

Minutes Concord Quarterly Meeting via Zoom on October 25, 2020

Opening Worship

Debbie Murray-Sheppard (Clerk)

Debbie welcomed attendees to the meeting and began the meeting at 9:45 AM with a period of worship.

Welcome Newcomers

Debbie Murray-Sheppard (Clerk)

Debbie welcomed Tom Ceresini from Middletown Meeting and Pat Daley from Goshen Meeting.

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

Debbie Murray-Sheppard

Thirteen friends were present as the meeting began. All the Meetings except Concord and Westtown were represented.

Approval of Agenda

Debbie Murray-Sheppard

The group approved the agenda as written.

Approval of Minutes from July 26, 2020

Debbie Murray-Sheppard

The minutes from July were approved as written. Debbie thanked Marty Boston, the recording clerk, for doing the minutes.

Joys and Challenges Report from Westtown Meeting (attached)

Bruce Harrison

Bruce Harrison from Westtown Meeting was to give the Joys and Challenges from Westtown, but he was unable to attend today. The clerk will ask him to report at the next quarterly meeting.

Joys and Challenges Report from Willistown Meeting (attached)

Steve Kupferschmid

Steve Kupferschmid gave The Joys and Challenges report from Willistown Meeting. The group held the Friends at Willistown in the Light.

Treasurer's Report (attached)

Charles Spadoni

Charles Spadoni gave the Treasurer's report. Richard Ailes asked if Friends Fiduciary is eliminating all investments in fossil fuels. Charles said that is correct. The Green Fund is being restructured and it continues to invest in clean energy. Debbie thanked Charles Spadoni, the treasurer, for his work on the financial report.

Working Group on Aging Concerns Report (attached)

Rich Ailes

Rich Ailes gave a report from the Working Group on Aging Concerns. Rich invited everyone to the group's next meeting on November 11th. Lynne Piersol said that information about the Aging Concerns Working Group's recent program on Housing Options is now on the Quarter's website. Debbie thanked Rich for the report.

Coordinator Report (attached)**Lynne Piersol**

Lynne Piersol gave the Coordinator's report. She has been working on an event with Western Quarter for children. She shared the flyer about an Indoor scavenger hunt that will happen on November 21, 1:30-3:00 PM. Lynne will be sending the flyer out soon. Rich Ailes asked about what the Friends Schools are doing. West Chester Friends is meeting in person, but they have the option to meet remotely if necessary. Westtown School is now meeting in person through the eighth grade. The Westtown Upper School is returning to in-person meeting next week. Wilmington Friend's School is meeting in person for kindergarten through fifth grade. The Wilmington Friends Upper School is meeting in person four days a week. Delaware Valley Friend's School is planning to return to in person school soon. Rich Ailes suggested having in person events for the children and youth in the Quarter. Marty Boston shared about a Zoom game night at Birmingham Meeting. Serita Spadoni shared that Birmingham Meeting is having the children's program in person, but outdoors rather than in the meeting house.

Joint Quarterly Meeting with Western Quarter, how often?**Lynne Piersol**

Concord Quarter has been meeting with Western Quarter for the past two years. Lynne Piersol asked the group to decide how often Concord Quarter would like to have joint quarterly meetings with Western Quarter. The last meeting was in July in the place of having Concord Meeting host Quarterly Meeting. Concord Meeting is not able to host Quarterly Meeting in the near future. Lynne asked how flexible meetings in Concord Quarter would be to changing months of when they host Quarterly Meeting. Birmingham Meeting prefers to host in April. Wilmington Meeting and Willistown Meeting are flexible on the date when they host, however Willistown would prefer not to host in July because of the heat.

The group decided it would like to have a joint quarterly meeting with Western Quarter annually. Debbie will ask for a subcommittee to put together a program for July 2021.

