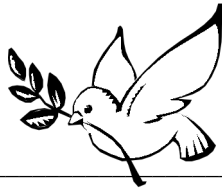


Concord Quarterly News

of the Religious Society of Friends



Concord Quarterly Meeting Newsletter Volume 20, Issue 4, October 2023

Intergenerational Worship (Ed. Note: Westtown Meeting is excited to share their experience with Intergenerational Worship at our QM on October 22.)

Intergenerational Meetings: A Pathway to Strengthen our Beloved Community

I see intergenerational meetings not only inclusive across ages – but inclusive of all in the community. – Rachel Ishmail, parent of Kindergartener
We love intergenerational meeting! – Domi Waldron, parent of Kindergartener

At our upcoming Quarterly Meeting, members and attenders of Concord Quarter will be given an opportunity to strengthen the spiritual life of our eight interconnected meetings through the practice of intergenerational meeting for worship, which we have been using at Westtown Meeting. For almost twenty years, Melinda Wenner Bradley, Director of Program and Religious Life for Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, has researched, written, trained teachers, and shared this concept with her own meeting in West Chester. During that time, she has co-created and shared Faith & Play™, a Quaker approach to Godly Play®, a collection of stories and a particular method for sharing those stories developed by Episcopal priest Jerome Berryman, with Friends and others everywhere! Faith & Play Stories and Philadelphia Yearly Meeting have given us a gift!

Two of us at Westtown Meeting participated in **Playing in the Light** training in the fall of 2022. We spent a few Sunday afternoons virtually and a weekend together at Powell House to learn the concepts, interact with the materials, watch stories modeled by Melinda, and practice in small groups. In the end, each of us led the entire group through a story we chose. You may well have been present at Quarterly Meeting last January when Melinda introduced intergenerational worship to us through the use of a Faith & Play story to start our Meeting for Worship. Our Meeting wants to share with you how we have implemented this experience into our Meeting for Worship. We hope you can take this idea, share it with existing families, and use it to reach out to others perhaps by bringing in a grandchild or two, or bringing in a family, or including someone nearby who has a special need.

Below are the reflections of a few of our Westtown members and attenders. Let their stories speak to you. Wonder how we might in our Meetings strengthen each other and all spiritually using this experience. Intergenerational Meetings allow us a pathway to be with all in worship, know God's presence deeply, and gently touch all. – *Ginny Sutton – Westtown Meeting*

Parent: *Even though my daughter loves being with her friends and teacher Abigail while mom is centering, Antoinette loves more doing big girl things with mom. It gives her a sense of inclusiveness. This inclusiveness isn't solely inclusiveness of all ages. I recall during an intergenerational meeting for worship a beautiful young lady with Down Syndrome was moved to speak. Her testimony included that she wouldn't have felt moved to speak at any other meeting for worship – just the intergenerational meeting for worship. I often ponder why this person, who is not a child but has a disability, felt more at ease to give testimony at an intergenerational meeting. I see intergenerational meetings not only inclusive across ages – but inclusive of all in the community.*

Parent of two children: *We have younger kids. At this stage of our lives, it is hard to think of ourselves as individuals, or even as a couple. The*

meeting acknowledges this explicitly with planning, resources, and abundant acceptance of our needs and limitations as a family unit, as children and as parents. They serve that of God in all of us, big and small. It's playing the "long game," for the Meeting as well as for us. And more broadly, for our gathering and spirituality to be meaningful to all of God's children—the whole spectrum of humanity in terms of skin tone, language, physical/mental/emotional ability, age, income bracket, gender etc. A great place to begin is with those already among us who are often confused by or maybe mildly resistant to our weekly hours together.

We are so grateful for the Meeting's evident loving commitment to our families; their hard work and patience is a gift given with foresight and contagious optimism. We have enjoyed the intergenerational meetings. In particular, the story element and the activities on the floor help keep the kids engaged and quiet. The quiet time in spiritual space with the activities sets kids up to succeed in remaining silent. The invitation for a short sharing from the children, I think, is a mutual benefit for adults and children feeling they are in community and known by others.

Teacher & Parent of teenagers: *In intergenerational worship, we love seeing our whole Meeting gathered together for all of worship. We can see how our youngest members are growing, and we can support parents and children as they explore meeting for worship and our Meeting community. Members and attenders of all ages enjoy interacting with the quiet materials that are available. Allowing a space where it is ok to move around brings life to our worship. Friends of all ages often share something about the story or something they are wondering during worship. It is a joy to hear Spirit rise through our youngest friends, and so wonderful for children to also share messages.*



Parent of adult children: *When we are intentionally intergenerational, I see Spirit move. The ebb and flow of attention, movement and occasional vocal ministry opens my centering and contemplation to important observations and reflections that I don't access as easily among only adult Friends. I feel this type of gathering nurtures the sense of belonging for the younger Friends. These interactions, even at a distance*

through Zoom, allow us to become more aware of each other, seeing our natural personalities. This is important over time because it lays the groundwork for connection as we all age. This time together helps a young friend to experience Spirit firsthand and with all members of their community. Over time a young Friend may pick an older Friend to become a Friendly Adult Presence in their life. This type of Meeting can provide the early basis for those future relationships. We enrich each other and that is reason enough to foster this intergenerational experience.

