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**Concord Quarterly Meeting Newsletter Volume 14, Issue 3 July 2017**


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### How canst thou not proselytize!?

My own journey into Quakerism started not too long after moving to Pennsylvania; I developed what could be described as an intrigued interest in the many old Meetinghouses and "Friends' Schools" that seemed ubiquitous in every town I went through, and even on the occasional hilltop of a country road. I had heard about Quakers' unique "consensus-based" decision-making process, and seen that some Meetinghouses would display words on their signs like "integrity" and "community". And then there were the radio ads for the many seemingly do-gooding Quaker philanthropies and the character-based emphasis of those Quaker schools.

This all seemed quite different from my experience of religion, which I was steeped in as a child. As happens to many of us, I was one who had fallen away from a church community, but had started to have a sense of needing to revisit that kind of community. I visited a Meeting near me, and then another, and was soon introduced to the notion of "Meeting shopping". Friends who got to know me said that I was probably "a Quaker the whole time, but just didn't know it"! I was not entirely surprised to find the extent to which I had missed being a part of a faith community for the previous decades, but was utterly shocked to discover the importance to me of something else: that I had a need to be contributing to one.

On coming to Quakerism I discovered something interesting; the opacity of a whole vernacular that had never before entered into my daily speech. Simple words like *and thy*, of course, but also a whole raft of descriptive terms like discernment, seasoning, 'easy with', 'weighty' and 'leading' was in common parlance among.... uhhh, "Friends". These were a bit curious to me, but gradually 'opened the way' (!) to my gaining a more nuanced appreciation of the Quaker experience. The words, in these cases, closely fit the careful processes by which Friends bring themselves closer to Truth.

But one word stood out in its ambiguous uniqueness; it was a word that I had not ever heard or used in common conversation, I thought, since Junior High School Social Studies class. And, as open-minded and spiritually adventurous as Quakers seemed to be, this word represented the one thing that was clearly a taboo: "Proselytize". As in, "Quakers don't proselytize!" (Always expressed with an exclamation point). This became an especially common and quizzical experience for this Friend, a lifetime communications

professional and self-described ardent promoter. In an effort to defuse my distress with humor, I came to refer to this as 'the dreaded P-word'. (As in, "ohhh noooo, NOT the P-word!") Not a week passes that it does not rear its dreaded expression.

Where did this supposed tradition come from...and what purpose does it serve? There are several accounts, none of which I've ever quite grasped. But, as recently as First Day last (!), a Friend commented, with some obviousness, that when someone new joins us for Worship, it's clear that we are not going to tell them how, or who or what to do...that is between us and God (or Spirit). And so, it became clear to me: NO, Quakers DON'T P-tize, and never would! But does that mean we should NOT be talking about our Faith. Have Friends gotten this confused?



(Mary Fisher before Sultan Mehmed IV in 1658)

I believe we have, and that the result has had a strongly negative impact on Friends' ability to reach out to our communities and for some of our Meetings to thrive; in some cases even to survive. Somewhere along the line we stopped sharing our beliefs; we stopped bearing witness. So much so that these days our 'Quaker culture' has lost the value of being able to communicate what and who we are. We are, quite simply, out of practice. I can prove it: right now, take a moment to describe Quakerism without using negative terms (We Quakers have no priest, no creed, no majority vote, and no 'smells and bells' but says nothing about what we do have.) A bit hard to do, Yes?

So, this taboo leaves us unwittingly uncomfortable in trying to describe ourselves to those most eager to learn about us, even in everyday conversation. So, as human nature would have it, will we avoid that conversation? Not proselytizing sounds very noble. But if it makes us Friends less ambitious about speaking positively about our faith maybe we get an extra benefit of being safe in a "sticky" conversation or not having to deal with someone new and different in our tightly knit communities. And doesn't that keep others from knowing about the joys and satisfactions of our faith, which can act as a stop for people who are on the margin of being interested in us?

I invite you to come to our next Concord Quarterly Meeting at Willistown where we can have a discussion about how we as Quakers can start to feel at ease talking about our faith and its benefits that we know are available to those seekers who choose to come through our doors.

