

Chestnut Hill Friends Meeting
Monthly Meeting for Business
January 17, 2021

The Meeting for Business was clerked by Dylan Steinberg. Twenty-three Friends were present via Zoom electronic conferencing service. Ellen Deacon served as Elder, holding the meeting in the Light. The meeting began with a period of silent worship and the reading of the queries for the First month – Deepening Our Faith: Meeting for Worship.

1. **Clerk’s Report.** Dylan brought forward the following:
 - a. The clerks of committees met earlier this month with Dylan and discussed:
 - i. **Next steps for Coronavirus Working Group**
 1. Since March of last year, a Coronavirus Working Group consisting of committee clerks and a few others has been meeting periodically to address Covid-related issues. The clerk suggested this group is too large to work effectively and its scope is too broad. Proposed instead to assemble smaller groups to address specific Covid issues as needed.
 2. Suggested instead convening three small groups now to address:
 - a. Planning the mechanics of opening the building to in-person use. Group includes the clerk, assistant clerk and committee clerks of Worship and Ministry, Care and Counsel, Office and Administration, and Property. Any decision to re-open the meetinghouse will come to meeting for business for approval.
 - b. Addressing technology issues for virtual meeting for worship as we move to hybrid virtual/in-person worship model.
 - c. Creating and executing a survey to see how the Meeting feels about returning to in-person meeting for worship and identify issues and questions.
 3. The Meeting was asked to let Dylan know if other issues arise that need to be addressed.
 - ii. **Thoughts on making business meeting more efficient**
 1. “Raise hand” feature on Zoom. Suggested using this feature to simplify the clerk’s identifying those who wish to speak.
 2. Committee reports
 - a. Urged Meeting clerks to submit reports and minutes by end of day Wednesday before a Sunday business meeting so a full agenda can be included in the Newsletter on Thursday. This will give people time

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read relevant materials and come to business meeting prepared.

- b. Urged clerks presenting annual reports not to read them word for word but instead summarize the committee's work. This will encourage members and attenders to read the full report in advance.
 - c. Suggested the Meeting receive reports in a spirit of gratitude for what has been accomplished and consider this an opportunity to recognize the committee's contributions.
3. Reflection between agenda items. Expressed desire to allow time for reflection and worship between items on the agenda.
- iii. **Patience.** Asked for the Meeting's understanding as the new clerk settles in.
2. **Care & Counsel Report.** C&C member Joe Byers read a minute (attached) from the committee regarding the passing of Meeting member Storm Evans. The Clerk noted that Storm's virtual memorial service will be on Saturday, January 30 at 3 pm.
Friends approved the minute.
 3. **Peace & Social Concerns Annual Report.** Linda Rosenwein, committee clerk, brought forward the report (attached) and observed that P&SC has worked hard to become more integrated with the workings of other committees, including working on joint projects with other committees.
 4. **PIHN Annual Report.** Carla White, committee clerk, brought forward the report (attached), noting that the committee had found ways to help PIHN families despite Covid restrictions that meant our Meeting could not host families this year.
 5. **Worship & Ministry Annual Report.** Rebecca Heider, committee clerk, brought forward the report (attached) and said W&M's biggest challenge was figuring out how to make virtual worship comfortable, meaningful and spiritually nourishing, and offering alternatives such as in-person outdoor worship and virtual mid-week meetings. A Meeting member expressed gratitude to the committee for sponsoring small groups such as Bible Study and support committees which, despite Covid, W&M has continued through the year.
 6. **Philadelphia Quarter Update.** Representative Carla White presented the report. Also, she observed that Phil Anthony is taking on the role as mentoring clerk to the new clerk of the Quarter and, as a result, is stepping down as a Quarter rep for our

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own Meeting. This means the meetings needs another Philadelphia Quarter rep. Another of our Quarter reps, Tricia Walmsley, expressed deep gratitude to Phil for his pivotal role in identifying people to fill key leadership roles for the Quarter. A person urged Friends to become active in the Quarter to enrich our lives and faith.

7. **Approval of Minutes.** The November and December minutes were approved as read.

