

Concord Quarterly News

of the Religious Society of Friends

Concord Quarterly Meeting Newsletter Volume 21, Issue 2, April 2024

Committee Work (Ed. Note: Our next Quarterly Meeting at Wilmington will highlight the work of the American Friends Service Committee.)

AFSC – Working for Peace, Working for Justice

American Quakers founded the American Friends Service Committee in 1917 to create opportunities for conscientious objectors to World War I to serve by aiding civilian victims rather than joining the military (or going to prison). When Europeans faced widespread hunger, AFSC provided meals for up to 1 million children a day, on both sides. It supported Appalachian coal miners in 1922 with food and livelihood training when they protested their dire working conditions by walking out of the mines. After the Spanish Civil War and World War II, AFSC provided life-saving assistance to war victims, including Japanese Americans who were forced into internment camps.



AFSC began its anti-racism work in the 1920's. In 1959, AFSC arranged for Martin Luther King and his wife to visit India to meet Gandhi. An AFSC representative accompanied them throughout their visit. In 1963, AFSC gained permission from Dr. King to publish and distribute 50,000 copies of his "Letter from Birmingham Jail." That same year AFSC nominated him for the Nobel Peace Prize. The AFSC noted that working with Dr. King and being part of the civil rights movement here in the United States played a big role in the organization's understanding and practical application of nonviolence. <https://Kinginstitute.stanford.edu/>

AFSC shared the Nobel Prize in 1947 with the British Friends Service Council for their "silent help from the nameless to the nameless." In accepting the Nobel Prize on December 12, 1947, Henry Joel Cadbury, the AFSC chairman, spoke with deep conviction that Quakers

"believe that war is merely a convention of social habit, and we believe that these conventions of social habit are subject to change, as much as we believe in the transformation of individuals. Christianity and experience teach us that men and customs can be transformed. We believe that war is a habit, a curious habit, a somewhat accidental habit that men have adopted, although in other areas they have found different means for pursuing similar ends. ... War is an extreme expression of anarchy. That does not mean that wars are not waged for just ends. It means that we do not believe that it is the only way to achieve those just ends. We believe that means are not consistent with the ends, and the better the ends for which men fight, the less moral, the less effective is the method of war. So on this point, the Quaker is not an unrealistic perfectionist, but a practical moralist who believes that this problem can be solved by other means..."

<https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/peace/1947/friends-committee/lecture>

AFSC has not abandoned its principles or rested on its laurels. History shows that injustices are human-made and can be changed. In its 2020-2030 Strategic Plan, AFSC acknowledges the interconnectedness of our world as well as the urgent need to resist the many forces that fuel inequality, oppression, and violence. AFSC has identified three strategic goals:

Just and sustainable peace – seeks to change the mindsets that prioritize militarized approaches over peaceful and people centered solutions.

Just Economies – promotes sustainable economic systems that benefit everyone, rather than those that favor the wealthy and exacerbate inequality and environmental crisis.

Just response to forced displacement and migration – challenges forced displacement and champions the dignity and rights of all people.

The 2020-2030 AFSC Strategic Plan is well grounded in mission, vision, and Quaker values:

Vision: A just, peaceful, and sustainable world free of violence, inequality, and oppression.

Mission: Guided by the Quaker belief in the divine light of each person, AFSC works with communities and partners worldwide to challenge unjust systems and promote lasting peace.

Values: We respect the equality, worth, and dignity of all people and regard no one as our enemy.

We seek right relationship with all life on a sustainable Earth.

We accept that our understanding of truth is incomplete and seek ever deeper insights from lived experience.

We trust the Spirit to guide discernment of our collective actions.

We assert the transforming power of love and active nonviolence as a force for justice and reconciliation. Peaceful ends can only be achieved through peaceful means. AFSC seeks to forge connections from the local to the global level by using methods of:

Convening – bringing people together who not ordinarily meet to encourage an open exchange of ideas, to build trust, forge partnerships, reduce conflict and build bridges for peace.

Organizing – building power through collective action by facilitating grassroots community organizing and partnering with dozens of civil society and community groups worldwide.

Advocacy – advocating boldly and tirelessly with impacted people and allies, while also working to influence government and corporate policies to bring about systemic change.

Research – conducting research grounded in wisdom, knowledge, and experiences of those harmed by injustice.



