

Concord Quarterly Meeting

Held at Westtown Monthly Meeting - April 23, 2017

Opening Worship

The meeting opened with a period of worship at 8:32 am.

Welcome -- Representatives were present at the start from all meetings save for Concord and Willistown. Twenty Friends were present as we began.

Approval of Minutes -- Deb Wood (Clerk)

The minutes of the Quarterly Meeting held on January 29, 2017 were approved.

Nominating Committee Report – Tom Woodward (Goshen)

Chris McKinney was nominated and approved as CQM Assistant Clerk 7/17-- 6/18, Clerk from 7/18 -- 6/20, and then Assistant Clerk 7/20 -- 6/21. It was noted that Pete Lane is retiring as a member of the PYM Nominating Committee. The CQM Nominating Committee would welcome suggestions of Friends who would be interested in filling out the last year of Pete Lane's term.

Coordinator Search -- Rich Ailes (Middletown)

Friends received notice of Charles Spadoni's resignation as CQM Coordinator with deep regret. He has provided exceptional service to the Quarter and we wish him well in his move to Illinois. An advertisement for his replacement has already been widely circulated, providing more detailed information on the duties of the job and with a deadline of May 5 for applications. The search committee is comprised of Rich Ailes (Middletown), Tom Woodward (Goshen), Gwynne Ormsby (Birmingham), and Bruce Harrison (Westtown) with Charles Spadoni (current Coordinator), advising.

Approval of Reviewers of the Quarter Financial Records -- Deb Wood (Clerk)

David Wickard, WCMM and Tom Gilbert, Willistown MM were nominated and approved as the Friendly Review committee of the CQM financial records.

Joys and Challenges Reports

The report from Wilmington MM was presented by Cruce Stark, Tri-Clerk WMM and the one from Birmingham MM by Chris McKenney, BMM Clerk. Both reports were received with appreciation and are attached as Appendices 1 and 2. In response to a question about anniversary events at Wilmington meetinghouse, Cruce Stark noted that their schedule is posted on the Wilmington MM website.

Report on Responses of Monthly Meetings (Birmingham, Goshen, West Chester, Westtown) to Middletown MM's Minute re Rightly Ordered Discipline at PYM Sessions and Decision on Whether the Quarter Should Endorse Such Minute – Deb Wood (Clerk)

The various MM minutes were circulated in advance and are attached as Appendix 3. Our MMs have a different sense of how to support Thomas Swain's concern. All were attentive to the importance of a spiritually grounded process and about the difficulties posed when there is conflict. Some included suggestions of next steps while others did not. Some lifted up how words and actions can have different meanings and interpretations. The clerk posed the following query to the body: What are we led to do with these minutes and responses? One Friend added he does not have a negative reaction to applause, which to him can be joyful. Another Friend suggested that Swain's letter and the MM minutes be sent to the Yearly Meeting. In response to this suggestion a Friend wanted our transmittal letter to recognize the difficulty the leadership of the YM is facing at the moment and our desire to be supportive. But another Friend worried that sending on our diverse responses was passing on to YM our problem, rather than discerning an appropriate response. We did note that all of the minutes wished to ground our work in the spirit and loving kindness. Different ones of us had different reactions to different aspects of what occurred. Would contention have occurred because of matters before us even with better use of our procedures? A Friend was happy for us to note our shared concern while not losing the diversity of our responses, but this was not acceptable to all. How do we balance our own perceptions with those of others? Still another Friend felt that the Westtown minute does the best job of reflecting our diversity and moving us forward. Other Friends noted that the response from their MM was not written to have an audience beyond the quarter and were uncomfortable with its being sent on. The clerk tested the sense of the meeting: The diversity of our MM responses is helpful in itself -- but we were not in unity on a response to the YM. We accepted that we need to

reach deeply into what has gone wrong that led to the difficulties at the PYM sessions last July. At this point the clerk received a just transmitted letter from PYM on these issues, which she read. The letter is attached as Appendix 4. The meeting appreciated receipt of the letter, the effort that went into it, and the steps forward it reports. Friends approved moving forward with the agenda.

