

# Concord Quarterly Meeting via Zoom on January 24, 2021

## Minutes

### Opening Worship

Debbie Murray-Sheppard welcomed attendees to the meeting and began the meeting at 8:30 AM with a period of worship.

### Welcome to Newcomers

**Debbie Murray-Sheppard (Clerk)**

The clerk extended a welcome to David Calamaro, Associate Head and Academic Dean of School of Delaware Valley Friend's School.

### Monthly Meeting Count (Birmingham, Concord, Goshen, Middletown, West Chester, Westtown, Willistown, Wilmington)

**Debbie Murray-Sheppard**

Thirty-one friends were present as the meeting began. All the Meetings of the Quarter were represented.

### Approval of Agenda

**Debbie Murray-Sheppard**

The group approved the agenda as written.

### Approval of Minutes from October 25, 2020

**Debbie Murray-Sheppard**

The minutes from October were approved as written.

### Joys and Challenges Report from Westtown Meeting (attached)

**Bruce Harrison**

Bruce Harrison read the Joys and Challenges Report from Westtown. The group held Westtown Meeting in the Light.

### Joys and Challenges Report from Wilmington Meeting (attached)

**Brian Fahey**

Brian Fahey highlighted some main points from Wilmington Meeting's Joys and Challenges Report. Pam Cerchio reported that Wilmington Meeting has had three meetings about the use of their building. Pacem in Terris has been using the second floor of the Wilmington Meeting house as its headquarters. The group held Wilmington Meeting in the Light.

### Treasurer's Report (attached)

**Charles Spadoni**

Charles Spadoni reviewed the Treasurer's report. He reported that all of the Quarter's assets in the Green Fund are being moved to the Growth and Income Fund. Friend Fiduciary has closed the Green Fund. The Growth and Income Fund is going all fossil fuel free. The group approved the move of the assets to the Growth and Income Fund.

### Report from Delaware Valley Friends School

**David Calamaro**

David Calamaro gave an annual report from Delaware Valley Friends School. He gave details about how the school is dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic. The Lower School and Middle School are meeting in person. The Upper School has had a hybrid teaching model since September. David shared a video called *I Am Light* that featured

singing and photos of the students at the school in various school activities. The group accepted the Delaware Valley Friend's School's annual report. The group held the school, faculty, and students in the Light.

#### **Coordinator Report (attached)**

**Lynne Piersol**

Lynne Piersol gave her Coordinator's Report. Lynne mentioned that tuition aid applications are due by February 19, 2021. She said that applicants could email her to receive an aid application. Lynne is accepting an email from the meeting clerks if the applicant cannot get the clerk's signature on the application. Lynne is working with a small group to plan an outdoor event in March 2021 because people have grown weary of so many Zoom meetings and it would be nice to have an in-person event.

#### **New Support Group for Researching Retirement Housing**

**Rich Ailes**

Rich Ailes gave a report about a new support group started by the Working Group on Aging Concerns. The group is for those looking to research and move into a retirement community. The group will have an initial meeting January 28, 7:30 pm. If people are interested in joining the group they may contact the Coordinator for the Zoom link at [concordquarter@pym.org](mailto:concordquarter@pym.org)

#### **PYM request to Monthly and Quarterly Meetings regarding the EcoJustice Collaborative and PYM's Summary Minutes (see attached)**

**Debbie Murray-Sheppard**

PYM asked individual meetings for feedback on three issues: membership and belonging; climate change and ecojustice; and diversity, equity, and inclusion to help PYM discern what unity there is across the Yearly Meeting for these specific minutes and priorities. At the October Quarterly meeting Concord Quarter asked the Clerk to write a letter to the PYM Clerks expressing concern that the Quarters were not involved with the requests for discernment.