Teacher & Parent of adult children: *There is a quote that says something like, "the strength of a nation lies in its youth." This quote comes to mind during our intergenerational meetings. These special worship gatherings are a time for our Meeting to focus on youth: to nurture them and to plant seeds of faith, kindness, and mindfulness in their hearts. This also teaches children they are valued and respected by a community, which will fortify them as they grow up. In turn, they will do the same for their younger generation. Youth are the hope for the strength of our Meeting.*

Teacher of Children's Meeting: *I believe it is a wonderful tool and resource that encourages the community to witness the Spirit together. I appreciate how it is inclusive of everyone. The exploratory and interactive aspect of the process has captured my heart the most.*

PYM Annual Sessions – July 2023

Annual Sessions were held online on July 26 - 27 and met jointly in-person/hybrid at The College of New Jersey, July 28 - 30. The theme of the sessions was "Living with our Neighbors: Growing into Beloved Community." The Sessions offered joint worship each day, several keynote speakers, meeting for business sessions, morning Bible Study, a program for Young Friends and another program for youth and children. Three epistles were created from the Sessions that are well worth reading and can be found at <https://www.pym.org/sessions/>

Meeting in-person after Covid was very meaningful for those present. The informal interactions between the meetings afforded participants a chance to get reacquainted with old friends and meet others for the first time.

A keynote address by Jeanne Elberfeld was an inquiry into how Friends might use the science of stress and safety to cultivate and nurture our Quaker Communities. She explored how the brain works through the lens of neuroscience. She postulated that a prerequisite for a gathered, beloved community is safety, belonging, and connection. She indicated that scientific methods of helping people deal with trauma and stress are productive avenues of exploration for Friends communities. She discussed how we can make Meetings safe for everyone. She examined the five elements to nurture others are 1. expressing care by listening and encouraging, 2. challenge growth by expecting the best, 3. provide support, 4. share power, 5. expand possibilities.

Right Relationship with the Lenape: Year One

Hè! (Lenape for hello; pronounced like "hey"). - On September 18, 2022, meeting for worship at Birmingham began for the first time with a land acknowledgment. Our working group had established our commitment toward relationship with the Lenni-Lenape, the original people of this land and a people who still live among us. That day's opening exercise was a recognition that a land acknowledgment was just the beginning. Taking action was our ultimate goal. A relationship is by definition a state of *engagement* between two people or parties. It was time to turn our attention from book readings and article sharing to hearing Lenape people.

Our first presenters, from the Lenape Nation of Pennsylvania, drew the largest crowd the meetinghouse had seen since the pandemic. It was joyous. Adam Waterbear DePaul, Chief of Education and Tribal Storykeeper, and Shelley DePaul, Director of Language and Treaty Liaison, shared their experiences as descendants and scholars of Lenape who in the 19th century married into the German farming communities of the area. These Lenape who stayed behind lost their national tribal identity, but they passed aspects of indigenous knowledge and beliefs to their children through the generations.

We also learned, albeit belatedly and unexpectedly, about the controversy over the Lenape Nation of PA. Given that there is no proof of lineage in the federal tribal records, the legitimacy of the Lenape Nation of PA and its members is challenged by federally recognized tribal nations and allies. Indigenous identity is especially contentious in Pennsylvania, which does not recognize any native American tribes in the state, unlike its neighbors New Jersey and Delaware, which do recognize that some remained and grant state privileges accordingly. The difficult conversations within the Quaker community precipitated by our hosting of the DePauls served as a

Land Stewardship & a Mexican Cloud Forest

The cloud forest is a magical place. It is both the most diverse and the most endangered eco-system in the world. While only .8% of the land area in Mexico is cloud forest, there are 2,500 plus plants that prefer this eco-system. It is an essential habitat for many migratory birds we enjoy here. Due to land cover changes, illegal logging and cattle grazing, the cloud forest is endangered. The conservation and restoration of cloud forests are extremely important to support biodiversity and to ensure water quality, water availability and flood mitigation.

So, how did two Concord Quarter Quaker educators end up doing reforestation work in the cloud forest of Mexico? Having heard about the amazing work being done by a young couple, Ricardo and Tania Romero we visited the Romeros at their project, called Las Canadas, in 2003. The visit was life changing. Their 600-acre cattle ranch had no amenities, but it possessed a rare fragment of intact cloud forest. It led them to replace their cattle with a small dairy herd to stop any further ecological damage. They

Meeting for Business Sessions covered three important themes.