Report on Responses of Monthly Meetings (Goshen, Westtown, Middletown, West Chester) to Minute of Fellowship of Friends of African Descent and Decision on Whether the Quarter Should Endorse Such Minute – Deb Wood (Clerk)

Goshen, Westtown, Middletown and West Chester have endorsed this minute to date. (Attached at Appendix 5.) A Friend noted that the last sentence implies a financial decision, which requires further discernment. Another noted that such a commitment is not necessary. Another clarified that their MM endorsed the vision of the minute and had not yet discerned financial support. In response to a questions as to whether we as a body could move forward without consideration by all MMs, the clerk suggested that because four of CQM's 8 MMs had endorsed the minute, the gathered body could take action this day. Friends spoke in support. The minute was endorsed by the meeting on behalf of CQM, with discernment on the financial implications to come later.

Financial Report -- Tom Haviland (Treasurer)

The Treasurer's Report was received with appreciation and is attached to these minutes as Appendix 6. Income is on target and expenses are slightly lighter than expected.

Proposed CQM Budget -- Tom Haviland (Treasurer)

Covenanted contributions to PYM will no longer be made through CQM. MMs are strongly encouraged to be in touch with PYM administration about when their contributions will be transmitted. Otherwise the Treasurer proposes no changes from last year's budget. The meeting approved the budget (at Appendix 7) as presented.

Report on Responses of Monthly Meetings (Birmingham, Goshen, Middletown, West Chester, Westtown, Willistown) to Establishing a Proposed ARCH-Type Program – Deb Wood (Clerk)

Six of the CQM monthly meetings have appointed representatives to attend the first meeting of the ARCH Steering Committee, which will meet at The Hickman on Wednesday, May 10 at 7:00 p.m. (Wilmington has declined and Concord has not said yea or nay.)

The meeting ended with a period of worship at 9:55 am, at which point 32 Friends were present and all MMs save Willistown were represented. The following visitors were present -- Zachary Dutton (Central Philadelphia MM) and Paul Indorf (Swarthmore MM).

Announcements and Events

Attached to these minutes as Appendix 8

Respectfully submitted,

David Leonard (Recording Clerk) and Deb Wood (Clerk)

Appendix 1: Joys and Challenges of Wilmington MM

Clerks' Report/State of the Meeting 2016

Wilmington Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends meets every First Day for worship and once monthly (except August) for Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business. In many ways our Meeting mirrors issues facing everyone today. Our continuing challenges are adequate financial support from members and attenders, and staffing committees. Our Meeting offers an opportunity for worship and reflection in a fast-paced world, and we must all work to ensure this continues.

Ongoing committee work and activities include:

- Intensive preparation for observation of the Meeting House's 200th anniversary. Among the activities:
Replication of the book "Friends in Wilmington: 1738-1938."
Reinvigoration of the Meeting House museum with an exhibit on the Bancrofts.
A series of potlucks accompanied by talks on Thomas Garrett, the history of the Meeting House, Howard Pyle, the Bancrofts, and memories of Wilmington Friends School when located across the street from the Meeting House.

Tours of the Meeting House and museum during the Berry Festival.

A grounds clean-up and planting weekend.

Talks at the Wilmington Library about the history of the Meeting House,
Quaker industrialists, and Thomas Garrett.

Tours of the Meeting house and a talk about Quaker architecture, during the
Sacred Places Conference.

Beginning of a quilt square project.

Beginning of a recipe project

And more to come in 2017!

- Adult religious education sessions continue and are warmly received. Members and attenders continue to share leadership of these sessions.
- The Peace and Social Justice Committee has entered a partnership with New Beginnings/Next Step, a support group of men and women recently returned from prison, to provide a clothes closet for the Meeting's surrounding neighborhoods. The project, which occurs Saturday afternoons at the Meeting House, has been fulfilling for all involved—those receiving clothing, the volunteers, and the returning citizens. It has also helped establish an identity for the Meeting among its neighbors. The committee has also been instrumental in providing bus transportation to the Women's March on Washington.
- Our First Day School program includes three groups: the Nursery for children four and younger, the Early Elementary for children five through ten, and the Middle School group for children eleven through fourteen. Our programming features worship sharing, Bible stories, service, Quaker history and frequent field trips. Again this year the First Day School continued the pumpkin project; enjoyed "trunk or treat" for Halloween; and, in partnership with members of New Beginning/Next Step, planted, nurtured, and harvested the Meeting House vegetable garden.
- The Kitchen Committee has finalized designs for the new kitchen, employing value engineering to meet regulatory codes for food service facilities and control costs.
- Worship and Ministry sponsored a day-long retreat at Centre Meeting in May in which participants shared the ongoing stages of their spiritual journeys. Regular mini-retreats are scheduled for the coming year at the rise of

Meeting on the fifth First Day of those months containing one. The first will be this January 29th, centering on what, for each of us, it means to be a Quaker.

