

2019 Annual Meeting of Friends General Conference Central Committee

October 24-27
Reisterstown, Maryland

Schedule for 2020:

Winter Executive Committee: January 31-February 1, Austin, Texas

Spring Executive Committee: May, TBD

Fall Executive Committee: September 26, location TBD

Annual Meeting of Central Committee 2020: October 22-25

Present: Colby Abazs, Mandy Abbate, Barbara Andrews, Patsy Arnold Martin, David Bantz, Frank Barch, Jean-Marie Prestwidge Barch, Marvin Barnes, Michelle Bellows, Pamela Boyce Simms, DeAnne Butterfield, Jim Cheydleur, Ethan Chiddicks, Ileana Clarke, Claire Cohen, J. Lee Cook, Kat Darnell, Janice Domanik, Nancy Duncan, Christie Duncan-Tessmer, David Etheridge, Galen Fick, Sally Freeman, Howard Frysinger, Chad Gilmartin, Linda Goldstein, Bob Goren, John Greenler, Ellie Greenler, Valerie Groszmann, Sarah Haber, David Haines, Becka Haines Rosenberg, Mary Hampton, Chris Harmer, Kody Hersh, Bette Rainbow Hoover, Shannon Isaacs, Robyn Josephs, Carrie Karhnak-Glasby, Jaya Karsemeyer Bone, Joyce Ketterer, Don Kewman, Paul Klever, Donna Kolaetis, Carolyn Lejuste, Debra Lenik, Heather Levien, Joe Magruder, Tony Martin, Sabrina McCarthy, Katrina McQuail, Douglas Mertz, Melissa Meyer, Jan Michael, Nancy Moore, Miyo Moriuchi, Helen B. Mullin, Dave Nachman, Jill Nanfeldt, Carter Nash, Mathilda Navias, Allen Olsen, Madison Paulus, Frank Perch, Laura Pickering Ford, Lynne Piersol, Anne Pomeroy, Jo Posti, Kit Potter, dest/jess(ie)/etc. Purvis, Chelle Riendeau, Ann Riggs, Jeff Rosenthal, Elaine Ruscetta, Ed Seliger, Kat Sharp, LVM Shelton, Lori Sinitzky, John Skinner, Karen Snare, Sally Weaver Sommer, Dick Steele, Ken Stockbridge, Haskell Swygert, Susan Taylor, Howard van Breemen, Dot Walizer, Regina Renee Ward, Peter West Nutting, Eppchez, Ellie Ziegler, Anne-Marie Zilliacus

Staff: Barry Crossno, Marian Dalke, Rachel Ernst Stahlhut, Audrey Greenhall, Faith Josephs, Vanessa Julye, Lee Meinicke, Olivia Pandolfi, Elizabeth Piersol Schmidt, Ruth Reber, Marta Rusek

Fifth Day (Thursday, October 24)

(73-19) Opening Worship and Message from the Presiding Clerk. The meeting began with worship.

Frank Barch, Presiding Clerk, asked Friends new to Central Committee or who have returned after an absence to rise and give their name. He also reminded the body of our continuing attention to the query, “How does this decision or work support FGC and the Religious Society of Friends in its goal to transform into an actively anti-racist faith community?” He reviewed the weekend schedule. Friends approved the draft agenda, remembering that we are in God’s time.

(74-19) Introductions. Assistant Presiding Clerk Marvin Barnes asked all Friends to introduce themselves by name, monthly meeting, yearly meeting, pronouns, and what light or sound they encountered on their travels here. Some Friends also named the indigenous peoples whose traditional land they live on. It was suggested that Friends could go to <https://native-land.ca/> for information on which indigenous people have lived on and used the different parts of North America we now inhabit.

(75-19) Report and Message from the General Secretary. Barry Crossno reported as General Secretary of FGC. He lifted up that the work of FGC is shared work and thanked Friends for attending Central Committee and taking part in the care of the Religious Society of Friends. Barry and his wife Beth became parents for the first time in May, and he also thanked Friends for their thoughts, cards, and reminders of community over the last few months.

Barry read the vision statement of FGC and reminded Friends of the query set by the Institutional Assessment Implementation Committee to guide our work. We can all return to these things to ground us as we do business this weekend.

Faith Josephs joined us as Associate Secretary for Development near the beginning of the year, and we recognized at that time that development work is always harder for a new person, since so much of development work depends on long-term relationships. In spite of this, Barry lifted up that the diligent work of Faith and others means that--including restricted contributions--we met our fundraising goal in FY2019.

