



Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Spring Continuing Sessions 2024: Called to Healing

Meeting the morning of Saturday, March 9th, 2024 both in person at Arch Street Meeting House and via Zoom

We settled into worship at 9:00. Melissa Rycroft, Presiding Clerk, acknowledged that we are all on land that has been the home of native peoples. She urged us to find what indigenous people had lived where we are by going to the website <https://native-land.ca>. Then she encouraged us to recognize our collective path and to do better in the future.

At 9:35, Presiding Clerk, Melissa Rycroft welcomed everyone—in person and on Zoom. People at the table with Melissa introduced themselves including the Rising Clerk – Nikki Mosgrove, Recording Clerk – Jim Herr, and General Secretary – Christie Duncan-Tessmer.

Melissa then asked the Elders to introduce themselves. Those in person included George Rubin, Terry Whiteford, Susan Elliot, and Yelena Forrester. An Elder was present on Zoom – Ed Solenberger. Members on the Pastoral Care Team introduced themselves.

In the Meeting House, there were two Ushers.

Melissa recognized the potential challenges with our technology. There were quite a number of people at remote locations, and she asked everyone to be patient and work together. She urged everyone on Zoom to look at the documents on line.

Melissa Rycroft then gave us a brief overview of the meeting for worship with attention to the business of the Yearly Meeting here today. She urged us all to raise our hands if we need to ask a question and to be patient with the complications brought about by the hybrid nature of our meeting.

In a follow up to Fall Continuing Sessions, Melissa told us about a conversation she had with a concerned group of Friends concerning our lobbying policy. Subsequently she talked to members of Administrative Council several times and have found this subject to be so important she placed it first on the agenda today. Jeanne Elberfeld, from Administrative Council, led us in a brief exercise to release tension and help us center in this space. She acknowledged that there is passion held in this area. Jeanne shared that Administrative Council

has decided to suspend the lobbying policy until there is time for everyone to be heard on the matter. She emphasized that it is still the case that no one can speak for the Yearly Meeting unless the body has approved that. Jeanne learned from the Anasazi Nation that when our hearts are at peace, we can be open to other people. When our hearts are at war, we close ourselves to others and create a dyad—us versus them. The only power we have is our choice to have our hearts at peace and wait for the other. Jeanne demonstrated this concept using two chairs. Listening is an act of love. We need to remember who we are.

A Friend noted that we need to be present with our conflict. Several people expressed appreciation for the concern for this issue. A Friend urged us to have an ad hoc committee to be responsible for considering and recommending next steps, and another Friend expressed agreement. A Friend noted that with a large challenge like this, time must be granted to resolve it and come to unity. He noted that the challenges with this subject are not just administrative but also are spiritually profound. He pleaded with us to have faith in the Yearly Meeting. Jeanne acknowledged that we need to take time and apologized for not listening to the individual with this passionate concern. Another Friend expressed a need to advocate as an expression of our faith. Jeanne said we must come to Unity, hearing all voices. She said she will listen with a heart of peace. An individual noted that the advocacy policy must come to the Meeting at Large for approval. Tom Zemaitis interim clerk of Administrative Council said he cannot predict how this will go forward, but the Council is determined to take the time necessary to arrive at unity. A Friend told us there continues to be a challenge to bring more people into our group. A Friend reminded us about Friends Committee on National Legislation where lobbying is promoted.

Melissa thanked Jeanne and Tom for their time and effort here this morning.

Melissa told us about the April 11 Threshing Session on Structures and Needs. She invites everyone to join her in this process. There are Monthly and Quarterly Meetings that are struggling, and not sure if they are able to do what they are “supposed” to do. Melissa told us this is really about how people can come into community together. She has heard from individuals that their Monthly Meetings are “failing” because they can no longer have meetings for business on a monthly basis. The Threshing Session will not be a time to decide what is right, but to share what we can do to help everyone as they look for ways to find community. Melissa asked us to join this Zoom threshing session, 7:00-8:30, April 11. And she urged us to bring others to the session who may have left for one reason or another.