- With leadership from Harmony on the Hill, the Meeting continues to support the Strawberry Festival in June, providing fellowship for both the Meeting and the surrounding community.
- Pot luck meals, sponsored by the Committee on Care of Meeting, at the rise of Meeting on the third Sunday of most months.
- Refreshments are provided by the Social Committee at the rise of Meeting on most Sundays; by the children in the First Day School on the fifth Sunday of each month containing one.
- Among the events hosted this past year in the Meeting House were the Quaker Hill Historical Preservation's Underground Railroad series; the Sacred Places Conference tours of the Meeting House (led by Meeting members); and the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting's Middle School Friends Gathering.

We continue to be happy having Pacem in Terris as a tenant in the Meeting House. Having others in the building provides a sense of comfort for our staff as well as for members who come to the Meeting House during the week. It also adds to our sense of belonging in the neighborhood.

We look forward to continuing our spiritual growth in 2017.

Cruce Stark for the Meeting Clerks

Appendix 2: Joys and Challenges of Birmingham MM – April 2017

Overall, Birmingham Meeting is thriving. Attendance at meeting for worship on Sundays is healthy, and we continue to have strong attendance and participation at our monthly business meeting.

Our joys and challenges are comingled. Each challenge brings its joys, and every joy seems to be attained through some challenge.

Perhaps our greatest joy is the sense of community shared by our attenders and members through our commitment to Quaker values.

Here are a few examples: our Fellowship Committee recently sponsored a talent night for our meeting. This was an intergenerational activity, held on a Saturday evening, in which individuals shared their talents with the meeting. Some brought in artistic projects that they had created for display, while others performed live in front of the gathering. It was a wonderful experience which strengthened the bonds amongst us and gave each of the participants an opportunity to share a creative side of themselves that most were not aware of.

Here's an example of Birmingham members working together for the betterment of the community at large. In this past year, several of our members took on the challenge of assisting in the resettlement of a refugee family which was being relocated to the West Chester area. This process involved helping the family in obtaining housing, employment, food, transportation, education, and translation services. Our community has helped them to become part of the larger community where they now reside. We feel blessed that this family now regularly attends meeting for worship at Birmingham.

Our beautiful meeting house and grounds continue to be an inspirational environment for us to worship, but we are continuously challenged by the necessary repairs, upgrades, and routine maintenance demanded by our old building. For instance, we recently discovered some serious termite damage in the education wing of the building which must be treated and continuously monitored henceforth. Last year we had a problem with our chimney and heating unit which needed to be replaced, and we are currently faced with the issue of trying to convert our bathrooms so that they are handicapped accessible.

Finally, another joy/challenge is our music ministry which has been dampened by our inability to have consistent piano players to lead us in song.

Overall, Birmingham Meeting is a loving, caring community. We are blessed to have each other and to live and share common values. While much may be amiss in the world today, Birmingham is an oasis which offers nourishment for the soul.

Appendix 3: THOMAS SWAIN'S LETTER OF CONCERN AND MONTHLY MEETINGS' RESPONSES THERE TO

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 session 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 over done 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

Middletown MM

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 eldery 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].

Birmingham MM

Thomas Swain has raised a concern on the lack of good order at the 2016 Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Annual

Sessions. He has composed a letter and it has been taken up by his monthly meeting and raised to Concord Quarter. The Clerk of the Quarter has asked all monthly meetings in our Quarter to read the letter and spend time in Meeting discerning the concern. She asked each monthly meeting to prepare a response and send it to the Quarter. The Clerk noted that PYM Clerk Penny Colgan-Davis has already been in contact with Thomas regarding his concern.