Barry shared that the most recently approved FGC Blue Book is now available on the FGC website, along with annual financial reports from 2012 onward and other financial documentation. This allows for greater transparency and invites more Friends to learn about the inner workings of FGC. Transparency is an important principle for all of us to keep in mind. We will also have new eyes on our books this year, as we have switched to a new auditing firm that specializes in organizations like ours.

FGC's Committee for Discernment, Planning, and Priorities was laid down this year, and Barry expressed gratitude for the work of Friends who served on the committee, and also acknowledged we can structure the work of discernment and planning differently to provide greater visibility and opportunities for participation for members of Central Committee. We are still discerning where all the pieces of CDDP's work will land, so Friends should stay tuned.

Barry shared that although the proposed budget for FY2020 does not meet the threshold we defined as "sustainable" in 2017, we need to recognize that we are in a much different financial position than we were a few years ago, when we could envision our reserves depleted in five to seven years. Our reserves are stronger, and the extra expense in the budget reflects our values in improving benefits for part-time staff and supporting crucial work like implementation steps from the Institutional Assessment.

Barry shared learnings from Doug Gwyn, reminding us that FGC Friends in 1949 had many of the same concerns that we do today, including racial justice and outreach. They were also excited about opportunities for fellowship across the continent, and in 2019 we are overjoyed to welcome Pacific Yearly Meeting to affiliation with FGC. Barry pointed out that Friends' engagement in racial justice work seventy years ago is indicative of the long-term nature of this work, and that endowing this work through a major fundraising campaign would reflect our understanding that this is not a problem that is going away in the next few years. Similarly, he reminded us that there is a continuing hunger for outreach resources, including those focused on building intergenerational community. The opportunities provided by a campaign are opportunities to live into work that is already important to us and to the Religious Society of Friends as a whole.

Friends were reminded that in our commitment to transparency we should strive to demystify our Quaker alphabet soup. Please share the name of your committee or organization in addition to its acronym.

(76-19) Nominating Committee report. Sally Weaver Sommer reported for the Nominating Committee. Sally spoke to the difficulty of nominating work when FGC's Nominating Committee doesn't know Friends throughout FGC meetings. Please continue to send suggestions.

Ashlynn Sylvain, FGC's Database Associate, has developed a "Volunteer Interest Survey" that's on FGC's web site. Central Committee Friends are asked to use this to get this sort of information to both the Nominating Committee and particular committees. All Friends on Central Committee were asked to go on-line and fill out the survey. From FGC's Home page, click on Serve, then click on the link to the Volunteer Interest Form.

Members of the Nominating Committee stood and were named. Each member of the Nominating Committee works with two or three yearly meetings.

FGC is a complicated organization. Sally introduced the printed roster which was sent out with the advance materials for this meeting. There are a lot of details, and mistakes are made. Please check the roster and if there are mistakes let a member of Nominating Committee know.

Sally reviewed the names that Nominating Committee plans to bring for Central Committee's discernment later this weekend. She is very happy to announce that we have found someone to serve as Assistant Treasurer after a years-long search for someone to serve in this position. Sally also pointed out positions that need filling, and particularly asked Central Committees members who are not yet serving on an FGC committee to ask themselves if they could fill any of those. These Friends are invited to visit committee meetings this weekend that they are interested in and to talk to the clerk or another member of the committee to find out more. Let the committee clerk and/or a member of Nominating Committee know of your interest.

Sally asked the representatives appointed by each yearly meeting to meet this weekend and choose one member to serve on FGC's Executive Committee, and let Nominating Committee know.

(77-19) Introduction of staff. Barry Crossno invited the members of the FGC staff who are present this evening to introduce themselves and name those who aren't present this evening. Nine staff members introduced themselves in person. Barry also read a statement from Ruth Reber announcing her retirement:

It is with very mixed feelings that I have decided to retire after the 2020 Gathering. The work is deeply satisfying and has offered me the chance to grow personally, professionally and spiritually. It is however, a huge job requiring wells of energy and commitment. I will turn 70 in the year 2020 and I think it is time for a new period in my life with more space for reflection and rest. I thank you all for your work, your support and your caring.

Barry announced that we will begin a search for a new conference coordinator in November, with the hope that they will begin work in March 2020.

Friends APPROVED minuting our appreciation for all the varied and dedicated work of our staff.

Friends APPROVED minuting our appreciation for Ruth Reber for her care and commitment to nurturing a number of wonderful Gatherings. She has been invaluable in supporting our mission to become an actively anti-racist organization. Her gentle humor and grace under pressure have welcomed

Friends into the work and fellowship of Gathering. We expect a more formal minute of appreciation will be brought forward by Long Range Conference Planning Committee at a later date.

The meeting closed with announcements and a brief period of worship.

