

Chestnut Hill Friends Meeting
Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business
September 15, 2024

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3. Reading of the Query for the Ninth Month
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 - a. Due in October
 - i. Addressing Racism Annual Report
 - ii. Nominating – New slate of officers
 - iii. Property and House Annual Report
 - iv. Quarterly Meeting Representatives Annual Report
 - v. Treasurer's Annual Report
 - b. Release date for Oct 19 (3rd Sat) is tomorrow
12. Closing Worship

Query for the Ninth Month – Equality and Justice

- How does our meeting benefit from established patterns of prejudice, exploitation, and economic convenience? What are we doing to change this?
- How and how often does our meeting engage in a self-examination of its attitudes and actions regarding race, ability, gender, sexual orientation, or class?
- What steps are we taking as a meeting to inform ourselves about social injustice and ecological violence embedded in our political and economic systems?
- What steps are we taking as a meeting to assure that our meeting and the committees and institutions under our care are respectful of the earth and its people?
- *Do I regularly examine myself for attitudes and behavior that indicate any hidden prejudice regarding race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, or class?*
- *How do my lifestyle choices affect—positively or negatively—the causes of justice and peace in our nation, the community of nations, and the whole of creation?*
- *How do I demonstrate in my way of living, and in what I teach my children, that love of God entails acknowledging “that of God in every person”?*

**Centennial Committee Update Report
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Over the summer, the Centennial Committee has laid the foundation for what we hope will be a fun, informative, and spiritually nurturing recognition of our community's remarkable history. So far, our plans include:

Visual History: We launched the Centennial last week with an Adult Class that explored our Meeting's 100-year timeline and led to a wonderful round-robin exchange of anecdotes and connections. Since then, you may have noticed 15 posters displayed on our meetinghouse walls that contain the 100-year timeline. We are also working on a booklet containing 10 stories, one for each decade in our history, each illustrated and highlighting a key or pivotal moment in our past.

Sept 29 Homecoming Picnic: The big event this month will be in two weeks on Sunday, September 29, the Homecoming Picnic. Our committee and the Hospitality Committee are planning to offer BBQed hot dogs and beverages. Friends are invited to sign up to bring side dishes and beverages. Dessert will be anniversary cakes, including a gluten-free one! That day we plan to take a group photo, mirroring the one taken 25 years ago this summer at the old meetinghouse for the 75th anniversary.

Additions to our landscape: We are also working with the Outreach Committee on commissioning a new sign in front of our building and with the Landscape Committee on some centennial benches.

In fact, it turns out this Centennial will only be possible by engaging with many (if not all) of our Meeting's committees. For this, we are humbled and grateful. We look forward to celebrating with you in two weeks!

**Worship and Ministry Request
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For more than a year, the Worship and Ministry Committee has been struggling with the question of whether there are technology solutions to the auditory accessibility problems that we have faced in the meetinghouse since we moved in. Our hybrid model of worship has improved auditory accessibility for those on Zoom, but frustrations remain for those who attend in person. The original hearing assistance system designed for that room never worked well and has now fallen out of use entirely. We now feel that addressing the issue in a comprehensive way goes beyond what our committee can or should undertake in isolation.

Therefore, we propose that the meeting convene an Ad Hoc Committee on Auditory Accessibility, including at least representatives from the W&M, Outreach, Office, and Property committees along with anyone else who has a leading or expertise in the area. This committee would investigate possible steps to improve the auditory accessibility of meeting for worship and bring a proposal (with budget) back to meeting for business.

Family Promise of Philadelphia (FPP) Committee Update Report
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The Herbert family was referred for summer housing to CHFMs Family Promise of Philadelphia (FPP) Committee at the beginning of July and lives on the 2nd floor of our meetinghouse until August 31. The family included a mother and father with a 16-year-old daughter and 14-year-old twin boys who were high on the autism spectrum.

The mother was working remotely as a mortgage broker on commission. The twins had aged out of the camp they had expected to attend, and the daughter volunteered on Saturday afternoons at Mt. Airy Art Garage. The father, a very capable I.T. professional and photographer, took care of the household with shopping and cooking, while also job hunting. We were confident they would be responsible and reliable residents.