Debbie asked if Meetings from the Quarter have discussed the EcoJustice Collaborative document and the Climate Change Minutes. Bill Laky from Goshen Meeting said that Goshen has discussed the issue and they going to try to make some changes to their Meeting house to help with Climate Change. Charles Spadoni reported that Birmingham Monthly Meeting has been working on the membership issue. Elizabeth Varley from Concord Monthly Meeting said that Concord plans to discuss the issues next month.

Debbie Murray-Sheppard said that she will send out an email about the three issues from PYM to everyone in the Quarter. She would like the monthly meetings to send their responses about the three issues to the Quarter as well as to PYM. PYM would like responses by the summer sessions.

#### **Reading of Minutes for Approval**

**Marty Boston (Recording Clerk)**

Friend Fiduciary is closing the Green Fund and has made all investments in the Growth Income Fund fossil fuel free. Concord Quarter approved moving the Quarter's assets in the Friends Fiduciary Green Fund to the Friends Fiduciary Growth and Income Fund.

Concord Quarter accepted the Delaware Valley Friends School's annual report that was presented by David Calamaro, Associate Head and Academic Dean of School of Delaware Valley Friend's School.

#### **Second Count of Meetings in Attendance**

**Marty Boston (Recording Clerk)**

Thirty-seven people were present at the second count of the Meeting. All Meetings were represented.

#### **Announcements of Upcoming Events (all also on the CQ website calendar) Debbie Murray-Sheppard**

**January 28, 7:30pm** – Support Group for those looking to research and move into a retirement community. Organized by the Working Group on Aging Concerns. Contact Coordinator for the Zoom link: [concordquarter@pym.org](mailto:concordquarter@pym.org)

**January 31, 2pm** – Concord Quarter Planning Committee. Open to all interested in the workings of the Quarter. Contact Coordinator for the Zoom link.

**February 3, 10:30am** – Concord Quarter Working Group on Aging Concerns. Open to any interested in aging concerns and becoming a resource person in your meeting. Contact the Coordinator for information and the Zoom link.

**March 13, 10am-noon** – Hike in the Land of the Lenni Lenape at Okehocking Preserve. An outdoor family friendly event for the Quarter! More information coming.

**March 27, 9am-4pm** – PYM Continuing Sessions via Zoom

There are also various events for adults, families, children and youth on the PYM calendar, along with several Thread Gatherings on various topics. <https://www.pym.org/>

Respectfully submitted,  
Martha Boston

## **Reports and supporting documents for Concord Quarterly Meeting, January 24, 2021**

### **Westtown Monthly Meeting 2020 Joys and Challenges**

This year has been a challenging year in many ways for Westtown Meeting. We have struggled with many of the same issues as other Meetings but ours began before the pandemic hit.

Bruce Harrison and Margaret Haviland had been serving as Co-clerks for the Meeting until Margaret accepted the position of Head of school for Westfield Friends School. Another member of the meeting was asked to serve with Bruce as Co-clerk but just after he accepted his work life changed drastically with additional responsibilities and lots more travel. He could not serve as Co-clerk at this time. Bruce Harrison has continued to serve with the help of the Pastoral Care and Concerns committee and other members of the community.

To help find a new Co-clerk and to evaluate the work of the Meeting and the various committees and how members serve the Meeting, a new Committee was formed composed of past Clerks and seasoned Friends. The Nurture and Coordination Committee. They have been communicating the needs and concerns of the meeting and its members to each other and listening deeply. It is still early days, but they are becoming the glue that helps bind us together.

Because we are on Westtown Schools campus and many of the boarding students at the school join us on Sunday morning, our years really follow the school calendar starting in September. The school's Religious Life committee had begun experimenting with changing the compulsory attendance requirement on Sunday for boarding students. Many boarding students who lived locally would go home allowing them to skip Sunday Meeting. Student who were international or from far away ended up having to attend Meeting every Sunday. Now all students are required to attend a set number of Sunday Meeting each semester. We see fewer students

each Sunday {which makes many of us sad} but we will see all the students during the year. Students still provide an energy and occasional ministry to the Meeting, but they are much more invested in their Thursday student Meeting for worship. Students have stated that they feel a sense of ownership and investment in Thursday Meetings for worship which allows them to become spiritually powerful event.