Sixth Day Morning (Friday, October 25)

(78-19) Worship and Introduction of New Arrivals. The meeting began with worship. Friends were asked to hold in the Light those who cannot be with us this weekend.

Assistant Presiding Clerk Marvin Barnes asked Friends who arrived after introductions last night to introduce themselves by name, monthly meeting, yearly meeting, and what light or sound helped get them here.

(79-19) Honoring of U.S. Representative Elijah Cummings. Frank Barch, Presiding Clerk, shared that at 10 o'clock a funeral will begin for a great man: a man of great courage, compassion, integrity, and a call to do what is right. When Freddie Gray died in police custody in Baltimore and a riot broke out, Elijah Cummings and others walked through the streets in pursuit of justice and peace. He carried a bullhorn marked, "The gentleman will not yield." Friends sang the same song that they sang on that occasion, "This Little Light of Mine" to honor his legacy.

We were reminded of the query to keep in mind today and in the future: "How does this decision support FGC in its goal to transform into an actively anti-racist faith community?"

(80-19) Honoring of First Peoples' History. It has become our practice to name the indigenous people who lived on or used the land we are meeting on before Europeans settled in North America. Frank Barch shared his discomfort with our only acknowledging the names of the indigenous tribes. He shared history of the native people who lived and used the lands in this area, including the brutal murder of indigenous people in Pennsylvania by The Paxton Boys in opposition to the pacifist stance of the Quaker-dominated government. [A copy of Frank's narrative is ATTACHED.](#)

We also watched a video about a remnant of the Lenni Lenape people who stayed in Pennsylvania practicing their culture and spirituality in secret after the rest of the tribe was forcibly moved to Oklahoma. <https://www.lenape-nation.org/2nd-project>

(81-19) Treasurer's Report. Joan Sampieri delivered the Treasurer's Report remotely via Zoom. This year we finished with a deficit of about \$107,000, which is a much higher number than our \$22,000 deficit in FY2018, but it reflects us taking opportunities this year that went above our budget in priority areas like supporting our anti-racism work. It also reflects lower Gathering income than budgeted in 2019.

Joan reflected that our investment in supporting a smooth transition in the role of Associate Secretary for Development has paid off in the achievement of 99% our budgeted contributions for the year, and the costs associated with that transition—including overlap in Faith Josephs' and Traci Hjelt Sullivan's time and higher consulting costs—will not need to be part of our budget for next year. There will be different costs associated with Development next year if we move forward with a campaign, but we have ensured that we have strong development staff in advance of that.

Friends last year requested more detailed information, including a balance sheet, be provided to Central Committee. Joan acknowledged both that it is valuable to provide this and that we may need help to understand it. Therefore she has provided a document to help Friends know what they're looking at in terms of our assets, liabilities, and equity (ATTACHED). Joan assured us that this balance sheet reflects the same kind of math we do when we do our taxes or make our own budgets, although the numbers are bigger.

The treasurer's report and balance sheet are ATTACHED.

(82-19) Finance Committee - First presentation of Proposed FY20 Budget. Frank Perch, Clerk of the Finance Committee, expressed his gratitude that the Finance Committee is working with a full roster for the first time in several years. He explained the proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2020 that the Finance Committee is bringing for Central Committee's discernment. A copy is attached. We had hoped back in 2017 that we would be able to present a budget that balances – that is, with neither an overall deficit nor a surplus. Frank explained why and which areas result in the proposed budget being one in which we expect to use more money to invest in our anti-racism work, our staff, and other priorities than would be the case with a zero balance budget.

We watched a series of slides on our finances and three possible financial scenarios during the next 15 years; one that projects that current investment returns remain the same as they have been recently; a more modest scenario; and one that includes a market crash similar to the 2008 recession. Even in the worst-case scenario, we have at least 10 years of reserves available to us without running a financial campaign.

In the question-and-answer period, we were reminded that in 2017 Central Committee minuted a directive to bring a fully sustainable budget to this body for 2020. Most Friends understand that to mean a budget with no deficit. Frank explained that one can do that by manipulating the numbers to come out to zero, but that is not how Friends in Central Committee choose to operate. What the Finance Committee, with the backing of Executive Committee, is arguing for is a more nuanced understanding of what a fully sustainable budget means. One of the things that has changed between 2015 and now is that we have been told by our financial advisors that our earlier projections were unrealistically gloomy. We have also benefited from a number of years of good market returns such that we have ended up with more money than we started with for a number of years in spite of sizeable withdrawals.