On Sunday, April 28, 2024, at Wilmington Monthly Meeting, Lewis Webb, Jr. will share AFSC's current peacebuilding work. Lewis is the United States Peacebuilding Director, responsible for leading AFSC's work towards a future free of militarism and violence. AFSC works to address the root causes of violence—and transform systems to ensure just, sustainable peace for all. He

oversees work to build conditions for peace and to foster vibrant and open civic space and commitment to human dignity and rights.

Lewis previously led AFSC's New York-based healing justice work for over 12 years and since 2017 has been the coordinator of the organization's national healing justice network. Since joining AFSC, Lewis has built an advocacy program that focuses on sentencing and the school-to-prison pipeline, and established a growing youth advocacy training program. Lewis holds degrees in philosophy and law and has many years of experience as an educator. He is based in Philadelphia. – *Debbie Murray-Sheppard - Wilmington Meeting*

"We are a people that follow after those things that make for peace, love, and unity; it is our desire that others' feet may walk in the same and do deny and bear our testimony against all strife and wars." Margaret Fell

And now a Word from Our New Coordinator!

I am very thankful for this opportunity to serve as the new Coordinator for CQM. I have been warmly welcomed by a group of very dedicated and caring people who serve the Quarter in many different volunteer roles and capacities. I am especially grateful to Rich Ailes who is patiently sharing his expertise with me and helping me to gain competence in the many needed areas.



Also, Debbie Murry-Sheppard, who is shepherding the QM Planning Committee as clerk and has been encouraging and supportive to me as I move into this new position. Charlie Spadoni has also reached out and continues to offer support as have others on the CQ Planning committee. I have also been offered any support I might need from Lynne Piersol who served many years in this capacity. So we are off to a good start and I am sure I will be continuing to call on many of you periodically as needed. Thank you.

My history among Friends in this Quarter started in the mid 1980's when I was traveling among Friends in the PYM area, speaking about the message of early Friends and its impact on my life. During this time, one of the Meetings that invited me to visit was Middletown Meeting. Middletown has a long history of Friends who traveled in religious service and also spoke regularly from the facing bench in Meeting. I was so warmly welcomed and

David Singleton, AFSC Board Member

David Singleton is a member of Wilmington Monthly Meeting and an AFSC Board Member and its current Treasurer. He grew up in the Purchase Monthly Meeting in West Harrison, New York, which his family joined after immigrating from Europe in 1681, seeking religious freedom. He remembers (with a chuckle) his mother telling him he was related to at least half the people in the graveyard which surrounds the meeting house.

He joined the AFSC Board in April 2018, after indicating his willingness to serve by responding to a survey. He has extensive experience serving on the boards of both Wilmington Friends School and his alma mater, Swarthmore College, as well numerous other non-profits. Professionally he has served in management roles in city, county and municipal government and spent most of his career in investment banking.

David would like all friends to know that AFSC has been the primary force for Quaker activism since its founding in 1917. It provides an opportunity to put faith and principles into action, through both direct action and financial support. Although a relatively small organization, AFSC has had a large impact both here in the United States and around the world. One of the benefits of having won the Nobel Prize in 1947 is that AFSC can nominate future winners. It takes this opportunity seriously and is committed to raising the profile of other peacebuilders through this process.

David believes AFSC lives its commitment to nonviolence and its belief in the transformative power of love to overcome conflict and oppression. He admires the intellectual leadership AFSC provides in demonstrating new ways to bring governments and people together across fractured lines of communication and interaction.

Why I go to Friends General Conference Gathering

In 2000 I attended my first FGC Gathering in Rochester, NY. My daughter had been campaigning to go, and it was the last year she could be in the High School Program (which got rave reviews from her friends), AND I had grown up in the Rochester Friends Meeting. I took a workshop on spiritual growth where we had prayer partners and shared deeply with each

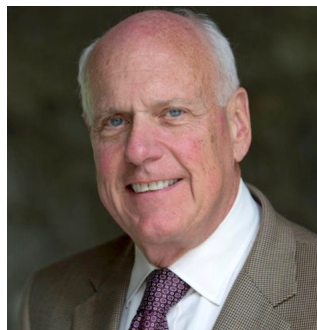
encouraged by Friends there that I started going back regularly and eventually joined in membership in the early 1990's.

