

Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business
Asheville Friends Meeting Minutes
Second Month 8, 2026

Present in the Meetinghouse: Clerk; Lilith Swaggert, Recording Clerk; Elliott Jarrett, Katherine Kowal, Margaret Farmer, Babrbara Esther, Sarah Jane Thomas, Pat Johnson, Laura McCullough, Jim Cavener, Steve Livingston, Kitti Reynolds, Rory Killian, Matt Utterback, Rusty Maynard, Bobby Carter, Barbara Burke, Diantha, Scotty Utz, Bob Lackey, Suzanne Junkin-Fredericks

Present via Zoom: Gita Larson, Ellie Cox, Beth Eddy, Mike Eddy, Rylin Hansen

The meeting opened with Silent Worship.

Out of the silence, the Clerk shared a reading from *All About Love* by bell hooks.

Sadly, many of our nation's citizens are proud to live in the most democratic country in the world, even as they are afraid to stand up for individuals who live under repressive and fascist governments. They are afraid to act on what they believe because it would mean challenging the... status quo. Refusal to stand up for what you believe in weakens individual morality and ethics as well as those of the culture. No wonder then that we as a nation of people, the majority of whom, across race, class, and gender, claim to be religious, claim to believe in the divine power of love, and yet collectively remain unable to embrace a love ethic and allow it to guide behaviour, especially if doing so would mean supporting radical change. Fear of radical change leads many citizens of our nation to betray their minds and hearts, yet we are all subjected to radical changes every day. We face them by moving *through* fear. These changes are usually imposed by the status quo. For example; revolutionary technologies have led us all to accept computers. Our willingness to embrace this unknown shows that we are all capable of confronting fears of radical change, that we can cope. Obviously it is not in the interest of the... status quo to encourage us to confront our collective fear of love. An overall cultural embrace of a love ethic would mean that we would all oppose much of the public policy that [politicians] condone and support. Society's collective fear of love must be faced if we are to lay claim to a love ethic that can inspire us and give us the courage to make necessary changes. Writing about the changes that must be made Fromme explains,

“Society must be organized in such a way that man’s social, loving nature is not separated from his social existence, but becomes one with it.” If it is true as, I’ve tried to show, that love is the only sane and satisfactory response to the problem of human existence, then any society that excludes, relatively, the development of love must, in the long run, perish of its own contradiction with the basic necessities of human nature.

Presentation of the Agenda

Minute #1: The Agenda was accepted.

A Friend informs us that the State of the Meeting report will be presented in March with the goal of approving it in April.

Approval of 1st Month Minutes

Minute #2: Meeting approved the First Month's Minutes.

Announcements

- Thank You Notes: This is a list of local & national organizations who sent ‘thank you’ notes for donations we made:

Manna Foodbank

Green Works

Madison Quakers, Incorporated (Projects in Vietnam)

Pisgah Legal Services

Colaborativa La Milpa

Veterans for Peace

BeLoved

Building Bridges

Asheville Poverty Initiative

Homeward Bound

Equal Plates

This is a list of wider Quaker organizations who sent 'thank you' notes for donations we made:

Friends World Committee for Consultation
Friends Committee on National Legislation
Right Sharing of World Resources
Pendle Hill
Friends General Conference
Quaker House
Friends Peace Teams
Friends Journal
American Friends Service Committee

Quaker Earthcare Witness

(Several of the wider Quaker organizations included hand-written well-wishes for our community's recovery from hurricane Helene)

Service Opportunities for Friends Montessori School

Canaan Brackens, of Friends Montessori School, has asked our meeting if we could provide assistance in setting up service opportunities for their students. The clerk asks if there anybody has interest in serving on an ad hoc committee to help the school with this request.

Minute #3: The Clerk created an Adhoc committee for advising service opportunities for the Friends Montessori School in Woodfin, North Carolina including Barbara Esther and Barbara Burke.

The clerk notes that we will need more folks on this committee. They and committee members will be recruiting more members for this committee.

