

Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business
Asheville Friends Meeting Agenda
3rd Month 8, 2026

Present in the Meetinghouse: Lilith O'Brien Swaggert, Presiding Clerk; Elliott Jarrett, Recording Clerk; Margaret Farmer, Barbara Esther, Pat Johnson, Katherine Kowal, Ellie Cox, Jim Cavener, Jim Barham, Bob Lackey, Steve Livingston, Adrienne Weir, Sarah Jane Thomas, Bobby Carter, Isabella Bradshaw, Rusty Maynard, Arjay Ruotolo, Nick Mimkin, Suzanne Junkin-Fredericks, Scotty Utz, Rylin Hansen

Present via Zoom: Gita Larson, Beth Eddy, Mike Eddy

The meeting opened with Silent Worship.

Out of the silence, the Clerk shared a reading from *The Lathe of Heaven* by Ursula K. LeGuin:

“Love doesn't just sit there, like a stone, it has to be made, like bread; remade all the time, made new.”

Presentation of the Agenda

Minute #1: The Agenda was accepted.

Approval of 2nd Month Minutes

The Meeting will approve at next month's Meeting when the links have been approved. Elliott believes this issue has been resolved but will update during the April Meeting for Business.

Announcements

- SAYMA Clerking Workshop—SAYMA is putting on a hybrid clerking workshop in Atlanta March 28-29. It will be held in person and virtually 9:30-3:30 Saturday and 1-3 on Sunday. Leaders are Mary Ann Downey and Bill Holland; there will be **no fee for registration**, as they see this as their ministry to Friends. Asheville Meeting has donated \$200, which will be applied toward food. Friends in Atlanta Meeting offer **in-home hospitality**

Friday and Saturday nights for those from out of town who attend. Here is the registration link: [REGISTER HERE](#)

- We will have a second-hour worship sharing on March 15th based on the Pendle Hill Pamphlet, “Patterns of Racial Wounding and Racial Justice in Quaker Communities.” All Friends are invited to participate whether or not they have read the pamphlet. Refreshments will be served.
- The Religious Education Committee wants to thank everyone who participated in our Secret Pal program this year. If you have suggestions on how to improve it for next year, please see Robin Wells or anyone on the Religious Education Committee.
- The 2026 Gathering of Friends General Conference will be held in Burlington, Vermont from July 7-July 12. Early registration (with a payment plan option) is open until March 17. Full Registration and work-grant applications open on April 1. Full details can be found at <https://www.fgcquaker.org/fgcprograms/the-gathering/>.

A reminder that our AdHoc Meeting for the Montesorri school still needs members. Please speak to Barbara Esther and Barbara Burke.

Ad Hoc Yard Sale Committee

We hope to have a Meeting-wide yard sale in April or May and we need a committee to find a good date, pick-up stored items, organize the collection of things to sell, facilitate the sale, and arrange for the pick-up of what remains after the sale. Robin Wells volunteered to convene the ad hoc committee.

Minute # 2: The clerk forms the Ad Hoc Yard Sale Committee to administrate a spring time yard sale to raise funds for the Meeting. Robin Wells will convene the committee consistng of Bobby Carter, Barbara Esther, and Ellie Cox

A Friend reminds us that we don't have to be on the committee to do the work of the committee, the committee only decides what the work is.

Presentation of the First Draft of the State of the Meeting Report - Lilith Swaggert

The clerk read report, noting that we are not seeking approval at this meeting; comments can be addressed with Margaret Farmer contact her by email at zipsnork@gmail.com or by phone at 828 335-8287.

Draft State of the Meeting Report

These are the four queries the SAYMA Ministry and Nurture Committee approved:

1. How does your Meeting maintain its center and focus on Spirit?
2. How does your spiritual community support Friends in discerning and pursuing what is theirs to do in today's world?
3. Where is the leading edge of spiritual growth in your Meeting community?
4. In what ways does or doesn't your Meeting connect with the Religious Society of Friends and/or the wider Quaker world?