Friends at Middletown certainly do not all have the same beliefs, understandings, and experiences of faith, however there is an openness to listen deeply to one another and a recognition of our common need for a deeper experience of God. For me, coming from a life changing encounter with the unique Christ-centered faith of early Friends, I felt able to share openly from my experience as well as gain needed insights, guidance, and support from Friends there. It felt like coming home. My wife and I were married at Middletown Meeting in 1990. The Meeting was extremely supportive to us as we grew as a family. We now have two grown-up children. I continue to remain active in Middletown Meeting and serve on the Worship and Care committee.

Last spring, I retired from full time teaching at HMS School for Children with Cerebral Palsy in West Philadelphia. I have spent most of my professional life teaching there and continue to work there part time. After retiring, I spent the Spring Semester at Pendle Hill as the Kenneth Carroll Scholar, working on my Quaker-related memoir that I hope to complete this year.

Well enough about me! I am looking forward to traveling to the different Meetings in our Quarter and getting to know each of you a little better. Please let me know if there are ways I can assist you in the ongoing work of your Meetings and our Quarter.

– Chris Stern – Middletown Monthly Meeting



AFSC's three strategic goals speak directly to his Quaker values in bringing people of faith together to challenge injustice and build conditions for lasting peace around the world. Its current emergency response in Gaza includes providing food, safe drinking water, hygiene kits for women, girls and seniors, and recreational activities for children. Because it has established relationships with surrounding Arab nations, AFSC has been able to move supplies into

Gaza through Egypt and Jordan. Its work is not in support of or in alliance with any political body, but rather seeks to bring humanitarian aid to those who are suffering the horrible consequences of the political conflict.

When asked how being a Quaker has influenced him in his many endeavors, David noted that he learned, even as a child, how important it is to listen, especially to those with whom he might not share a common perspective. The openness to the thoughts, concerns and experiences of others is important to finding truth and identifying a way forward beyond conflict. He has always sought to resolve differences through consensus building, even in arenas where a simple majority vote might have been the most expedient way to move forward. Holding fast to seeing that of God in everyone, and taking time for reflection, has been important to him.

David demonstrates that it is possible to hold fast to Quaker ideals in service to the greater good. His continuing journey of revelation is an inspiration. We are very happy to call him Friend!

– Debbie Murray-Sheppard – Wilmington Monthly Meeting

The 2024 FGC Gathering, “Rooted in Story”, will be held at Haverford College in Haverford, PA, from June 30 – July 6, 2024.



other. I felt so spiritually nurtured that I was able to take a big step in my personal life. We planned to go back the following year.

I've attended nearly every Gathering since, returning home spiritually nurtured, and strengthened with new resources and new friends. The workshops I have taken included dance, art,

spiritual practices, writing, couples' enrichment and more. Some years I chose a topic just to nurture myself; other years I learned things I could bring back to my meeting. There are usually a number of workshops on social issues and some on Quaker history.

There are always awesome evening plenary speakers – this year they include Ayesha Imani, a Philadelphia Quaker, member of Germantown Meeting and Ujima Friends Meeting. who once spoke at a Concord Quarterly Meeting, and tom kunesh, a member of the Standing Rock Lakota and attendee at Nashville Friends Meeting, along with two others. The concert is Emma's Revolution! There is a Bible half hour program every day. There is excellent programming for children, youth and young adults. Children have programming in the mornings and evenings, so parents are free to attend their workshops and the plenaries. High school students have their own housing and programs.

Afternoons have opportunities to browse in the bookstore, hear other speakers, sing, worship, play during intergenerational activities, and explore other interest groups – or simply take a nap! And there are more activities later in the evening – folk dancing and movies, for example (if you can stay up that late). If you are more interested in attending online, there will be an opportunity to

Visiting the Lorraine Motel – The National Civil Rights Museum

On April 4, 1968 at 6:01 PM Central Time, Martin Luther King was shot with a Remington rifle bullet that brutally ripped through his body, knocking him to the floor, unconscious, never to regain consciousness again. King had been standing on the balcony of the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, Tennessee, conversing with friends and colleagues who were assisting him in his support for the Black sanitation workers of Memphis who were on strike for better working conditions.

The Lorraine Motel had been purchased by Walter Bailey in 1945 who renamed the 1925 building after his wife and operated it as an upscale lodging that catered to a Black clientele in the Jim Crow South. It was a favorite spot for King whenever he was in town. During the 60s among its guests were musicians going to Stax Records, including Ray Charles, Lionel Hampton, Aretha Franklin, Ethel Waters, Otis Redding, the Staple Singers, and Wilson Pickett. The motel closed down in the late 1980s in deteriorating condition.