Correspondence and Resolution from Land of Sky United Church of Christ

The Clerk received this message from Reverend Sara Wilcox. She asks that the meeting read and consider the resolution and that we decide upon our endorsement at the next Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business. Here is her message;

“I am reaching out to you as a signatory for the op-ed we ran in the fall. There have been significant developments in organizing and I celebrate nearly 1,500 signs around Buncombe County encouraging folks to **lovethyneighbor**. Those signs will allow us to send close to \$8,000 to our Latine organizers in our community. We still have some signs and banners so if you haven't gotten yours let me know. Black Mountain has organized its own Immigration Justice group that is meeting at Black Mountain Presbyterian Church (Awesome!!). Funds nearing \$15,000 have been collected to assist the victim of violence in Carrier Park last summer.

I have worked with organizers outside the faith communities to integrate our organizing into the wider network of our communities and allow for organizing by location across diverse entry points.

We continue the work of accompaniment for CIMA through FCIJ, as well as other means of support and solidarity. Our 4th Amendment Workplace efforts have grown and expanded under the organizational capacities of some of our younger organizers without affiliations to faith communities.

When I emailed for the news conference in November the resolution being offered was about staging ICE on city and county property. While the resolution was tabled for the time there was curiosity about what might serve our community and work to shift narratives about our immigrant neighbors. The Love Thy Neighbor Campaign hoped to start conversations and encourage expansive understandings of our immigrant neighbors, and the 4th Amendment Workplace initiative seeks to protect us all from what happens with government overreach. These past weeks in Minnesota detail what we DON'T want happening in our streets. We don't want violence here that endangers everyone, we don't want inhumane and unconstitutional actions by our government that harms families in our communities. We refuse to perpetuate a story where immigrants are our worst criminals-because that story is false and it is predatory and feeds the worst instincts we have.

**YOU HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO HAVE YOUR COMMUNITY ENDORSE
THE NEXT COUNCIL RESOLUTION**

Signatories are by name of institution so this is not an all call for clergy signatures, it is a specific call for institutions that you may lead.

The information below helps you understand the WHY and WHAT? The entire resolution can be found here. AND, if your institution receives federal grant money then YOU should possibly not sign this, as it can jeopardize grants based on this Administration's policies.”

Here is the resolution mentioned

RESOLUTION NO. 25-_____

RESOLUTION DECLARING THE CITY OF ASHEVILLE A 4TH
AMENDMENT WORKPLACE

WHEREAS, Asheville is committed to ensuring the safety, dignity, and human rights of all residents, regardless of race, gender, age, ability, religion, immigration status, or national origin; and

WHEREAS, The trust and cooperation of all residents is necessary to the effective operation of Asheville’s local government functions, including law enforcement; and

WHEREAS, The 4th Amendment to the Constitution of the United States reads in full: “The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no Warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by Oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized;” and

WHEREAS, Executive Branch law enforcement agencies including Immigration & Customs Enforcement have recently engaged in a pattern of unconstitutional and warrantless workplace searches, which have disrupted small businesses and local communities in many states, including North Carolina; and

WHEREAS, Detentions by Immigration and Customs Enforcement in North Carolina rose by 160% from January to June 2025, according to the Deportation Data Project; and

WHEREAS, The threat of unconstitutional seizure by Federal authorities such as Immigration and Customs Enforcement is preventing immigrant households from safely engaging in public life, including pursuing education and employment; and

WHEREAS, These search and seizure operations violate the 4th Amendment rights of all residents – which our state’s local law enforcement officers are obligated to respect when conducting their operations – undermine public safety, erode public trust, create barriers to essential services, and contribute to an environment of panic experienced by many immigrant households in our community; and

WHEREAS, Second-generation and non-immigrant Black, Indigenous, and People of Color families are also being unconstitutionally targeted, harassed, and arrested by Federal authorities and law enforcement officers under the guise of immigration enforcement; and

WHEREAS, LGBTQ+ individuals and families remain at risk for illegal and unconstitutional persecution by Federal and State authorities; and