- Paul Indorf, Swarthmore Meeting & the PYM Membership Development Support Fund Granting Group

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**Concord Monthly Meeting would welcome other Concord Quarter Friends to join them for worship any First Day. Their worship begins at 11:15 AM. They have Monthly Meeting the 2nd Sunday of the month.**

## New Quarterly Meeting Working Group Forming to Support Concerns on Aging

In our October 2016 Concord Quarterly Meeting newsletter, Pam Leland, The Hickman Executive Director provided a compact description of a unique program of New York Yearly Meeting to help aging Friends. That program called ARCH (Aging Resources Consultation and Help) "seeks to strengthen the capacity of Meetings and of individuals to care for aging community members by equipping people with information, skills and appropriate boundaries, a network of support and resources, and the spiritual grounding of Quaker values." The article was an invitation for Friends to attend a presentation by Callie Janoff of NYYM on the attributes of this organization. About 20 interested Friends attended. On May 10 of 2017, 11 members, representing all the Meetings in our Quarter, attended a kickoff meeting at The Hickman, clerked by Pam Leland

On June 23, 2017, the group met again with a few more additional members attending. The positive energy generated at the last meeting continued. The group would like to become an officially recognized working group of the Quarter: the *Concord Quarter Working Group on Aging Concerns*. Already we are planning events. There is the possibility of a presentation on a relevant topic at the October Quarterly Meeting at West Chester if that is approved at their upcoming Meeting for Business in July. On January 20 in 2018 we want to organize a morning workshop around the questions we need to ask ourselves as many of us enter the "3rd Age". And next spring we may host a weekend long training for our core group or the wider Quarterly Meeting body, using resources contracted from New York Yearly Meeting. Our next meeting date will be August 16 at The Hickman. If you are interested you are welcome to attend.  
- Rich Ailes Middletown MM

## Concord Quarter 2017-2018 Fiscal Year Budget AND a Critical Notice

Last July, the Quarter approved a total budget of \$139,297 to cover the projected expenses for the 2016-2017 fiscal year ending June 30, 2017. Funds from this budget were earmarked for the following line item expenses: \$23,000 for coordinator expenses, \$2,400 for operating and program expenses, \$98,997 contribution to Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, \$7,000 for the tuition endowment fund, and \$7,900 for tuition grants (these funds came directly from semi-annual distributions of the Quarter's Friends Fiduciary accounts and not from Monthly Meeting contributions). As we approach the end of this fiscal year, I am happy to report that we are on target to have a balanced budget.

Based on this past year's finances, budget, and covenant contributions from Monthly Meetings and looking ahead to the programs, activities, and new coordinator expenses projected for the 2017-2018 fiscal year, I recommended at the April 23<sup>rd</sup> Quarterly Meeting that the total budget of \$139,297 remain the same for 2017-2018.

What this means is that I am asking all Meetings to contribute at the same level your Meeting contributed this past fiscal year for 2017-2018. I am hopeful that, and want to strongly

encourage, Monthly Meeting Clerks and Treasurers to bring this information before your membership at one of your upcoming monthly business meetings to affirm your Meeting's ability and commitment to continue with this same level of support to the Quarter.

### The other noteworthy change for this upcoming 2017-2018 fiscal year starting July 1, 2017 is that

Concord Quarter will no longer serve as an intermediary for collecting and then forwarding the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting (PYM) covenant contributions on to PYM. Monthly Meetings are now in charge of making their own covenant contributions directly to PYM. I want to encourage Monthly Meetings to communicate with PYM's Linell McCurry ([lmccurry@pym.org](mailto:lmccurry@pym.org)) regarding the schedule and amount of your Meeting's intended covenant contribution. Just like Concord Quarter, PYM relies heavily on funds from Monthly and Quarterly Meetings for the planning and operation of its business and therefore it is very important to maintain, and even increase as able, your Meeting's 2016-2017 contribution level for 2017-2018. -Tom Haviland – Westtown Meeting and Concord QM Treasurer

## Concord Quarter's Peter Lane stepping down from PYM Nominating Council

For almost eight years Pete Lane (Westtown) has acted as Concord Quarterly Meeting's representative on Philadelphia Yearly Meeting's Nominating Council (f/k/a Nominating Committee). As explained on PYM's website:

Pete has tendered his resignation from that position. His resignation will become effective on the date PYM's 2017's Annual Session begins in July. Since one year remains on his term of service, Pete's resignation offers a still-unidentified Quarter-member the opportunity to serve the Yearly Meeting in his stead.

