

Concord Quarterly Meeting

Held at Goshen Monthly Meeting - January 29, 2016

Opening Worship

The meeting opened with a period of worship at 8:35 am.

Welcome -- Representatives were present from all meetings save for Willistown. Thirty Friends were present as we began.

Approval of Minutes -- Deb Wood (Clerk)

The minutes of the Quarterly Meeting held on October 23, 2016 were approved.

Treasurer's Reports -- Tom Haviland (Treasurer)

The Treasurer's Reports are attached to these minutes as Appendix 1. They were received with appreciation.

Coordinator's Report -- Charles Spadoni (Coordinator)

The report was received with appreciation and is attached to these minutes as Appendix 2. The meeting approved an expenditure of up to \$500 for Playback Theatre's charges for the April Quarterly Meeting program.

Joys and Challenges Report

The report of Wilmington MM report will be formally presented in April, as Wilmington has a retreat today.

Refugee Relocation Update -- Leslie Leonard (Birmingham)

Things are going well for our Congolese family. Isaac has been working for some time and Rebeka and Maombi began work as well yesterday. Church World Service's support of the family has now ended and the Isaacs are paying for everything except their rent. The challenge has been organizing phone connections for them with relatives in the refugee camp in Tanzania, which is important currently because of the unsettled state of US refugee regulations. Friends expressed concern about the short and long term consequences for refugees of the changes in US regulations. Friends are encouraged to write to their members of Congress about this matter and to forward stories of relevant experiences to FCNL and Philadelphia YM's collaborative.

Nominating Committee Report -- Charles Spadoni (Birmingham)

The committee met in early January in order to begin consideration of the position of CQM Assistant Clerk. Suggested names would be welcome.

Responding to the Challenge of Small Meetings -- David Jones and David Leonard (Birmingham)

In response to the Joys and Challenges Report last year from Concord MM at our July meeting David Jones and David Leonard (Birmingham) have written to suggest two sets of issues that are presented by the struggles of small Meetings. (The letter is attached to these minutes as Appendix 3.) Due to an overly full agenda in October discussion of the letter was deferred to today's meeting. David Jones is concerned that we have in place the procedures we would follow if a meeting had to be laid down. David Leonard wishes to help small meetings find other organizations to share the use of their premises and responsibility for their upkeep and management. In response to the two presentations, one Friend asked if the Quarter had an Outreach Committee which might assist in expanding memberships. The Clerk felt that this idea could be a part of the larger initiative. Another Friend noted that *Faith and Practice* clearly states that the Quarter is responsible when a meeting is being laid down and suggests the processes to be followed. It was noted as well that PYM has an Outreach Committee and funds to assist with new initiatives. Rich Ailes, Peter Lane, Valerie Peery and Judy Reece volunteered to join an *ad hoc* committee with David Jones and David Leonard to work on executing both aspects of their presented concern.

Responses of Monthly Meetings to Middletown MM's Minute re: Rightly Ordered PYM Sessions -- Deb Wood (Clerk)

Following the October 2016 Quarterly Meeting, the Planning Committee recommended that the letter submitted to the Quarterly Meeting by Thomas Swain of Middletown Monthly Meeting regarding the conduct of business at Philadelphia Yearly Meeting's 2016 Annual Session be submitted by Thomas for approval by that meeting. After Middletown MM

minuted its approval of Thomas' letter, Clerk Deb Wood circulated Middletown MM's minute and Thomas' letter for consideration by all of the other constituent monthly meetings. A minute was received from West Chester MM, but the one from Birmingham has not been transmitted as yet. Further consideration therefore was deferred to the next Quarterly Meeting. (The original Swain letter, the Planning Committee response, and the minutes of Middletown and West Chester MMs are attached at Appendix 4.)

Responses of Monthly Meetings to Proposed ARCH Program – Deb Wood (Clerk)

This item was deferred to the next Quarterly Meeting. It was also noted that the coordinator had not received minutes or reports from any MMs regarding the two minutes on ARCH, and encouraged MMs to communicate with the coordinator.