Query: What processes have meetings been using to reflect on the request sent out by the PYM clerks to consider the priorities of climate change, racism, and membership? (attached)**Debbie Murray-Sheppard**

The group questioned the process for the request from PYM to consider priorities on climate change, racism, and membership. The group felt that the timeframe suggested to discuss the topics was not adequate and the priorities should filter through the monthly meetings to the quarterly meeting then to PYM. The Quarter would like for good process to be observed. The Quarter will give this feedback to PYM.

Reading of Minutes for Approval**Marty Boston (Recording Clerk)**

The Quarter approved having an annual joint quarterly meeting with Western Quarter. Debbie Murray-Sheppard will ask for a subcommittee to put together a program for July 2021.

Second Count of Meetings and Members in Attendance**Marty Boston (Recording Clerk)**

At the second count of the attendees, nineteen people were in attendance. All the meetings except Westtown Meeting were represented.

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

*****You are invited to stay on the Zoom call for worship with Middletown Meeting and breakout groups following.

October 27, 7-8pm, **Quakerism 101 class**: Building on Our Past, Looking to Our Future on Tuesday evenings with Chris Smith. In person at the West Chester meetinghouse and by Zoom. **October 27—Our Changing Testimonies: Living in the Light; November 10—Relevance in the Present: Where Do We Go From Here?** Any questions or for the Zoom link, contact Marina Pavluk at Marinapavluk1@gmail.com

October 28, 7-8:30pm, QM Program via Zoom: **COVID-19, How Local Groups are Helping** featuring three

community foundations serving Delaware and Chester Counties, and Delaware State. Register to get the link and more info via the CQ website: <https://concordquarter.org/special-events/2020/covid-19-local-groups-help>

November 1, 2pm, **Concord Quarter Planning Committee** via Zoom. All welcome to this group which has oversight of Quarter activities and business. Contact the Coordinator for the Zoom link.

November 7, **PYM Continuing Sessions for multigenerational worship and fellowship and worship sharing:** for info and registration: <https://www.pym.org/continuing-sessions/>

November 11, 10:30am, **Concord Quarter Working Group on Aging Concerns.** Meets monthly. All welcome who are interested in aging concerns. Contact the Coordinator for the Zoom link.

November 21, 2-3:30pm, **special event geared to elementary school aged children and families** in Concord and Western Quarters. Since we can't do an in-person Parents Morning Off this time, here is a time to get to see/know each other, play a game or two, do a craft and have fun! Sponsored by Western and Concord Quarters. More information on its way!

December 8, **PYM Continuing Sessions with Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business**

Concord Quarterly Meeting Reports and Background Material for October 25, 2020

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 of 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. Students 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 2nd 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 ask 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 Beehler 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

Challenges and Delights Willistown Friends Meeting October 2020

THE CHALLENGES:

The Pandemic of course! We had our last in-person Meeting for Worship in February. We quarantined in silence for two months. The Clerking Team (with Nelson Wicas taking on the initial Hosting job) began doing Zoom worship sessions in April, getting the Zoom meeting codes, password, out to our membership, to try “Virtual” Meeting for Worship. This process took nearly two months to get a variety of folks connected from their homes. By this time, several members asked to try in-person Meeting for Worship with no more than 12 people, safely physically distanced and masked in the Meeting House, with windows open for ventilation. We tried “blended” worship with the “Host” using his computer while sitting in the Meeting House. When this worked, the Meeting decided to invest in a large screen and microphone for the Meeting room. We were fortunate to have Betsy Swan’s input and knowledge for getting this system in place, working, and with written directions for those doing Host, Facing Bench and other Meeting room duties.

THE DELIGHTS:

The joy for us is in seeing members from Maine, New Jersey shore, New York State, Seattle, Portland, as well as more local members whose distance or health problems have been preventing them from attending. Such a joy to see their faces and hear their voices again! I would never have associated the word “ZOOM” with Friends’ processes! The Pandemic Challenge has inspired Friends to use our gifts within our community to meet the challenges, each with different gifts, have used all of them to unite our Meeting to this new millennium. A prime example was the Zoom 95th Birthday Party a family in Seattle gave attended by people from all walks of life and from all over the country!