Each section of this draft is prefaced by the query it addresses

How has your meeting maintained its center and focus on Spirit?

We find that we receive a regular spiritual lift as we sit together in worship. Connecting with Friends helps us know we are not alone. Sitting in the silence allows us to wait together with the intention of clearing unhelpful thoughts and feelings, centering down, opening up, and finding much needed wisdom. This is a process that takes practice and time, and is easier and more powerful when done in community. When together, we expect Spirit to open the way.

Sharing our joys and sorrows helps us practice empathy and experience solidarity. Shared information about local activities and protests which reflect our values encourages participation. However, the way that we were sharing directly after the hour of worship made it difficult for some, especially newcomers. We seek to differentiate between the messages rising from the Inner Teacher during the silence and messages that are personal and political. We have separated the sharing of personal joys and concerns from the hour of meeting for worship. Our new process of closing Meeting creates space for more people to participate, rather than the few who may speak out of the silence. To better meet the need to discern whether a message is to be shared during Meeting for Worship or shared as a joy or concern, we offered a second

hour program that focused on vocal ministry. This reminded us of ways to discern which messages derive from Spirit and when they are meant to be shared.

How does your spiritual community support Friends in discerning and pursuing what is theirs to do in today's world?

After a year of seeking a Presiding Clerk, shuffling former clerks from month to month, a member participated impromptu as Clerk. She found deep alignment with the work and answered the call to Clerk with joy. We are all benefiting from the filling of the Clerk's position.

Last year we continued to carry the weight of tropical storm Helene's impact on surrounding communities and in the lives of those still suffering. We were able to channel donations to those in need through various organizations.

We are aware of the impact of what we do, as individuals and as a Meeting, regarding the health of our planet. When our west end furnace died we decided to pay more to install mini-splits in three locations in order to move away from the use of oil and gas power.

Our connection to nature sometimes comes in surprising ways. Not long ago, during a business meeting, we were visited by a hawk in the dogwood tree outside the big south-facing windows just as we were transitioning from one agenda item to another. Everyone stole a look at it while we waited for the Treasurer's Report. We value the nurture of the turkeys, bears and occasional birds who visit us, even if they did help themselves to the kale that the children and one of our adult gardeners planted in the Fall!

We have also shown our solidarity with immigrants in our area, hanging a banner and distributing yard signs that remind us to love our neighbors. Friends from our Meeting are participating in wider-community training around immigrant justice. We joined an alliance with other faith groups to be more aware of and respond to the needs or challenges facing immigrants. We formed a response team in case we have a visit from a federal agency, writing a protocol with specific the roles of various people if such a visit were to occur. We are learning to trust the Quaker perspectives of compassion, understanding, non-violence, and inclusivity as we plan for what we hope will never happen. Part of the plan is to have parts of the meetinghouse labeled as private. We

especially want to protect any children who are with us, so the entire second floor is private.

We love our children and find that sharing our values with them makes us appreciate and better reflect those values. Religious Education brings us back to the basic jewels of Quakerism. Their activities, such as making care bags for homeless individuals, show their caring spirit.

Where we live, we're surrounded by gun culture. With the calm that one carries from Meeting, we can be better listeners, not reactionary, but instead listening to those around us who keep guns. We continue to support Raw Tools South, the ministry of one of our members to transform gun metal into garden tools and other objects from surrendered guns. At gun surrender events, he often finds opportunities to minister to the people surrendering firearms, They are granted release from the trauma many of them experienced, especially when the guns were used in a suicide.

Asheville Friends feel connected and strengthened knowing that there are Friends who share pressing concerns that otherwise might make each of us seem to be a lone voice in the wilderness. Our Meeting has clearly seen the wrongs of the world, and yet, has maintained hope and found ways to act. We sense the fragility of the Peace Testimony when we do not act. We are held together by our commitment to help and protect others, and our hope for a more uplifting outcome. We contemplate the state of affairs in the world with a combination of fear of what's happening and determination to make a positive difference in the lives of the most vulnerable.