Prominent African American officials in the early 1980s including D'Army Bailey, A.W. Willis Jr., and Charles Scruggs began raising funds and awareness to save the Lorraine Motel location as a memorial to King's assassination. Their organization was able to purchase the Lorraine in 1988 at a public auction and set about to developing a museum that would highlight King's legacy. The museum opened to the public on September 28, 1991. In the intervening years since, the National Civil Rights Museum has increased in complexity and sophistication and come to highlight the formative years of the Civil Rights struggle of Black Americans, going back to the era of the forced removal of enslaved people brought to the Americas from Africa.

attend evening programs and the Bible Half Hour along with the Friends of Color retreat, all with a pay as you wish option.

I love going and meeting up with new and old f(F)riends from all across North America, learning new things, being spiritually nurtured and having fun. The Six Degrees of Connection often end up being one or two, as I sit down with a new person, and discover that we have something in common in addition to being Quaker or Quaker friendly.

This year Gathering's theme is "Rooted in Story" at Haverford College from June 30-July 6. Registration will open in early April. Although it may seem expensive, there is financial assistance available from FGC in the form of work grants and scholarships. Regular fees cover all programming, housing and meals and this year you probably don't need a plane ticket! And you might be able to commute. Often monthly meetings also have funds to help. General information can be found on the website <https://www.fgcquaker.org/fgcprograms/the-gathering/> Feel free to be in touch with me if you have questions about Gathering! lynne@lhptangleart.com I hope to see you there!
– Lynne Piersol – Swarthmore Meeting

Go to <https://pym.org/news> for more tributes to The Gathering.

My wife, Shirley, and I did a stopover in Memphis to visit the museum during our tour of the South this past February and March. What we found was an extraordinary display, through video, audio, story cards and photos, of that horrific part of US history where African Americans, by law, were not only denied their civil rights but also denied the basic human rights of freedom and equality. To tour all the galleries which stretched from the transportation of enslaved people to the colonies, through to the 1963 March on Washington and up to King's assassination took us 3 hours. The website publicity told us it would take 2 hours, but it was impossible for us to absorb all the detailed material provided in that time. Both of us found a humbling experience of knowledge inadequacy, as we went through each segment of the struggles exhibited.

The exhibits end at a viewing of the room which King and his friend, Ralph

Abernathy shared the night of his murder. The room is unchanged and viewed through a large glass window. There was a line of museum attendees, interracial, slowly and solemnly passing by, lingering at the sight, no doubt moved like us at the pathos portrayed there. We came out of the museum shaken and changed as to what we'd found. We not only had a more deeply held respect for Dr. King, but also an indelible awareness of the African American struggle in our country. We recognized that the bullet from that Remington rifle took the life of one of the most important world figures of Black liberation and one who has become the most revered for his dedication to non-violence and direct action. But we also understood the human stream which King had entered into was monumental and navigated by a people who had a fearless dedication to their own self-worth in their quest for dignity and freedom. – Rich Ailes – Middletown Monthly Meeting
<https://www.civilrights museum.org/>



Left: Bayard Rustin at his 1944 arraignment for Draft Refusal. Right: The women workers arraigned for supporting the Montgomery Bus Boycott in 1956.

Readers who would prefer a paper copy of this newsletter can request one by sending an email to our coordinator at concordquarter@pym.org. Please provide a snail mail address along with your request. Thank you.

Concord Quarter April 2024 Announcements & Calendar of Events

Announcements

The PYM Ministry and Care Committee invites Meetings to submit their **Spiritual State of the Meeting Reports for 2023**. Submission window has been extended to April 29. <https://www.pym.org/state-of-the-meeting/submit-a-report/>

The Monthly Meeting of Friends of Philadelphia (Arch Street) supports necessitous Friends through The John Martin Trust. The requests must come from your Meeting, usually from the clerk of your Care Committee. Only requests for necessitous Friends and active attenders are considered. You may learn more information and acquire application forms by going to www.archstreetfriends.org/jmt

Draft minutes of our January 2024 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 April 22, 2024.