Goshen MM's Proposed Minute re: Fellowship of Friends of African Descent – Alison Levie (Goshen)

Goshen Monthly Meeting endorsed the August 2016 minute from the Fellowship of Friends of African Descent on state sanctioned violence. CQM MMs were asked to consider Goshen's minute in anticipation of its being further discussed at next Quarterly Meeting. Alison noted that Westtown Monthly Minute has also minuted its endorsement.

The meeting ended with a period of worship at 9:55 am, at which point 34 Friends were present.

Announcements and Events

Attached to these minutes as Appendix 5.

Respectfully submitted, David Leonard (Recording Clerk) and Deb Wood (Clerk)

Appendix 1: Treasurer's Reports for the Second Quaker of 2016-2017

TREASURER'S REPORT – FISCAL YEAR 2016-2017 Q2 (Oct – Dec) - January 29, 2017

Income and Expenses Highlights

- A BIG thank you to all Meetings for communicating with me at the beginning of this fiscal year about Covenant contributions. This has made it much easier to plan and see that we are on schedule to meet our 2016-2017 budget at this midpoint of the year.
- Second quarter income and expenses were normal.
- 20% of our Friends Fiduciary Consolidated Funds were moved into Friends Fiduciary Green Funds. Semi-annual distributions for both funds (\$4,287.34 total) were made in December.
- Second quarter PYM Covenant contributions were recently sent to PYM and will be reflected in Q3 expenses.
- Tuition grant funds (\$8,025) were divided amongst 15 students (\$535/student) and sent to 6 Friends Schools
- Hayride and Drop & Shop program contributions of \$200 are included in 2nd quarter Operating/Programs income.

Concord Quarterly Meeting - Income and Expenses (run date 1/21/2017)

[Redacted]

Assets Highlights

- Checking Account line item balances are in good order.
- PYM and TEF funds have been sent to PYM and FFC respectively and will be reflected on next quarter's statement.
- Friends Fiduciary Tuition Endowment Fund (TEF) holdings:
 - On Oct. 26, TEF funds were split 80% Consolidated Funds and 20% Green Fund. Going forward, all TEF deposits will follow the 80%/20% allocation.
 - December's Consolidated and Green Funds semi-annual distributions were deposited directly into our Short Term Investment Fund (STIF). These funds are fully withdrawn each fall for Friends education tuition assistance.
 - The Consolidated Fund unit value finished the year at \$47.47 (down from the Sept. 30 value of \$47.89). The Green Fund unit value finished at \$35.25 (up from the Oct. 26 purchase value of \$34.64). Economic indicators (employment trends, industrial production, and consumer sentiment) are signaling strength for 2017.

**Concord Quarterly Meeting - Assets (run date 1/21/2017
[Redacted]**

Appendix 2: Coordinator's Report

As a rule, Western Quarterly Meeting ("WQM") meets on the third Sunday of January, April, July and October each year. However, in 2017, because Easter falls on the third Sunday of April, WQM rescheduled its April quarterly meeting to the fourth Sunday, the same day Concord Quarterly is scheduled to meet. Coincidentally, that is the same day (April 23, 2017) that Western and Concord Quarters are scheduled to hold a youth outdoor adventure event at Westtown School for children in the 3rd to 12th grades. The convergence of all of those events led WQM's Coordinator Sarah Kastriner to propose that both Quarters meet that day at the same place (Westtown MM) to join together in worship and in program, but to hold separate business meetings. Westtown MM, which was not scheduled to host quarterly meeting until October 2017, and West Chester MM, which was scheduled to host quarterly meeting in April 2017, graciously agreed to exchange places, and Sarah's idea started to develop into a reality.