We provide opportunities for clearness committees when individuals reach out for help. New attenders seek and find materials in our Meeting library to engage them as they learn more about Quakerism.

Where is the leading edge of spiritual growth in your Meeting community?

We have had an increase in spiritual activism, merging inner spiritual work with external social change. Many feel a deep connectedness with those being oppressed and are driven to address it in a variety of ways.

We have had many visitors and seekers join us in worship this past year, to experience stepping out of the prevailing tumult of change and confusion.

Friends' worship, the caring community, and the varieties of outreach among Asheville Friends appeal to some who have begun to attend regularly. While attracting newcomers may be easy, our meeting finds that retaining them is difficult. Newcomers who are young and/or people of color often cease attending after a few visits. This is a concern of our Meeting.

One recent second hour was lovingly focused around neurodiversity, touching our hearts and deepening our compassion and our understanding of ways we can better support and care for one another. The panel presenting included a professional and three generations of Friends on the spectrum.

New attenders seek and find materials in our meeting library to engage them as they learn more about Quakerism. We provide opportunities for clearness committees when individuals reach out for help or seek membership.

In what ways does or doesn't your meeting connect with the Religious Society of Friends and/or the wider Quaker world?

In the Quaker historical spirit of addressing sufferings we try to serve those within our community who need assistance or encouragement. For example, we were providing a meal each Sunday evening for the widow of a beloved member. When she died this fall, several of us celebrated her life with her family and friends at the Basilica in Asheville.

Throughout the year we had opportunities to work with other Quaker meetings and wider Quaker organizations. We have collaborated with Swannanoa Valley and Celo Friends Meetings to work with both Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians. We supported the development of Celo meeting's land acknowledgement. We attended several meetings that Swannanoa Valley Friends organized around right relationship with Native Peoples. Several of us participated in a walk of Remembrance for the children who attended the Indian Boarding Schools and Day Schools. The walk recognized & acknowledged the intergenerational trauma from the forced family & cultural separation in attempts to assimilate Native Peoples. This remembrance is held each September 30. We were delighted to see many Friends that day in Cherokee from several meetings in and near SAYMA.

A couple of months later we received eight letters from fourth graders attending Carolina Friends School asking us what the meeting was doing to

make reparations for the harms done by Quakers and others by schooling indigenous people in ways that were detrimental to their language and culture. Individuals responded about our attempts to seek right relationship with Native Americans in our area, and the journey toward making amends.

In 2023 we approved setting up an Indigenous People's Fund supported by a portion of rental income, the value of our own time at the Meetinghouse & individual donations to be donated to a Cherokee organization as a rent payment for their property that we occupy. This year we determined that the recipient of the rent payment is the Center for Native Health. The director, Trey Adcock gave a presentation that shared the goals and activities of the center.

Two Friends in our Meeting have become very active in Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL). Because of their encouragement and the work of our Peace, Earth and Justice Action Committee (PEJA), many of us were moved to lobby our representatives in government through visits, calls, card writing, and paying attention to the priorities of FCNL that we participate in setting. Another Friend serves on Friends General Conference's newly-formed governing board, and works to support the Ministry on Racism. Both the meeting and individuals have consistently participated in and developed connections, information, and friendships from the SAYMA yearly meeting gatherings, committees and workshops. In our budget we allow for contributions to those and other wider Quaker organizations. That budget process serves as an example to individuals regarding what work we want to support.

We would like to thank the SAYMA Ministry and Nurture Committee for these thoughtful queries. We find this annual time of reflection to be helpful and inspirational.

Meeting noted that we are not seeking approval only feedback

All Questions, comments, or concerns may be sent to Margaret Farmer's email.

A Friend thanks Ministry and Counsel for their work.