The request from the Quarter Clerk and Thomas' letter were shared in advance. Chris read excerpts from the letter. He also read excerpts from Sallie Jones' letter since she could not be present. Friends discussed the concern and the responses from those who were present at sessions. Most present didn't feel comfortable responding to the concern since they weren't there, but from what they heard, they felt that the concern hinged upon process. If there were a better process, perhaps sessions would have been less contentious.

The Meeting acknowledges and respects the concerns of Thomas Swain. We recognize that process itself can be a source of conflict and that sometimes even the language we use can make people feel shut out. "Good Process" is not a neutral statement. Friends minuted their concern on the conflict that occurred in Annual Sessions, and we are supportive of finding a more effective process that will help us find resolution to deeply contentious issues.

West Chester MM

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

Goshen MM

Referring to the letter to PhYM regarding discipline during sessions, we discerned the following: While GMM does not endorse the letter that was sent to the clerk of PhYM, we strongly believe in a grounded spiritual practice in our meetings for business. No further action planned.

Westtown MM

Dear Charlie and Deb,

The following minute is lifted up by Westtown Monthly Meeting for consideration by the Concord Quarterly Meeting, as we consider the need for our better attunement to the uses of Quaker process as well as better attunement to the suffering of those in our midst.

Kevin A. Gallagher
Recording Secretary
Westtown Monthly Meeting

In discussion of Thomas Swain's concerns, Friends at Westtown Monthly Meeting

1. approved reading aloud a quotation from George Fox's *Journal* (1678) which addresses dealing with divisiveness in a Meeting for Business, and heard that text,
2. heard queries and concerns raised by Friends regarding Fox's advice and our own fully conscious use of our process, and
3. agreed that texts of both should be sent to and considered by Concord Quarterly Meeting. Those texts are as follows:

"And dear friends, if there should happen at any time anything that tends to strife, dispute or contention in your monthly or quarterly meetings, let it be referred to half a dozen, or such like number to debate and end out of your meetings, as it was at first, that all your monthly and quarterly meetings may be kept peaceable. And then they may inform the meeting what they have done, that the weak and youth amongst you may not be hurt, through hearing of strife or contention in your meetings, where no strife or contention ought to be: but all to go on and determine things in one mind in the power of God, the gospel order; in which gospel of peace ye will preserve the peace of all your meetings..."

"Let all prejudice be laid aside and buried; also all shortness toward one another; and let love, which is not puffed up, envies not, seeks not her own, but bears all things, have dominion in all your meetings. This love will suffer long, and is kind; will keep down that which would vaunt itself, behave itself unseemly, or is easily provoked: it hath sway over all such fruits which are not of the Spirit, the fruit of which is love. "

--George Fox, 1678

Queries:

- a) "How does this advice of Fox speak to us now? Where may it *not* serve the love of some of our Friends? Don't we need to be purposeful in how we talk about our practices, and thoughtful of where our practices are taking us?"
- b.) "Can we be tender and open enough in business to discern our own habits of thought by which we frame dualistic, 'either/or' choices, and to honor our testimonies of unity and loving-kindness by seeking a 'third way'—the 'both-and' choice—that sustains our practice and its purpose, while—for instance—opening a space wherein we hold Friends of color fully within the 'dominion of love' that our Friends' covenant of love calls us to?"
- c.) "How can we more deliberately help our elders to help us consciously discern hidden cultural conditioning such as systemic racism, so that we might be more open to transforming ourselves as well as transforming the world in which we live?"

Appendix 4: Letter from the PYM Leadership on ways forward in the current conflict.

Communication from leadership to PYM

APRIL 22, 2017 ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL

Dear beloved Friends,

We want to begin by thanking all of you who attended Continuing Sessions and all others who have shared their questions, support, and concerns about the recent announcement of changes in the staff structure. Our community is going through a huge transition with our new structure, and we are finding our way as we grow into it. Some parts of the structure have worked well from its inception; others have needed tweaking, and still others have created significant issues. The process of making a change in the structure of PYM staff is just such an example.

We recognize that we in the Religious Society of Friends are not isolated from our culture in which racism is structurally entrenched. The water from which we all drink is poisoned, and our yearly meeting is no different. The leadership of PYM acknowledges that in recent months there has been deep pain and hurt and that assertions regarding racism have been expressed in our yearly meeting. We understand that Friends may be wondering what we are doing to address the

pain and concerns and we want to share what that looks like for us.