Details about the April 23, 2017, program are still a work-in-progress. Currently, we are proceeding on the supposition that Playback Theatre of Philadelphia (<http://www.yesandplayback.org>) will be engaged to lead us in an interactive program involving one or more topics that come out of our experiences at the January 29, 2017, Quarterly Meeting program. In Playback Theatre

performances are carried out by a team of actors, a "master of ceremonies" called the conductor and a musician. As the show begins, audience members respond to questions from the conductor, then [they] watch as actors and musician create brief theatre pieces on the spot. Later, volunteers from the audience come to the stage to tell longer stories, choosing actors to play the main roles. Although performances often focus on a theme or interest of concern, the performers follow no narrative agenda, but bring their dramatic skills and their humanity to embodying on the stage the concerns and experiences of audience members.

Our program for children continues with a February 11, 2017, trip to Newlin Grist Mill to experience the life of rural Quakers in the Delaware Valley in the 18th century and with the April 23, 2017 outdoor adventure program at Westtown School. Please join us on February 18, 2017 (rain date February 25) at our almost 6th annual, inter-generational square dance. Square dancing is great fun for people of all ages, and Willistown MM's social room is a great venue for it.

Philadelphia Yearly Meeting's staff members are working assiduously to develop a weekend-long workshop devoted to helping monthly meetings enhance the quality of their respective First Day School programs. I will keep you advised as to when that workshop will be offered.

Please do not forget the February 16, 2017, deadline for filing applications for tuition assistance offered by Concord Quarterly meeting for children of members of constituent monthly meetings (other than Wilmington MM) attending Quaker schools. This financial assistance is derived from an endowment fund the Quarter started in 1993. The principal of that fund now exceeds \$200,000 in value. I am sure that the children who receive and have received that financial assistance and their parents (especially the parents) appreciate the generosity of those monthly meetings that have contributed to the Quarter's tuition assistance endowment fund over the past 24 years.

In Faith,
Charles B. Spadoni, Coordinator

Appendix 3: Letter on the Challenge of Poorly Attended Meetings

October 6, 2016

Dear Concord Quarter Friends:

At the last meeting of our Quarter we received the "Joys and Challenges" report of Concord Meeting, which is struggling to maintain its property in the face of a very small active membership. It appears to us that Concord's challenge is less

one of finances than of few numbers in attendance at meeting for worship and the consequent difficulty of mobilizing the volunteer support needed to maintain the meeting house and its grounds. Both of us were challenged by this report and feel that it raises issues that the Quarter and individual meetings should discuss further.

David Jones feels we should be considering what the Quarter's responsibilities would be (if any) if a meeting felt it needed to lay itself down. There might be one answer if the property concerned is just a meeting house; if, however, there is a graveyard or the meetinghouse is historic there may be a very different course of events. Does each meeting's articles of incorporation or bylaws speak clearly to the issue of a beneficiary organization? Does the Quarter have knowledge of its potential responsibilities? How might the Quarter insure that it is prepared for such an eventuality?

David Leonard is concerned to maintain the viability of a small meeting's use and retention of its core property. The problem is likely to be more than just one of money; it also is vital that there be a group of people using the property who care enough about it to volunteer labor to maintain and manage it. In the case of some small meetings a primary or nursery school has provided a group of concerned parents to supplement the worshipping community in caring for the property. But this is not a universal option; in the case of Concord, competition forced the meeting to close its pre-school. It may be that the 'market' for schools is now saturated. To achieve viability a meeting such as Concord needs to reach out to other potential, complementary users who, more than pay rent, would volunteer to care for the meetinghouse. For example, Jewish, Muslim and Seventh Day Adventist groups all hold worship on days that do not compete with Friends' meetings for worship and the fact that our meeting houses are free of religious iconography and often are historic would be positive attractions. Some poor immigrant churches also might be willing to consider worshipping on Sunday afternoons or evenings. In sharing a meetinghouse with such a group a meeting would be making a positive gesture of inclusion *and* would benefit from expanding those who care about the building. To create such opportunities, however, we would have to be pro-active. It is not obvious to outsiders when a particular meeting would welcome shared usage. David Leonard suggests that we might form a Quarterly Meeting committee (perhaps jointly with another quarter in the area) to actively look for religious and other communities that would be interested in shared usage of one of our lovely meetinghouses and then help in the negotiation of the terms of such sharing between the new community and the struggling meeting.