A Friend shares that before we received the Query we reflected on past years Queries and this felt essential in making the draft as we waited for the Queries to arrive.

A revision could be brought to April Meeting for Business. The deadline to turn them in is April 17.

Here is the latest draft of the 5 priorities requested by FCNL from AFM. Kitty Reynolds, Margaret Farmer and Bob Lackey completed this final draft:

Using Spirit as a guiding principle for our discernment as noted in the Preamble of The World We Seek:

- 1) Prioritizing especially those most vulnerable, making available to them science-based, affordable and accessible public health, food security, childcare, shelter, and reparations for Black communities, instead of prioritizing defense priorities.
- 2) Legal protection of the Bill of Rights, basic individual human rights, humane immigration policy, fair election protections, all human bodies having the right to choose their own healthcare.
- 3) Seeking an Earth restored that protects and nurtures life on Earth.
- 4) Following Spirit, we seek to live into our testimonies and thereby support the Creation of a Truth and Healing Commission on the Indian Boarding School Era. SourceSection II.4.3 Relationships with Native Americans.
- 5) Right relationships with other countries, pursuing peaceful and fair resolution to international conflicts.

A Friend asked that we change “Defense Priorities” to “War and Militarism”
One Friend suggested that the first priority may include immigrants
In response a Friend explained that we chose the most inclusive language we could.

A Friend shared that they often think about the erosion of Bill of Rights and that picking on immigrants opens up avenues for oppressing everyone

One member shared a thought on “Science Based”, reminding us that the term is a Western higher Education based way to think about your health and encourage the use of the word “Culturally Appropriate”

A Friend offered the word Institutional, or empirical

A Friend expressed that Science based is reactionary, recognizing that the current state of institutions is anti-science and the part that we want to retain is the value of “Empirically Sound”

A Friend also offered “Evidence Based Practice”

A Friend asked to refine the term “Culturally Appropriate” to Culturally Responsive”

We are reminded that copies of the “World We Seek” are on the FCNL website or can be borrowed from the Library

The Clerk thanked everyone for their input.

House & Grounds Budget Request - Adrienne

“The House & Grounds committee would like to request that the Meeting make an adjustment to the 2026 Operating Budget. After House & Grounds met with Doug Lane and discussed his hourly rate, the committee decided that Doug should receive \$210/month rather than \$150/month. Business meeting had already approved paying Doug for 3 hours a month for his work as a handyman. This new rate would reflect an increase in the rate of pay the Meeting pays him to *bring it to align with his usual rate of pay for his work.*”

Friends discussed.

Minute # 4: Meeting approved increasing the House & Grounds Budget in order to bring the pay rate for Doug Lane in line with his usual rate of pay in his line of work. The new rate is \$210 a month, so paying Doug this amount beginning this month will be an increase of \$600 for this year to the House & Grounds budget.

Finance Report–Satchel Loftis

Satchel presented our final 2025 Operating Budget as well as the updated reserve funds.

A big thank you to the Finance Committee for sending out our donation acknowledgement letters. It is no small accomplishment.

A Friend pointed out that there are additional transfers to reserve funds that didn't show up and Satchel and Pat will get together to revise the spreadsheet.

Satchel reported that these numbers were on the spreadsheets provided to them.

A Friend felt confused about the deficit on the heating system. The numbers previously showed that we covered that cost and they asked to go over those numbers again.

One Friend asked whether the community support fund includes the transfer we will be making from the budget surplus from last year.

PEJA Statements on Gender & Labor Acknowledgement - Steve Livingston

PEJA Committee brings to the business meeting today two statements that Friends have seen before but we feel it is time to see them again. First we bring to the Meeting a revision of the statement of welcome to Persons of all genders that was approved 4th month of last year to be posted on the FLGBTQC website. It was not disseminated any further, so we are asking Meeting to approve the statement as revised to be posted on our website, on our facebook page, and in other, more public media.