Calendar of Events

- April 1**
4:30 pm – 6:30 pm
Lecture and Discussion: Indigenous Teachings. Presented by Prof. Robin Wall Kimmerer, the author of the bestselling collection of essays *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants*. LPAC Pearson-Hall Theatre @ Swarthmore College. This event is free and open to the public.
<https://www.swarthmore.edu/cooper-series/indigenous-teachings>
- April 1**
7:30 pm
Pendle Hill: Pursuing a Just Peace in Israel/Palestine: What Can Quakers Bring to the Table? A First Monday Pendle Hill Lecture with Steve Chase. Free and open to the public. Registration required.
<https://pendlehill.org/events/pursuing-a-just-peace/>
- April 2**
7:00 pm
Zoom Presentation - Election Violence Prevention series: with Emily Provance (NYYM)
<https://www.pym.org/event/election-violence-prevention-series/2024-04-02/>
- April 3**
10:30am-12
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
- April 3**
7 – 8:30 pm
Driving into the Sunset Years sponsored by the CQM Working Group on Aging Concerns - Are you an older adult thinking about transitioning to a non-driving lifestyle or a younger adult concerned about your parents' driving status? Join us for a presentation by driving analyst Susie Touchinsky, OTR/L. You'll also hear from 3 Kendal Residents who have made the transition from driving to non-driving lifestyles as well receive a list of transportation strategies to make a transition easier. Go here to register for Zoom link: <https://concordquarter.org/aging-concerns/2024/older-adult-driving>
- April 4**
5:30 pm to 8:30 pm
Friends in Business Spring Gathering at The Arch Street Meetinghouse. Spiritually Grounded Long-Term Thinking in Business Practice. A Conversation with Benjamin Camp, Team Leader, and Realtor. For more information, <https://secure.qgiv.com/for/PYMEvents/event/friendsinbusinessspringgathering/>
- April 6**
8:30 am – 11:00 am
Wilmington Friends School 275th Anniversary Community Service Project. As part of this on-going celebration, you are invited to participate in this service project. Rooted in our history and practice of Quaker humanitarian service, we have chosen to reaffirm our commitment to addressing food insecurity and hunger in Delaware with the goal of packaging 27,500 shelf-stable meals for Delaware families.
<https://www.wilmingtonfriends.org/news-detail?pk=1571742&fromId=235693>
- April 6**
10:00 am – 2:00 pm
PYM Young Friends Program for grades 8-12: Responding to what we are hearing from current PYM youth, we are seeking to create a program that will focus on getting to know other teens, building community, and having fun together! For more information, <https://www.pym.org/event/pym-young-friends-new-program/2024-04-06/>
- April 12 – April 14**
Young Adult Friends 2024 Spring Retreat at Camp Onas: “Welcoming Your Inner Child” For more information: <https://www.pym.org/event/young-adult-friends-spring-2024-retreat-welcoming-your-inner-child-at-camp-onas/>
Registration closes on April 5
- April 12**
7 pm – 8:30 pm
PYM Threshing Session on our Meeting's Structures on Zoom: PYM presiding clerk Melissa Rycroft invites all Friends to join her for a threshing session on exploring how our meeting structures meet Friends' and seekers' needs for their Quaker home. <https://www.pym.org/event/threshing-session-on-meeting-structures-needs/>
- April 13**
1:00 pm – 6:00 pm
Pendle Hill Program - Active Peace: Breathing and Living the Peace Testimony in Times of Unrest. An on-campus afternoon exploring living Kingian nonviolence in community with Dwight Dunston.
<https://pendlehill.org/events/active-peace-breathing-and-living-the-peace-testimony-in-times-of-unrest/>
- April 28**
8:30 am - 1:15 pm
Concord Quarterly Meeting for Business & Program: AFSC – Working for Peace, Working for Justice - At Wilmington Meeting. Lewis Webb, Jr., AFSC's Director of US Peace Building, will share his work with us. There will be a full children's program and a Faith & Play activity provided during worship. For childcare during Meeting for Business contact the coordinator before April 26. <https://concordquarter.org/nextqm-pastqm/2024/qm-at-wilmington>
- May 5**
1:00 pm
Concord Quarter Planning Committee: In Person at The Hickman and on Zoom. Open to all folks interested in the workings of the Quarter. Contact concordquarter@pym.org for Zoom link

Concord Quarterly Meeting In-Person/Zoom at Wilmington Meeting April 28, 2024



<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89634274927?pwd=OjdYT2JERko3VFMydHRhWFBxc2diZz09>

- 8:30-9:45 am Concord Quarter Meeting for Business
- 10:00 – 11:00 Meeting for Worship (Faith & Play story about Bayard Rustin to begin worship)
- 11:00 – 11:15 Introductions and brief break
- 11:15 – 12:30 Program: AFSC: Working for Peace, Working for Justice
- 12:30 – 1:15 Lunch Provided – Please bring a dessert to share.