Since Covid, unlike earlier years when the Meeting members provided and cooked all food, cared for the children, stayed overnight, etc., FPPs approach to housing families has changed radically, so we have only accepted one family each year. This family wanted to do their own food shopping and cooking. As a result, in general, once the rooms were prepared here at the meetinghouse, there was not a lot for Meeting members to do for the family. The father attended Meeting for Worship several times and seemed to feel very comfortable in introducing himself and the familys needs. That helped inspire the Meeting to contribute generously to the food fund we had set up for the family. Some offered an occasional job for the father. The father was also very helpful in reporting and solving problems such as a blown fuse and also helped with the Meeting's Zoom needs and creating the Centennial timeline posters.

We had difficulty communicating with the FPP people, perhaps because they are very understaffed and the organization is not focused on shelter as much as on rent and eviction issues. We had been expecting FPP to be deeply involved in moving the family and its belongings on August 31. Instead, cleaning the upstairs living quarters and moving the family to its next housing location, FUMCOG, took a lot of work by our committee. We are glad that FUMCOG will provide shelter for the family through November, if necessary. The father has received several responses to his job applications recently, and the children are back in school in Camden, NJ.

**Outreach Committee Update Report
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Outreach focuses on ways we can more warmly include newcomers and recent attenders in the life of the Meeting. We ask all our longstanding members and attenders to help us greet newcomers at worship and engage them after worship. As much as we are able, our committee members also take on the less visible tasks like tracking attendance, making new name tags, and sending welcome emails to those who leave their info in our guestbook.

This past year, our activities included two Seekers Gatherings. At these evening events two or three Meeting members or regular attenders talk about what brought them to Quakerism. They answer the newcomers' questions and hear how our newest seekers are experiencing Chestnut Hill's worship and community life.

Our Friendly Eights' gatherings at individual members' homes provide another chance to answer questions and enjoy each other's company. Like the Seekers Gatherings, these have led to deep dialogue about our faith.

Fifty people attended our Winter Chili dinner. They enjoyed the food but also the six performers at the open mike and our own DJ Betsy RaRaRobinson who kept folks dancing.

Thanks to several of our younger members, we are reaching out on social media like Facebook and Instagram with pictures and announcements.

After 11 years at our "new" building, we decided we need an inviting (and legible) new road sign to let people know we exist. Funding applications are in the works. It will be lettered by Randy Granger, famous for being Irene McHenry's husband and longtime art teacher at Penn Charter School.

In nature, what isn't growing is dying. Our aim is to help keep the Meeting growing with new members and new ways to share and experience our Quaker faith and community.

The Outreach Committee

Chestnut Hill Friends Meeting
Minutes – Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business
June 16, 2024

The hybrid Meeting for Business was clerked by Miyo Moriuchi. In total, 12 Friends attended in person and two via Zoom.

The meeting began with a period of silent worship, followed by Land Acknowledgement sharing. It was explained that Indigenous People around the world have begun a movement called "Land Back" focused on getting Indigenous lands back into Indigenous hands – a profound and worthwhile challenge. We learned that when White Europeans came to North America centuries ago, they did not find uncharted wilderness; indeed, had that been the case, they might not have survived. They encountered a continent throughout which many Indigenous peoples had created a well-developed network of communities (both fixed and portable) with well-traveled roads, abundant agriculture, and flourishing trade, supported by well-established local governments, well-developed relationships among Indigenous nations, and diplomatic ties with tribal nations beyond the continent.

The Query for the Sixth Month was read – Stewardship of Resources. Miyo asked that we take today's queries into our hearts, especially today as we look at the proposed budget.

- 1) **Clerk's Report.** Miyo said that in the six months she's worn the clerk hat, she has come to truly love this Meeting, our clerks, members, and attenders for their openness, quiet dedication, and for the extra work that so many do quietly and without recognition, work that is essential to maintaining our community and that takes so many hands and hearts.

- 2) **Finance: Proposed Budget for 2024-2025 Fiscal Year (July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025).** Finance Committee Clerk Chuck Bragitikos pointed out several changes made to the draft budget presented last month to complete this final budget. First, he said Finance learned that the Skyspace opening mechanism is damaged and Skyspace openings are on hold. As a result, Finance cut the revenue from Skyspace openings in half to \$5,000. Chuck added that a group has been found to repair the Skyspace opening mechanism and it is hoped that the repairs are done quickly so Skyspace openings can resume. Second, Chuck said Finance updated the Building and Grounds line items to reflect detailed input from the Property Committee. Property anticipates maintenance may be needed this year since our building is more than 10 years old. Chuck said any required costs beyond what is budgeted would be paid through funds available to the Meeting through either the operating reserve, the unencumbered portion of the graveyard fund, or the emergency fund. Third, he said the Peace and Social Concerns Committee requested that its \$10,000 funding for grants and donations be increased and it has been raised to \$12,000. Chuck said that, taken together, these changes reduced the projected annual surplus in the FY24-25 budget from \$16,000 to \$6,000. He and Treasurer Bob Reynolds then welcomed questions or comments.

