

## Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business

Asheville Friends Meeting Minutes

Fifth Month 10, 2026

DRAFT

Present in the Meetinghouse: Interim Clerk: Pat Johnson, Recording Clerk: Elliott Jarrett, Margaret Farmer, Ellie Cox, Adrienne Weir, Bob Lackey, Rylen Hansen, Bobby Carter, Sarah Jane Thomas, Jim Cavener, Laura McCullough, Carrie McLachlan, Jim McLachlan, Jim Barham, Robert Allen, Barbara Burke, Catherine Kowal, Richardson Exius, Alice Lane, Doug Lane, Suzanne Junkin-Fredericks

Present via Zoom: Gita Larson

The meeting opened with silent worship.

Out of the silence, the Interim Clerk read a poem from *An Offering to Mother Earth: Her Features and Creatures*; A collection of poetic works by Ron Martin-Adkins.

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### Gardening

While I have a garden  
My hands go into the soil,  
Because to seeds, plants,, and dirt  
I am the guardian.  
I weed, water, watch for pests  
And it never feels like toil.  
Though I know the produce will be  
Minimal.

I don't depend, fortunately, on what grows.  
I'm not a deer, rabbit. Squirrel, bird  
Or other animal

Searching for food in my short rows.  
What matters is that I connect with Earth's  
Treasures.

She's the ultimate Mother who gives all life birth.  
That connection provides the greatest pleasure,  
Far beyond anything else of worth.

## **Presentation of the Agenda**

**Minute #1:** The Agenda was accepted.

## **Approval of 4th Month Minutes**

**Minute #2:** The 4th Month Minutes were approved.

## **Announcements**

Our annual Youth Celebration will be held at Rise of Meeting on May 31st this year. We will have a short presentation about the children in Meeting followed by a potluck meal. Please join us.

Our 2026 SAYMA Annual Sessions and Retreat will be held on June 18-21 at Berea College in Berea, KY. The theme is Seeking Spirit Together. Registration for the Annual Sessions opens soon.

The 2026 Gathering of Friends General Conference will be held in Burlington, Vermont from July 7-July 12. Full Registration and work-grant applications opened on April 1. Full details can be found at

<https://www.fgcquaker.org/fgcprograms/the-gathering/>.

We received a thank you from 40 Acres in the Land of the Sky Alliance CDC. The full letter can be found in the addendum.

We also received a thank you from the Center for Native Health for our payment of \$5,634.45 as "rent" for use of the land on which our Meetinghouse stands. It can also be found in the addendum.

NPR recently covered a story on Raw Tools South, a ministry of Scotty Utz and Stan Wilson. Raw Tools holds gun surrender events, turning the gunmetal into tools, jewelry, and other works of art.

Our yard sale is scheduled for June 6, with a possible alternative rain date to be announced.

We are considering starting Friendly Eights again. We are leaning toward starting this fall and are looking for someone to coordinate this. Friendly Eights involves setting up groups of eight Friends who wish to come together regularly once a month for fellowship and food (if desired).

We are looking for a Meeting Clerk or possibly a pair of Co-Clerks for our Meeting. If you are interested in Clerking or being a Co-Clerk for the Meeting please see the Nominating Committee. A Clerk must be a member of the Religious Society of Friends.

House and Grounds informed us that there is an electrical safety issue concerning the wiring in the Meeting Space and on the front porch. They are considering it an imminent safety issue and are working with an electrician to resolve this concern.

## **Committees:**

### **Yard Sale Report - Rylin Hansen**

The 2026 Yard Sale is currently scheduled for June 6th, if the weather cooperates. The rain date for the Yard Sale will be determined. We have collected quite a few things for the sale and we have a nearly-full storage unit two miles from the Meetinghouse. We currently have a washing machine, a few kitchen appliances, shelving, furniture, yard tools, exercise equipment, assorted housewares, clothing, and lots of books. We can use more! Please look through your things at home and see what you can donate for the Yard Sale. We have limited space in the Meetinghouse, so please wait to bring your things until right before the sale—or sign up for a pick-up from your home.

We will begin sign-up for Yard Sale tasks on Sunday, May 17th. We will be looking for vehicles to help transport yard sale items to the Meetinghouse right before the sale, people to help set up the sale on Friday, people to help during the sale on Saturday, and people to help take leftover items to Habitat and Goodwill after the sale. We are also looking for more tables to use for the sale. Stay tuned for more information about the Yard Sale as it becomes available.

The Meeting House coordinator has a concern about conflict between the yard sale and the Zen Center's meditation. They are going to work with the committee to find a conclusion.

**Religious Education - Alice Lane & Doug Lane**  
**Report to Business Meeting 5/10/26**

Because of restrictions from the Fire Marshall, there was no SAYF (Southern Appalachian Young Friends) retreat held at the Asheville meetinghouse during the 2025 to 2026 year. The restrictions from the fire marshal are connected to having people sleep inside the meetinghouse.

