

PYM Quaker Life Council Minutes

15 December 2018 p.1

Present: Amy Taylor Brooks, Cathleen Marion, Marge Dawson, Gray Goodman, Julia Carrigan, tonya thames taylor, George Rubin , Anthony Stover, Melanie Douty-Snipes, Bryn Hammarstrom, Ayesha Imani

Regrets: Kate Bregman,

Ex-Officio: Andrew Anderson (Treasurer), Christie Duncan-Tessmer (General Secretary), Zachary Dutton (Associate Secretary Program + Religious Life), Melinda Wenner Bradley (Youth Engagement Coordinator)

Clerk Amy Taylor Brooks welcomed members and .let the Council know that she needed to leave at noon and that Cathleen Marion would serve a clerk after Amy’s departure.

Members shared reflections on how the 10:30-11:00 time with the Joint Councils is structured. 30 minutes is too short for a General Secretary report with questions. There does not seem to be time reserved for decision making amongst the Joint Councils. Is this as we Friends wish it? How do we address the racialized aspect of how the time for questions was cut short?

Youth Program Advisory Committee: Melinda Wenner-Bradley: The Committee is being filled. Middle School, High School Friends, and adult Friends are interested in serving. One member of QLC should also serve on YPAC. Members would meet approximately 4 times a year often via ZOOM meetings. The entire slate of names will be presented to QLC for approval when the slate is filled.

Committee Membership: Zachary Dutton: Members approved having Catherine Campbell and Mary Tierny serve on the Sessions Coordinating Committee. Catherine is a senior at University of Pennsylvania. Mary is a graduate of Earlham College. Both are active Young Adult Friends.

Members approved the committee membership of Quaker Life Council.

Governance Committee	Program Committee	Discernment Team	Officers
Gray Goodman (C)	Cathleen Marion(C)	Melanie Douty-Snipes (C)	Amy Taylor Brooks (C)
Amy Brooks	Bryn Hammarstrom	Ayesha Imani	Cathleen Marion Alt Clerk
Anthony Stover	Kate Bregman	Anthony Stover	Gray Goodman Rec. Clerk
George Rubin	Marge Dawson	Kate Bregman	
Ex-Officio	Melanie Douty-Snipes	Cathleen Marion	
Christie Duncan-Tessmer	Ex-Officio	Amy Brooks	
Zachary Dutton (Progam + Relig Life)	Andrew Anderson (Treas)	Bryn Hammarstrom	
	Olivia Brangan (Comm Engagmenet)	Gray Goodman	
	Zachary Dutton		

Members approved the following to serve on the Friends Counseling Service Advisory Committee.

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Bill Procyson	Norristown FM	FC Counselor
Sarah Whitman MD	Chestnut Hill FM	Non-Staff Non-FC Counselor
Philip Jones	Chestnut Hill FM	Non-Staff Non-FC Counselor
Kenneth Brick	Ex-Officio PYM Friends Couns. Service Coord.	
George Schaefer	Ex-Officio PYM Care + Aging Coord.	

Library Sprint: Zachary is in the process of compiling a list of names of Friends who are interested creating a report that can provide policy guidance for QLC.

Database: Minutes: (Staff Project): Zachary is making sure that minutes of the councils will be searchable. This will also include minutes of concern.

Upcoming Conferences: Zachary: On February 9, there is a Thread gathering on Outreach at Abington Monthly Meeting. It is a joint effort on the part of PYM, FGC, and Friends Journal. There is a special emphasis on racial justice and LGBTQ Friends and attenders. From May 30-June 2 there is a conference at Pendle Hill on leadership entitled Quaker Skills Institute. QLC members are encouraged to attend.

Program Committee: Cate Marion: The Envelope Fund is used for applications for funds. It comes from the PYM General Fund. What money is not used goes back into the General Fund. There is a second QLC fund called the Strategic Project Reserve Fund. The Program Committee is working on a structure for how to apply for money from the Strategic Project Reserve Fund. Friends should reflect on how to use the funds. SPRINTS, Collaboratives, and other PYM groups can make an application for use of the funds.

Governance: Gray Goodman: Anthony Stover spoke about a leading he had on the need for PYM to bring together the various groups of the Yearly Meeting who have been working on race and racism but do not necessarily work with each other. Anthony and Gray asked members to consider this as a spiritual leading that they are bringing to Friends to test. It could be on the agenda at the February retreat.