We look forward to the deliberation of the Quarter on whether to move forward with either or both of these courses of action.

In Friendship, David Jones and David Leonard

Appendix 4: Minutes from the CQM Planning Committee and Middletown and West Chester MMs in Response to the Letter of Concern from Thomas Swain about last July's Philadelphia YM Sessions.

At its meeting held on October 30, 2016, the **Planning Committee** took the following action:

Thomas Swain submitted to the Planning Committee his reflections of what had transpired at Annual Sessions with respect to the U[ndoing]R[acism]G[roup] proposal and what steps should be taken to return to rightly ordered discipline at Annual and Continuing Sessions to ensure that what transpires and what is recorded in the minutes is Spirit-led. After extensive discussion, there was unity among those present that Thomas should take his concerns to Middletown MM to begin the discernment process of what should be done, if anything, to bring about a Spirit-led process at Annual and Continuing Sessions. Then, if Middletown MM is moved to submit and submits a concern or minute to Quarterly Meeting, the Clerk will disseminate such proposal or minute to the clerks of all of the Quarter's constituent monthly meetings and request that their respective monthly meetings submit responses to that minute prior to the January 2017 Quarterly Meeting at Goshen MM so that the Quarter will be in a position at such meeting to consider and, if moved by the Spirit, act upon those submissions.

At its meeting for worship with attention to business held on December 11, 2016, **Middletown Monthly Meeting** took the following action:

Concern on Yearly Meeting discipline at Annual Sessions. The Meeting reopened discussion of Thomas Swain's concerns on discipline at last summer's Annual Sessions. His letter stating these concerns was read. One Friend commented that the letter is "well-stated" and "fair." He noted that the

yearly meeting session was not a good experience. Another said "that Friend speaks my mind." A third said that we need to hold up the spiritual process in meeting for business; "that's where the discipline comes in." Those clerking and eldering need to uphold and guide the membership back to the process. Another member agreed that clapping is inappropriate in business meeting, as we're all meant to be servants of the Spirit; also, this member believes it's inappropriate for staff of Quaker organizations to present so often. One Friend believed that members were "bullied" from the podium during the Saturday morning session regarding the Continuum consideration, and also that the Faith and Practice matter was "hijacked." Members of the Faith and Practice group expressed discouragement that approval was blocked, since approval can only be given at Annual Sessions. Another Friend said that the minutes of the Saturday morning session did not express the contention that occurred and also that the minutes were not posted until December 5, months after the session occurred. The Sunday morning session minutes accurately stated the lack of unity, but said nothing about the contention. A Friend tried to obtain the verbatim transcript and believes she was "blown off." The Yearly Meeting clerk, an active member of the URG, asked for approval of the proposal "for me"; this was inappropriate. A member recommended that we promote an appropriate process regardless of the topic; this should be our message. Another agreed. A third said that our message to PYM should be "for healing."

Thomas is willing to amend his letter to note more clearly that his concern is about process and discipline. The content of the session is not the subject of his letter. He will add words to that effect. With that change, those present united with the content of the letter and approved that it be sent to Concord Quarterly Meeting with the request that it be passed along to the monthly meetings in the Quarter and considered by them, for response before the January 2017 quarterly meeting session. [Approved]. The letter is attached to these minutes.

November Letter from Thomas Swain

Dear Friends,

Annual Sessions this year were contentious and the good order we usually experience was missing. The agenda item for changes to Faith & Practice brought a focus for me – We did not have good discipline in our Meetings. There were several things that I can point to that demonstrate my concern for good order and corporate discipline among us.