Since Continuing Sessions, PYM leadership has been in a process of discernment about how to respond to those concerns, how to care for our entire yearly meeting community, and how to be faithful to what God calls us to do. This letter is to share what we heard and learned from Continuing Sessions, and how we propose to move forward with love and compassion for all.

What We Heard and Learned

We learned that Friends felt both blind-sided by the changes and deeply upset by the impact of some of the changes on beloved members of the PYM staff. We learned that Friends care passionately about our programs for children, Middle School Friends, Young Friends, and Young Adult Friends, and the staff people who have lovingly cared for our children, young people and young adults. The people and the programs matter deeply to Friends. We also learned that, if we are to be faithful to our corporate witness of ending racism and white supremacy within PYM and beyond, we cannot make staffing decisions that negatively impact people of color without ameliorating that impact to the best of our ability. Probably our biggest learning was that decisions affecting the structure of yearly meeting must be done in a more transparent way. Friends must know when such discernment is about to begin, what needs are being addressed, what the timeline for discernment is, and how Friends will be asked for feedback. In addition, Friends must be given frequent updates about the progress of the decision making. We learned that the governing councils must take more time to consider proposed changes. We have also learned that the councils should better reflect our diversity of backgrounds and experience to ensure that the discernment is as expansive and inclusive as it can be and, we must persist in making this a reality.

Our Responses to Date

1. Recognizing the vital importance of understanding systemic racism, all three Councils and their committees participated in a day-long training with Crossroads on April 8th and identified follow up steps to continue to grow in our understanding. We are exploring options for professional guidance in conflict resolution and identifying and addressing racism within our structure, and we stand with our General Secretary as we observe her seeking to be teachable and open to Spirit's call to us when racism surfaces. We call on those for whom racism is an active concern, as well as those for whom that isn't yet the case, to engage with us in a healing journey at this time. (PYM is hosting a training by Crossroads at Friends Center, see details online).
2. Administrative Council has become more closely involved in understanding not just the goals and costs but the details of structural changes in staffing, the reasoning, the outcomes and the impacts. It began this immediately in a called meeting where it reviewed extensively the details of the change in administrative support and then identified a member of the Administrative Council to be present in conversations about that position with the Executive Assistant and General Secretary. The Council received, threshed and approved a plan that would allow the Executive Assistant to continue working for PYM in a position that is full time and at her current hourly rate and benefits. In addition, the Administrative Council has caught up with posting minutes shortly after they are approved.
3. In the weeks before Continuing Sessions, the General Secretary asked the clerk of the Administrative Council to identify a process for appointing a small group of people who deeply understand the dynamics of racism to work with the General Secretary to identify and address possible patterns of racism in activities and plans she is responsible for. The leadership is committed to making this happen in the near future.
4. Minutes of concern from three meetings have been forwarded to the leadership of the yearly meeting. Our new governance structure does not identify a process for responding and addressing minutes. Administrative and Quaker Life Councils are working together to develop a plan and to use the working basis of that plan to respond to the minutes to avoid any further delay in responding.
5. We agreed that several proposed staffing changes will move forward, as they did not raise concerns and are immediately needed to support the work of yearly meeting. These include the *Director of Staffing and Inclusion*, *Associate Secretary for Advancement*, *Director of Donor Engagement*, *Gift Processing* and *Data Entry Associate*, and the *Administrative Assistant for Arch Street Meeting House*. The General Secretary is currently creating job descriptions for these positions and will present them to the Personnel Committee and Administrative Council for review before posting. The positions will be posted when the job descriptions and reviews are complete and when there is capacity to manage a search.
6. The Administrative Council and the General Secretary are in conversation with the Executive Assistant.

7. Young Adult Friends staff position will be continued for two years. The proposed changes for the children, Middle School Friends, and Young Friends staff were always planned to take effect October 1, 2017, which allows Sprint 3 (Visioning and Mission of the programs) to complete its work. Once completed, the General Secretary will present to the Councils for review data gathered over the past two years (from three Sprints, surveys, the visioning session and the extensive review of program impact and statistics) along with a proposed staffing structure that meets the needs identified in the data. Following that, the Councils expect to share this information with the wider community at the beginning of June.