A Friend said the Addressing Racism Committee would like to get an annual commitment of \$5,000 per year to fulfill the final three years of the Meeting's overall five-year commitment

to contribute \$25,000 to Ujima Friends Peace Center. Chuck said \$5,000 is included in this fiscal year's budget, and the Finance Committee is analyzing the amount of uncommitted funding the Meeting has to handle the rest of the overall \$25,000 commitment. Another Friend asked if there will be any Skyspace showings for first half of the new fiscal year. Chuck said this will depend on how quickly repairs can be done so that openings can resume. Another Friend said that Stewardship isn't certain it will be able to make its goal for the new fiscal year and urged caution regarding committing additional funds before we are certain we have the resources.

Another Friend expressed deep appreciation to the Finance Committee and the Treasurer for thinking things through so thoroughly and stewarding our resources so well. The budget was approved.

- 3) **Care and Counsel: Second Reading of Clearness Committee Report for Membership of Noah Anninger (Decision).** Committee clerk Joe Byers read the clearness committee report. Approval was given to this application for membership. Joe said that Paul DuSold will convene a welcome committee when Noah returns from a summer away from Philadelphia. Steve Elkinton and Jean Warrington volunteered to join the welcome committee.
- 4) **Peace and Social Concerns: Update on Climate Action Project.** Committee clerk Jean Warrington acknowledged that we are living in fraught times and said that in addition to work on peace and social concerns, the committee has established a Climate Action subcommittee, following PYM's Climate Action Plan, and will have several events and activities coming up to engage our community.

A Friend pointed out that two of our community members host a show on G-Town Radio and a podcast called Planet Philadelphia which bears continuing witness to climate change. It was also noted that CHFM supports the program through a grant and people were encouraged people to tune into the show and the podcast. Finally, it was shared that Planet Philadelphia's hosts were interviewed on WHY Y recently about what motivates them to do this work. Miyo suggested adding a link to the interview in the next newsletter.

- 5) **FPP: Update on Housing at Meetinghouse This Summer.** Tricia Walmsley said FPP has said they expect we will have one family with up to four children staying on the second floor of the meetinghouse, but has not yet confirmed details. The family is expected to move into the meetinghouse on June 30 and stay until Labor Day. She said that one tenant's regular meeting upstairs may need to be moved to the Gathering Room and the Nursery may have to be relocated also.
- 6) **Minutes for Approval: May.** Ellen asked that the standing item on the business meeting agenda "Reading of the Land Acknowledgment Statement" be changed to "Land Acknowledgment" to reflect a wider understanding of our intent – to open our minds to a joyful journey of learning and growing. The recording Clerk Liz Williams agreed to make this change in future agendas. The minutes were approved as presented.

7) **Announcements**

- a) Annual Reports Due in September
 - a. FPP
 - b. Outreach
 - c. Treasurer
- b) Release date for July 20 (3rd Sat) is tomorrow
- c) Philadelphia Quarterly Meeting rep Tricia Walmsley said that there is now a newsletter sent by the Quarter via email and that the next quarterly meeting will be Sunday, July 28 at Germantown Monthly Meeting and will include morning and afternoon tours of the Betty Cary Arboretum on the grounds of adjacent Germantown Friends School.
- d) Ellen Deacon explained that our Meeting member Phil Lord was one of the founding members in 1992 of the Fellowship of Friends of African Descent which established the Ujima Friends Peace Center at 17th and Lehigh and Ujima Monthly Meeting. She said that the Addressing Racism Committee has arranged for the Fellowship to meet at 2 pm this Friday at CHFM and from 8 to 10 am here on Sunday morning, then they will join worship at 10:30 am.

8) Closing Worship. Miyo wished all a healthy and rejuvenating summer and encouraged everyone to continue building a strong sense of community.

Respectfully submitted,

Liz Williams, Recording Clerk