8. **Announcements**

- a. February Annual Reports due
 - i. Library (held over)
 - ii. Office and Administration
 - iii. Recorder
 - iv. Skyspace
- b. Treasurer's quarterly report held over to February.
- c. Release date for March 20 is tomorrow.
- d. A Friend asked the Meeting to hold Kathleen Karhnak-Glasby in Light as her partner recovers from serious surgery.
- e. Another Friend reminded the Meeting about the PYM thread gathering on addressing anti-Blackness.

9. **Closing Worship.** Gratitude for the vibrancy of our community.

Liz Williams, Recording Clerk

**Care and Counsel: Minute Regarding the Passing of Storm Evans
January 17, 2021**

Our dedicated, beloved member Storm M. Evans died peacefully and unexpectedly on January 9, 2021 at her home in Cheltenham, PA. She was born on March 13, 1949 in Sayre, Oklahoma. In the 1990s, Storm moved to Philadelphia where she met and married Dan Evans. Retired from a career in legal systems management, she devoted many hours to Chestnut Hill Friends Meeting, most recently as Recording Secretary and active with the Finance, Office and Administration, and Property committees. During recent worship-sharing, Friends spoke of Storm's clear-headed, practical, knowledgeable, enthusiastic, and thoughtful grounding and leadership. As with her vibrant quilts, Storm's determination was key to the construction of our new meetinghouse. We will deeply miss Storm. We hold Dan, Storm's son Michael, and the larger family in our hearts and in the Light.

Respectfully submitted,

Miyo Moriuchi

Peace and Social Concerns Committee Annual Report January 17, 2021

This year the activities of the Peace and Social Concerns Committee became considerably more integrated into the life of the Meeting, both spiritually and organizationally. This result was something the Committee had worked towards for a couple of years. Coordination with the Worship and Ministry Committee, the Addressing Racism Committee, and the Working Group on Immigration, as well as other activities helped this effort. This change occurred despite the pandemic.

While we did not consciously plan to follow Quaker testimonies, these were our spiritual heritage and environment and, so, we actually did in large part:

SIMPLICITY: Our environmental activities and careful consideration of grant recommendations showed a concern for using financial and natural resources carefully.

PEACE: We promoted alternatives to violence in our interactions with POWER, response to police conduct, and reactions to federal voting and postelection concerns, as well as grant giving.

INTEGRITY: Our Committee's witness to the world is about letting our outer life reflect our inner lives/values, and we tried to continue these values in the way we interacted with the Meeting and each other

COMMUNITY: Connecting better with a wider range of our Meeting members/attenders was part of this, as well as the more obvious attempt to reach out in a non-patriarchal way to the community outside Quakerism

EQUALITY: Our work with POWER focused on racial justice/equality. In our questionnaire development (see below) we tried to recognize all the different kinds of backgrounds of people in the Meeting, including class.

STEWARDSHIP: Our focus on environmental issues is about stewardship

While we worked to involve the Meeting in peace and social concerns activities/opportunities and represent the Meeting to the outside community on these issues, our work has focused primarily on the following topic areas, although letter writing (see below) addressed a much wider number of areas:

- Racism and inequality
- Environmental issues

Specific activities and actions of the Committee include:

- Before the pandemic lockdown, we focused intensely on letter writing, offering letter writing monthly on the first Sunday of every month for the first 3 months of the year. 143 postcards were written in those months, more per month than 2019. In a few months after that, summary letters to use to contact legislatures were put in the newsletter, and for one month a sample message for First Day Schoolers related to police reform was offered. Letter writing is a way to involve the Meeting as a whole in the mission of the Committee (peace and social concern activities in the community).
- We continued writing more about our Committee's activities in the newsletter and bulletins. We hoped this information would enhance the Meeting's interaction

with our Committee's activities. Not infrequently in these venues, we had suggestions for Meeting members/attenders about further resources or activities to support (e.g., RGGI or Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative). Since we are now a member of POWER, activities of POWER were routinely shared with the clerks and the newsletter.