Ideally, Pete's replacement would be a person who knows, has interacted with, and continues to interact with many Friends outside of her or his monthly meeting, particularly Friends who are members of Concord Quarter. That person would be expected to attend as many meetings of the Nominating Council as possible. Normally, the Nominating Council meets once a month with supplemental Zoom calls in between. Its members are encouraged to attend PYM's Annual and Continuing Sessions and to become involved in Quarter-wide events and programs with the goal of meeting and learning about the qualities and interests of PYM members who could bring value and energy to various PYM positions. Those positions, which are not as numerous as those that existed prior to the adoption of PYM's most recent strategic plan, include:

1. Clerk of PYM, Alternate Clerks, Recording Clerks, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, and Elders.
2. Clerks and members of Administrative Council and Quaker Life Council.
3. Representatives to organizations external to Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, such as American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL), Friends General Conference (FGC), interfaith councils, and other groups that the Quaker Life Council deems necessary.
4. Members of PYM ad hoc committees at the request of the yearly meeting in session or the councils.

If you are interested in serving as Pete's replacement or know of someone you believe is qualified and would be interested in serving as the Quarter's representative on PYM's Nominating Council, please contact any member of the Quarter's Nominating Committee (Deb Wood (Westtown); Julie Senko (Birmingham); Tom Woodward (Goshen); Rich Ailes (Middletown); Cruce Stark (Wilmington); Marian Walker (Concord); Scott Smith (West Chester)) or Lynne Piersol (Coordinator). - Charles Spadoni, Birmingham

## Concord Quarter Welcomes Lynne Piersol as New Coordinator

I am honored to have the opportunity to serve the members of Concord Quarter in the role of Concord Quarter Coordinator. I look forward to meeting you at your meetings and events over the next few months, hearing your joys and concerns and being of service to you going forward. I am impressed with the programs you are offering in your meetings and as a Quarter!

I grew up in Rochester, New York as a member of the meeting there, and moved to the Philadelphia area for college and graduate school (Bryn Mawr). Although there were years when I did not attend a meeting regularly, I always identified as a Quaker. When my children were young, I was led to start attending Swarthmore Meeting where I quickly became very involved. Over the years I have taught First Day School, served on Worship and Ministry committee (which plans adult religious education), and currently serve on Care and Counsel. I have served as Clerk of several committees, and as Clerk of the meeting.

Other Quaker involvement includes attendance at Friends General Conference Gathering for many years, and I am currently

also serving on FGC Central Committee as a PYM representative. I also serve as a Spiritual Nurturer for a Quaker Voluntary Service Fellow in Philadelphia. You can see I am led to serve Quakers! Professionally I most recently worked as the enrollment coordinator at a large early learning center in West Philadelphia, and previously in Head Start and a parenting program. My training as a social worker has been a wonderful background to have for these jobs and for life in general.



I also enjoy being outdoors in nature, reading, Zentangle drawing, dancing and learning hand drumming.

Please be in touch anytime with ideas, concerns or feedback!

—Lynne Piersol, Swarthmore Meeting & CQM Coordinator

## Willistown Friends Hosts Successful Series on Race, Islam and Child Trafficking

The Willistown Friends Meeting (WFM) has recently completed two of its planned, speaker/workshop community events. The incentive began with a survey of all members and attendees in which they were asked what THEY would like to hear about and share with the wider community from presenters outside WFM. Who could the Worship & Ministry Committee (W&MC) find in the broader community who are dynamic speakers talking about important, current, cultural topics?

Our first speaker was Dr. Samuel Lemon whose topic title was “Unintended Racism”. A thoughtful, warm-hearted, knowledgeable person, Dr. Lemon talked about his slave forebears, their transitions to freedom and how his family grew to the present day.

Dr. Lemon was asked the following: “What were the main points you wanted participants to take home?” And his answers were:

“To educate yourself about the history, cultures, lives and challenges experienced by people of color. Develop empathy for others and examine your own cultural biases. Have a diverse group of friends. Try to learn another language. Have a cultural experience in which **you** are the minority. Expose yourself to ethnic films, cuisine and other cultural events. Speak out against racism and bias and support those affected. Remaining silent condones racism. People of color can’t solve the problem alone.”