Winter 2020. On Sunday February 2<sup>nd</sup> Westtown Meeting celebrated our Centinela with Meeting for Worship in the Meeting House followed by an archival photo of our members on the facing benches and in front of the Meeting House. We enjoyed a cake and light refreshments in the East end collection room of the main building.

Spring 2020 as the pandemic began to spread the Head of School, Tori Jueds was in contact with the Meeting about our use of the Meeting house and the schools needs to follow best practices as recommended by the CDC. We began to asked members who were in the high-risk groups to not attend meeting. The Westtown students were about to leave for Spring break. We held Meeting in person one last time with a special camera perched on a ladder to allow members to join us through Google Meet.

We joined together via the internet with a camera focused on the empty benches in the meeting house. The next week we had a microphone so you could hear the birds and noises from the Meeting house. Westtown Meeting was so very fortunate to have Carl Behler as a member and our technology guru. He continued to change and adjust our equipment in the Meeting house and eventually move us to the Zoom platform.

Summer 2020 we returned to meeting in person in the Meeting house with a sign-up genius and hard limit of 25 persons wearing masks. Leaving all the doors and windows open we can really hear the birds and occasionally have one fly in to worship. The blessings of Zoom meeting for worship is that members who have moved away can and do now join us regularly from places like Chicago, Sacramento and Maryland. Our oldest member, my mother Isabella Harrison (93) joins us most Sundays from her apartment at White House Village on her I-pad. Members and attenders will sometimes stay on the Zoom link at the end of meeting to chat and exchange greetings.

Fall 2020. Some international students have returned to campus and the Meeting will have to change and adjust as the school begins to feel its way through a new school year in the middle of a pandemic. (Pivot). Our use of the Meeting house and just being on the school grounds is conditional and based on the needs of the school and its students. Our Meeting for worship has been an important community building opportunity for alumni and school community members. We have made an invitation to current parents of lower, middle and upper school, along with Alumni to join us on Sundays with the Zoom link.

Winter 2020 & 2021 We do not plan on holding our usual in person Christmas and New Year events. We will continue to hold Meeting in the Meeting house and on zoom. The doors will remain open for full ventilation and the schools steam heat will try to maintain a comfortable balance. We are planning to hold our annual Christmas Plant Sale fundraiser, in hopes of maintaining some sense of normalcy. Normalcy: We have had two requests of clearness for marriages in 2021 and have a great sense of joy that love will not be put on hold for a pandemic.

Bruce Harrison, Clerk of Westtown Meeting

### **Wilmington Monthly Meeting Joys and Challenges 2020**

Wilmington Meeting is grateful for many joys and recognizes that even our challenges present the opportunity for individuals and the Meeting community to experience spiritual growth. We strive to stay grounded in Quaker testimonies and committed to spiritual discernment. Thus, we find that we can embrace the joy of accomplishments and communal activities, as well as weather our difficulties. This past year some of the circumstances that we have faced have offered the opportunity to experience both joy and challenge.

The Meeting continued to hold meeting for worship on first days throughout the year, offering spiritual nourishment and community to members and attenders. The COVID-19 pandemic did prevent us from having in-person meeting for worship for some time, but we were able to resume gathering in person over the summer. We have also been using video conferencing for those who wish to join remotely; this seems likely to continue into the future, even after we are able to safely gather in person.

#### Some of our joys:

Using video conferencing has allowed our distant members, including those on different continents, to once again join us for worship. It has also allowed our members with mobility challenges to join us on a regular basis.

Thanks to the wise stewardship of our financial resources, we have been able to address maintenance issues that arose during the year, such as the removal of fallen trees, and repaving and improving our parking lot. We have currently embarked on an extensive renovation of our nursery area, which will involve the removal of carpet and linoleum squares and the removal of lead paint.