There was a corporate witness session on addressing racism presented by the Addressing Racism Collaborative. Some upbeat experiences of three Monthly Meetings that have forged a partnership with three separate African American churches were shared. The presentation explained how each of the three Meetings established contact and elaborated some of the joint activities made possible by the associations. See Website: <https://www.pym.org/addressing-racism-collaborative/> and report: <https://www.pym.org/sessions/advance-documents/>

The PYM Session on climate change was presented by the PYM Eco-Justice Collaborative. It focused on what individual meetings can do. The committee presented a Playbook on climate action to go carbon neutral. The session drew on the experiences of Meetings that are working to become carbon neutral. See report at www.pym.org/sessions/advance-documents/ General Secretary Christie Duncan-Iessmer gave an overview of the updated computer-based resources that PYM offers. She highlighted the new on-line skills registry as well as other on-line resources.

Fall Continuing Sessions (hybrid) will convene pm Saturday, 11/11 and will include worship, community, youth programs and yearly meeting's business. The program on living into our spiritual gifts will be in person at Arch Street Meeting House in Philadelphia. – *Dan Hewitt, Wilmington Meeting*

reminder of how little we know about Lenape affairs. The westward removal of Lenape far beyond their homelands to Oklahoma and Wisconsin does not change the necessity of our getting close to them and their stories. Our payment of honorariums was a choice of material support going to one tribal nation and not another. It was a lot to think about.

Our second set of speakers were Gail Melix and Paula Palmer, co-facilitator and co-director, respectively, of Toward Right Relationship with Native Peoples, a program of Friends Peace Teams. Paula's research on Quaker Indigenous Boarding Schools has become the foundation for workshops nationwide to invite Quaker meetings and schools to learn and process the uncomfortable truths of Quakers' involvement in the cultural genocide of native peoples. Gail, who hails from Massachusetts, is an enrolled member of the Herring Pond Wampanoag Tribe of Plymouth and a member of Sandwich Friends Meeting. They joined us for meeting for worship and then a conversation about their experiences navigating Quaker history and indigenous identity. Paula and Gail provided depth and perspective about the controversy above. We learned that the messiness of identity politics confounding us was commonplace. Gail and Paula's kind encouragement reassured us to follow our leading.

Finally, we are excited and honored to host a virtual presentation with Curtis Zunigha this coming October. He will present on **Forced Removals of the Lenape: The Original People**. Mr. Zunigha is an enrolled member of one of the three federally recognized tribes: the Delaware Tribe of Indians in Oklahoma. He is also co-founder and co-director of the Lenape Center in New York. A specialist in Delaware/Lenape culture, language, and traditional practices, Mr. Zunigha is a long-anticipated speaker of the working group. We hope you will join us for his presentation. (ed. Note: See Calendar on Page 4 for date and time.)

–*Lauren Buckalew - Birmingham Meeting*

then radically changed their lifestyle to reflect what they understood about climate change and threats to biodiversity. Through workshops and apprenticeship programs, they had invited others into a process of sustainable agro-ecology. They committed most of their lands to a first of its kind land conservancy in Mexico. We saw in them that Quaker impulse to align with the truth – by acting on our broken relationship with the natural world. It prompted us to consider how we could take that relationship just as seriously. What actions were we willing to do to heal our relationship to the cloud forest?

In 2003, we brought the first of many groups of high school and college students to experience a Quaker environmental leadership workshop in collaboration with the Romeros. That led us to experience a great opening to be of service to this habitat. Ricardo informed us that his neighbor wanted to sell 250 acres of degraded land with only a fraction of cloud forest remaining. We were led to take this next step of buying the land

without really knowing what we were getting into. We named the project Las Bellotas or the "Acorns" after both the endangered oaks found on the property and the symbolism of new life from acorns.

Our first step was to get guidance. We turned to the National Institute of Ecology in nearby Jalapa where their faculty introduced us to restoration ecology, a process of assisting in the recuperation of an ecosystem that has been degraded or destroyed. We gained a knowledge of what a healthy cloud forest look like. We were fortunate to have several legacy tree species which had not been logged. In addition, we had a healthy ecosystem in our neighbor, Las Canadas, whose restoration work was years ahead of us.

With so much land degraded by grazing, we started with active restoration because this land needed a jump start! Our first steps were to collect seeds from the remaining mature trees and start a nursery. We received financial help from a Mexican foundation that we used to purchase native tree species. In 2005, we planted 27 tree varieties and 10,000 trees. In 2006, we focused on 17 varieties and planted 10,809 trees. In 2007-9, we planted 30 varieties (including shrub layer plants) and a total of 17,804 saplings. We continued to plant at a slower rate over the next 10 years. Not all the 40,000 saplings survived! Our challenges were ants, mice and larger rodents, unexpected killing frosts and the exotic grasses that had been planted for cattle. For some trees and in some years, we faced high mortality rates.



Once the active phase was underway, we selected areas for passive regeneration. In these areas, we let nature take its course. In some of these areas the bracken took over, but in others we saw resilience.