WHEREAS, Hundreds of North Carolina workplaces have joined an effort by Siembra NC’s “Make NC Work” project to become 4th Amendment Workplaces that train their staff to defend the 4th Amendment rights of employers, staff and patrons, as have hundreds of workplaces in other states; and

WHEREAS, The City of Asheville can serve as an example of how local governments can advocate for the rights of all local taxpayers and discourage the overreach of Article II agencies in our communities.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT: The City of Asheville is proclaimed a 4th Amendment Workplace; that the City Manager is to direct staff to uphold the 4th Amendment at their workplace and report back to Council any needs or barriers to effective training on the 4th Amendment for any departments; that the City of Asheville is to instruct relevant economic development and workforce development staff who lead the city's relationships with employers to host at least three trainings this calendar year for workplace staff to also receive such training, with outreach efforts comparable to that for other municipal programs; and that we encourage all Asheville workplaces to join this effort to ensure respect for the Constitution and discourage Federal overreach into local communities.

Nothing in this resolution shall be construed as restricting or interfering with the execution of lawful judicial warrants or the enforcement of criminal law, nor as limiting the rights of any person or entity under state or federal law.

“Thanks for considering what your institution can do in this moment. We anticipate the council will be able to support this and have a number of councilpersons in support. Our institutional support protects them and they are freed to support with wider community support.

So please do what you are able. Please let me know as soon as possible if you can support this resolution.

Grace and peace,
Reverend Sara Wilcox
Land of the Sky United Church of Christ
Pronouns: she/her/hers”

The clerk of PEJA Committee reports that the committee recommends endorsing the resolution.

Minute # 4: The Meeting endorses and approves signing in support of this resolution.

Fundraising for Friends Changemaker Weekend - Barbara Burke and Bob Lackey

This is a message from Rory Killian, a regular AFM attender and member of the FCNL Western NC Advocacy team.

This Spring, from April 10-14, there will be an FCNL lobbying effort in Washington DC. Bob Lackey, Alan McGregor, Asheville activists and I (Barbara Burke) plan to join 6 UNCA students to attend the Friends Changemaker Weekend in Washington, DC. The theme is No Wars at Home and Abroad. We will be lobbying for bills that demand restoring war powers to the legislative branch and reining in our militarized immigration and border security agencies.

We supported 6 UNC-A students finding funds to attend the Friends Changemaker Weekend. These students are young, and (like me) inexperienced, but they earnestly want to learn about lobbying and be among like-minded people. Several are seniors going out into the world they have to live in, getting jobs and facing student loan repayments.

The total cost for the 6 students was \$2100 for driving to DC, registration, housing for 4 nights, transportation in DC, and meals. This amount has been reached through individual donations. Any additional funds raised will be allocated to support students from Western Carolina University.

A Friend shares that the students that will be traveling will be cross disciplinary Poli/Sci, Art, History, Etc.

A Friend points out that this is a wonderful opportunity to support young people and their journey to become lifelong advocates for change.

A Friend shared that yesterday they reached over the \$2,100 requested through individual donations, meaning that the cost for the representatives from UNCA will be covered.

A Friend would like to see the Minute include that if additional funds are contributed they would go to the WCU students.

A Friend would like to thank our young Quakers for bringing this issue up.

Minute #5: The Meeting recognizes the contributions of individuals within the Meeting to complete the fundraising to support the UNCA students attending Friends Changemaker Weekend. There is a small surplus, that surplus plus any future contributions to this effort will be contributed to students from Western Carolina University who will be attending the Friends Changemaker Weekend. Meeting thanks Rory Killian for recruiting the students to participate in this weekend.

Report from SAYMA Representative Meeting - Barbara Esther

The Representative Meeting #156 of Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting and Association (SAYMA) met on Saturday, January 31, 2026, as a virtual-only meeting. Margaret Farmer also attended the meeting from Asheville.:

Our Meeting does not have an official representative at present, but since I attended and I wanted to share a little of the agenda of the meeting. Another Representative meeting is planned as an in-person only meeting at Columbia Friends Meetinghouse on April 25, 2026. Anyone can register to attend a representative meeting. Since the minutes and narrative are approved in the face of the meeting, I had hoped that I could give a more complete report. However, they are not yet available on the list of documents at the SAYMA website. Reports submitted are on the website. The following is a partial report.

