

Chestnut Hill Friends Meeting
Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business
January 19, 2025

Agenda

1. Opening Worship
2. Land Acknowledgement
3. Reading of Query for the First Month
4. Clerk's Report
5. Care and Counsel
 - a. Membership Transfer Request (Decision)
 - b. Membership Resignation Request
6. Centennial Committee Update
7. Minutes for Approval: November
8. Announcements
 - a. Annual reports due in February
 - i. Library
 - ii. Office and Administration
 - iii. Skyspace
 - iv. Worship and Ministry
 - b. PQM Quarterly Meeting at CHFM on Jan 26
 - c. Release date for Feb 15 (3rd Sat) is tomorrow
9. Closing Worship

Query for the First Month: Deepening Our Faith – Meeting for Worship

- Are our meetings for worship held in stilled, expectant waiting upon God?
- As we worship in the living silence, are we drawn together by the power of God in our midst?
- Do we experience a deep reverence for the integrity of creation?
- How does our worship nurture all worshipers, creating a deeper sense of community?
- How does our meeting encourage vocal ministry that spiritually nurtures the worshipping community?
- *Do I faithfully attend meeting with heart and mind prepared for worship, clear of any predetermination to speak or not to speak, expecting that worship will be a source of strength and guidance?*
- *Does worship deepen my relationship with God, increase my faithfulness and refresh and renew my daily life, both inwardly and in my relationships with other persons and with all of creation?*
- *Does worship enhance my capacity for attentive, non-judgmental listening to others?*
- *How does participation in meeting for worship contribute to my life-long spiritual journey?*

Philip M. Lord
730 Wolcott Drive
Philadelphia, PA 19118

December 16, 2024

Chestnut Hill Friends Meeting
20 E Mermaid Lane
Philadelphia, PA 19118-3505
Attn.: Miyo Moriuchi, Clerk

Re: Transfer of Membership

Dear Miyo Moriuchi:

Although it has been a long while since I have attended at Chestnut Hill Friends Meeting, it continues to hold a special place in my heart as my home meeting and an important foundation of my Quaker experience. The Meeting has supported me, both personally and organizational over many years. It has supported me personally by providing memorable worship experiences and a variety of opportunities to serve the meeting community during that time. I am also particularly grateful to Ellen Deacon and other meeting members for providing a spiritual support committee to patiently help be navigate the challenges of serving as clerk of the American Friends Service Committee for several years.

However, recently Ujima Friends Peace Center has been my primary place of service and worship. Chestnut Hill Friends Meeting and its members have provided the Center with faithful and much needed support. Whether at an Ujima event or at an AFSC activity, I have been proud to share that I am a member of Chestnut Hill Friends Meeting.

At this point on my spiritual journey, I feel led to transfer of my membership from Chestnut Hill Friends Meeting to Unity Monthly Meeting in the Frankford area of Philadelphia. Unity Meeting is located in an historic meeting house that was a site on the Underground Railroad. I am requesting this transfer so that I can fully commit myself to the planned revitalization of that meeting and help it be a spiritually welcoming and supportive witness to Friends Testimonies in the diverse Frankford community. The meeting house will provide a more stable spiritual home to continue the outreach and community-based ministries of the Ujima Friends Peace Center.

Thank you for the work you do and for assisting with this matter.

In Peace,



Phil Lord

**Centennial Committee Update
Chestnut Hill Friends Meeting
Meeting for Business – Jan 19, 2025**

The Centennial Committee has not met since November, but we want to give you an update on events ahead to mark Chestnut Hill Friends Meeting's centennial year.

The theme for the fall was the past and culminated on Sunday, Sept. 29 with a wonderful, shared potluck lunch and history-related activities. The stories that were recorded that afternoon are being curated this winter. So, too the photos for the day will be organized for display and archival preservation.