Minutes to this point were read, corrected, and approved.

We took a brief break, and when we came back, clerk urged us to not have other conversations in the room during the time business is being considered.

Clerk told us that in 2014 we approved our strategic directions as a yearly meeting. Now we must consider the implementation of these strategic directions—everybody, including Monthly Meetings, staff, and individuals. So today we are going to focus on one these directions.

Christie Duncan-Tessmer first reminded us of all 5 strategic directions – Connecting, Belonging, Witnessing (on racial justice and climate change), Communicating and Functioning. For each of these there are two ways to consider them. Connecting includes increasing Meetings’ interactions with each other. This requires that they get to know each other. We went into small groups to discuss this. Christie urged us to look where we want to go, not where we don’t want to. Look for where God is in the interconnectedness, and consider what success might look like.

One of the groups suggested that Quarterly Meeting can consider bringing Monthly Meetings together to consider particular projects on which to focus. Another person hoped that people could build curiosity about other Meetings. A Friend expressed that interconnectedness can include all ages. A group talked about activities such as a concert and a talk by Ben Pink Dandelion that can help with interconnectedness.

Then Christie urged us to consider in our small groups what steps might be needed to get to the success. She told us one of the possible steps might be to use the PYM calendar. A Friend told us that a personal invitation is a first step. A Friend suggested that we develop written pieces to talk about how our Meetings are interesting. A Friend suggested that two Quarters close to each other can work together and possibly merge. Another group said first look at what has worked and what has not in the past. Another point is to debrief. A person suggested talking to people who have had success. A Friend said to consider what the expectations might rise to and recognize that discomfort might be a necessary step.

Christie urged everyone to send her all the ideas generated today.

Sean Connolly brought us the annual report for the Arch Street Meeting House Preservation Trust. This organization interprets and preserves this space. In 2023, 52,000 people visited. Over 90% have not been Quakers. This is the first place many come in contact with Quakerism. This building is the home of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting and it is important to preserve it. The Preservation Trust is set up as a supporting organization of PYM and thus is not a religious organization and is therefore eligible apply for grants that otherwise wouldn’t be available for Arch Street. George McNealy, member of the Preservation Trust and co-clerk of the Trust’s capital campaign, told us that the Trust is starting a capital campaign. This will be used to install a fire suppression system, update the heating and cooling system, replace the lighting in this room and update the entire electrical system, and to update the exhibits inside the building. The objective is to raise \$4.7 million to cover all of these. Arch Street will invite others to a

meeting to help this campaign get moving. A Friend suggested that this is not the only home of PYM. Sean said that over \$1 million has been raised. He said it is important to avoid delaying these maintenance issues. A Friend was concerned that raising this amount of money for a building will be violating Friends integrity.

Then announcements were made by Tara Rubinstein who urged us all to be aware of the change to our Annual Sessions. They will be two days immediately following the FGC Annual Gathering at Haverford College, July 6 & 7. Tara further urged us to keep paying attention to the calendar. For instance, there is a process now to strengthen the Young Friends program. She also told us about the George Fox birthday party June 29th here at Arch Street.

Approval of minutes. With gratitude.

Meeting closed with a period of silence.

Respectfully submitted,
Jim Herr

Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Spring Continuing Sessions 2024: Called to Healing

Meeting the morning of Sunday, March 10, 2024 via Zoom

Welcome. Presiding Clerk Melissa Rycroft welcomed Friends to join in worship.

Our spring and fall continuing sessions are longer in order to make the summer session shorter. We hope that Friends will consider attending The Friends General Conference Gathering in June 30- July 6 at Haverford College, followed by Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Annual Sessions July 6-7 at the same location.

The Friends serving as elders are Yelena Forrester, Ed Solenberger, George Rubin, and Susan Elliott. Meg Barney and Carter Nash are serving as our Pastoral Care contacts.

The report from the Nominating Council was presented by George Schaefer, clerk.