Discernment Sprint: Melanie Douty-Snipes: QLC members **APPROVED** laying down the Discernment SPRINT and for the Discernment TEAM take on the following tasks:

1. Create a manual on conflict and resolution that could provide guidance for Friends.
2. Organize training and workshops on conflict resolution.
3. Bring together the various Friends and groups in PYM who are addressing racism.

Minute for Traveling +/-or Religious Service: Gray Goodman: The SPRINT formed a report how to add structure and detail to the information in Faith and Practice on the issue of minutes of travel and minutes of religious service. Friends should read the report within the December minutes document. Time will be reserved at the January QLC meeting for Friends to share reactions to the report.

Retreat: February 16, 2019 has been designated as the date for the QLC retreat. 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. at the Ujima Friends Peace Center. Nourishment will be potluck.

Respectfully submitted, Gray Goodman, Recording Clerk

The following pages are ancillary documents to read in advance of the January 2019 meeting

State of Meeting Report 2018-9 Letter

Dear Friends,

Greetings from Quaker Life Council of the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. How does the Truth prosper with your meetings? If you are ready to let your spirit shine out, we are ready to receive your spiritual self-assessments! Anything we receive before May, we will be sure is included in our summary report for PYM.

Last year, we began the transformed practice across our monthly meetings of performing spiritual self-assessments and sharing them with the Yearly Meeting at annual sessions. Quaker Life Council compiled a summary of these reports that was shared during the summer and PYM staff has now posted all of these state of the meeting reports on the PYM website for all meetings to see. (Available at <https://www.pym.org/category/state-of-the-meeting-report/>, December 15, 2018). Read them! Rejoice in our full PYM Quaker community. You may find help for an issue that your meeting is facing in the way another meeting has handled a situation. You may find inspiration. You may find a different way that your meeting would like to do the Spiritual self-assessment this year after reading these.

Above all, we hope that you again focus on the Spirit in the process of assessing the Spirit. We encourage you to have the process be Spiritually rich, rather than depleting. I have included the Faith and Practice guidelines which outlines a process you may choose to undertake. However, do not hesitate to be creative in your process and in your reports. If your meeting needs more worship, do your assessment in worship. If you need to know your hard numbers or want to write an intellectually based historical report, go for it. If your meeting sews in the Spirit, do your spiritual assessment in a quilt. Write songs or stories together if you would like, or play games and share back the rules of how to play that makes your community shine. We can receive videos, pictures, written reports, whatever you would like to share that captures your meeting's Spirit. Make it a good and rewarding experience for your meeting, because this is done for you and for the Spirit of our whole PYM.

We, the Friends in Quaker Life Council extend our love you and your meetings. We want our Spirits to shine together. Thank you for holding us in the light as we do our work, we are doing the same for you. Please know that we are here to help nurture your Spiritual growth. Call on us if you think we might be able to help. We are so glad that your meeting is a part of PYM and we are thankful to be serving you.

Love,

Quaker Life Council

[list QLC members and their meetings]

Faith and Practice Section : Conducting a Spiritual Self- Assessments:

When early Friends met one another, they would ask “How does the Truth prosper with thee?” rather than asking “How are you?” They wanted to know about each other’s spiritual condition and relationship with the Divine.

Undertaking a prayerful assessment of the Friends meeting’s spiritual condition and needs and issuing a state-of-the-meeting report on a regular basis can provide a deep and meaningful opportunity that draws the community together. The meeting’s self-examination process may involve several steps. The meeting could begin with queries that address its spiritual strengths and weaknesses and also efforts to foster growth in the spiritual life of each member and of the meeting as a whole. The meeting may use the queries suggested below; it may use selections from the general queries above; it may decide to use queries from some other source; or it may formulate its own queries. The meeting may charge one of its standing committees, such as worship and ministry, or an ad-hoc group to prepare a response to the chosen queries or to oversee a process of gathering information more widely in the meeting from which to prepare a response. In the latter case, the committee may hold discussions with committee clerks, the meeting’s young Friends, or new attenders, for example; or it could conduct worship sharing by small groups within the meeting or by the meeting as a whole. The committee will prepare a draft report in a format that is most helpful to the meeting. The report is then submitted to the meeting for discussion and approval.

After approval by the monthly meeting, the meeting may agree to share its spiritual self-assessment with other meetings.