The SAYF steering committee approached us with a proposal that the RE committee has considered and would like to bring to business meeting. They would like to hold a retreat at the Asheville meetinghouse in April 2027. Rather than sleep inside the meetinghouse, Friends would sleep in tents in the yard and on the porch. We believe this would allow us to be in compliance with the fire marshal's restrictions.

We are eager to have a SAYF retreat at the Asheville meeting for a couple reasons. One, our meeting is geographically central to the meetings who send youth to these weekend retreats. Second, we have a number of youth in our meeting who are of the age or almost the age to attend safe retreats. Having one hosted at our meeting would be a great chance for these young people to become more connected with Quakers in our region.

Laura Lane would act as a lead FAN (Friendly Adult Nurturer) for this retreat.

Friends discuss the restriction concerning the availability of a sprinkler system by the Fire Marshal. This would be a necessity to have people stay overnight in the Meeting House. If the kids camp outside they would be able to use the restroom overnight. A Friend asks if there is a need for tents and it was agreed these concerns would be met closer to the time. People are allowed to camp on private land. The House and Grounds Committee may look into what it would take to get a sprinkler system installed.

**Minute #3: The Meeting approves the proposed SAYF Retreat and will allow participants to camp on the lawn and porch of the Meeting House.**

**Ministry and Counsel - Margaret Farmer**

**Ministry & Counsel Clearness Committee Report.**

The Ministry and Counsel Committee held clearness meetings for Carrie and James McLachlan on 4-14-2026. Carrie's committee was Barbara Esther (clerk), Pat Johnson, and Kitti Reynolds. James's committee was Robin Wells (clerk), Margaret Farmer, and Steve Livingston. Both Carrie and James reached clearness about moving forward with membership in the Religious Society of Friends. Both committees are united in recommending membership for Carrie and James. We will present them with a copy of SAYMA's Faith and Practice.

We have permission to read both letters requesting membership.

**Carrie McLachlan's Letter:**

Dear Friends,

I am writing, with my husband, to request Quaker membership in the Asheville Friends Meeting. For most of my life I have been a Mormon. I have over the last few years, however, become inactive. That has been liberating in some ways, but in others has created a void in my life. I miss the community. There are many things I value from my Mormon heritage, but I have found the things I value most are in the Quaker tradition: the idea of the light of the world, the inner light, and continual revelation and progression, for example. Quakers have the values and beliefs that are core to my own, but do not have the things I cannot accept in my Mormon heritage:

hierarchy for one. It is this too, that seems to me to most inhibit Mormonism's ability to adapt and be open to new ideas. Though Mormonism has the theological basis to accept the equality of women and men, priesthood hierarchy gets in the way.

The practice of being quiet and listening for the inner light for guidance is appealing to me. I value your practice of sitting quiet in a group, being united in a common quest, and coming together as a community in group action. I appreciate that Quakers have been and are involved with social issues and have provided leadership to help bring about change. I have Coffin ancestors who were part of the New Garden community in NC and then moved to Indiana to help with the Underground Railroad. I too would like to be part of a tradition that has actively sought to do what is possible to help others and make the world a better place.

I grew up with positive feelings towards Native Americans though I have no biological heritage. My grandfather, for a time, worked for a Shoshone-Bannock farmer/rancher. My mom named me after a Native American schoolmate she admired and used to buy moccasins for me. I wore a pair when I married my husband, James McLachlan. But though I grew up living next to the Fort Hall Indian Reservation in Southeastern Idaho, their traditions were always on the periphery of my life. When my husband and I moved to Cullowhee, NC 36 years ago, I began to study the Cherokee tradition and have continued to learn more about their and other American Indian traditions. I have a M.A. in history from Western Carolina University where I wrote my thesis on Cherokee cosmology. I went on to study American Indian History at the Ph.D. level at UC-Riverside and I am ABD. For three years I worked with Tom Hatley, the Sequoyah professor of Cherokee Studies to find ways to improve Western's relationship with the Cherokee community. We helped to improve the Cherokee language program by pairing a linguist with a native speaker and created a Cherokee studies minor and graduate certificate. I am currently trying to better understand the Cherokee past by studying archaeology and make sense of conflicting narratives.

I appreciate that when you feel the community has made mistakes, like with Indian boarding schools, you have apologized for the negative impacts that practice had on Native American communities and individuals and have sought ways to atone. We, of course, are human and make mistakes, but I appreciate the openness and

willingness to change. I desire similar changes in my life and seek to align myself more closely to the light. In short, I find my core values compatible with yours and would like to be part of the Asheville Friends Meeting. I hope you will look favorably on my application.

Carrie McLachlan

**James McLachlan's Letter:**

Dear Friends,

Carrie and I would like to join the Asheville Friends meeting. Carrie is writing her separate letter, but we have been married for 48 years, and I can't think of doing anything without her so when I say that I would like to join the meeting I can't really say it without including her. I wouldn't join anything without her.