Minutes. I agree we might find helpful ways to abbreviate the process for our minutes. We have come to expect that only decisions will be read in the face of the Meeting. In most cases this seems an efficient process. There might be times when hearing our minutes would help us reflect on the concern and the various messages offered in considering the concern. When there is a difficult sessions where strong feelings are expressed and there was no unity, it would help to hear and to reflect on the concern if minutes were read in the face of the Meeting. On Saturday morning and afternoon it would have helped us to hear our words and to remember what we said and to possibly gain a new perspective on the concern for when we picked up the concern at another session. There was a time during Saturday afternoon when the “Continuum on Becoming an Anti-Racist Multicultural Institution” stages were presented. There was an appreciation expressed in the body that Friends experienced. If the minutes had been read we might have been able to deepen our process by seeing what was missing – such as the move towards unity around the stages of the “Continuum.” that was missing in the draft minutes. Hearing again our discussion might have risen up hope for our deliberations around this important concern.

Another part of minutes is that they might be posted as soon as possible. Posting them December 5th was too late for Continuing Sessions and for others who might have used them in reporting to their Monthly Meetings in September. My sense is that our recording process is not serving us. I recommend that the Recording Clerks bring a proposal to Yearly Meeting that has a sensitivity about what is read in the face of the Meeting beyond just decisions we have agreed upon.

On Saturday, when there was a physical movement of Friends gathering at the front of the room in support of continuing discussion about the Undoing Racism Group's proposal, I felt this was characteristic of organizations that vote. I felt uncomfortable with this display of strength that blocked our agenda to consider the revisions to Faith and Practice. I had the sense that we were split in two groups. We function by the Spirit and not by force. My sense is that some Friends are not familiar with Quaker Meeting for Business and lack trust and belief in a spiritual process that persuades rather than by human strength. I recommend that in this year's effort around One Book, One Yearly Meeting, we highlight the sections on our business process. I also suggest that we develop a reading calendar, like Britain Yearly

Meeting, for a suggestion for Meetings to deal with particular sections of Faith and Practice.

Another example of our lack of discipline was when our Meeting adjourned on Friday evening and a member shouted out that a previous comment was “hurtful” and the comment itself was “racist”. When a meeting adjourns, there is no settled group to hold such emotional outbursts. I felt the Friend was not in good order and it would have been more helpful to speak to the individual directly and personally. This Friend was a staff person and could be a better model for discipline. I recommend that our appointed Elders has a session about good order among us as a part of one of our Annual Sessions.

When members present a concern or report to the body, it is good to ensure there are different Friends at the podium. There were two Friends who reported twice. One presented the Undoing Racism concerns and later represented the American Friends Service Committee report. Another Friend also presented the Undoing Racism concerns and later represented the Friends World Committee for Consultation. We miss developing skills of other Friends to present when we focus on only a few. We share the work among committee members. These Friends were staff for these two organizations. In their professional position as staff they are able to influence in helpful ways. I feel their influence is overdone when staff dominates our agenda like it happened at Annual Sessions. Staff could help develop the skills of the other appointed representatives to each of these two Quaker organizations. This was a point made by one of our visitors to Annual Sessions. We do have over 11,000 members. I recommend that the Planning Committee be aware of presenters and to see that there is a broad diversity in who presents at Yearly Meeting.

When we applaud at Yearly Meeting sessions, I feel we move our feelings outward and away from the inward joy we might be feeling. The sound of applause deafens the tender energy of the Spirit. For those who have experienced Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, the thunder of applause sometimes re-stimulates past traumatic experiences. I recommend that our Clerk encourage us to raise our hands or to sit quietly in thankfulness.

While some of these comments might be peculiar to this writer, I hope they give us pause to consider how important our corporate discipline is in our worshipping and discerning matters of concern. My hope is that we might forward this concern to Quarterly Meeting, who, after consideration, and if appropriate might forward this to the Clerk of Yearly Meeting expressing our encouragement to build corporate discipline among us.

Thomas Swain - 12.11.2016

West Chester Monthly Meeting

Small-group consideration of Thomas Swain's Letter - 1/22/17

Following Meeting for Worship at West Chester Monthly Meeting on 1/21/17, a small group including four Friends and four attenders gathered to consider Thomas Swain's 12/11/16 revision of his letter “Concern on Discipline at Annual Sessions in 2016.” Another Friend, unable to stay for this session, mailed the WCMM co-clerks a copy of the letter's earlier version with her comments.