Our Meeting was founded in 1798. Friends have adapted to moments of emergency because of the spiritual wisdom of our Founders in different times of turbulence in the “worldly” society.

**Unreviewed Financial Statements through the First Quarter Ending September 30, 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.

First Quarter Ending September 30, 2020, Revenues and Expenses Versus Prior Year's Revenues and Expenses for the Same Period

For a non redacted copy of the report, contact the CQ Coordinator

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September 30, 2020 Balance Sheet Versus Prior Year Comparison

- There are no liabilities.
- For a non redacted report, contact the CQ Coordinator*

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Note: Individual monthly meeting Growth & Income Fund and Green Fund balances are available by request.

Respectfully submitted,

Charles B. Spadoni, Treasurer
October 25, 2020

**Concord Quarter Working Group on Aging Concerns Report to
Concord Quarterly Meeting Virtual Session 10/25/2020**

Rich Ailes, Clerk

We continue to meet regularly via ZOOM technology. Friends seem to enjoy this format as it cuts down on travel time while keeping our sense of community intact. Anyone interested is welcome to attend our meetings and become part of the group. Meeting times are usually from 10:30 AM until 12 PM, the first Wednesday of the month. In November we are meeting one week later on the 11th, to give Friends time to digest the results of the US national election.

The group continues to use our sessions to check in and support one another on our mutual experiences around aging issues in our own lives and in our Meetings.

Our planning meetings have included guest speakers on relevant topics. We are planning to hear from PYM's new co-clerk, Jean-Marie Prestwidge Barch in December, to give her perspective on aging concerns amongst people of color.

On October 10 we held a ZOOM workshop on Senior Housing entitled "Housing Options in

Your Later Years” presented by Susan Hoskins, the director of Friends Foundation for the Aging. Fifteen people attended to hear Susan provide many “framing” questions which older adults need to ask themselves as they face choices for their future housing needs. An outgrowth of this workshop may be the formation of a support group around the topic of choosing appropriate housing options for ourselves. Details will be forthcoming after our November meeting.

For more information, you can contact Lynne Piersol at concordquarter@pym.org or the clerk, Rich Ailes at railesjr@ailesdodson.org.

Coordinator Report for Quarterly Meeting, October 25, 2020

Lynne Piersol

It’s been a challenging year on many levels! I have been working remotely since March with the assistance of Zoom. I have continued to visit the meetings that have virtual connection for worship and other things. Earlier this fall I did attend the in-person Chichester Fall Meeting for Worship since there was ample ventilation and very few attendees, but otherwise, being in the high-risk age group, I will be working virtually with all of you for the time being. Other administrative tasks have included working on a document retention policy for the Quarter which will be presented to Planning Committee on November 1.

I have shared numerous resources with meetings about how to set up hybrid worship, sometimes from outside organizations, but also from the meetings in the Quarter themselves who have developed formats that work. Most meetings are now having in-person worship; for some outdoor worship preceded the indoor setting. I also continue to share resources when I have attended programs and written them up such as the Caln Quarter Membership Development series, and the recent PYM Meeting Leadership Gathering.

I attended the Delaware Valley Friends School/Concord Quarter Care Committee in September. The committee reported extensively earlier this year, and the pandemic has hampered our efforts to collaborate on events, so there isn’t much to report this fall. The school will report in January; they have done a wonderful job of keeping the school going virtually with some in person education too.

I also continue to support the CQ Working Group on Aging Concerns by taking minutes, setting up the Zoom links and helping to organize workshops such as the recent Housing Options for your Later Years, reported on by the Clerk, Rich Ailes.

Finally, I am working with Western Quarter to create a fun afternoon event on November 21 focused on children (preK-6th grade) and families. We haven’t been able to organize in person events yet, so this will “substitute” for the traditional Parents’ Morning Off event we usually do in the late fall.