I started reading Quaker material back in graduate school in 1979. I was studying European history at Indiana University. At the suggestion of my teacher James Hart in Religious Studies I started reading the 17th Century German mystic Jacob Boehme. Boehme is difficult and so I searched for help in understanding him and ran across Rufus Jones's book, *Spiritual Reformers of the 16th and 17th Centuries*. I told Professor Hart about the book, and he told me that Jones was a Quaker. I'd read about George Fox in William James's *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*. I was very impressed by Quakerism and started reading Jones and Fox's journals sporadically in the years that followed. I have retained an interest in Jacob Boehme and the modern philosophers influenced by him. Some of the best material on Boehme is by Jones and the Quaker philosopher Howard Brinton. Brinton wrote that the Quakers were the main surviving sect of Boehmianism. I find that attractive.

I decided I would rather pursue studies in Religious Studies rather than history, so after finishing my M. A. in History at Indiana I earned a Ph. D in Religious Studies with a specialty in philosophy of religion at the University of Toronto. I taught in the philosophy department at Brigham Young University for a year and then, in 1989, moved to a permanent position in Philosophy and Religion at Western Carolina University and we have lived in Cullowhee ever since. I retired at the end of 2020.

I grew up in Utah and grew up in the local religion, Mormonism. I served a Mormon mission in France from 1974-1976. After I received my degrees I helped organize the Mormon Studies Group at the American Academy of Religion, and was President of the Society for Mormon Philosophy and Theology. I served as a Mormon Bishop in Waynesville, NC in 2014-15. I love Mormonism at least as it was the religion of my ancestors, with its ancestor veneration, finite Gods, revelation open to all, and eternal marriage. Still, I found it extremely difficult to believe the mythology. This only got worse as I grew older. Though I exist because of 19th Century Mormon polygamy, I found that history hard to take as well.

In high school I read Mark Twain's *The Mysterious Stranger* and *Letters from the Earth*, and Voltaire's *Candide*. I developed a serious allergy to Theism and pretty well all the traditional ideas of God as an Omnipotent, Omniscient, and Omnipresent Being. My version of the Mormon God was of a finite being, or community, doing the best they could do in a chaotic world beset with suffering. That was idiosyncratic for a Mormon, but no one bothered me about it. As the years went by and Mormonism became more literalist and politically conservative. It has a racist past for which it refuses to apologize, and remains homophobic. I found that I just couldn't remain a Mormon. But leaving Mormonism left a hole. We have family who are Hindu. There is much that is wonderful there, but I'm too attached to people I love to become unattached. I understand myself as a follower of Jesus and I want to remain Christian but as we looked at other Christian groups I found they were either too Theistic for me, or like the Unitarians, too secular.

I've long been interested in mysticism. I like silence, and don't like creeds or sermons. I've always admired Quaker commitments to an active mysticism. Quakers have always seemed to me right on most moral issues and even when they were wrong, as with the Indian Boarding Schools during the Grant administration, they were more right than most other religious groups. When they discover they were wrong they try to make it right. I've read Fox, Jones, and Brinton, I've been listening to Quaker Speak podcasts, and last year I read Amos Smith's *Holistic Mysticism: The Integrated Spiritual Path of Quakerism*. Last November I started attending the Charlotte Friends Meeting in Charlotte during visits with our son who lives in Charlotte.

I am moved by the silence, by people speaking of the light, and the non-hierarchical character of Quakerism. I like that Quakers call themselves friends. Mormons call each other brother and sister which is beautiful but to call each other friends is wonderful and I don't miss the hierarchy and patriarchy of the tradition where I grew up. I hope you will accept me as a member of the Asheville Friends Meeting.

Thank you.

James McLachlan

**Minute 4: The Meeting approves the Ministry and Counsel Committees recommendation that both Carrie McLachlan and James McLachlan be accepted as members of Asheville Friends Meeting as of May 10, 2026.**

A welcome party will be planned for a future date.

The business meeting closes with silent worship until way opens for our Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business on the 14th day, 6th month 2026.

**Addendum:**

**Thank You Notes**



40 Acres in the Land of the Sky Alliance CDC  
Asheville, NC 28803  
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<https://www.40acreslandoftheskycdc.org/>

April 15, 2026

Dear Asheville Friends,

Thank you for your generous donation of \$500.00, received on April 1, 2026. Your support of 40 Acres LOTSA helps our efforts to empower and revitalize our community.

Because of your generosity, we are able to move forward on our initiatives in service of the under-resourced communities in Asheville and Buncombe County. Your gift helps us to continue to advocate for the implementation of the recommendations put forth by the Community Reparations Commission.

Tax acknowledgment:

No goods or services were provided in exchange for this contribution.

40 Acres in the Land of the Sky Alliance Community Development Corporation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Our EIN is 39-2721074.

Thank you again for your support and belief in our mission.

Sincerely,

Chris Gordon

President

40 Acres in the Land of the Sky Alliance Community Development Corporation



The CENTER for NATIVE HEALTH

Asheville Friends,

Sgi/WADO/Thank you for

your continued support. WE

are so grateful to be in

relationship w/you all to serve

Native communities throughout the South East  
By Cole PhD  
Executive Director