Jeremiah Gold-Hopton, Assistant Clerk of SAYMA, was nominated and approved to clerk the Handbook Committee with the goal of updating the Handbook before he becomes clerk of SAYMA in June at the close of sessions. Guthrie Armstrong, Recording Clerk of SAYMA, was nominated and approved as a member of the Yearly Meeting Planning Committee (YMPC). They are both from Atlanta Friends Meeting. There are many other opportunities for Friends to serve our yearly meeting which will be listed in the full minutes of the meeting. Of

those, a clerk of the Finance Committee and an Assistant Treasurer are important positions needing to be filled. It was emphasized that clerking skills are more important than financial expertise for the Finance Clerk position. Please consider talking with those on the Nominating Committee if you are interested in, called to, any of the available positions.

Registration for yearly meeting retreat and sessions will open on April 1. Workshop proposals can be submitted to the planning committee related to the theme Seeking Spirit Together, due by April 15. The retreat and sessions will take place at Berea College on June 18-21, 2026. The dates span Juneteenth, which to some is significant. It was noted that with the exemption clause in the 13th amendment to the constitution, we are still treating some people as slaves in involuntary servitude if they are incarcerated. Abolition of this practice is sought by many Friends.

The bookstore will be encouraging attendees to donate used books for sale. Fewer new books will be purchased, with those not sold being kept until the 2027 yearly meeting instead of returning them by mail.

Still needed are:

- A volunteer to assist with workshop planning and organizing
- Plenary suggestions
- A YAF as emcee for the Talent Show Saturday evening
- Call for a singing leader and a call for meetings to bring sing a long books to sessions
- There is a need for scholarships - you can designate contributions on the registration form or contact the treasurer for other ways to provide financial assistance. The cost of registration is still being worked out but we expect an increase this year to ensure we cover expenses and scholarships.

If you have questions, please send them to YMPC@SAYMA.org
Please see other reports, which are already posted on the SAYMA website as reports to the representative meeting.

Restorative Justice Circles have been used in Atlanta for several years,

and were added to the last two representative meetings and to last year's yearly meeting as a way to build community. We can find out more and use this approach if we choose to do so.

Respectfully submitted,
Barbara Esther

PEJA Outreach - Steve Livingston

2025 General Outreach

12 Baskets	\$450.00
Homeward Bound	\$390
BeLoved Asheville	\$360
Shiloh Community Association	\$250
Manna Food Bank	\$240
Raw Tools South	\$200
Equal Plates Initiative	\$180
Pisgah Legal Services	\$180
CIMA	\$150
Asheville Green Works	\$120
Mountain True	\$100
Creation Care Alliance	\$100
Just for Peace for Israel/Palentine	\$100
Veterans for Peace	\$100
Co Thinkk	\$80
TOTAL	\$3,000

Quaker Outreach

2025 Quaker Outreach

AFSC	\$375.00
FCNL	\$375.00

Quaker Earthcare Witness	\$375.00
FGC	\$300.00
Quaker House	\$300.00
Right Sharing	\$300.00
Friends Peace Teams	\$187.50
Ramallah Friends School (FUM)	\$187.50
Friends Journal	\$120.00
FWCC	\$120.00
Madison Quakers	\$120.00
Pendle Hill	\$120.00
QUNO	\$120.00
Total	\$3,000.00

A Friend asked about our affiliation with the Madison Quakers.

A Friend replied that they are the Quaker Meeting in Madison, Wisconsin that are connected to Reparative Justice in Vietnam. We have been collaborating with them for 12 or fifteen years beginning with raising funds for the construction of a water well. We also have a connection with a Black Mountain Quaker who was married to a man who self-immolated in protest of the Vietnam War.