Frank explained what the Finance Committee means by a “sustainable budget.” The Finance Committee has set up a guideline of a maximum of 5% annual withdrawals from long-term unrestricted funds, which is the bulk of our money. For mid-term unrestricted funds the Finance Committee has set up a guideline of a maximum of 15% annual withdrawals until the funds are used up. For endowments, the guideline is less than a 5% annual withdrawal. Friends heard that we sometimes refer to unrestricted funds as endowment, but this does not meet the technical definition of “endowment” as funds that we do not touch apart from their income.

It was explained that the DeBurlo Group, our current major investment manager, is a Quaker firm that has socially responsible screens in place. A Friend expressed comfort with the proposed budget and mentioned the transparency of the information, explanations, and answers to questions provided. The proposed budget will be brought back for consideration Sunday morning.

Sixth Day Afternoon (Friday, October 25)

(83-19) Threshing Session: How FGC can serve as a Connector of YMs. Assistant Presiding Clerk Marvin Barnes introduced the concept of a threshing session: a session that is focused on surfacing thoughts, feelings, and concerns about a topic, not on making a decision. He invited Friends to think about what FGC's role is, could be, and should be in connecting our monthly and yearly meetings.

Friends shared many thoughts about their own experiences with their monthly and yearly meetings and with FGC. Notes of the session will be shared with Marvin for further seasoning.

Marvin closed the session by lifting up that FGC has set priorities that seem to resonate with many Friends, but how could being a better connector help us let people know that FGC wants to pursue work like racial justice.

Sixth Day Evening (Friday, October 25)

(84-19) Development Presentation. Friends gathered in worship at 7pm. Faith Josephs, Associate Secretary for Development shared that nonprofits in general have seen a trend in fundraising that greater income inequality has led to greater dependence on a few major donors. FGC can engage a wider base of smaller donors, but it requires that all of us become advocates for FGC in our home communities.

Members of the Development Committee led Central Committee in exercises that helped us model deep listening and spiritual conversation and helped us consider common needs of local meetings. Friends shared from their own spiritual experience and lifted up sometimes difficult questions. Many monthly meetings are historically white middle-class spaces and Friends noted that we need to embrace changing cultural expectations rooted in race and class privilege. This is likely to be continually uncomfortable for privileged Friends, and will require becoming used to discomfort without becoming complacent in it. Discomfort needs to stir us to action in our local meetings and in FGC.

Their materials on spiritual conversation are ATTACHED.

Seventh Day Morning (Saturday, October 26)

(85-19) Worship and Introduction of New Arrivals. As Friends arrived, they continued the worship begun in the pre-plenary open worship in the meeting room.

Presiding Clerk Frank Barch repeated a question raised last evening: If a meeting indicates that its finances are such that they're having difficulty keeping the lights on, does FGC have anything helpful to suggest? Members of the Development Committee have realized that FGC has already developed some materials to help struggling meetings fund raise more effectively. Frank invited Friends to continue to share, be creative, and to continue to respond to our constituents' needs.

Marvin Barnes, Assistant Presiding Clerk, asked Friends who arrived after introductions yesterday morning to introduce themselves by name, monthly meeting, yearly meeting, and what light or sound helped get them here.

(86-19) Institutional Assessment Implementation. The Institutional Assessment Implementation Committee is very new, and the presentation brought to Central Committee this morning is a hybrid, representing the work of Friends from the Implementation Committee, the Institutional Assessment Task Force, and the Diversity Committee. Regina Renee Ward, co-clerk of the Implementation Committee, invited members of the committee to come to the front of the room and introduce themselves. Carolyn Lejuste, co-clerk of the Implementation Committee, invited Friends to consider that anti-racism work is spiritual work.

Regina Renee led Friends in a small-group activity where we reflected on ten scenarios of racism based on the lived experience of Friends of Color (ATTACHED) and discussed how we would react and how we would like to react in each one. We considered strategies for “What to say when you don’t know what to say” and shared thoughts and noticings from our small group conversations (ATTACHED). We were reminded that acting imperfectly is human, and that practicing disrupting racism whenever we can makes confronting each incident easier. Friends also heard that the query that guides us during our Central Committee sessions can be modified to “How does this action support my goal to transform into an actively anti-racist person of faith?”

Friends APPROVED laying down the working group, with thanks for their work, and with the understanding that the standing Institutional Assessment Implementation Committee will carry it forward.

(87-19) Invitation to the 2020 Gathering. Patsy Arnold Martin and Tony Martin, 2020 Gathering co-clerks, invited Friends to the 2020 Gathering. The theme is “Way Will Open,” and the logo shows butterflies as a symbol of transformation. It will be held at Radford University in Radford, Virginia, June 28-July 4, and hosted by Baltimore Yearly Meeting. They passed out postcards for Friends to take back to their yearly meetings, and also to send to people to invite them to attend. They shared their vision for the Gathering:

“We want the Gathering to be a nurturing place where all Friends, no matter where they are in their journeys, feel welcome, accepted, and loved so that they can be brave enough to be vulnerable, to take risks, and to trust that Spirit will be present to lead them in the next step, whatever that is. We envision this for each of us as individuals, and for us as a body.”