A second question read: “What is your message?” Dr Lemon responded: “We all have conscious or unconscious biases based on experience, beliefs, misconceptions, fears, ignorance—some are unintended. Some reasons for the biases are: enculturation (where and how we grew up, what we were taught, actions of parents and families) generational differences, isolation from others who are ‘different’, language, etc.” And finally: “What about biases within ethnic groups? Remember we are ALL related. How many races are there? One. Human genetic variation: 99.5% similarity.”

Two months later WFM hosted two, empathetic and energetic representatives from the Islamic Society of Chester County.

The words ‘empathetic and energetic’ have special meaning in this situation as the speakers, Dr. Anjum Irfan and Mrs. Hareem Ismail, agreed to lead our workshop despite the date’s falling in the early part of Ramadan. For a practicing Muslim Ramadan means fasting from dawn to dusk; no food or liquids at all during daylight hours. Thus these two thoughtful people openly shared their beliefs, spiritual and physical, with the participants at WFM.



Dr Anjum and Mrs Ismail were asked to address the following: “What does it mean to be a practicing Muslim in the current culture, locally and further afield? A second topic was: “What is life like for a practicing Muslim now and historically? And finally, they were asked to explain “The Five Pillars of Islam”.

The participants were eager to ask “pent-up” questions such as how does anybody explain the actions of the Jihadists when so much of Islam calls for mercy, caring for others, prayers for others in distress and preferences for peace. There was much sharing of spiritual feelings and beliefs as participants and speakers grew more and more comfortable hearing, sharing and learning about Islam and about Quaker beliefs. Easy comparisons of many Quaker and Islamic beliefs grew as W & M Clerks were asked to speak about similarities between “SPICES” and Mrs Ismail’s “Six Beliefs”.

These two events provided the surrounding community wonderful opportunities to learn about topics that are for some, easy to dismiss or ignore despite all the coverage in current media. If we as community members are to be valued, we need to include more and more people who are willing to engage in addressing the social issues surrounding us.

The third event in the WFM series comes on September 30, 2017. With a workshop by Carol Metzger, educator and author, titled, “Protecting Your Children Against Human Trafficking”: that Saturday’s workshop will run from 10:00 AM to 11:30 AM. It is free and open to the public. For more details please telephone Carol Metzger at 610-703-4387. - Derek Stedman  
Willistown MM

# Concord Quarterly Meeting's July-September 2017 Announcements and Calendar of Events

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

Minutes of the April 23, 2017, Quarterly Meeting have been posted on the Quarter's website (<http://concordquarter.org/documents>). If you have any comments on those minutes, please send them to David Leonard, Recording Clerk, at [leonard@berkeley.edu](mailto:leonard@berkeley.edu) no later than July 20, 2017.