The theme for this winter is the present. Two events are planned: a panel discussion Jan. 26 (next week) on "Quakerism Today - and Tomorrow" and a six-week series on "The Quaker Way" led by Joan Broadfield. Both events are co-sponsored with Philadelphia Quarterly Meeting. One immediate need next week is that we are serving a potluck lunch between worship and the panel discussion -- so we hope many Chestnut Hill Friends sign up to bring a dish to share.

In the spring we will wind up the year-long Centennial celebration with the theme, "Our Future." Our hope is to build on some of the ideas coming out of next week's panel discussion and possibly hold a family-oriented retreat for the entire Chestnut Hill Meeting community perhaps in April or May with discussion sessions devoted to planning our future as a meeting.

At that point, we'll be done and disband the committee, hoping that each of us has gotten some meaning from this anniversary.

Chestnut Hill Friends Meeting
Minutes – Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business
November 17, 2024

The Meeting for Business was clerked by Miyo Moriuchi. In total, 14 Friends attended in person and five via Zoom.

The meeting began with a period of silent worship, followed by the Land Acknowledgement. We were asked to consider practical ways to support the Lenni Lenape people in their challenges. A Friend spoke of the wisdom and learning in “Braiding Sweetgrass” by Robin Wall Kimmerer, a botany professor and member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation.

The Query for the Eleventh Month: Education was read by Peter Warrington, assistant clerk.

- Gratitude was expressed that our Meeting supports families who send children to Quaker schools, and concern was shared that the state supports private Christian schools, some promoting white nationalism – a challenge for our country.
- Two members of our Meeting were thanked for supporting public schools, one who volunteers at the Jenks School’s library and another who provides his truck to help serve the needs of a public school in Fairhill.
- A Friend offered a revolutionary way to address racism: End Friends schools and other private schools and shift that tuition money and focus to developing great public schools.
- Another person offered that our Meeting has many young families who choose public education for their children, as spaces that more accurately embody their ideals.
- Another Friend said that attending both public and Quaker schools led him to a career in government service. Now in retirement, he is helping an area high school and middle school augment their curriculum with helpful activities for young people, particularly young men.
- Another Friend suggested queries and comments be included in our monthly newsletter.

1) Clerk’s Report. Miyo acknowledged the mammoth energy and effort Friends put into the Nov 5 election and the sense of grief and disappointment about its outcome. She noted our desire to keep on acting on our values and beliefs, and that this brought to mind a quote: “All shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of things shall be well, for there is a force of love moving through the universe that holds us fast and will never let us go.” She thanked the recording clerk Liz Williams for serving for three years and making her job as clerk much easier.

There was a discussion about how to get more people to attend business meeting: offer childcare, meet earlier with a hard stop for worship, read queries in worship instead of at business meeting, and survey people anonymously. It was pointed out that the big decisions made at business meeting impact committees that then have to do the work, even though they had no input into the decision. Another Friend clarified that most items discussed at business meetings have moved through a committee and then come to business meeting for review and approval, a process that some may not be familiar with. It was suggested that the

recording secretary send an email to the whole Meeting a week before business meeting with the agenda. Miyo said we need to discuss all of these ideas further.

- 2) **Nominating Committee: Approval of Officers' Slate.** Clerk Steve Elkinton said that four officers have agreed to continue serving, but that the Meeting needs to fill the fifth role because Liz Williams is stepping down as recording clerk. He said that in the past the Meeting has required that the position be filled by a member of our Meeting, but that Nominating had talked with more than a dozen members who were identified as potential recording clerks, but no one would agree to serve in the role. As a result, Nominating proposed Inaara Shiraz for the job. He explained that Inaara and her partner have become attenders and that she has worked for Philadelphia Yearly Meeting for 18 months. Others spoke in support of Inaara's taking this role. The renewing officers present left the room, and their nominations were approved. Then Inaara left Zoom, and her nomination was approved.
- 3) **Landscape Annual Report.** Committee clerk Cyane Gresham thanked the Meeting for its support and noted one committee member's comment that they are looking for connection while providing care to the Meeting's grounds. She said it had been announced last week that the city has allotted \$100,000 to create a trail along Cresheim Creek and that she is reaching out to see how CHFMs can help. She pointed out the list in the annual report of things Landscape has accomplished in the last year and expressed profound gratitude for the committee's budget. She noted that charges won't always fall neatly into the Meeting's fiscal year since the growing season does not conform to a budget calendar. For example, she said it is very lucky that we have had the same capable mowing contractor for more than five years, but we've had to accept that he sends invoices really late. A member of the Finance Committee offered assurance that this is okay. Cyane reported that, having worked with the Treasurer to get an accurate accounting, Landscape has raised \$6,000 through plant sales and memorial bequests. Based on the Meeting's enthusiasm for installing benches on our grounds, she said Landscape will pursue this before the end of this fiscal year.