Seventh Day Afternoon (Saturday, October 26)

(88-19) Feasibility Study Presentation & Responses. Barry Crossno, FGC General Secretary, provided background on the feasibility study. FGC has begun work with David Hoeksema, an FUM Friend and professional fundraising consultant, who has recently worked on a campaign with *Friends Journal* and comes highly recommended. A working group of major donors and others close to FGC met recently to consider draft campaign materials, which will be refined for use in presentations to meetings and individual Friends over the next few months. Although the working group had copious questions and feedback about the materials, Barry was heartened by their support and interest in FGC and the campaign’s goals, and he and Faith are excited to move forward with presentations and interviews over the next few months.

Barry presented slides highlighting FGC’s concrete impact in 2019 and individual feedback about the impact of FGC’s programs and services. The quantitative measures are important, but personal feedback shows the spiritual value of FGC in the lives of Friends and our strong relationships with yearly meetings.

Barry spoke about the recent history of FGC and the boom and bust cycle created by campaigns with short-term goals. Even when we plan projects with limited terms, laying them down creates heartache and usually results in difficult staff restructuring. The campaign under consideration now is more focused on long-term goals and endowing priority projects. The focus of the campaign will mirror our approved priorities:

- FGC Gathering
- Ministry on Racism
- Religious Education and Spiritual Deepening
- Youth and Young Adult Ministries
- Connecting and Communicating

He reviewed the proposed campaign goals in each area, highlighting how much would be endowment vs. short-term funding. He explained that larger short-term line items often represent limited-term staff positions, e.g. supporting a revamp of our website.

Our Quaker testimonies are more important in the world than ever, and Barry expressed the hope that strengthening FGC through a campaign will enable all of us to co-create a better Religious Society of Friends and a better world.

The campaign represents the identified priorities of Central Committee, and although it is important to generate excitement from major donors, Barry is clear that major donors cannot change the priorities of the campaign or the organization. If a major donor's leadings do not align with the prioritized work of FGC, their support is probably destined for other organizations.

Barry explained that bequests are counted as pledges with the understanding that they may not come in for a very, very long time. Friends can give annuities or some types of property instead of simple monetary gifts, and FGC is happy to work with donors on creative giving. Campaigns often result in restricted endowments, and we will ensure that these restrictions do not hinder our flexibility as an organization in the future.

A Friend lifted up unease with the idea of dependence on endowments, which accrue income through interest and investment, validating the methodology of the stock market and the capitalist values of the society we live in, where hoarding of wealth by some leaves many alienated and financially insecure. We should always leave space for concerns like this about how we live our values, both personally and in FGC.

Friends APPROVED empowering Executive Committee to receive and season the results of the feasibility study during their spring meeting and approve moving forward with the campaign if so led. In advance of this meeting, the results of the feasibility study will be made available to all members of Central Committee for feedback. Executive Committee is empowered to approve adjustments to the goal amounts based on the feasibility study and Central Committee feedback, understanding that the campaign priorities reflect the Spirit-led discernment of Central Committee and that the campaign will assist us in becoming an actively anti-racist organization by supporting long-term anti-racism work.

Many members of Executive Committee have heard the concerns raised on the floor today and will hold them in our hearts during discernment around the campaign. Our hope is that a campaign will generate largely unrestricted contributions that can be put towards the areas of greatest need, but should the feasibility study reveal that certain areas of work are less likely to be fully funded, Executive Committee will consider that tenderly but without fear. We should not approach a major campaign with a mindset of scarcity but with excitement about what is possible for the future of FGC.

(89-19) Christian & Interfaith Relations Committee. Ann Riggs, co-clerk of the committee, reported on the recent Parliament of World Religions, which Dorothy Day attended, and the World Council of Churches, sharing some of the work these groups are doing on anti-racism, concern for indigenous people, and other ministries.

The National Council of Churches' recent Christian Unity Gathering focused on anti-racism. Carter Nash, Vanessa Julye, and Ann Riggs represented FGC; and Christie Duncan-Tessmer, the General Secretary of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, was also present. Anti-racism is an ongoing concern for the National Council of Churches, which includes many historically black churches. A new initiative was launched April 4, 2018, the anniversary of the assassination of Martin Luther King. About 20 Quakers from Baltimore and Philadelphia Yearly Meetings participated in a rally on the National Mall in Washington, DC as part of the launch. This initiative has the theme "Awaken, Confront, Transform". It acknowledges that any of us might have racist feelings or thoughts. Using a positive approach, the aim is to work together to dismantle structures of racism.