This year we are celebrating our 20th anniversary of our relationship with this patch of cloud forest. You can see the contrast between the aerial photo

from 2003 and the more recent one. We have met our first goal to stop doing harm. We have assisted in the recuperation of an ecosystem. Our biologist colleagues who measure our progress have seen an increase in birds, reptiles, amphibians and most recently mammals including the jaguarundi and foxes.

In May of 2023, we were awarded the designation of an ecological reserve by the state of Veracruz, a small step toward the international goals set by the 2022 UN Biodiversity Conference, to reverse the destruction of nature. Just as we were inspired by the Romeros, we hope other Friends will be led to follow our example on their own properties or to support us as we expand our restoration work. If you want to learn more about our project watch this <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1pIDTYtXp-KtCFcgAJigthh929WDKd0Vf/view>. If you would like to contribute to our project, please visit our GoFund Me site. www.gofundme.com/f/restoring-the-cloud-forest-and-ourselves If you would be interested in visiting the project, please be in touch!

Paula Kline, Alan Wright -Westtown Meeting Kline.paula@gmail.com

Completing the Circle – Traveling as an Elder in England



"All along the way there has been God's Grace. Matt and I started out as," father and son," and now we are like brothers." (Journal entry, September 8th, 2023.)

I met Matt Rosen at Pendle Hill. He was there for the spring term, 2023. He was totally different from what I had expected. As a philosophy major, coming from Oxford University, and as the Cadbury Scholar, I assumed he would be highly intellectual,

very aloof, and difficult for me to make connections with. Instead, I met a young man who had a strong intellectual gift, but was clearly following his heart as well, and he had two feet firmly on the ground. As it turned out, our faith journeys were very similar, despite our age difference (4 decades!) and we soon became close friends.

We were both brought up in suburban Quaker Meetings, even in the same Quarter! We both struggled as youth, trying to understand the Quaker meeting for worship and in the process not finding the strength within ourselves to be, "good Quakers." We both left Quakers looking for answers elsewhere. We were both totally turned off by religion and found it empty and meaningless. We were both spoken to deeply within by a Power greater than our own. Both of us were drawn to read early Quaker writings and found real Life and Hope in them. Both of us were "convinced" deeply by an experience of Jesus as our Living Teacher, within us, and among us. We both returned to Friends to try to share our experiences and call Friends to connect to the vital faith in our roots. Pretty amazing. I was gobsmacked!

Matt and I visited the Friends Historical Library at Swarthmore College. He was working on a paper about Quaker "convincement:" what it means, and how it relates to membership. I suggested we take a break and explore the new cafeteria building. As we were looking around, a staff member came up to greet us and asked if we were enjoying our visit. He clearly thought that we were a father and son, looking at Swarthmore on a college tour. From that point on at Pendle Hill, Matt was referred to as my son. My wife, Verona, also "adopted" Matt. He quickly became a part of our family.

It was hard to say goodbye (after six weeks) when Matt left to go back to Oxford. Not long afterwards, an unexpected email arrived saying that

Matt was, "feeling called to travel in the ministry" and visit meetings in the Oxford area. I shared the email with Verona and she said, "You have to go!" Friends at Middletown Meeting agreed, and some of them even offered financial support for the trip. So, with some trepidation, I wrote back and asked Matt if he had a traveling companion (elder) to go with him. I told him that I might know someone who is interested. He wrote back encouraging me to come.

This began a journey together that provided an extraordinary opportunity for us both. It helped me to close a circle. I had been called to travel in the ministry among Friends as a young man (around Matt's age) and didn't know what this meant or how to proceed. Some older friends had encouraged me and traveled with me to help me find my way. Now I could do this for Matt. Coincidence? To me it felt like it was a gift from a Divine Hand, something I had never planned or anticipated.

We traveled to six Meetings together, often spending the night in the home of our host Friends. This allowed for good informal conversations and opportunities to learn about the joys and concerns of each Meeting. As we traveled together, I was given the Grace to encourage and support Matt in many ways. As he grew into his calling, I also grew in my understanding and experience of what it means to be an elder.

I encouraged Matt to look for additional opportunities outside of meeting for worship where he could speak for longer periods of time. I suggested that he make sure his heart had been fully cleared and to ask for questions and responses afterwards. He first tried this at Jordan's Meeting, in a small village outside of London.

Matt started by speaking of his own "convincement" experience. Then he spoke about his work with the Oxford Young Friends. He finished by speaking about his experience of yielding to, and following a leading "to travel in the ministry among Friends." The first person to respond after Matt spoke said that he had never heard such a clear and deep explanation of the Quaker faith. He was clearly moved. Others also expressed their appreciation. By sharing from his heart, Matt opened the door for Friends to have deep conversations about their faith.