- We recommended the Meeting give \$4250 in grants to 7 nonprofit organizations which involve Meeting members or attenders. These organizations were in 3 groups: environmental, international/world peace, and underserved communities (especially people of color and the poor). These were all the grants applied for. In late 2019 we had responded in writing to the Meeting's queries about our grant giving and in 2020 we presented this document to the Meeting.
- To help the Meeting decide how it could respond as a body to racism, we developed a questionnaire to ask people what actions they could support and checked with the Addressing Racism Committee about the content and purpose of the questionnaire. We also supported a vigil outside the Meeting during the George Floyd demonstrations. Finally, we collected information from other Quaker Meetings and organizations about their attempts to deal with racism and discussed findings with the Meeting.
- We hosted several zoom sessions: a spiritual sharing zoom session after the election coordinated with the Worship Committee, a RGGI talk followed up by opportunities to take action. A presentation by an FCNL member had to be cancelled because of COVID-19. Other sessions are in the planning stages.
- We planned to use the funds allocated to the Committee to help other worthy organizations use Meeting space for fund raising (e.g., PA Interfaith Power and Light) but these opportunities were cancelled because of the pandemic, although EQAT was able to complete their event before the pandemic.
- We worked to help the Meeting understand more about POWER and participate as appropriate. A POWER representative was scheduled to talk to the Meeting, but COVID-19 intervened. We attended a number of POWER events and zoom meetings of other Friends who have joined POWER. The result was that more members/attenders outside our Committee began participating in events organized by POWER.
- We recommended the Meeting support a minute on the environment being considered by other Quaker Meetings in the area. The Meeting did so.

Going forward we wish to:

- Continue with our newsletter/bulletin presence
- Help the Meeting develop more effective work with POWER. This may involve exploring and reaching out to develop relationships with others in POWER or our community.
- Continue with our present level of work on grant recommendations and letter writing
- Explore additional ways to help the Meeting take action on matters of racism
- Use our funds to help worthy organizations use the Meeting for fund raising

- Continue to try to use our limited resources effectively – we really **need** more members who have the time to work on Peace Committee issues between meetings. Six members of the Committee currently consistently attend meetings, and Mary Day Kent (who is our letter-writing affiliate, FCNL liaison, and UN liaison) coordinates with us. We welcome anyone to attend our meetings.

Committee members: Linda Clark (clerk), Steve Elkington, Linda Rosenwein, Robert Rosenwein, Lori Spadaro (part of the year), Jean Warrington, Kay Wood

PIHN Committee Annual Report 2020 January 17, 2021

The Chestnut Hill Friends Meeting PIHN Committee coordinates our meeting's efforts to host families transitioning to permanent housing as part of the wider efforts of the Philadelphia Interfaith Hospitality Network (PIHN). While they prepare for a permanent place to live, PIHN guests usually stay for two-to-four weeks at a time at a religious congregation that supplies a place for guests to sleep and dinners, food and hosts. CHFMs usually hosts guests for four weeks but has hosted for six weeks in some years.

In 2020, due to Covid-19 restrictions, the meetinghouse was closed beginning in March and we were unable to provide hospitality to families. We were not alone in this and PIHN's shelter program was limited to three families, who were housed in non-congregational settings and without "hosts". PIHN's more recent efforts with homelessness prevention became even more important as many families suffered loss of income due to the pandemic's economic effects. The PIHN organization continues to consider whether and how they may return to congregational shelter and hosting in the future. The CHFMs PIHN Committee continues to find ways to support families in need of help in coping with or avoiding homelessness.

Our activities since our last report (October 2019) included:

1. **EMERGENCY LAUNDRY:** In late October 2019, PIHN asked if a new family could use our washer and dryer to catch up on laundry accumulated while they lived in their car before finding PIHN.
2. **GATHERING and DELIVERING CHRISTMAS PRESENTS** We did this in December 2019 for two PIHN families with eight children. Evangeline Bragitikos was our contact with PIHN and main organizer. Other committee members helped with sign-ups and gifts. The Hospitality Committee contributed cash collected from sales of Christmas decorations. Attender (now CHFMs and PIHN committee member!) Paul DuSold and Marlena Santoyo made the deliveries.
3. **COLLECTING FOOD and PERSONAL ITEMS:** As PIHN helped more and more families avoid becoming homeless, they needed more material aid. In lieu of sheltering and hosting families in the meeting house in July, the committee urged the CHFMs community to donate food and personal care items. PIHN Committee member Barbara Buonocore collected the donations on her porch and delivered them to the PIHN Day Center for distribution to families in need. Thanks to Jan Collins, we were able to send a notice to everyone who participated in hosting last year, using the information in SignUp Genius. We also made announcements after meeting and in the newsletter bulletins. The response was so generous that Barbara continued the collection until December!
4. **DONATING FURNITURE and HOUSEHOLD ITEMS:** Several CHFMs households donated unneeded furniture and household items to PIHN families. Some donations were coordinated to go directly to the new family, others were distributed by PIHN from their day center as needed. (NOTE: PIHN does not have a lot of storage space. If you have an