George presented a slide show about the purpose of the council, which is to nominate Friends to serve on Yearly Meeting councils and outside organizations. They are working to increase participation of our thirteen quarterly meetings.

The nominees for representatives to FWCC, Josh Ponter, Amy Duckett Wagner, and Peterson Toscano were approved.

The Administrative Council nominee, Terry Cooke, was approved.

The releases and completed terms for four elders, Phil Anthony, Ed Solenberger, Sarah Miller, and Robert Dockhorn, were approved.

Clerk recognized the Friends who have served as our Elders.

Friends accepted with deep gratitude.

The release of Quaker Life Council member Wade Wright was accepted.

The release of two at largemembers from the Nominating Council, Suzanne Day and Michael Lane were accepted with gratitude for their years of service.

The Nominating Council grieves the passing of beloved Friends Phil Anthony and Suzanne Day.

Presiding Clerk Melissa Rycroft recognized and celebrated the years of dedicated service that both Phil Anthony and Suzanne Day have offered to the Yearly Meeting. They will be missed.

The Nominating Council also finds representatives to other organizations such as FCNL, AFSC and FWCC.

FWCC World Plenary session will take place in South Africa this year. PYM representatives to the Plenary are Amy Duckett Wagner and Peterson Toscano.

Friends received the Nominating Council report with gratitude.

The report from the publication “Creating a Climate Playbook for Climate Action” was presented by Salvador Orellana.

The entire Yearly Meeting cares deeply about our corporate witnessing on climate and anti-racism.

It is all of our work. Salvador distributed two hard copies of playbook pamphlet yesterday to our monthly meetings. On April 22, join a Zoom meeting to hear how to use the playbook in your family, monthly meeting and quarterly meeting. Two more meetings will take place on May 29 and October 10.

The report on the progress of a second Playbook publication focusing on anti-racism was presented by Salvador Orellana.

Friends can participate in the creation of this pamphlet by submitting content via an online form. Clerk thanked Friends for their hard work on these Playbooks.

The report on Thread Gatherings was presented by Director of Program & Religious Life Melinda Wenner-Bradley and General Secretary Christie Duncan-Tessmer.

There are five threads that weave through all of our meetings: governance and stewardship, ministry and care, outreach and communications, peace and social justice, and religious education. There are gatherings on topics related to each thread – called a thread gathering. Participants report that they are uplifting events. Connecting and learning together builds connections between meetings. Generally, two to three thread gatherings take place each year. Planning for a thread gathering for ministry and care and peace and social justice is underway. Take aways from these gatherings were that Friends want to stay connected and share resources on these topics. Christie Duncan-Tessmer reported that we are currently working on a tech platform to make it easy for individuals to connect to each other. Before we implement it, we will beta-test it on Gaggle email. We invite Friends to participate so that different skills can be explored. Friends have already shared that they want the way we connect to be a safe place, with a mutuality built into it.

How can we, our PYM community, create this welcoming space so that it meets all of our needs?

To share info with Christie Cduncan-tessmer@pym.org or Salvador, Sorellana@pym.org

A Friend asked if there is a document we can see first? More detailed information will be sent soon.

A Friend asked how to make our properties more accessible to Friends with disabilities, especially in our historic meetinghouses. For many people, air conditioning in the summer is necessary for medical reasons. A recent thread gathering focused on meeting house property, including burial grounds. Caln Quarterly Meeting at Camp Swatara has utilized Google Docs and the same Zoom link for all meetings, which has made it easier to connect.

Friends approved the minutes with gratitude.

