Martha Gay	
Patricia Johnson	Candler, NC
Thomas D Horne	
Lynn Perlik	Greenbelt, MD
James Wilkinson	Berwyn Height, MD

**NAME**

Jodi Newman	Redmond, WA
Nicola Bennett	Winchester, England
Barbara Hoekje	Philadelphia, PA
Philip Callahan	Silver Spring, MD
Allison Tracy	Robbinsville, NC
Marie Roena Oesting	
Jane Blount	San Diego, CA
Dirk Neyhart	Berkeley, CA
Rylin Hansen	Asheville, NC
Ted Emigh	Bloomington, IN
Margaret Brown	Portland, OR
Judith Reece	Greensboro, NC
Jean Archer	Greensboro, NC
Charles Bruder	Mt Holly, NJ
Charles	Mt Holly, NJ
Bert Skellie	\$150.00 (AFM) \$150.00 (SVFM) \$150.00 (Celo) Atlanta FM, GA
Rich Sidwell	Beallsville, OH

	<b>AFM</b>	<b>SVFM</b>	<b>Celo</b>
<b>Total Just Giving</b>	<b>\$2,935.24</b>	<b>\$150.00</b>	<b>\$150.00</b>

<b>Total Receipts</b>	<b>\$6,835.24</b>	<b>\$1,950.00</b>	<b>\$150.00</b>
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How should remaining funds be disbursed? Ministry & Council suggested \$1,242.02 for AFM\* & \$1,240.00 each for SVFM & Celo (based on the original net balance of \$3722.02) or \$1640 to Celo and \$840 to SVFM, as they had received \$800 from the Maui Worship group

\*We anticipate at least \$800.00 more in needed assistance in the AFM community and the rest could be shared with

local organizations doing relief work.

Other suggestions offered for additional groups to receive funds were: Beloved, Equal Plates, Reparations Stakeholders Authority of Asheville (RSAA), Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church (GCPC) and the donation should be made to the pastor's discretionary fund, and Colaborativa La Milpa (CLM) It was brought up that we may be restricted to donating to 501C non profits. Some feel any money left should go to local organizations instead of the actual Meetings, while a Member said that if money is sent to a particular Meeting it is their decision what to do with the money. More money may be coming in, and AFM has had requests for money, which has been paid, and anticipates more requests of about \$800 from people in our community, so this also needs to be considered. \$3422 remains after \$800 set aside for anticipated AFM needs. Suggested recipients are Beloved, Equal Plates, RSAA, GCPC, CLM, SVFM, and CELO. Discussion ensued and a Minute was proposed.

**Minute #3:** The remaining \$3,422 plus a \$78 donation from a Friend will bring the amount to \$3,500. Reparations Stakeholders Authority of Asheville, Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church, Colaborativa La Milpa, Equal Plates and BeLoved, Swannanoa Valley Friends Meeting and Celo Friends Meeting will each receive \$500.

Spiritual Enrichment Committee: schedule changes Barbara Esther

Due to disruptions after Hurricane Helene we have had to postpone several planned events in October. Late November and December are full of activities with:

- Simple Gifts (Little Crafty) multigenerational program on **November 24**. If you have in mind a simple gift we could make, see Robin Wells or Barbara Esther to reserve a table. Each person leading an activity provides the materials needed at that table, but may request reimbursement if desired.
- **November 17 and December 1** discussion of the letter from Chattanooga Friends-tentative
- **December 8** is our regular meeting for the conduct of business.
- The Christmas play will take place on **December 15**. The Ethical Society meets that day.
- We will have a shared Holiday Potluck on **December 22nd**.
- **December 29** is a fifth Sunday, which we traditionally use for card writing to elected officials, led by the Peace and Earth Committee.

Postponed activities include the viewing of "Bad Faith", Neurodiversity with Paul Fleischman, and Weaving a Wider Welcome to be rescheduled for a day in 2025.



The Meeting closed with silent worship as way opens for our next Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business in the Twelfth Month 8, 2024.

Letter from Chattanooga Friends Meeting

Dear Friends,

We hold a vision of SAYMA as a stronger, more spiritual, diverse and actively anti-racist body, with children, teens and young adults flocking to our sessions. The need to overcome the culture of racial bias within the Society of Friends and SAYMA is indeed important. We see the YM taking steps toward becoming an anti-racist community and understand that the journey will take many years.

But we wonder: how long it will take for SAYMA to get to this vision—or will it implode from conflict and the withdrawal of monthly meetings and individual Friends?

Over the last few years, Chattanooga Friends have witnessed very unFriendly behavior at SAYMA sessions. We have seen shouting during business meetings, rants, name-calling, bullying, and other antagonistic conduct that went unchecked. Quakers tend to be conflict-averse in many situations, and this unFriendly conduct continued through several clerks without the YM establishing firm boundaries for acceptable behavior and tactics. This year, in response to a letter from Chattanooga Friends Meeting (CFM), SAYMA clerks implemented Guidelines for Participants in Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business with some success. However, Chattanooga Friends still observed toxic behavior and what felt like manipulation of the YM at large.

As a result of this ongoing turmoil, several of our long-time SAYMA participants have completely dropped their connection with the YM after being personally attacked, belittled and otherwise mistreated. The number of Chattanooga Friends attending YM has dwindled significantly, and only one person currently serves on a SAYMA committee. Thus, we find ourselves wrestling with what our

relationship with SAYMA should be in the future, especially whether to continue our financial support in 2025.

CFM wonders if this turmoil is “normal” in the journey toward racial conflict transformation and becoming an anti-racist community or whether SAYMA’s tumult is the result of personalities that seek to manipulate our path through divisive power tactics instead of through spiritual leadership. We hear voices in the YM on both sides of this concern.

So we offer these questions for consideration by the clerks of SAYMA, YM committee clerks, and the other monthly meetings of SAYMA:

1. How would (or how does) SAYMA recognize and respond to someone whose behavior is out of step with Friends testimonies and practices?
2. How would SAYMA distinguish between someone following a Spirit-led leading or an ego-led leading?
3. Would SAYMA ever remove an attender from participation in and influence over YM matters? How would the YM determine it needed to initiate this process? What would this process look like in person and on Zoom?
4. How does SAYMA assess the value of Monthly Meeting engagement and membership versus maintaining the involvement of individuals whose behaviors sow division?

CFM cannot answer these questions for SAYMA, but we ask that the YM and its constituent meetings consider them soon. We welcome your direct feedback at [ChattanoogaFriendsMeeting@gmail.com](mailto:ChattanoogaFriendsMeeting@gmail.com).

Yours in the Light,

Chattanooga Friends Meeting

**Finance Reports**

**[AFM 2024 Fund Balances](#)**

Operating Activity as of 11/10/24