Ann shared about areas in which Friends have been collaborating with other ecumenical bodies.

CIRC will nominate two Friends as FGC representatives to attend Friends United Meeting's Triennial Gathering in July 2020 in Kisumu, Kenya. Other Friends are also welcome. Ann noted that FUM uses Everence, a financial services company that FGC also works with, to provide a service of advising meetings that are facing difficult finances, and FGC might want to look into doing the same.

Currently, CIRC is dependent on individuals' and groups' direct contributions to fund committee travel. Ann reported that the morale of the people on the committee is very low due to financial constraints.

Friends received the report with thanks. The committee's written report is ATTACHED.

(90-19) Committee for Nurturing Ministries. Jean-Marie Prestwidge Barch reported as outgoing clerk of the committee. She led the body in singing "Wade In The Water" and spoke about empathy. Connection to each other is hardwired in our brains, and our emotions mirror those of people around us. Our ability to "other" people, including people of different races, comes from thought, not biology, and certainly not from faith. When we trust in the deep empathetic "unknowing" of our faith, we can wade into dangerous and uncomfortable waters to address systemic racism. And we can hold the hands of others who are not yet ready to leave the shore.

Jean-Marie welcomed Pacific Yearly Meeting into affiliation with FGC to enthusiastic silent applause. Having Pacific Yearly Meeting Friends in our midst is a joy, and we are excited to see what will come from this new connection.

Jean-Marie lifted up the part of our Ministry on Racism that supports Friends of Color in living in Quaker faith and community, which is not always easy in majority white spaces. A gathering for Friends of Color and their families will take place November 8-10 at the Maria Kaupas Center in Chicago, and registration is still open.

The Bayard Rustin Fund supports travel by Friends of Color to FGC events, but Jean-Marie lifted up that this is not the only area where offering scholarship would benefit our ministry on racism. She presented the following minute from CNM:

The CNM unites in support of testing support for the establishment of a new endowment, to benefit our Ministry on Racism. Such an endowment would provide broad support for anti-racism work, including, but not limited to, program development and staffing. Although we recognize the need for considerable education about her history and significance, Friends

approved the possibility of calling this endowment the Mahala Ashley Dickerson Fund. This endowment could be funded through legacy gifts or immediate donations. The Mahala Ashley Dickerson Fund would serve as a companion and complement to the currently existing Bayard Rustin Fund, for which we would continue to raise money, both during the campaign and beyond.

As we look towards shaping the goals of the campaign, we have the opportunity to create a home for some of the money raised. The fund would be administered in part by CNM as the Bayard Rustin Fund is now. Jean-Marie explained that Mahala Ashley Dickerson was an African-American attorney who was admitted to the bars of Alabama, Indiana, and Alaska in the 1950s, often the first African-American woman to be admitted, and was a founding member of Alaska Friends Conference.

Friends APPROVED the establishment of the Mahala Ashley Dickerson Fund.

(91-19) Friends Fiduciary Fund. Christie Duncan-Tessmer, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting General Secretary, serves on the board of Friends Fiduciary Fund and reported details of the social responsibility screens they use before they invest in a company in response to interest from the body. The board is entirely Quaker, and includes Friends from all across the country; the executive secretary is also Quaker. Friends Fiduciary works with other shareholders to work for changes in a number of the companies they do invest in.

First Day Morning (Sunday, October 27)

(92-19) Nominating Committee. Susan Taylor and Nancy Duncan, members of the committee, shared a minute of appreciation for retiring committee clerks and Central Committee members. The retiring Friends were asked to stand and give their names and committees.

Truly there is no way to express our gratitude for these Friends who have given Spirit, time and treasure to Central Committee. We say this knowing, that without the contribution of these Friends, Friends General Conference could not exist. While these gifts sustain us today, those whom they have faithfully mentored and guided will continue to sustain us for years to come. We thank you Friends, for each of your unique contributions. We hope that you leave with your lives enriched by this experience.

Sally Weaver Sommer, clerk, presented a roster of Friends for us to consider. She noted that it is still a work in progress, and the Nominating Committee is working on filling the rest of the positions. This is being presented as a “consent” or “unity” agenda, which means that Central Committee is asked to approve or not approve the slate as presented without any changes. Friends APPROVED.