**American Friends Service Committee:
Working for Peace,
Working for Justice**

For more than 100 years, American Friends Service Committee has engaged in Quaker action for a just world. Established by Friends in 1917 to identify service alternatives to prison for conscientious objectors, AFSC continues to work today for a just, peaceful, and sustainable world. In a time of heightened conflict here and across the world, Lewis Webb, Jr., AFSC's Director of US Peace Building, will share his work with us. Come and find out about how Friends can engage in efforts to "... seek peace and ensue it; to follow after righteousness and the knowledge of God; seeking the good and welfare; and doing that which tends to the peace of all," denying all occasions for war. (1660 Declaration of George Fox from the People called Quakers)

Children's Program: An Invitation to Young Friends to Join Quarterly Meeting

The morning will begin with all friends (from the youngest to the most seasoned) gathering in the meeting room at 10:00 to hear a Faith & Play story about Bayard Rustin, shared by Melinda Wenner Bradley. The story shares touchpoints of Rustin's life and how his witness to justice, peace, and equity formed with his spiritual leading to be his whole self.

After the story, the children will move to the annex for discussion. During the remainder of adult worship, young friends will celebrate the advent of spring and Earth Day 2024! There will be planting and bird house building and other outside activities, which will continue through the AFSC program. We will all gather for lunch at 12:30.

Childcare will be available during the Quarter's Business Meeting from 8:30 – 9:45, if needed. Please email Chris (CQM Coordinator) at concordquarter@pym.org no later than Friday, April 26 for your need for childcare.

For more info, email concordquarter@pym.org
Event Website: <https://concordquarter.org/nextqm-pastqm/2024/qm-at-wilmington>
401 North West Street (at the corner of Fourth and West) - Wilmington, Delaware 19801

Concord Quarterly Meeting at Willistown January 28, 2024

Opening Worship

Meeting was opened at 8:30 am with the clerk leading us into worship.

Welcome to Newcomers - The clerk asked newcomers to the Quarterly Meeting to introduce themselves. – Tom Martin from Birmingham Meeting and Andy Coe from Westtown Meeting were welcomed by the meeting.

Monthly Meeting Count- Twenty Friends and attenders were present at the opening of the Meeting for Business. The meetings represented were Birmingham, Goshen, Middletown, West Chester, Westtown, Willistown, Wilmington with Concord Meeting not represented.

Approval of Agenda – The agenda was approved as presented in the handout.

Approval of Minutes from October 29, 2023 - The Minutes from the last Meeting for Business in October were approved.

West Chester Area Refugee Resettlement Project Update- Susan Brodesser of Birmingham Meeting reported. The Colombian couple is doing well in an apartment in West Chester that is located near the home of a prominent Birmingham member who has been a great help to them. Medicaid coverage has been obtained for the couple. The husband now has a part time job with a local ACME supermarket. He has experience in construction work, so he is looking into employment in that field. The wife will soon be working part-time at Barclay Friends in housekeeping. WCARRP's legal commitment ends on February 7, 2024, but the group will continue supporting the couple. It was pointed out that WCARRP is an interfaith group with support coming from a number of churches and Quaker meetings in the area.

Joys and Challenges from Goshen Meeting (attached) - Sallie Welte of Goshen gave the Joys and Challenges report for Goshen Meeting, and it was accepted with gratitude.

Nominating Committee report – Rich Ailes, clerk of the Nominating Committee presented Serita Spadoni of Birmingham Meeting as the new CQM representative to PYM's Nominating Council. She replaces Deborah Lyons of West Chester Meeting who has completed her term. Cecilia Filauro, the PYM staff person supporting its Nominating Council, states that Serita's term will end after the Annual Session of, 7/31/2027. Serita's term is longer than the typical 3-year term as she was appointed after January 1. **Friends approved this appointment with appreciation.**

Nominating Committee has not met for several months. The last time the committee met there were no prospects for filling the role of Treasurer whose current term ends on July 31, 2024. If anyone has suggestions as to what Friend in the Quarter might be asked to take on this role. please send an email to concordquarter@pym.org. There is also a need for a new recording clerk for the Quarter.