As I write this, Matt is continuing to travel, accompanied by other friends, carrying a message of Light and Hope. If you want to hear Matt speak, you can register for his Pendle Hill Monday Night Lecture, November 6th, 2023. The link is listed below.

pendlehill.org/events/awakening-the-witness-convincement-and-belonging-in-quaker-community/
- Chris Stern, Middletown Meeting *Chris will be speaking here on Oct 1:*
<https://cropwellquakers.org/october-1-chris-stern/>

Concord Quarter October 2023 Announcements & Calendar of Events

Announcements

Draft minutes of our July 2023 Quarterly Meeting are on the CQM website:

<https://concordquarter.org/documents/?category=Minutes> Please send any comments to the temporary Recording Clerk, Rich Ailes, at railesjr@ailesdodson.org by October 23, 2023.

The West Chester Area Refugee Resettlement Project update - An official application to Welcome Corp for hosting two refugees has been submitted. Once the application has been approved, fundraising will occur to raise \$10,405 of which half has already been raised. Contact Susan Brodesser at be_still@verizon.net for info

Landmine Detector Fundraiser: Birmingham is once again selling paperwhite, daffodil and amaryllis flower bulb gift boxes in support the purchase of a landmine detector. Order by October 23. Contact Rebecca Zug at rzug@wilmingtonfriends.org. More info here: <https://www.birminghamfriends.org/about-9>

Concord Quarter is continuing to look for a part time coordinator. All inquiries for job description and salary information should be sent to concordqmsearch@gmail.com

Calendar of Events

- Sept 30 10:30 am to 4 pm** **23rd Annual Bucks Peace Fair:** on the grounds of the Buckingham Meeting and Buckingham Friends School in Lahaska, PA, and features local crafts, artwork, traditional and vegetarian food, kids games, a dunking tank and Bucks area non-profits whose focus is peace, community service, healthy living and the environment.
<https://www.quakersbucks.org/events/2023-bucks-quarter-peace-fair>
- October 1 3-4:30 pm** **World Quaker Day Event at Kendal at Longwood:** George Lakey speaking on "Facing Polarization then and now; The Quaker challenge in the 17th century and today" Followed by a singalong with George at the keyboard! GPS for Kendal at Longwood is: 1109 E. Baltimore Pike Park in parking lot #6
- October 4 10:30 am to 12 pm** **Concord Quarter's Working Group on Aging Concerns via Zoom:** Meetings are open to anyone interested in aging concerns in the Quarter. Contact the coordinator email address for more information and the Zoom link at concordquarter@pym.org
- October 5 7-8:30 pm** **Threshing Session on PYM's Advocacy Policy:** Presiding Clerk Melissa Rycroft has called a threshing session for PYM on the Advocacy Policy. The policy affirms Quaker political advocacy but it also affirms that as a non-profit PYM and groups within PYM are not to lobby by the IRS definition. Register here:
<https://www.pym.org/event/threshing-session-on-pyms-advocacy-policy/>
- October 8 11:30 am to 12:30 pm** **Forced Removal of the Lenape** - Birmingham MM presents a webinar by Curtis Zunigha of the Delaware Tribe of Indians in Oklahoma, and Co-Founder and Co-Director of the Lenape Center, New York. Mr. Zunigha is a specialist in Delaware/Lenape culture. He describes the history of westward removal of the Lenape spanning four centuries Join virtually or join us at the meetinghouse to watch together. Get Zoom link: lauren.buckalew@gmail.com
- October 14 11:00 am to 3:00 pm** **Middle School Friends Trip to Highland Orchards** - (grades 6 to 8) gather at Highland Orchards in West Chester, PA for a fun fall farm day! We will meet up at Highland at 11 AM and pick up from the Orchard is 3 PM. Middle School Friends and adult facilitators will take a scenic ride out to the corn maze for a friendly Quaker race! \$20 fee
<https://www.pym.org/event/msf-to-highland-orchards/>
- October 19 7 - 8:30 pm** **Called Concord Quarterly Meeting on Small Meeting Support** - Participants at our July Meeting for Business requested a called meeting to share ideas and resources to strengthen and support small monthly meetings and to perhaps lighten the load across the quarter regarding committee work. This will be a Zoom session at this link.
<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81067277010?pwd=qnqd0tbjt8eyTUJTkRVCX6i0robaf.1>
- Oct 21 3pm to Oct 22 1:30pm** **Middle School and High School Friends - Overnight at Arch Street Meetinghouse** - Middle School Friends (grades 6 to 8) and Young Friends (grades 9 to 12), join us for a spooky, late October gathering and overnight at Arch Street Meetinghouse! There will be opportunities for separate age group programming, as well as some time for all to gather in one big community. More info at <https://www.pym.org/event/overnight-at-arch-street/>
- October 21 1 to 5 pm** **PYM Outreach & Communications Thread Gathering** - at Downingtown Meeting. A gathering for the Outreach & Communications Thread, with a focus on membership development. Panel discussion, Outreach Fair, Planning session and Worship Sharing. Please register at <https://www.pym.org/event/outreach-comms-thread/>
- October 22 9:45am to 1:00pm** **Concord Quarterly Meeting at Westtown - Intergenerational Worship in the Beloved Community** - An intergenerational worship with a discussion afterwards on its benefits and how to implement.
<https://concordquarter.org/nextqm-pastqm/2023/qm-at-westtown>
- October 29 1:00 pm** **Concord Quarter Planning Committee and Meeting for Business via Zoom and in person at Westtown:** Open to all interested in the activities and workings of Concord Quarter. Contact the Coordinator with questions and for the Zoom link at concordquarter@pym.org. More info will be posted at <https://concordquarter.org> closer to the event
- Nov 11** **Continuing Sessions of PYM: at Arch Street Meeting House and online - 8:30am-5pm**