(93-19) Final consideration of the Fiscal Year 2020 Budget. Presiding Clerk Frank Barch introduced consideration of the 2020 budget by explaining some history of our budgeting. We used to “balance” FGC’s budget through significant draws from our funds each year that got our bottom line to zero. This practice risked depleting our assets, and Adult Young Friends and others lifted up a need to keep FGC going for future generations through careful financial stewardship. This spurred Finance Committee to adopt a policy on “sustainable” draws from our funds, where we calculated acceptable draws based on a percentage of the funds’ value on a given date. Frank pointed out that although this is a repeatable system, the snapshot of the fund’s value used may represent a low point or a high point in the fund’s balance for the year.

Finance Committee Clerk Frank Perch reminded Friends that a budget is a plan that reflects our priorities, based on a series of inputs about how we need to use our resources to effectuate our priorities. We can invest our funds in projects that sustain Friends and our Religious Society, or we can hold onto our treasure to ensure it is available for the future. Budgeting is a process of balancing these

concerns. The proposed budget includes sustainable draws in that reasonable projections show it does not endanger our future while funding our priority work, although it does not meet the mathematical formula of “sustainability”. This budget supports us in becoming an actively anti-racist faith community by supporting staffing and programming for Implementation Assessment and Ministry on Racism.

Budget cuts have created a legacy of loss and fear in FGC, and we still mourn beloved programs that no longer exist, but responding to that loss has not driven us back to uncontrolled spending. Our budgeting process is methodical and Finance Committee looks with great seriousness at the long-term implications of each year’s budget.

Friends APPROVED the draft FY2020 budget. One Friend is recorded as standing aside.

(94-19) Institutional Assessment Implementation Committee Minutes. Members of the Institutional Assessment Implementation Committee came to the front of the room to present two minutes from the Committee, consideration that was held over from yesterday due to wordsmithing. Committee member Sarah Haber read the following statement, addressing the way that worship of the written word is used to enforce white supremacy:

We’d like to start by reminding everyone that love is a verb.

Delivering this message is an act of love.

The Institutional Assessment Implementation Committee met to consider Central Committee’s request that the wording of the query “How does this decision support FGC in its goal to transform into an actively anti-racist faith community?” be reworded to include the phrase “and work”. The Committee met, discussed, and came to a decision that we will not be offering up new or different wording for this query. The word choice is deliberate and, aside from the time frame, was crafted with great care by the Task Force. To clarify, we feel that the use of the phrase “and work” is far less specific and therefore allows room for us to look away from the discomfort that naturally occurs when doing anti-racism work.

Anti-racism work asks that we address oppressive institutions, and the word “decision” directly address these institutions.

The query is a tool to be used before a decision is made. It can be assumed that through Quaker process a decision would be the result of work. However, the decision is the part of the work that is concise, actionable, and is intended to further anti-racist work. We encourage friends to understand the Spirit of what is being asked in the query, and to use this understanding to adjust this query to your specific work if needed.

We’re also offering a few noticings.

Due to the distraction of wordsmithing, the minute was not addressed. The minute we asked that the body approve was to apply the query to all future work, as it was already worded and approved by this body last year.

The reaction to the original minute last year is parallel to that exhibited this year, where the Task Force, or in the present case the Institutional Assessment Implementation Committee, was asked to take leave and return to the body with a revised minute. We’d like the body to recognize that this pattern is white supremacy culture in action. Specifically, this is worship of the written word, a tool that is used to uphold white supremacy culture. If you need clarification on this, we

encourage you to consider this as an opportunity to do some anti-racism work by educating yourself and Googling the phrase.

We ask, that as the committee doing this work, that you will continue leaning into discomfort by trusting that we have done due process on what we are bringing to you to approve. Wordsmithing and an unwillingness to answer the question are symptoms of the discomfort and uneasiness experienced when doing anti-racism work that this body is experiencing.

We're offering a metaphor to provide a positive way to think about discomfort.

Imagine you're standing on the edge of a cliff looking over at the view below. Living in discomfort is standing on that edge. Safety and "the way things have always been done" is at your back, and the unknown future is at the bottom of the cliff. We're not asking you to jump off the edge. We're simply asking you to stand, look at the view, and not turn your back on it, no matter how beautiful and terrifying you find what you're faced with.

Lean into that discomfort, because we have one more minute for you to consider.

The committee then brought forward this minute, unchanged from the version appearing in the committee's written report, to extend the use of the "anti-racist faith community" query beyond 2019 into all future FGC work:

Central Committee resolves that in all FGC decision-making processes, starting immediately, each body shall answer the following query with respect to each decision, "How does this decision support FGC in its goal to transform into an actively anti-racist faith community?"

Friends APPROVED this minute.