8. A called session was mentioned, and we have begun to do shared work around that.

As painful and difficult as this period has been for many Friends, we remind ourselves that we are a faith community that believes we can have direct and immediate access to God's leading. We also believe that we can resolve our conflicts by looking to that of God in each of us, that the strength of our community depends upon treating each other with love and respect, and that we can look to our testimonies to guide us in this work. When we speak directly, out of love, to those with whom we disagree, listen deeply and openly to what the other has to say, forgive one another our mistakes and missteps, and allow room for transformation in others and ourselves, we can become a more beloved community.

- Penny Colgan-Davis, *Clerk of PYM*
- Bruce Haines, *Clerk of Administrative Council*
- Lane Taylor, *Clerk of Quaker Life Council*
- Melissa Rycroft, *Clerk of Nominating Council*
- Andrew Anderson, *Treasurer of PYM*
- Christie Duncan-Tessmer, *General Secretary*
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Appendix 5: Minute from the Fellowship of Friends of African American Descent

The Fellowship of Friends of African Descent is a 25 year old Quaker organization that supports the spiritual nurture of Quakers of African descent and provides opportunities for the sharing of our concerns. As those of us in the United States witness the media portrayal of high profile police violence and the resulting racial tensions, we are moved by our compassion for our communities to call for action that will lead to justice and respect, particularly for black men but also for black women and children in America. We stand with those who have identified bigotry, structural racism and state sanctioned violence as historical and continuing sources of senseless suffering and death among our people.

We grieve the loss of any human life, including the lives of police. However, the presence of the police too often seems like an occupying force designed to protect and serve an invisible elite instead of protecting those who reside in our communities. We also recognize that the violence and tragic killing of innocent civilians have touched so many in our communities. We believe that these evil forces cannot be overcome through retribution and retaliation, and can only be overcome through respect, resources and love. Jesus taught us that the love of God and our neighbor is the greatest commandment.

The problems of racism, militarism and violence that we face are rooted in a deeper, less recognized sicknesses of materialism and greed. From the slave trade and plantation economies of the American south to the terroristic subjugation of Jim Crow to the modern-day profits of miseducation and mass incarceration, racial stereotypes have been used to mask and justify the exploitation and denial of economic human rights to people of African descent. As a result, these communities are under-resourced as is evidenced by the lack of jobs, healthcare, quality education and decent housing. In the absence of real opportunities for employment and economic self-sufficiency underground economies rise up in our communities to fill the gap. People in these economies are criminalized and prosecuted even though they are only seeking to provide enough resources to support their families. We realize that we cannot have a meaningful conversation about ending racial oppression without also addressing classism, joblessness and wealth inequality.

In response to these realities, we, as Quakers and as people of African descent call for the following:

1. PEACEFORCE. The training, support and employment of a "peaceforce" consisting of police officers and community based peacekeepers, none of whom are armed. The peacekeepers will be local residents who have the community relationships and street credibility (especially with young people) to cultivate the capacity and inclination for the use of non-violent methods for de-escalating conflict. [Returning citizens are an important resource for this work.]
2. PEACE CENTERS. The development and support of "peace centers" in our communities which will provide safe havens, educational, cultural and recreational opportunities for young people in our communities. Quaker Alternatives to

Violence trainings can be redesigned to be rooted in the cultural experience of African people. These centers will also function as spaces where Quaker worship and values can be modelled and developed.

3. COMMUNITY TRAINING. Police training will be ongoing and consistent including sub-conscious bias training that is not just academic but rather is community based. Police departments need to revamp their training so its members are trained to deescalate potentially dangerous situations and are not expected to “shoot to kill” in every situation they consider dangerous.

4. DISARMAMENT. Promoting the disarming of our communities (including segments of the police force responsible for minor offenses) through the elimination of handguns, rifles and automatic weapons. We realize that this goal is long term and will require a cultural shift from our current reliance on violence to solve social problems. However, we believe that we are all safer without guns than with them.

In the words of the poet, Nikki Giovanni, “Black love is Black wealth.” We as Quakers of African descent are making a personal commitment to these ends and invite others to join us in this effort. We call on Friends’ organizations to use some part of our substantial corporate investments to support this work.