Working Group on Aging Concerns- Rich Ailes presented the report. WGAC continues to meet almost monthly with about 8 Friends attending where we discuss our Meetings' issues around aging. Recently WGAC was featured in an article on PYM's news website. The group is planning a PYM-wide presentation on Driving and Aging with Susie Touchinsky, OTR/L, SCDCM, CDRS, an occupational therapy certified, driver rehabilitation specialist who will be presenting on Zoom on April 3, 2024. The group is also exploring a possible program on burial options. A subgroup also meets almost monthly to discuss concerns relating to Senior residential living. We just had a presentation to this group by two long-time residents of Senior living facilities which was well received.

Treasurer's Reports (attached) – Charles Spadoni presented the report, and it was accepted by those present. There was a question on current tuition fees charge by Quaker schools. Deb Wood, member of Westtown Meeting and former teacher at Westtown School, explained that boarding fees and tuition can run as high as \$70,000 at an upper school. She noted that Friends schools provide a considerable amount of financial aid to those in need. Individuals and constituent Meetings can contribute to the CQM Tuition Endowment Fund. So far only constituent Meetings have contributed to this fund. A question was raised about increasing the constituent Meeting's covenants to provide more tuition assistance, but there was no further discussion on this suggestion. One Friend present alerted us to the Pennsylvania Educational Improvement Tax Credit Program (EITC). This program provides tax credits to businesses who donate funds to support a Scholarship Organization and grants to individuals through the companion Opportunity Scholarship Tax Credit Program (OSTC). <https://dced.pa.gov/programs/educational-improvement-tax-credit-program-eitc>

Coordinator Update - Debbie Murray-Sheppard was pleased to announce that Chris Stern of Middletown Meeting will be the new Quarterly Meeting Coordinator starting on February 1, 2024. He will begin with the typical 90-day probationary period, after which, if the CQM Planning Committee approves continuing employment, his pay will be raised from \$23/hour to \$25/hour. A suggestion was raised about having the Coordinator also keep the books for the Quarter, increasing the skillset needed for the position. There was some discussion of this suggestion, but it was decided to continue the position as is. **Friends minuted their deep appreciation to Rich Ailes for his work filling in as temporary Coordinator since March 2023.**

Sharing around the Quarter – The Clerk asked Friends from the various Meeting to share current happenings.

Westtown – Peter Lane reported that the Meeting's project for having 3 new clerks rotate into the shared position of Clerk every 4 months has in place for over a year, and it is working well.

Wilmington – Pam Cerchio reported that Wilmington's Tri-Clerk approach has been going on for 15 years. They have three staggered terms with one clerk rotating off and one clerk rotating one every year. The Meeting currently is experiencing an increase in attendance, in part due to the Meeting's association with Wilmington Friends School. The increase has benefitted the diversity of the membership. Also the meeting room needs to be repainted, and lead paint issues need to be mitigated. Next Sunday the meeting for worship will start being held at Wilmington Friends School for at least 4 weeks. Friends at Wilmington Meeting did apply for funds to help with the painting. An attending Friend noted that if lead paint begins to chip then that increases the cost of remediation exponentially.

Willistown – Susan Ploeg reported that several members attended the PYM Thread Gathering on Property and Burial that was held on January 27, 2024. The burial grounds piece was especially worthwhile.

Birmingham – Children and Youth Program – Gwynne Ormsby explained that kids go to school all week so why should we make them go to school on Sunday. So the Meeting has stopped using the name of First Day School! It now has a Children and Youth Program. The Meeting surveyed members who grew up in the meeting and who now have young children and urged them to start considering returning to the community. This request has increased attendance and participation considerably. The Meeting also has a strong working group that supports Indigenous communities.

Middletown – Rich Ailes reported that the Meeting’s clerk was called recently by a convener of the local chapter of Al Anon to see if the Meeting’s facilities could be used for the group’s weekly gathering. The clerk allowed the group to meet temporarily two times in the Social Room. Then the Meeting for Business discerned that it was rightly ordered to allow the use of the Social Room for the next three months which the group was requesting so long as the Meeting was added as an additional insured under that group’s liability insurance policy. This has been done, and Al Anon now meets in the Social Room every Tuesday afternoon for their sessions.

The clerk urged Friends present to support activities at the Yearly Meeting level and also at the Quarterly Meeting level.

Reading of Minutes for Approval - Minutes of approved actions were read and approved.