Concord Quarterly Meeting Zoom/In-Person at Westtown Meeting October 22, 2023



Zoom Link: <https://westtown.zoom.us/j/91776460909> (pw= wmm-mfw)

Important Note: In an experiment to make Quarterly Meeting more accessible, we will be holding QM Meeting for Business on October 29 at 1 PM via Zoom and in person at Westtown Meeting

- 9:45-10:00 am Sign in
- 10:10-10:30 Hymn Sing
- 10:30 – 11:30 **Intergenerational Meeting.** All are welcome to sit on quilts or benches in the center of the meeting room.
- 11:40 – 12:30 **Program: Small Discussion Groups** around the topic implementing Intergenerational Meeting and how to strengthen our Children's Meeting programs.
- 12:30 – 1:00 Light Refreshments



Intergenerational Worship in the Beloved Community Providing an Environment to Nurture All

Come, bring your children! Bring their favorite toy, blanket/quilt, and pillow! Westtown has been using Intergenerational Worship with Faith & Play for almost a year and our parents and children love it! Our whole community loves it! Research has proven children grow in their knowledge and understanding of Quakerism by participating regularly in Meeting for Worship. They are much more likely to become active members as adults. During this Quarterly Meeting you will learn about Intergenerational Worship by experiencing it and then discussing it afterwards. This program is for all ages of Friends because intergenerational means "everything is for everyone." Children and families need accompaniment of all generations together. Come and experience this unique way that Westtown has grown their Meeting community and learn how to bring it to your Meeting.

Supervision and community building for children will be provided, outside, weather permitting during the discussion time from 11:40 to 12:30

For more info, email concordquarter@pym.org
Event Website: <https://concordquarter.org/nextqm-pastqm/2023/qm-at-westtown>
Westtown Meeting is located at 215 Friends Meeting Ln. West Chester, PA 19382
Parking near entrance of E School Lane and Shady Grove Way

Concord Quarterly Meeting at Birmingham July 23, 2023, Minutes of Combined Business Meeting and Planning Committee

Opening Worship - The clerk asked the meeting to approve Rich Ailes as the temporary recording clerk - Meeting approved

Welcome to Newcomers – The clerk asked if there were anyone new to the Meeting for Business who would like to introduce themselves. As no newcomers were present the meeting proceeded.

Monthly Meeting Count was taken - Birmingham, Concord, Goshen, Middletown, West Chester, Westtown, Willistown, Wilmington. All Meetings were represented

Approval of Agenda The agenda as presented was approved.

Approval of Minutes from April 30, 2023, at West Chester was requested. These minutes were approved

The Hickman Report (attached) - Meeting accepted with gratitude the report from the The Hickman presented by Martha Boston who is on the Board of Directors. It was mentioned that the older Hickman residence eventually needs a complete rehab requiring the moving of current residents to other quarters temporarily. One Friend praised the Hickman for the care given to her father. One Friend needs to talk to someone about some issues regarding a particular interview experience. Marty Boston offered to reach out to this Friend.

Joys and Challenges Report from Concord Meeting (attached) Elizabeth Varley - Meeting accepted with gratitude the report from Concord Meeting presented by member Elizabeth Varley. Elizabeth noted that the Spicebush Montessori school is currently using the former women's meeting room inside the Meetinghouse.

Nominating Committee report was presented by Rich Ailes - Nominating Committee brings forward the name of Melinda Wenner Bradley of West Chester Meeting as the new assistant clerk for Concord Quarter. Term begins July 23, 2023. Melinda will rise to clerkship of the Quarter on July 1, 2024, for two years, and the current clerk, Debbie Murray-Sheppard will then rotate back to assistant clerk for one year. **Meeting approved the appointment with gratitude.**

The current members of the Quarter Nominating Committee are Julie Senko (Birmingham), Lisa Vosburg (West Chester), Peter Lane (Westtown) and clerk Rich Ailes (Middletown) – Rich reminded us of the current need for a Recording Clerk and also by next July 1, a new Treasurer.