At the Clerks' invitation, one Friend shared his memory of the PYM Annual Sessions meetings that occasioned Thomas's letter. Another Friend affirmed that this account agreed with her recollections of the Saturday sessions.

Those present then turned their attention to Thomas's recommendations and the underlying reality of our need for “good order and corporate discipline” in our Religious Society.

We united with the recommendation that, especially at Annual Sessions, minutes more descriptive than a simple summary of decisions be presented in the face of the Meeting, particularly when an issue has aroused strong feelings and unity has not yet not reached, and that full minutes be posted to the whole Yearly Meeting in a timely fashion.

We recognize that not only attenders but also members who have come to Friends as adults may “lack trust and belief in a spiritual process that persuades” if they have not yet experienced that process themselves. For that reason, we agreed with the recommendation that this year's “One Book, One Yearly Meeting” effort highlight the new *Faith and Practice*'s sections on our business process. We help one another deepen our religious lives by exploring and sharing both the “how” of Friends' practices and the “why” behind them.

Submitted on behalf of West Chester Monthly Meeting - Deborah Lyons, Co-clerk

Appendix 5: Concord Quarterly Meeting's February-April 2017 Announcements and Events.

Feb. 16, 2017 Applications for tuition assistance from Concord Quarterly Meeting for children attending Quaker schools (1st through 12th grades) during the 2017-18 school year must be submitted by February 16, 2017. To be eligible, a student must have at least one parent who is a member of a constituent monthly meeting other than Wilmington MM. The application form is available on the Quarter's website <http://concordquarter.org/> or from the Coordinator (610-256-3572 or concordquarter@pym.org).

Calendar of Events

- Feb. 10, 2017** **West Chester Monthly Meeting** is inviting members and attenders of other meetings in the Quarter to join West Chester's members and attenders in a silent retreat at The Jesuit Center in Wernersville, PA (near Reading), a peaceful place where one can feel the love of the Divine. **A second silent retreat is scheduled for June 2-4, 2017.** The cost of each retreat is \$170 per person. That amount includes accommodations for two nights (Friday and Saturday) and meals. If you would like to attend either retreat or need additional information, contact West Chester member Scott Smith at 610-405-1959 or scott@envirosureinc.com. You can view The Jesuit Center's website at www.jesuitcenter.org for general information. **The registration deadline for the February retreat is January 27, 2017.**
- Feb. 11, 2017** **Concord and Western Quarters' Elementary School Age Children's Visit to the Newlin Gristmill, Glen Mills, PA** (Saturday) 9:45 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Please see the attached flyer.
- February 12, 2017** **Concord Quarterly Meeting's Planning Committee** (Sunday) 7:30 p.m. at Concord Monthly Meeting (Concordville). Please note that the date has been changed.
- Feb. 18, 2017** **Concord Quarterly Meeting's Sixth (Almost) Annual Square Dance** (Saturday) 7:00-9:00 p.m. at **Willistown Monthly Meeting**. Please bring a non-perishable food item or check for the West Chester Food Cupboard. Please see the attached flyer.
- Feb. 25, 2017**
- Mar. 14, 2017** "**Speaking Truth to Power in the Trump Era: the Role of a Quaker Lobby**", Diane Randall, Executive Secretary, Friends Committee on National Legislation. 7:15 pm at the Auditorium of Kendal at Longwood.
- Mar. 25, 2017** **Philadelphia Yearly Meeting's Continuing Sessions** (Saturday)
- April 23, 2017** **Concord Quarterly Meeting at Westtown Monthly Meeting** (Sunday) 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Joint program and worship with Western Quarterly Meeting.
- April 23, 2017** **Youth Event (3rd to 12th grades) sponsored by Concord and Western Quarters** (Sunday) 8:15 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Westtown School's campus.