The Worship & Ministry Committee continues to provide Adult FDS, with monthly discussions of readings selected by the changing facilitators.

An all-clerks meeting in September focused on whether our stewardship of financial resources reflected our stated values. We gathered financial data to examine the sources of our annual revenue and what we spend that revenue on. This information was collated and then shared at meeting for worship with attention to business and led to a deep discussion of the position of the Meeting in the community and whether the Meeting will be in closer a relationship with the community going forward. It was suggested that we work with an outside consultant to help us gain clarity and establish a direction for the future, which we are currently pursuing. We have contacted the Partners for Sacred Places to help us in this process.

The Meeting continues to be engaged in several outreach and service efforts. Family Promise is an initiative that works with local homeless families. Meeting members and attenders support that group by providing meals on a regular basis, which are delivered to the shelter.

Also, we have been using our commercial kitchen in order to provide meals to the Emmanuel Dining Room, in Wilmington.

The Meeting also assists peer-led support groups for returning citizens. These groups sometimes meet at the Meeting House and meeting members help to facilitate the groups.

We also held two demonstrations in the summer to support the Black Lives Matter movement and social justice. Subsequently, we hung a Black Lives Matter banner on the Meeting House. Lastly, we have discussed how we might attract and support neighborhood groups that may benefit from the use of the Meeting House.

#### Some of our Challenges

Regarding the use of video conferencing for meeting for worship, several members have noted that video

conferencing seems to lead to a more informal atmosphere and in some cases, less focused engagement in meeting for worship and during meeting for worship with attention to business. It has also been noted that we seem to not be listening as deeply as we might, and we wonder if we should be using queries to examine items addressed in meeting, as opposed to making declarations. This could also be a by-product of not being in person, but the clerks agree that there is a need for spiritual clarity regarding listening

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic nearly all of our social gatherings have been cancelled since last March. This included our monthly potluck lunches and also the Berry Festival, which attracted a great many of our neighbors on an annual basis.

It was noted that contributions for members and attenders are running behind this year. This could be a significant issue in the near future, as we need to attend to stewardship of our meeting house property as well as that of Appoquinimink Meeting House and grounds: these properties require considerable financial resources for preservation and maintenance.

Getting enough people to serve on committees or be actively involved in the life of the Meeting: we have a vital core group, but we are stretched thin.

For Concord Quarterly Meeting January 24, 2021

### **Concord Quarterly Meeting Coordinator Report, January 24, 2021**

In just a few weeks, it will be a year since the pandemic was taken seriously and we had to change how we go about our lives. We had to change how we function as a Quarterly Meeting. I have missed the in-person visits at your meetings but have chosen to limit my indoor in-person gatherings. Zoom has been extremely helpful in maintaining connection as I “visit” meetings virtually and set up meetings via Zoom. We have had some successful programs too, via Zoom, but not sitting with folks at lunch after a program or worship is a loss.

I attended the PYM Meeting for Business Session on December 8 and heard about the reports of meetings’ discernments on the questions that had been submitted in the late summer. My article about that was in the January newsletter.

Current projects include working with a small planning group for an outdoor event for March 13. It will be a hike with a scavenger hunt at Okehocking Preserve. The feedback we get is that folks are zoomed out, especially those who are working remotely with children zooming to school. Since we were unable to offer the traditional Parents’ Morning Off event, we (Western and Concord Quarters) did plan and carry out a virtual “Would You Rather” event in November for elementary school aged children. It was a light-hearted fun event. However, only 3 children attended. They enjoyed it, but it was not the success we had hoped for.

Work on the document retention policy continues. With the help of Planning Committee, I was put in touch with more people in the Quarter who have experience in this work and I recently received more information to add to it. Hopefully, it can be submitted for approval in April.

Ongoing work includes information sharing across the Quarter and the Yearly Meeting. Some meetings asked me to share their special events around the Christmas and New Year holidays. In response to the violence on Capitol Hill in Washington on January 8, I shared several statements approved by various Quaker meetings, PYM and FGC. At least one meeting in the Quarter, Westtown, wrote their own statement and organized an online and in person event for January 20 which I shared with the Quarter.