Climate Action Working Group (CAWG): Acceptance of Epistle for Annual Sessions - Meeting approved accepting the CAWG epistle presented at the last Quarterly Meeting in April after the following meetings approved; Birmingham, Middletown, West Chester, Westtown, and Wilmington. The clerk will send this approval to the EcoJustice Working Group and the General Secretary of PYM

Proposal that the Climate Action Working Group be laid down: Paula Kline, the clerk of CAWG, proposed laying down the working group after a successful series of Climate action events since its inception, as there does not appear to be someone to fill a leadership role. Friends are deeply appreciative of the work of the working group. Peter Lane may be able to step forward to help in this role. **It was proposed that the Friends gathered should return to their Monthly Meetings to ask if someone is led to step forward to provide leadership and revisit the issue at the next Quarterly Meeting in October. Meeting approved.** A minute of appreciation for Paula Kline's work with this committee was proposed **and Meeting approved enthusiastically.**

Treasurer's Reports (attached) - Meeting approved accepting the year-end treasurer's report provided by Charles Spadoni, the Quarterly Meeting treasurer. A question was asked regarding reduced expenses for the coordinator position. The budget will remain the same and if there is a surplus at the end of the fiscal year a decision will be made at that time as to what to do with the surplus.

A concern was raised regarding membership with the suggestion that money be spent to try and increase membership. A concern was also raised regarding consolidating some smaller Meetings because of the expense and energy involved. Some damage may be done to our whole Quaker community if we have too many tiny Meetings. Friends entered into a rather deep discussion on this concern with the recognition that the concern should be held and considered seriously. A proposal was suggested for a called meeting in early October that invites leadership members, including the clerks, of each meeting to discuss this concern. This meeting will be scheduled by the CQM clerk. **This proposal was approved.**

Melinda Wenner Bradley noted two relevant thread gatherings at PYM coming up; one on outreach and membership development in October, and one in January with a focus on Property issues.

Outreach & Communications Thread Gathering - Saturday, October 21, 1:00 - 5:00 pm @ Downingtown Meeting

A gathering for the Outreach & Communications Thread, with a focus on membership development. Meetings are encouraged to send a "team" of 2-3 folks to this gathering and set a date for follow-up discussion as a meeting!

Governance & Stewardship Thread Gathering - Saturday, January 27, 2024 @ Arch Street Meeting House

A gathering for the Governance & Stewardship Thread, with a focus on property and burial ground concerns.

Coordinator Update A discussion ensued regarding the coordinator position. Debbie Murray-Sheppard said one person is considering the position. Three other people have considered but have declined.

Reflections on last joint Quarterly Meeting – There was great attendance (over 80) and Christie Duncan-Tessmer's program on welcoming new people, using the strategies of Ikea, was well received. One successful strategy for Zoom participants was allowing open access for Zoom attendees instead of having people admitted by the host.

Planning for Quarterly Meeting at Westtown, October 22, 2023 - Peter Lane explained that Program plans have not been made, however the Meeting is under the weight of this and will respond soon. Their session usually has music at 10:10 AM with Worship from 10:30 to 11:30. Rich Ailes noted that he needs information regarding program and schedule by September 15 so that the publicity can go out in a timely manner.

A concern was raised about splitting out the program from Meeting for Business as we have been doing for the past two Quarterly Meetings. There were those attending who wanted to return to the traditional format as well as those interested in continuing the new format. It was proposed that we try one more time with this format to see if more people attend both the program and the business session. **Meeting approved doing the new format one more time with the program piece on the October 22nd at Westtown and the business meeting on October 29th at 1 PM at Westtown.**

Newsletter Articles suggested for the October newsletter: Westtown Meeting experience with a get together at the lake with a West Chester's Bethel AME Church. Article on the need for CAWG leadership. Support for Paula Kline's project in Mexico. Consolidating smaller Meetings and the rationale for that. Report back on Annual Sessions. Montessori School at Concord Meeting

Future CQM Family Events - Debbie Murray-Sheppard noted the following events probably need the assistance of a coordinator: Harvest event in October and the Parents Morning Off in late November. The Square Dance that occurs in February should happen as the event is easily organized by volunteers.

Reading of Minutes for Approval - Rich Ailes (acting Recording Clerk) Meeting approved the action items with some corrections

Second Count of Meetings in Attendance - Rich Ailes (acting Recording Clerk) All meetings accounted for except for Concord Meeting at the close of Meeting for Business.

Respectfully submitted by Rich Ailes (Acting Recording Clerk)

Attached Reports -----

The Hickman Friends Senior Community of West Chester - Annual Report to Concord Quarterly Meeting - July, 2023

The Hickman Friends Senior Community of West Chester is pleased to bring this report to the Quarter particularly this year as we have officially lifted all Covid related restrictions and have been awarded a "trifecta" of recognition in the year 2022. In September, our Executive Director received the Administrator of the Year award from our State advocate PALA (Pennsylvania Assisted Living Association). This prestigious award is in appreciation of an enduring commitment to seniors and the AL/PCH industry in Pennsylvania. In October, The Hickman was also recognized as "The Best Personal Care Home of Chester County" as nominated by the readers of The Daily Local News. Lastly, one of our Hickman caregivers was chosen as the Apprentice of the Year from our National advocacy group Argentum for her commitment to lifelong learning. These are huge successes for a small Quaker inspired community emerging from one of the hardest periods in our documented history.