She also noted that some of the pine trees on our property are quite compromised and probably need to be taken down. A member of Finance said there are funds to handle meeting-wide emergencies because Finance keeps in reserve six months of operating funds or about \$90,000. It was suggested that since safety is involved, we act proactively, funding an analysis of the health of our trees and removing those that could fall.

A member of the Property Committee told Cyane that several thrushes and a red-breasted grosbeak recently flew into our large glass windows and were found dead on the ground. She suggested that Property and Landscape partner on putting decals on our windows. A Friend suggested enlarging the decal order so members of the Meeting could buy decals for their windows to protect birds, too. A question was raised about putting in a bluestone path from the parking lot to the meetinghouse and Cyane said she doesn't see adequate support for this.

With sadness, Cyane noted that in the last year she has lost her husband who helped her maintain our landscape, in addition to losing loyal, valued stalwart member of Landscape, Ann Jones, who has been sidelined with health issues. Cyane said it is hard to lose people we love who contribute so much. She acknowledged that Quakers are not partial to plaques of

recognition, but suggested we think of how to honor Ann and her husband Phil Jones who died five years ago.

- 4) **Peace and Social Concerns Annual Report.** Committee clerk Jean Warrington summarized the actions that P&SC has encouraged this year, following the five elements in the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting's Playbook for Addressing Climate Change: Advocacy: education, personal actions, finance, and resilience/dealing with grief. She expressed gratitude to non-committee members Helene Hilger and Sarah Whitman for their involvement in this climate action work.

Jean noted that after careful deliberation this year, the committee gave out \$5,000 in donations and \$5,000 in grants. (Clerk's note of clarification: The Meeting also gives \$1K for POWER annually and \$5K for the Ujima Peace Center for 5 years.)

She thanked two committee members who host the weekly environmental radio show Planet Philadelphia and the many people throughout the Meeting who joined in the pre-election voter turnout effort "Philly Souls to the Polls." Jean also invited everyone to hear Jayson Massey, a member of Germantown Monthly Meeting, speak after worship about POWER Interfaith and how it is reacting to the election results and working on climate change issues.

The former clerk of PS&G offered tribute to Jean for stepping in when she had to step back because of her husband's illness. She said she has remained on the committee and enjoyed seeing how Jean has led with a light touch and a sprinkling of pixie dust while also crafting agendas and calling meetings, all with an openness to spirit. Miyo thanked Jean and the committee for actively engaging our community.

- 5) **Minutes for Approval: October.** The minutes were approved.

6) **Announcements**

- a) Annual Reports in January:
 - 1. Library
 - 2. Worship and Ministry
- b) Release date for December 21 (3rd Sat)
- c) Arch Street Meetinghouse by Candlelight, 4:30 to 7:30 pm on Dec 6
- d) PQM Quarterly Meeting at CHFM on Jan 26
- e) At CHFM on Feb 23, CEO of Family Promise Bob Byrne will discuss his organization's ongoing work and future plans. The FP committee will assist with refreshments that day.

7) **Closing Worship**

Respectfully submitted,

Liz Williams, Recording Clerk