Appendix 6: Financial Report Concord Quarterly Meeting Treasurer's Report

Fiscal Year 2016-2017 Q3 (Jan – Mar) April 23, 2017 *(Note: Redactions are for web version. Figures available upon request)*

Income and Expenses Report

- Total Covenant funds received for 3rd quarter was **[Redacted]**.
- Total Expenses for the quarter were **[Redacted]**, of which **[Redacted]** was a contribution made to PYM.
- Coordinator expense of **[Redacted]** was down from two previous quarters due to fewer payroll cycles and no Ailes Graphic Services expenses.
- Operating/Program expenses included **[Redacted]** annual payment for liability insurance. Other expenses for this line item were ordinary (food/supplies for program activity, newsletter costs, employment check/clearances).
- Based on Monthly Meeting commitments for 4th quarter (and for the year), we are on target to meet and have a balanced budget.

Concord Quarterly Meeting - Income and Expenses - (report date 4/16/2017)

[Redacted]

Assets Report

- Contributions of \$1,975 and rising unit values (Consolidated Fund 12/31 \$47.47 to 3/31 \$49.35 and Green Fund 12/31 \$35.25 to 3/31 \$36.51) were responsible for the increase in these 2 TEF accounts.
- All TEF and PYM contributions currently being held and all 4th quarter funds will be sent to PYM by June 30, 2016.
- All asset accounts remain strong and at appropriate levels for meeting our current and projected needs.

Concord Quarterly Meeting Assets (report date 4/16/2017)

[Redacted]

Note: Individual Monthly Meeting Consolidated and Green Fund holdings are available by request.

Appendix 7: Proposed Budget

Concord Quarterly Meeting -Preliminary Budget - Fiscal Year 2017-2018 - April 23, 2017

Discussion Notes

- Based on this year's finances and budget, this year's Covenant commitments from Monthly Meetings, and projected activities and expenses for next fiscal year, I am recommending that the 2017-2018 budget remain the same as this year's budget.

Additional notes:

- Coordinator – A new Coordinator's hours and pay rate has been considered and allowance made for reasonable extra funds if needed .
- Operating/Programs – expenses of \$2,000 are anticipated by fiscal-year-end. A budgeted amount of \$2,400 provides 20% additional funding if needed.
- TEF – Meetings are being asked to continue to maintain their Tuition Endowment Fund contribution level of at least \$650 and those who are able to or already do contribute above this level are encouraged to stay at that level (or increase as able).
- PYM – effective July 1, 2017, Concord Quarter will no longer collect and serve as a pass-thru for Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Covenant funds. Monthly Meetings should reach out to PYM (Linell McCurry - lmccurry@pym.org) regarding intended Covenant contribution schedule and amounts that will be paid directly to PYM. As PYM relies heavily on funds from all Monthly and Quarterly Meetings for the operation of its business, it is important to do everything possible to maintain (or increase as able) 2016-2017 contribution levels for 2017-2018.
- TEF – semi-annual distributions from the Friends Fiduciary Tuition Endowment Fund accounts have paid out roughly \$8,200 and are expected to continue so the 2017-2018 has been updated to reflect this increase.

[Redacted]

Appendix 8: Forthcoming Events

Planning Committee meets at The Hickman , April 30, 7:30 p.m.	Concord Quarterly Meeting at Willistown Monthly Meeting , July 23
Concord/Western Quarters Tubing on the Brandywine , June 18, 12:30 p.m.	Philadelphia Yearly Meeting's Annual Sessions at The College of New Jersey , July 26-30

From PYM's Ecojustice Collaborative:

Interfaith Power and Light state level moral advocacy to register for calls: chunter@paipl.org
webpage: <http://paipl.us/>

Peoples Climate March Contact for bus tickets through the Sierra Club: jim.wylie@verizon.net
general infor: <https://peoplesclimate.org/>

For additional Hate has no home here and the other yard sign, contact John at jjh2000@aol.com
Pendle Hill conference Expanding democracy May 11-14 AT: <https://pendlehill.org/learn/expanding-democracy-conference/#.WP0nwqK1vIU>

EQAT link <http://www.eqat.org/>

For folks interested in transitioning to a clean energy system locally; Ready for 100% renewable- can contact me kline.paula@gmail.com