Respectfully submitted,
Sally McQuail
Recording Clerk



Nominating Council Report

Nominating Council Members (For informational purposes)

Name	Monthly Meeting	Quarter	
Ron Inskeep	Gwynedd	Abington	Quarter Representative
Terry Christensen	Newtown	Bucks	Quarter Representative
		Burlington	Quarter Representative
John Christman	Lancaster	Caln	Quarter Representative
		Chester	Quarter Representative
Serita Spadoni	Birmingham	Concord	Quarter Representative
		Haddonfield	Quarter Representative
		Haverford	Quarter Representative
Jeff Rosenthal	Central Philadelphia	Philadelphia	Quarter Representative
Carleton Crispin	Woodbury	Salem	Quarter Representative
		Southern	Quarter Representative
		Upper Susquehanna	Quarter Representative
		Western	Quarter Representative
			At Large
			At Large
Nancy Robbins	Third Haven	Southern	At Large
Meg Barney	Providence	Chester	At Large
George Schaefer	Abington	Abington	At Large
Jim Waddington	Salem	Salem	At Large
John Marquette	Lehigh Valley	Bucks	At Large

Note: The complete current roster of Nominating Council is provided on the first page of this report for informational purposes. At-large members of Nominating are appointed by the Administrative Council; Quarter Representative members are appointed at their quarterly meetings.

Appointments

Representatives to FWCC			
NAME	MONTHLY MEETING	QUARTERLY MEETING	TERM END
Josh Ponter	Haddonfield	Haddonfield	2027 (1)
Amy Duckett Wagner	Fallsington	Bucks	2027 (1)
Peterson Toscano	Millville	Upper Susquehanna	2025 (1)

Administrative Council			
NAME	MONTHLY MEETING	QUARTERLY MEETING	TERM END
Terry Cooke	Haverford	Haverford	2027 (1)

Releases and Completed Terms

Elders			
NAME	MONTHLY MEETING	QUARTERLY MEETING	TERM END
Phil Anthony	Chestnut Hill	Philadelphia	2024 (1)
Ed Solenberger	Millville	Upper Susquehanna	2024 (1)
Sarah Miller	Mount Holly	Burlington	2026 (2)

Robert Dockhorn	Green Street	Philadelphia	2024 (3)
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Quaker Life Council			
NAME	MONTHLY MEETING	QUARTERLY MEETING	TERM END
Wade Wright	Lancaster	Caln	2025 (1)

Nominating Council (For informational purposes only)			
NAME	MONTHLY MEETING	QUARTERLY MEETING	TERM END
Suzanne Day	Westfield	Haddonfield	2024 (1)
Michael Lane	Westfield	Haddonfield	2024 (1)

Full Position Listing (For informational purposes only)

Officers

Name	Monthly Meeting	Quarter	Term End
Melissa Rycroft – Clerk	Upper Susquehanna	USQ	2024 (1)
Nikki Mosgrove – Rising Clerk	Trenton	Burlington	2024 (1)
Jim Herr – Recording Clerk	Lancaster	Caln	2024 (2)
Sally McQuail – Recording Clerk	Downingtown	Caln	2024 (1)
Treasurer (Vacant)			
Assistant Treasurer (Vacant)			

Administrative Council

Name	Monthly Meeting	Quarter	Term End
Tom Zemaitis	Moorestown	Haddonfield	2026 (2)
Kruskal Hewitt	Media	Chester	2025 (1)
Neil Holzman	Camden	Southern	2025 (1)
Carter Nash	Harrisburg	Caln	2025 (1)
Jeanne Elberfeld	Reading	Caln	2026 (2)
John Marquette	Lehigh Valley	Bucks	2026 (2)
Chuck Devers	Salem	Salem	2026 (2)
Cathy Toner	Downingtown	Caln	2026 (2)
Andrew Anderson	MMFP	Philadelphia	2026 (1)
Jim Waddington	Salem	Salem	2025 (2)
Vacant 1 (Nominated)			
Vacant 2			
Vacant 3			
Vacant 4			
Vacant 5			

Quaker Life Council

Name	Monthly Meeting	Quarter	Term End
Jean-Marie Barch	Schuylkill	Caln	2024 (1)
Meg Barney	Providence	Chester	2026 (1)
Sue Dietz	Medford	Haddonfield	2025 (2)
Susan Claggett	Third Haven	Southern	2025 (1)
Rose Ketterer	Newton	Haddonfield	2024 (1)
Robert Greene	Princeton	Burlington	2026 (2)
Michael Moulton	Germantown	Philadelphia	2026 (1)
Debbie Murray-Sheppard	Wilmington	Concord	2026 (1)