Friends for Racial Equity Committee Report - Robin Wells

2025 Racial Justice Outreach

Building Bridges of Asheville and Buncombe County	\$100
Center for Participatory Change	\$100
Youth Transformed for Life	\$100
Operation Gateway	\$100
Asheville Peak Academy	\$100
Colaborativa La Milpa	\$100
My Daddy Taught Me That	\$100
Christine W. Avery Learning Center	\$100
Different Strokes Performing Arts Collective	\$100
Sistas Caring 4 Sistas	\$100

Hood Huggers International	\$100
LEAF Global Arts	\$100
Paul Cuffee Abolitionist Center	\$100
Positive Changes Youth Ministry	\$100
A-B Community Land Trust	\$100
YMI Cultural Center	\$100
Keep It Moving Coalition in Asheville	\$100
UMOJA Health, Wellness, and Justice Center Attn: for the new food trailer	\$300
Reparations Stakeholder Authority of Asheville	\$1000
Total of \$3,000	

Helene Report - Pat Johnson

02-01-2026 Summarized Hurricane Helene Report				
DONATIONS				
Just Giving Total			\$ 4,064.44	
Checks Total			\$ 14,764.00	
Total Donations			\$ 18,828.44	
DISTRIBUTIONS				
To Meetings			\$ 4,350.00	
AFM Community			\$ 5,387.21	
Other Organizations			\$ 8,550.00	

Total Distributions			\$ 18,287.21	
Balance			\$ 541.23	
For more detailed report, go to Updated Hurricane Helene				

(Ministry and Council has a recommendation for the use of the remaining funds as you'll see in the following report)

Ministry and Council Report - Robin Wells

Helene Disaster Funding

It has come to our attention that there are some funds remaining in the Helene Disaster account. The amount is \$541.23. M&C would like to recommend that it be sent to Grace Covenant Presbyterian for their eviction relief efforts that are connected with the Helene disaster.

Minute #4 : Meeting approved that the remaining Helene Relief Funds be sent to Grace Covenant Presbyterian for their eviction relief efforts.

Request about Sandwich Sunday

This may seem like an odd request, but we are making it anyway. We are finding that many people new to Meeting are confused by the term, Sandwich Sunday. We have used it for decades, but where did it come from? We rarely have sandwiches at the event and it doesn't sound very appealing to someone unfamiliar with it. Would we consider renaming it to Potluck Sunday?

A Friend likes the alliteration of Sandwich Sunday.

Friends shared many potential names.

A Friend likes “Potluck” because everybody knows what it means.

A Friend states that this item stabs at a pet peeve of theirs about how Quakers communicate. We insist on speaking plainly and not using exclusionary language. The Friend strongly favors any language that is most commonly used by regular people, language that is not centered around an already established group and is more well understood by regular folks.

A Friend feels less in a hurry to accept this new name under the assumption that this is a more well known term. We don't know if Potluck is culturally competent for all cultures.

A Friend also points out that using another community’s word for “potluck” may not be appropriate for our predominantly White community.

Friends historically have been known for plain dress and plain speech. They point out that there are regional terms, like Covered Dish. They think delaying a decision for a Month would be possibly the best choice at this moment.

Finance Report- Satchel

[02/08/26 Finance Report](#)

[AFM - Operating Activity FY2025 - 2026-02-08](#)

[AFM - Operating Budget \(proposed\) FY2026 - 2026-02-08](#)

A Friend asks if outreach was under budget by \$6,000 but we just heard from the committee that they have used their whole budget.

A Friend informs Meeting that expenses for Religious Education Committee were far below budget.

A Friend wants to draw attention to our utilities budget. They point out that we have three minisplits that we didn't have last year. They want to look to see if we will have a higher electricity bill and a lower gas bill. They encourage us to take that into account as we budget for this year.

A Friend notes that we can identify this as our new budget and approve or disapprove this but the recording clerk does not need to worry about Minuting this.

Minute 5: Meeting Approved the 2026 budget with appreciation to Satchel and all Committee Clerks who garnered their budget numbers.

Report forthcoming. For this meeting we must finalize the Operation Budget for 2025 and approve the 2026 Operating Budget

The Meeting closed with a period of silent worship.