The second proposed minute asks monthly and yearly meetings to collect demographic information and has been modified from the version that appeared in the committee's written report following conversation and clarification during Central Committee:

Central Committee resolves to ask Monthly Meetings and Yearly Meetings to collect age and race demographics of Friends. This information will assist meetings in assessing their progress in becoming anti-racist faith organizations. Similarly, FGC will use this information in their nomination process to identify, welcome, and support friends of color as full participants in FGC, its governing body, and structures.

Friends APPROVED this minute.

The Implementation Committee will consider how we can receive and use this information responsibly and productively in the future without putting additional stress on staff. Friends with feedback or suggestions about this are invited to contact the committee clerks directly.

Friends are grateful for the faithful and continuing work of the Implementation Committee.

(95-19) Noticers. Frank Barch, Presiding Clerk, raised the idea of "noticers," of people who speak the things that they have noticed in our interactions with one another that we can learn from. Friends agreed to appoint noticers for our Central Committee meeting next year who would give us feedback at the end of our sessions. Friends also approved having the Clerk work with the Implementation Committee to provide education on how to be a noticer and how to receive noticings.

(96-19) Development Committee. Presiding Clerk Frank Barch and outgoing Development Committee clerk Doug Mertz invited Central Committee Friends to donate to FGC, including in-kind contributions and reporting of unreimbursed expenses. Being able to cite a high participation rate from Central Committee is helpful in conversations with major donors, and Friends should not be concerned that the gifts they can offer are too small. Even a dollar is helpful. Unreimbursed expense forms are available on the FGC website.

Development Committee's written report is ATTACHED.

(97-19) Long Range Conference Planning Committee. We learned from David Haines, committee clerk, that the committee already has access to some of the data from the marketing research we did on the Gathering. He reported that a number of first-time attenders do not come back because they did not feel connected, that many High Schoolers do not make the transition to Adult Young Friends (AYF), and that many Adult Young Friends do not make the transition from the AYF community to the general population of attenders. The committee is exploring ways to address these issues. A major help for first-time attenders is for a returning attender to welcome them and check in with during the week.

The committee's written report is ATTACHED.

(98-19) Publications & Distribution Committee. Nancy Moore, clerk of Publications & Distribution, introduced members of the committee, who handed out postcards. Nancy asked Friends to visualize Friends using bookstore resources: a child curled up in a corner reading a book that gets at the heart of Quaker faith and reflects our anti-racist values; an older Friend increasing the font size on an e-book purchased from FGC to engage with Quaker texts in an accessible way; a small group in a monthly meeting reading together to deepen their understanding of what it means to be a Friend or to learn something new; a group of Friends empowered and grounded through reading to do anti-racism work in their local meeting; Central Committee supporting FGC's Ministry of the Word from this very room.

The postcards handed out by the committee advertise an upcoming publication: *The Kendal Sparrow*, a historical novel about the life of Elizabeth Fletcher, a young adult from George Fox's time. Nancy invited Friends to be ministers of the word by sharing these postcards in their home meetings.

(99-19) Communications Policy, Strategy, and Infrastructure Committee. David Bantz, committee clerk, gave a brief report highlighting points in the committee's advance report. Marta Rusek, FGC's Communications Manager, reported the large number of people who have visited FGC's web site and other media outlets.

We need to create a new web site before the Drupal software version our current website uses becomes obsolete. The committee is committed to helping FGC find a new platform that is sustainable into the future and meets the needs of FGC and our constituents. All of the committee's deliberations about technology are being made under the weight of the concern of helping FGC become an anti-racist faith community. It was suggested that CPSI open itself to input from others at this point in its exploration of a new platform. David suggested a video conference of those interested. The details will be worked out following the rise of Central Committee sessions.

The [Committee](#) and [Communications staff](#) reports are ATTACHED.

(100-19) Minute of Appreciation to Pearlstone Conference Center. FGC Central Committee is grateful for the warm hospitality of Pearlstone Conference Center. We arrived in glorious sunshine on

Thursday and found ourselves welcomed by the glow of the changing leaves. We have appreciated the kindness and friendliness of the center’s staff, who told us about the workings of the farm, sat with us in fellowship at various points in the weekend, and met our questions and concerns with helpful attention. We are grateful for the goats whose heads we scratched and the rooster speaking his truth at all hours of the day. We appreciated the variety of food at our meals and the piles of farm-fresh vegetables that often stole the show. The patient reminders of kosher law throughout the weekend helped us live respectfully in your space. Our work has sometimes been difficult, but doing it in this mindfully-created place steeped in Divine love has buoyed us. We look forward to seeing you next year.

Resource Documents

[All reports presented at the 2019 Annual Meeting of Central Committee](#) can be found on the Central Committee website.

<https://www.fgcquaker.org/cloud/central-committee-friends-general-conference/resources/advance-reports-2019-annual-meeting>.