item you want to donate, please contact PIHN or the PIHN committee [pihncom@chestnuthillquakers.org] beforehand to make sure they can handle it and to arrange for delivery.)

5. MATTRESSES IN THE BASEMENT – For over two years, CHFM stored a large donation of mattresses in our basement, which PIHN picked up from time to time as their associated families needed them. The final two mattresses were picked up in September 2020.

6. SORTING and LABELING: On Saturday October 17, six members of the PIHN committee and a helper gathered in the empty Social Room at the meetinghouse, well-spaced with masks on and the doors open, to sort, bag, and label a large donation of clothing and other items made to PIHN by another organization. It was lovely to see each other face-to-face and visit the meetinghouse.

7. COORDINATING CHRISTMAS PRESENTS: In December 2020, CHFM households provided and delivered Christmas presents to nine PIHN families with 14 children. Carla White coordinated with PIHN and matched CHFM and PIHN families. This year, CHFM donors arranged gift deliveries themselves. Additional CHFM families made generous donations of gift cards to PIHN for distribution to struggling families.

PIHN committee members thank all of the meeting members and attenders who pitched in to help struggling families in new and different ways, as well as continuing to provide Christmas gifts. We would welcome anyone who would like to join our committee!

In the coming year, we hope to let all meeting members and attenders know about PIHN's program, about the families in the program and about our meeting's long participation in directly helping families from homelessness to homes.

In March 2020, the PIHN committee sadly lost Evangeline Bragitikos, Signe Wilkinson, Jan Collins, and Nancy Cox, but we were happy to add Paul DuSold to our number. Our current committee members are Barbara Buonocore, Tee Bushnell, Paul DuSold, Diane Fiske, Marlena Santoyo, Tricia Walmsley, and Carla White (clerk). We welcome new members!

Worship and Ministry Committee Annual Report January 17, 2021

The 2020 coronavirus pandemic has deeply affected the meeting community as a whole and touched many of us personally. Mindful of our primary responsibility of nurturing our community's spiritual life, the Worship & Ministry Committee helped our community transition to virtual meetings for worship with the invaluable assistance of members with technical expertise, including Craig DeLarge, Thomas Taylor, and Eileen Flanagan, among others.

Some have found online meeting for worship to be grounded and nurturing, whereas others feel it does not meet their spiritual needs. As local regulations allowed, we have been able to support a small group of in-person worshippers for early worship outside the meetinghouse. At the same time, our experience of online communal worship is in some ways richer than before, as we welcome the participation of community members who had been unable to attend in person because of distance or other challenges. Vocal ministry from these Friends has enriched our worship while we continue to yearn for deeper grounding for some messages.

This year we began projects to nurture the spiritual health of our Meeting during a time of national tragedy, personal isolation, and yearning for community (see specifics on the following pages) including:

- Organizing adult classes on George Fox, Sabbath Economics, and Vocal Ministry
- Offering Quaker Path sessions on Quaker belief, worship, and ministry
- Creating a joint committee with Care & Counsel on End-of-Life Issues
- Committing to a more active role in the membership process
- Organizing a called meeting for worship on racial injustice
- Holding a vigil for George Floyd, joining in spirit with other local Friends Meetings

Our leadings for 2021 include:

- What more can we do to nurture vocal ministers and/or elders?
- How can we more fully support the spiritual leadings of individuals in our Meeting?
- How can we support a transition back to in-person worship that is safe, spiritually grounded, and inclusive of people joining us online?