George Schaefer	Abington	Abington	2026 (1)
Guinevere Janes	At-Large	Philadelphia	2026 (2)
Kathryn Pettus	Third Haven	Southern	2026 (1)
Emily Blanck	Mickleton	Salem	2026 (1)
Vacant 1			
Vacant 2			
Vacant 3			

Elders

Name	Monthly Meeting	Quarter	Term End
Bethann Morgan	Buckingham	Bucks	2025 (2)
Susan Eliot	Chester	Chester	2026 (1)
Anthony Stover	Germantown	Philadelphia	2026 (1)
George Rubin	Medford	Haddonfield	2026 (2)
Terri Whiteford	Downingtown	Caln	2026 (1)
Yelena Forrester	Chester	Chester	2024 (1)
Vacant 1			
Vacant 2			
Vacant 3			
Vacant 4			

Climate Witness Stewards

Name	Monthly Meeting	Quarter	Term End
Andrew Anderson	MMFP	Philadelphia	2024 (1)
Jackie Bonomo	State College	Upper Susquehanna	2024 (1)
Ruth Darlington	Medford	Haddonfield	2025 (1)
Patricia Finley	Old Haverford	Haverford	2025 (1)
Robert Greene	Princeton	Burlington	2026 (1)
Vacant 1			
Vacant 2			

Representatives to AFSC

Name	Monthly Meeting	Quarter	Term End
Vacant 1			
Vacant 2			
Vacant 3			

Representatives to FCNL

Name	Monthly Meeting	Quarter	Term End
Sylvia Bronner	Haverford	Haverford	2024 (1)

Bill Cozzens	Germantown	Germantown	2026 (2)
Deb Hejl	Gwynedd	Abington	2024 (2)
Joe Laird	Downingtown	Caln	2026 (2)
Stefanie Morgan	Trenton	Burlington	2026 (3)
Lynn Oberfield	Providence	Chester	2026 (2)
Steve Olshevski	Radnor	Haverford	2024 (2)
Louis Pilla	Radnor	Haverford	2024 (1)
Judith Innskeep	Gwynedd	Abington	2026 (1)
Scott Duncan	Wicomico	Southern	2024

Representatives to FGC

Name	Monthly Meeting	Quarter	Term End
Keith Barch	Schuylkill	Caln	2026 (2)
Frank Barch	Schuylkill	Caln	2025 (2)
Howard Frysinger	Downingtown	Caln	2024 (2)
Sarah Haber	Newtown	Bucks	2024 (1)
Carrie Karhnak-Glasby	CPMM	Philadelphia	2025 (1)
Carter Nash	Harrisburg	Caln	2025 (2)
Laura Pickering Ford	Harrisburg	Caln	2025 (2)
Jeff Rosenthal	CPMM	Philadelphia	2025 (2)
Melissa Rycroft	Pennsdale	Upper Susquehanna	2025 (2)
Carl Stanton	Chester	Chester	2025 (2)
Anthony Stover	Germantown	Philadelphia	2026 (2)

Representatives to FWCC

Name	Monthly Meeting	Quarter	Term End
Joan Broadfield	Chester	Chester	2026 (2)
Jeff Keith	CPMM	Philadelphia	2024 (1)
Jack Waltz	Mount Holly	Burlington	2026 (2)

Vacant 1 (Nominated)

Vacant 2 (Nominated)

Vacant 3 (Nominated)

Representatives to PA Council of Churches

Name	Monthly Meeting	Quarter	Term End
Carter Nash	Harrisburg	Caln	2026

Quaker Earthcare Witnesses

Name	Monthly Meeting	Quarter	Term End
Ruth Darlington	Medford	Haddonfield	2025
Pat Finley	Old Haverford	Haverford	2025