## Calendar of Events

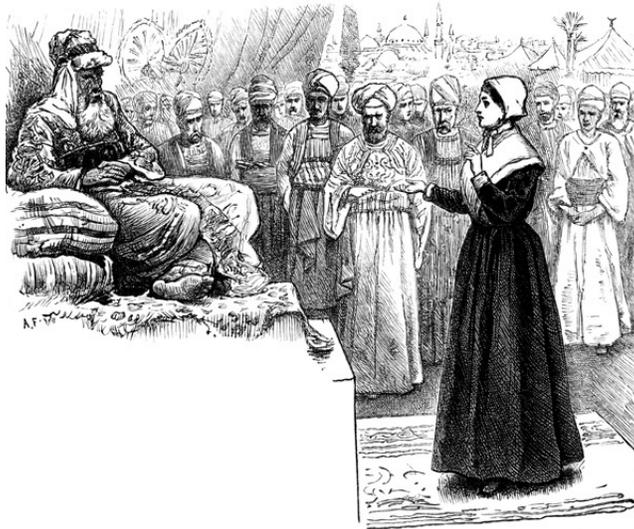
- July 2  
8 pm** **Twilight Meditation at Kirkwood Preserve.** Meet at Newtown Square Friends Meeting at 7:50pm, meet at location 8pm. Contact John Custer at [jscuster@yahoo.com](mailto:jscuster@yahoo.com)
- July 12  
6:30 pm** **The Hickman's Summer Concert Series featuring West Chester Band.** The concert is being held on The Hickman's grounds, admission is free, and the public is invited. **(rain date is the next evening)**
- July 23  
8:30 am to  
1:00 pm** **Concord Quarterly Meeting** at Willistown Monthly Meeting.  
7068 Goshen Road, Newtown Square, PA 19073
- July 26-30** **Philadelphia Yearly Meeting's Annual Sessions at The College of New Jersey.** For more information, go to [www.pym.org](http://www.pym.org). **Register by June 30. Financial Aid Available.**
- July 30  
7:45 pm** **Twilight Meditation at Ashbridge Preserve.** Meet at Newtown Square Friends Meeting at 7:35pm, meet at location at 7:45pm. Contact John Custer at [jscuster@yahoo.com](mailto:jscuster@yahoo.com)
- August 5  
4:00-7:00pm** **Birmingham Meeting is holding its annual Chicken Barbecue.** Food, music, and divine inspiration.
- August 6  
7:30 pm** **Concord Quarterly Meeting's Planning Committee** meets at **Concord MM.**  
Old Concord and Thornton Rds, Concordville, PA 19331  
All members of Concord Quarter are welcome to attend.
- August 9  
6:30 pm** **The Hickman's Summer Concert Series featuring Trailer Grass Orchestra.** The concert is being held on The Hickman's grounds, admission is free, and the public is invited. **(rain date is the next evening)**
- August  
20-26** **Young Friends Camp Onas Gathering 2017** for high school Friends. For information:  
<http://www.pym.org/event/young-friends-camp-onas-gathering-2017/>
- August 27  
7:10 pm** **Twilight Meditation at Newtown Meadows Preserve.** Meet at Newtown Square Friends Meeting at 7pm, meet at location at 7:10pm. Contact John Custer at [jscuster@yahoo.com](mailto:jscuster@yahoo.com)
- Sept 17  
11:15 am** **Chichester Meeting Semi-Annual Meeting for Worship**
- Sept 30  
11 am to  
4:30 pm** **PYM's Collaborative "Supporting Individual Calls to Ministry"** offers a free peer group series on how to provide mutual support so as to follow more faithfully the Spirit and create a better world. At **Friends Center, Philadelphia.** For more information and pre-registration go to [tinyurl.com/sicmpeer](http://tinyurl.com/sicmpeer).
- Coming** **Canoeing and more at Westtown School. Watch for details!**

# Concord Quarterly Meeting

## July 23, 2017

### Willistown Monthly Meeting

8:15-8:30 Sign-in  
8:30-9:45 Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business  
10:00-11:00 Meeting for Worship with Willistown Meeting  
11:15-12:15 Program  
12:15 -1:00 Fellowship with Lunch provided by Willistown Meeting



(Mary Fisher before Sultan Mehmed IV in 1658)

### How Canst Thou Not Proselytize!?

Early Quakers were known for their evangelical zeal that carried them to many parts of the world bringing their new religious energy to others, as they felt led. Yet in our time “proselytizing” has a negative connotation. Paul Indorf, a member of the PYM Membership Development Support Fund Granting Group, will explore this topic with a presentation and followed by small group sharing. What are the reasons we keep our light hidden from others. Are there ways we can more easily speak about our faith with our relatives, neighbors, and friends?

### Children’s Program

A Children’s Program and childcare will be available.

**Location:** Willistown Meeting 7069 Goshen Road Newtown Square, PA 19073

For more info and a map to the meeting go to <http://concordquarter.org/meeting-maps/>  
You can also email Lynne Piersol, Coordinator, at [concordquarter@pym.org](mailto:concordquarter@pym.org)

## 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**

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:
  - Republication 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 Meetinghouse 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 daylong retreat at Centre Meeting in May in which participants shared the on-going 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 29, 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.

*Editor's Note: Due to space constraints, Appendices 3 thru 8 are not posted here. They are available on the web at <http://concordquarter.org/documents/?category=Minutes>.*

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Middletown  
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