Second Count of Meetings in Attendance – Representatives from Birmingham, Goshen, Middletown, West Chester, Westtown, Willistown, Wilmington were still in attendance while Concord Meeting remained without representation.

Announcements of Upcoming Events

Debbie Murray-Sheppard

Concord Quarterly Meeting Planning Committee February 4 1-3 PM at The Hickman
Concord Quarterly Meeting Square Dance February 17 7 – 8:30 PM at Willistown
Friends General Conference Gathering will be at Haverford College in person and online, June 30 to July 6
PYM Sessions in 2024 will be longer in the spring and in the fall but shorter in the summer so as not to interfere with those who attend the FGC gathering.

Delaware Valley Friends School will have their Arts Festival at the beginning of May. More information on that will be forthcoming.

Middle East Collaborative is doing online sessions on “Why Palestine Matters.” Please check the PYM calendar for registration.

PYM Continuing Sessions on March 8, 9, and 10. Please see the PYM calendar for details.

Hickman Board member Diana Hodgkins informed the Meeting that its Board is looking for members.

Unless otherwise noted, contact the Coordinator for the Zoom links (concordquarter@pym.org)

Many other programs for children, youth, and young adults appear on the PYM calendar: <https://www.pym.org/calendar/>

Respectfully submitted, Richard Ailes, Acting Recording Clerk

Debbie Murray Sheppard, Clerk

Attachments

Joys and Challenges Report January 2024 - Goshen Monthly Meeting

Goshen meeting celebrates many joys as we enter the new year. We worship together faithfully each week in the meetinghouse, with several Friends attending on Zoom and three children and a dog often present. Several new attenders come regularly, and three have requested membership, including a family with two small children. We all enjoy each other’s company at Fellowship after Meeting for Worship, and though we don’t yet have a FDS, we are able to offer childcare that is age appropriate and joyous.

Our monthly adult religious education program (Meeting for Learning) occurs via Zoom, enabling Friends unable to travel or who live at a distance to participate, and a monthly “mid-week check-in” offers fellowship for those who cannot come to the meetinghouse.

Goshen’s lease with West Chester Area School District ended December 31, and we are grateful for the property repairs and improvements that resulted from this contract. Our relationship with Goshen Friends School is collaborative, and we anticipate sharing both space and operating expenses this fall if the school continues to grow. We have planned a morning coffee for any school parents interested in or curious about Quakers.

The challenge of being a small meeting and needing to do the work of the meeting is a continuing issue at Goshen and has been even more so without two seasoned Friends who moved. We miss their presence and their experience. At times we find ourselves stretched too thin and unable to meet the needs of increasingly infirm Friends. The meeting is also entering a period of belt-tightening as rental income from the school district ends, and we need to be ever more mindful of our resources and our commitments.

Two few Friends wear too many hats, and so we are finding our way together.

**Concord Quarterly Meeting Treasurer's Report For The First Half Of The Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2024
Un-reviewed Financial Statements (Except As May Be Noted Below, Reported On A Cash Basis)**

NOTES

•On September 14, 2023, the \$13,152 in the Tuition Operating Fund was distributed to four Quaker Schools (Westtown, West Chester Friends, Wilmington Friends and Virginia Beach Friends) in the form of tuition grants for the benefit of 16 students. Each grant was for \$822.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

INCOME STATEMENT

Revenues and Expenses for the First Half of the Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2024

Compared to the

Revenues and Expenses for the First Half of the Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2023

(numbers are redacted, contact the Coordinator for a full report)

BALANCE SHEET

December 31, 2023 Balance Sheet Versus the prior Fiscal Year’s December 30 Balance Sheet

(numbers are redacted, contact the Coordinator for a full report)

• There are no liabilities; however, the aggregate amount in the Tuition Operating Fund has been reserved to make tuition assistance payments in the fall of 2024.

*Checking Account 2 (used by the former Coordinator to pay Quarter expenses) was closed on March 23, 2023.

**Individual constituent monthly meeting Dec. 31, 2023, Growth & Income Fund market value balances are available upon request.

Respectfully submitted, Charles B. Spadoni, Treasurer

January 28, 2024

Concord Quarterly Meeting Newsletter
Volume 21 Issue 2, April 2024

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Acting Recording Clerk: Rich Ailes
Treasurer: Charles Spadoni
Coordinator: Chris Stern

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Concord Quarter Meetings

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Concord
Goshen
Middletown
West Chester
Westtown
Willistown
Wilmington

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