Suggested Queries for a Spiritual Self-assessment of the Meeting:

- What practices and strategies are employed by our meeting to help members and attenders of all ages prepare for worship—whether in meeting for worship or in meeting for business?
- What are the challenges to and opportunities for enhancing the worship of our meeting, and what are we doing to address these?
- What opportunities are provided to address topics important to deepening both personal spiritual journeys of members and the spiritual life of the meeting?
- What is most needed to strengthen the communal witness of the meeting to the local community and beyond?
- To what priorities does God call our meeting? How do our annual budget, our meeting’s standing committees and other aspects of the meeting’s life reflect those priorities?

QLC State of Meeting Reports Summary 2017-8

Friends of the Quaker Life Council have collected these kernels of wisdom from Quarters, Monthly Meetings, and Worship Groups throughout the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. We hope that others will delight in these practices as we have. We hold this information up to you not as a burden but as a source of strength and inspiration from God's presence amongst Friends.

When composing minutes, meetings either had an individual or a team prayerfully consider how to respond to PYM queries or queries the meeting community created. After collecting answers, Friends brought the report to a business meeting for further amendment and final approval. The Quaker Life Council formed a Sprint to read the reports from 2018 and most of 2017. Insightful responses or concerns were compiled into categories:

Deepening the Spiritual Community: Worship, Spiritual Growth, First Day School

Friends found a variety of ways to enhance worship and find a closer bond with Spirit. Some prepared for worship by collective singing and reading sacred texts aloud. Others sank into the Silence with the children present. During worship, some meetings preferred an unprogrammed format while others used a monthly prepared message or query. In closing worship, some groups preferred the children to enter a settled meeting. Others sang to end worship. Many meetings shared joys, concerns, after-thoughts, introductions, and announcements after worship.

Friends used many different methods of spiritual improvement. Yoga, meditation, mindfulness, and extended worship were practiced. Classes such as Spiritual Formation, Quakerism 101, Quaker Quest, and a speakers' series were additional paths to fostering growth.

First Day School was often enhanced with trained, hired instructors aided by volunteers. Weekly sessions for all age groups using spiritual text, video, and/ or speakers were helpful.

Building Community: Social Contacts, Membership, Business, Anti-Racism, Concerns

Community was best built through social activities that bring joy and fellowship to all ages such as: intergenerational games, movies, star-gazing, meals, singing, scavenger hunts, etc... Greeters at doorways makes others feel welcome. Notes to Friends at college or lifecare communities lets them know they are remembered. Notes on holidays and birthdays help everyone. Having social dinners for attenders welcomes them to the community.

Caring for the meeting's business is a spiritual practice filled with concrete, practical tasks. Creating brochures introducing Friends' ideas and practices educates all. Sending Friends to clerking workshops provides future trained leaders. Reviewing practices involving committees, records, bylaws, and finances helps Friends maintain best modern practices. Providing time between MFB and MFW helps Friends adjust their spiritual focus

Community often means helping each other with challenges. For majority Friends, acting on racism often begins with looking within oneself. It is helpful to join a group, preferably outside

one's comfort zone. There is a great deal of literature and media available for educating oneself and others. What is important is to begin the process and maintain humility. Challenges can also involve how to adapt to a changing community, aging buildings, and declining membership.

Involving the World: Local organization, Friends institutions, Witnessing to the World

Friends find their spiritual strength and growth not just within their houses of worship but also outside in their surrounding community, letting their lives and actions speak to others. Many meetings encourage outside groups to use the meetinghouse and grounds. Others invite the outside community in for special events. Having a strong, positive relationship with neighbors solves many problems in advance. This is also true when a meeting may share space with another organization like a school. Neighbors provide opportunities as well as challenges.

If a meeting is connected to a Friends institution, it is important to set up a Care Committee to nurture the spiritual, financial, and physical assets the two organizations use. Invite families to worship on First Day. Provide financial support for Friends of all ages to participate in Friends institutions as well as contribute to and publicize activities of FCNL, AFSC, FGC, etc...

Witnessing one's Spirit-led beliefs, ideals, and actions often means public action in one's own community and in the broader world. Public vigils of protest or commemoration can inspire others to act. Some meetings share monthly meals with those in need as an act of shared experience instead of only charity. Other Friends give material aid to refugee families including ESL and citizenship classes. Collecting goods + books to be shipped elsewhere may be expensive but still needed. Quarters and meetings can organize service trips on their own or with other faith communities. Service involves learning about one's community and discerning what help is needed especially if Friends are open to being transformed by the experience.