Statement #1

“There is that of God in every person.” This simple, powerful testimony leads the Asheville Friends Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends to welcome all people, including those of any sexual orientation, gender presentation, or gender identity. We advocate for equality of all people and for the right of everyone to live safely and without fear.

Asheville Friends:

- Reject the anti-scientific notion of a "gender binary."
- Affirm the right of every person to self-identify their gender.
- Recognize all gender expressions as valid and real.
- Acknowledge, affirm, and embrace the gifts of the Spirit embodied in our transgender, intersex, and nonbinary beloveds with joy, humility, and gratitude.

We welcome queer, lesbian, gay, bisexual, asexual, transgender folks as co-equal participants in our spiritual journey and in all other aspects of the beloved community.

A Friend reminded us that this should be updated on FLGBTQC's website

One Friend questioned the use of the word Queer because Queer includes all the other identities.

We are reminded that some people identify only as Queer.

A Friend calls to attention that the “C” represents that we are all in this together and does not exclude Heterosexuals. It includes the concerns of all of us.

Minute #5 : The Meeting approved that this statement on gender be displayed and shared in public places, the website and social media. We will send this minute to FLGBTQC (Friends for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Concerns) for their records.

The second statement is a Labor Acknowledgement that we are recommending to add to our Rise of Meeting announcements, to be coupled with our existing Land Acknowledgement. It was first read this past first month business meeting. We have consulted with several partners in the Black community and have reconsidered it in committee, but no revision came about as a result.

Statement #2

Asheville Friends Meeting acknowledges that we live in a region that was built in part with stolen labor of enslaved Africans and their descendants, and we benefit materially from their exploitation. We lament the incalculable deprivation and loss of life, and the resultant generational trauma exacerbated by injustice and inequity to this day. We acknowledge our responsibility to address these historical and ongoing harms through mitigation and reparative action. To this end we are committed to:

- nurturing our relationships with Asheville's Black community,
- following the guidance of Black leadership in efforts to stop the harm,
- supporting and participating in the work of Black-led community organizations, and
- providing reparative compensation through our Meeting's Reparations Fund.

A Friend shares that when they hear an announcement every week they tend to tune it out and reminds us that our post worship announcements are lengthy.

They proposed that we rotate the announcements to not be repetitive.

The Clerk asks that this consideration be brought to the next business meeting.

A Friend ask if “Inequality” should be “Inequity”

A Friend suggested including the word “Exploitation” as these former words although true remove the perpetrator.

One Friend wonders if we consider our continued work to be welcoming to members and visitors included in the Meeting.

A Friend observed that so many things we do in our Meeting are because of “us” and there are things we do to be Welcoming to newcomers to the Meeting. They may seem rote to us and it is good for newcomers to hear. They like the litany of things we stand for.

One Friend wondered if we can use “stolen labor” *and* “exploitation.”

We are reminded that the term subjugation does not recognize the rebellion against that. And that the Black Community was fighting back against subjugation.

Friends agree to discuss this in community before next Business Meeting.

Finance Report- Satchel Loftis

The third month finance committee report included minor revisions to the 2025 Operating Activity results that were presented the prior month.

The net result was a reduction in the previously reported 2025 Operating surplus -- a surplus of approx. \$4,300 as compared to approx. \$6,100.

Various updates include:

- Reclassification of approx. \$100 of Unrestricted Contributions Income to Royalties Income
- Reduction of Rental Income to a net of approx. \$6,000, down from approx. \$6,200 (reflects transfer of 20% of Rental receipts)
- Inclusion of AFM's Rental Expense of approx. \$1,000, not previously recorded.
- Inclusion of various December expenses paid in January.

Because unrestricted contribution revenue for FY25 was approx. \$34,200, no adjustment to the FY26 budget amount of \$34,000 was needed.

[AFM - FINAL Operating Results 2025 and Operating Budget 2026](#)

Meeting ended with a moment of silent worship.