The last three years have demonstrated how a constantly shifting environment can dramatically alter decision making and operations in a niche environment such as ours. Understanding that we are especially vulnerable as a single site non-profit community we have challenged ourselves to be creative and think creatively in terms of inflation, staffing and the overall demographic change in our population. We understand that these will be perennial issues and we must continue to think strategically to address immediate and future conditions.

Despite challenges, I am happy to report that The Hickman has recognized an operational surplus for the first time in the last 5 years. Operational restructuring along with strong financial oversight and a realistic forecast have yielded positive net assets after interest and depreciation.

Leading to this stabilization, we internally focused on opportunities that were presented through our local community and advocacy groups. One alliance was with Argentum who with the Pa. Department of Labor structured an apprenticeship for frontline workers in healthcare. Through this initiative, we have enrolled both incumbent and new workers into a career ladder program enhancing their skill set through tiered learning and incremental pay increases. This process not only enhances education which translates to quality of services but provides for greater job satisfaction and succession planning internally.

We continue partnerships with West Chester University, Widener University, Harcum College, and Fortis School of Nursing in providing a clinical site and service-learning opportunities for local students. Our community bond is strengthened by these partnerships and our residents benefit from additional 1:1 time which provides purposeful outcomes for both participants. In 2022 we calculated over 2500 hours of student service.

Additionally, our kitchen has begun providing nutritious meals to homebound seniors in our area. This collaboration with Meals on Wheels Chester County is providing a modest income stream but on a large scale expanded our outreach and gives the ability to highlight our outstanding culinary team.

Lastly, with understanding of the challenges that present in the current economic climate, we are proud to report that our annual increase passed on to our residents came in at 6%. Social Security gave its largest cost of living increase to date which was 8.7%. We were able to keep our impact low amidst the struggles of the market. With this in mind, we are analyzing future trends as the "Boomers" enter our target demographic and are expected to have far less in terms of savings and retirement planning than the Greatest Generation.

Thoughtful strategic conversations will continue between Board and Leadership to understand the best path forward for The Hickman to ensure viability for many years to come.

We approach this next period of change with optimism and intention, fully understanding that our industry is rapidly changing and highly competitive but remains in great demand. Given this knowledge, we recognize the investment of time necessary to develop a larger group of supporters and donors to assist us to position for the future.

We would like to take this opportunity to recognize the contributions of J. Dean O'Bannion of Willistown Meeting. Dean was recently honored by the Board with the Commitment to Caring Award which is an acknowledgment of his leadership and advocacy for The Hickman over the last 23 years of service. Dean recently retired and has relocated to South Carolina. We are grateful he has agreed to continue to serve on our Finance Committee. One positive outcome of the Covid pandemic is we have had to learn how to successfully conduct business via videotelephony software.

In sharing this report to the Quarter, we would like to acknowledge those individuals and Meetings who continue to support our efforts through financial contributions. Additionally, our work is strengthened through the staunch support of the following Concord Quarter Friends on our 2022 Board of Directors: Betsy Stratton from Middletown Meeting; Marty Boston from Birmingham Meeting; Evelyn Brownlee and Chenda Davison from Wilmington Meeting; Dean O'Bannion (retired) and Diana Hodgson from Willistown Meeting; These Concord Quarter Friends are joined by Matt Krasney of Falsington Meeting, and Hank Schellenger of Valley Meeting. We would welcome the participation of other Friends who are interested in our mission and future and are able to deeply engage in the work of governance at a time of significance in our future.

In closing, the next year will continue to bring about change, and another year of welcoming new residents into our service. We are grateful and appreciative of the support and encouragement from Concord Quarter Friends.

Submitted by Martha Boston, Member of the Board of Directors, on behalf of Betsy Stratton Chair, Board of Directors

Editor's Note: Minutes here are abridged. Concord Meeting Joys & Challenges Report from this Meeting for Business can be found at <https://concordquarter.org/documents/?category=Minutes> For unredacted Treasurer's report please email concordquarter@pym.org

Concord Quarterly Meeting Newsletter
Volume 20 Issue 4, October 2023

Rich Ailes, Editor
310 Park Avenue
Swarthmore, PA 19081

Clerk: Debbie Murray-Sheppard
Asst. Clerk: Melinda Wenner Bradley
Recording Clerk:
Treasurer: Charles Spadoni
Acting Coordinator: concordquarter@pym.org
Requested

Address Service

Concord Quarter Meetings

Appoquinimink Preparative (Under Care of Wilmington MM)
Birmingham
Concord
Goshen
Middletown
West Chester
Westtown
Willistown
Wilmington

Editor: Rich Ailes

Published: January, April, July and October

Phone: 610-543-7321

Submissions Due: March 17, June 17, September 17 and December 17

Staff E-mail: concordquarter@pym.org