We are very grateful to all who have organized and led alternative worship opportunities including Esther Gilbert, Jon Landau, Thomas Taylor, and Sarah Whitman. As always, we invite the meeting community to share with us your hopes and concerns so that we may better understand how to best nurture the spiritual life of the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca Heider, Clerk

Diane Dunning

Janaki Spickard Keeler

Ellen Deacon

Dan Evans

Betsy Wallace

Details of our work in 2020:

Tending to the health and vitality of our meetings for worship in a virtual setting

- We have tried new ways of conducting meetings for worship online using the technology available, ranging from experimenting with unmuting everyone during meeting (which ended up being distracting rather than calming), to posting a video of the worship room that people could choose to highlight during worship, and preserving silence at the beginning of the online meeting to bring us closer to the experience we have in the worship room. We continue to search for ways to capture the spiritual grounding and connectedness of in-person worship while taking advantage of the unique opportunities provided by the online format.
- We joined the Care & Counsel Committee in reaching out to people who weren't attending online worship to help them access Zoom.
- Although overall attendance at online meetings is slightly lower than in-person meetings (averaging in the mid-50s rather than mid-60s) and has decreased somewhat over time, we continue to have guests join us, some of whom have become regular attenders. Online meetings are more accessible to those who have disabilities and to those who are able to join us from afar.
- Having now experienced the greater inclusivity afforded by the online format, we are committed to providing online access to worship even after we return to the meetinghouse. We will need substantial support from the Meeting to make this happen.

Supporting grounded meetings for worship

- We found that online meetings gave rise to vocal ministry from people who had not spoken at in-person meetings. We will continue to reach out to first-time or infrequent vocal ministers with encouragement and support.
- The tensions of the presidential campaign sometimes entered the online meeting via "us versus them" messaging. We addressed this with some ministers specifically and supported modeling more positive messaging in general.
- Outdoor meetings are reported to be deeply grounded with infrequent but Spirit-led vocal ministry and much-valued personal connection.

Offering a variety of opportunities for worship and spiritual engagement

- We support outdoor meetings every Sunday, weather permitting. We are thankful for the assistance of Thomas Taylor and others in organizing these meetings while adhering to COVID precautions.
- The messages at the meeting immediately following news of George Floyd's murder expressed anguish at inescapably witnessing the tragic and graphic death of another person of color at the hands of the police. At our June committee meeting held two days later, we dispensed with much of the agenda and instead entered a deep discussion of how we, as a committee and as a community, were called to answer, which led us to:

- join with Abington Friends and other local Friends Meetings in holding a peaceful protest/vigil at our respective Meeting Houses in honor of George Floyd and others who have been killed simply for being Black, and
- hold a called meeting on racial injustice on June 7, 2020, which was attended by about 30 CHFM members/attenders and focused on the six queries contained in Barrington Dunbar's essay, "Black Power's Challenge to Quaker Power."
- We transitioned our biweekly Bible-study group online, using the "Friendly Bible Study" method to study Corinthians I.
- Two meetings for healing were organized by Sarah Whitman and Rebecca Heider in January (in-person) and March (online). Although sparsely attended, these meetings offered the opportunity for more focused healing prayer.
- We continue to offer virtual weekly midweek meetings, led by Esther Gilbert, focusing on the new *Faith and Practice*.
- Before the pandemic, we continued to offer hymn singing before meeting for worship on 3rd Sundays, but we were not able to find a good way to replicate this activity online.

Facilitating deeper understanding of Quaker beliefs and practices

- We organized adult classes on George Fox's meditations (led by John Gallery), Sabbath Economics (led by Will O'Brien), and Vocal Ministry (led by Rebecca Heider and Dan Evans).
- The Joint Committee on End-of-Life Issues (ELI) hosted an adult class on the Mysteries of Dying Well (led by Gary Soulsman).
- We held monthly sessions that ended in February 2020 focused on considering the five "Suggested Queries for a Spiritual Self-Assessment of the Meeting" (PYM Faith and Practice, p. 214). The responses collected at these sessions formed the basis of our 2020 State of the Meeting Report.
- We offered three Quaker Path evening sessions jointly with the Outreach Committee on the topics of Quaker belief, worship, and vocal ministry. These sessions started out in-person, and the last was held online. These classes were well attended and offered a chance for new attenders and seasoned members to get to know each other through engaging in deep discussion about Quakerism.
- We rewrote the paragraph "What Quakers Believe" on the Meeting's website to give the public a clearer understanding of Quakerism.