I'm available for Zoom coaching, and several have taken me up on that offer.

I continue to support the committees of the Quarter by attending, taking minutes, sharing resources, and supporting Clerks. These include Delaware Valley Friends School/Concord Quarter Care Committee, which met in December, the Working Group on Aging Concerns, which meets monthly, Planning Committee, which meets 4 times a year, and Nominating Committee which is working now on nominations for several roles. If you might be interested in getting more involved with the Quarter, do let me know!

The Working Group on Aging Concerns welcomed Jean-Marie Prestwidge Barch, Co-Clerk of PYM to share her knowledge about aging concerns in minority and underserved communities at their meeting in December. Periodically we invite experts to share knowledge on a particular aspect of aging concerns to expand the group's knowledge. The Working Group is also starting a support group for those interested in researching retirement housing options other than staying in your own home.

The Quarter's Tuition Aid program is accepting applications for the 2021-22 academic year. I keep track of those applications which are coming in now and then communicate with the Treasurer and the schools in the fall. Applications are due February 19!

I am hoping that once I am vaccinated, I can visit you more in person. As always, any questions and suggestions are welcome!

Lynne Piersol

#### **Regarding Climate Change minutes from PYM Continuing Sessions, December 8, 2020**

Below is a quote from the section of the Clerks' Report at these sessions. Also attached separately are the minutes referenced (EcoJustice Collaborative and the PYM Summary Minute)

"....There does seem to be some lack of clarity about the PYM Minute vs. the Eco-Justice Collaborative Minute, with different Meetings approving support for one or the other, or, in one case, both.

Way forward might include support in principle by the body for action on climate change as a yearly meeting witness followed by formation of a sprint to review the many documents we have and to outline the specific and actionable behaviors we could undertake. The resulting specific document would then come back to the body for approval.

Given that this issue has been before the yearly meeting in different forms for many years, and given also the urgency of addressing climate change, your clerk would propose final review of this document no later than our summer sessions. As is true for the sprint on membership, this Sprint membership must be widely inclusive with significant membership from the eco-justice collaborative. If you have names to lift up for possible inclusion on the Sprint, please share them with the clerk: [Barch@pym.org](mailto:Barch@pym.org).'

#### **CONCORD QUARTERLY MEETING TREASURER'S REPORT Un-reviewed Financial Statements through the Second Quarter Ending December 31, 2020 (Except As May Be Noted Below, Reported On A Cash Basis)**

- In September 2020, the Quarter distributed \$10,200 in tuition assistance payments. Seventeen recipients received \$600 each. They are attending the following schools: Westtown School; Wilmington Friends School; and

West Chester Friends School.

- Approximately \$956 of the Coordinator's compensation that was awarded for the prior fiscal year was paid in the current fiscal year for ease of administration.
- Effective December 16, 2020, Friends Fiduciary Corporation ceased accepting investments in its Green Fund.
- Two constituent meetings failed to fulfill their respective second quarter operating covenants, and one failed to fulfill its second quarter TEF covenant. Those covenants were met in January 2021.

**Through The Second Quarter Ending December 31, 2020**  
**Revenues and Expenses Versus Prior Year's Revenues and Expenses Through the Second Quarter**  
*Financial numbers are redacted, contact the Coordinator for a full report*

**December 31, 2020 Balance Sheet Versus Prior Year's December 31 Balance Sheet**

- There are no liabilities.
- The FFC's Green Fund's assets will be merged into the FFC's Growth & Income Fund on February 1, 2021, if the Quarterly Meeting takes no action to reinvest its Green Fund assets in another FFC fund.

Note: Individual constituent monthly meeting December 31, 2020, Growth & Income Fund and Green Fund balances are available upon request.

Respectfully submitted,

Charles B. Spadoni, Treasurer  
January 24, 2021