It continues to be challenging to make decisions about future events, and how to plan things that build community. I was saddened this past weekend to learn that Friends General Conference Gathering for July 2021 will be virtual again – a very understandable decision, but it brings home the seriousness of the pandemic. It will be a long time before “normal” returns if ever. I’m holding in the Light all of us that are saddened by the losses, both big and small, that we are experiencing. And the vaccine makers!

PYM Clerks' Message to Monthly Meeting Clerks

This year, Annual Sessions provided many first-time experiences, even for those of us who have attended sessions many times before. For the first time in the life of our yearly meeting, we worshiped, shared connection, and joyfully considered several important concerns via video conference. And we know there's more to come.

We ended sessions with **three major concerns** before us on which we will act as a yearly meeting in the coming months:

- the proposed Philadelphia Yearly Meeting witness on climate change,
- our movement to address racism, and
- consideration of our membership practices.

We know that as we try to discern the movement of Spirit, we profit from hearing many voices. As a next step toward action in these three areas, we are asking that your whole community consider the linked materials at your September or October Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business and share your wisdom with the yearly meeting.

We are including resources and information on each of these three concerns to assist and support your meeting in this undertaking. The [advance reports and videos prepared for Annual Sessions](#) are essential resources.

1. A minute under consideration for possible approval, which proposes that Philadelphia Yearly Meeting adopt a yearly-meeting-wide witness on climate change.

You might consider how climate change has impacted you and your meeting. Perhaps it would be helpful to discuss ways the meeting has engaged with this concern and what you have done to combat climate change. The yearly meeting will profit from input from every meeting as we move toward discerning we shall adopt this witness as a whole body.

The minute, [also available on the PYM website](#), is as follows:

Climate Change Summary Minute

Guided by many Friends who have worked tirelessly over the past fifty years, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting adopts a yearly meeting-wide witness on climate change. This corporate ministry is broad and encompasses the work and witness of many people, communities, monthly meetings and organizations within the wider network of Quakers in the Philadelphia region and beyond. A yearly meeting-wide witness on climate change seeks to raise up as many different voices and actions as possible to make progress on the environmental and societal issues at the heart of the climate crisis.

2. A minute originally written and shared widely in 2016 by the Fellowship of Friends of African Descent, a national organization of African American Quakers in the U.S.

This minute and the conversations it created formed the foundation for establishing the Ujima Friends Peace Center. We revisited this minute as a whole yearly meeting during the July 25, 2020 plenary session on addressing racism, and we invite your community to revisit the minute now as well. [It can be found on the PYM website.](#)

The discernment of these Friends can provide a meaningful starting point for meetings to consider their own work.

- What actions has your meeting been inspired to take regarding racism among us?
- What challenges arise for you as you consider racism in the United States in these days?
- How has your meeting been affected?
- What do you feel should come next in our collective work to address racism in our world today?

You can learn more about the [Ujima Friends Peace Center on their website](#).

3. The report on the January 2020 Threshing Session on Membership, which the body received and considered during the July 19, 2020 Plenary Session.

<https://www.pym.org/threshing-on-membership-report/>

- What does membership mean in your monthly meeting?
- What does belonging to a meeting mean?
- Do the current forms of our membership process speak to the substance of membership as it is understood by your meeting?

As a yearly meeting community, we have begun to re-evaluate the ways in which our membership practices nurture our relationships with one another and the Spirit. We need the wisdom and experience from all meeting communities as we move forward together. We have included some queries which may be helpful in framing your discussion.

Queries:

- Is it time for our yearly meeting to consider revising our membership practices?
- And, if so, how should they be revised?
- What vision of commitment and belonging are we moving toward in our Quaker community?

We look forward to learning from you about your discernment as a meeting in each of these areas.

Your input will help shape the agenda for Continuing Sessions on November 7 and how we move forward together. As we move into the fall, we hope way will open for us to worship with you via Zoom if not in person.

Sincerely,

Jean-Marie Prestwidge Barch and Frank Barch, PYM Co-Clerks
Christie Duncan-Tessmer, PYM General Secretary

(Originally discernment was requested by Continuing Sessions for November 7. However, the Business Meeting session is now scheduled for December 8.)