Nurturing individuals in their ministry and spiritual growth

- We continue to support Eileen Flanagan in her minute of religious service with an anchoring committee. Her 3-year minute of religious service ends in 2021.
- We laid down one informal support committee at the Meeting member's request, and we continue with a formal support committee for one other Meeting member.

- We continue to sponsor and support Katy Hawkins's Shiné Yoga program. COVID brought its challenges, but Katy found a way to hold classes online and outside on the meetinghouse property, weather permitting.
- Although there are no new W&M-sponsored Spiritual Friendship Groups this year, at least one group continues and some new ones have sprung up organically within our community.
- We hosted the Friends for LGBTQ Concerns weekend at the meeting house on Presidents' Day weekend in February, which ended with Friends from this group joining our Sunday meeting for worship. These Friends offered rich ministry that otherwise would not have been heard. Members who attended the LGBTQ Concerns weekend said that our hosting the event made them feel seen and valued. We encourage other committees to consider such benefits when deciding whether to sponsor an outside group's use of the meetinghouse.

Bringing spiritual grounding to our business, decision making, and other community activities

- We continue to appoint elders to hold the body in the Light during meetings for worship with attention to business.
- We work with other committees in considering issues of COVID safety and budget.
- We held worship at two online memorial services for Ernie Cuff and John Bieniek.
- We wrote "In Memoriam" obituaries for beloved members Phil Jones (which was published in the *Friends Journal*) and John Bieniek.

Pursuing our own spiritual development and understanding our leadings

- We formed a joint committee with Care & Counsel on End-of-Life Issues (ELI) that is charged with developing a process for the Meeting's engagement with loved ones of a deceased member/attender regarding memorial and burial services (in person and online), developing resources for families/loved ones of the deceased, and educating the CHFM community on end-of-life issues and planning.
- We held a committee retreat at which we discussed how we incorporate spiritual practices in our ongoing daily lives. These yearly committee retreats deepen our understanding of each other on a spiritual level and help us discern our way forward in the next year.
- At every committee meeting, we worship around the query "How am I led to serve the Meeting?" and we share brief responses to the question "How fares the Spirit with thee?"

Updates from Philadelphia Quarterly Meeting January 17, 2021

1. The Quarterly meeting on 10/25/2020 under the care of Chestnut Hill, was very successful, including the First Day School program presented by Donna Pucci, the consideration of queries facilitated by Craig DeLarge, and the much appreciated, devoted work of the Chestnut Hill Zoom technical support group.
2. The nomination committee for new Philadelphia Quarterly Meeting officers consisted of the meeting reps, led by Phil Anthony and Tricia Walmsley. They have nominated Kathleen Karhnak-Glasby, CPMM, for presiding clerk; Phil Anthony, CHMM, for mentoring clerk; and John Hickey, Germantown, for recording clerk. These nominees are expected to be approved at the Jan 24 PQM business meeting
3. The Quarter is still desperately in need of a treasurer. The last treasurer noted how important a treasurer's work is saying, "Budgets are a statement of our values." Perhaps less desperately but still importantly, the Quarter would like an assistant clerk.
4. Phil will be stepping down as our Quarterly Meeting rep because of consideration as mentoring clerk. CHMM Nominating Committee will need to be on the lookout for a new Quarterly Meeting rep. Please talk to Carla or Tricia - or even Phil himself! - about what that position involves. It's a great opportunity to work across Meetings in the Quarter, get to know other Quakers and have some very interesting conversations!
5. The next Quarterly Meeting session is on Jan 24 and is under the care of Central Philadelphia MM, with a program provided by .O and Chuck Esser, "Working on Racial Healing, Equity & Justice". The business agenda will include approval (or not) of new Quarter officers, celebrating ministries across the Quarter, and imagining its future directions.
6. The Quarter is exploring the possibility of holding a workshop on being a recording clerk, which would be open to anyone interested. Details are expected at the Jan 24 meeting.
7. Finally, a word of encouragement for the CHFM hymn singers: Central Philadelphia holds hymn-singing at 10 am every Sunday, via Zoom, of course. The link is published in the CPMM newsletter for which one can sign up by contacting their office.