These ideas listed here come directly from PYM's monthly and quarterly meetings as we renew the old tradition of sharing year-end reflections of our practices with each other. This first year is a step towards learning more from each other as well as where Spirit is guiding us. The Friends on the Quaker Life Council gathered this information as a service to Friends and Meetings throughout the Yearly Meeting. Our hope is that this year's reports will inspire more Meetings to take the time to renew the art of collective reflection on the past year to guide Friends to where God is leading them in the coming year.

**Discernment-Reconciliation Committee
(Thoughts from George Rubin, QLC, Governance)**

PYM needs to have a standing Discernment-Reconciliation Committee that could be part of QLC. Membership on the committee may be broad to include Friends from Administrative and Nominating Councils. QLC must also be sure that Friends on the Discernment-Reconciliation Committee are open and sensitive to the concern/s raised. This committee may also call upon PYM professional staff for assistance.

For PYM to have a strong Conflict-Resolution structure it should start in the Monthly and Quarterly Meetings. There needs to be a Pastoral Care Committee for all its members at the Monthly/Quarterly meeting levels. Friends should be reminded that there is a right balance between affirming the authority of the individual and affirming the authority of the group. This is what the true leading of the Spirit is. The way to reconciliation is deeply personal and involves facts and feelings that are unique to each individual. At every level, we need mutual accountability. We need an expectation of behavior that will nurture a relationship of trust, caring and responsiveness. This will help encourage Friends with problems to address their difficulties by asking for help from others and should not cause people to shy away from sharing when behavior causes offense. We all need to take the risk of trusting God's leading and letting go of our behavior in order to allow us to move to a new faithfulness in all areas of living.

Present Outcome:

QLC has seen the positive results of a Discernment Team handling a meeting conflict but this structure needs to have a higher priority for the Monthly and Quarterly Meetings. Effective listening and reconciliation at the Monthly/Quarterly Meeting levels may lead fewer of these problems move to the level of a concern of the Yearly Meeting.

Resources:

1. Gospel Order, Sandra Cronk, Pendle Hill Pamphlet #297
2. The authority of Our Meeting, Paul Lacey, Pendle Hill Pamphlet # 365
3. Coming to Light, Valerie Brown Pendle Hill Pamphlet #446
4. Meeting at the Center, Bruce Birchard, Pendle Hill Pamphlet #442

**Report on Addressing Minutes of Travel
Minutes of Religious Service**

Robin Mohr, Amy Brooks (QLC), Gray Goodman (QLC)

Goals of the Following Suggested Structure

- Avoid having QLC being the sole authority.
- Include more people in the process of examining minutes of traveling service.
- Have people with minutes of traveling service make presentations or provide opportunities for service within the Yearly Meeting.
- People appointed by PYM as representatives to Quaker organizations beyond PYM should each get a letter of introduction to carry with them when they serve on behalf of PYM. The standard letter would be personalized by the Nominating Committee with a brief biographical description and signed by the Clerk of the YM as soon as they are approved for service.
- Create a **Gifts and Leadings PYM Sprint Readiness Committee** made of up of people who could be on call for examining and learning about individuals' calls to religious service when they arise at the Yearly Meeting level. The Committee members would also to have read and be familiar with the information in the below link.

The following is a link from Pacific Yearly Meeting called "Faithfulness in Practice" which is in turn based on work done a decade ago by Central Philadelphia Monthly Meeting.

<http://www.pacificyearlymeeting.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2010/09/MandLFaithfulnessInAction.pdf>□

QLC SPRINT Suggested Steps For Minutes of Travel of Religious Service

1. A traveling minute of religious concern begins in the Monthly Meeting and guided by a Clearness Committee. *See Faith and Practice p. 74 and 75.*
2. If a Monthly Meeting gets under weight of a minute, the minute goes to the Quarterly Meeting. A Clearness Committee (or Gifts and Leadings Standing Committee) of the Quarter is set up to listen and learn about the nature of the leading. The Clearness Committee and the individual making the request would make a presentation at a Quarterly Meeting for Business to educate Friends regarding the minute.
3. Once approved by a Quarterly Meeting, the Quarterly meeting clerk writes a letter and signs it, endorsing the minute. If it is felt that the minute be sent to the Clerk of PYM and the Clerk of QLC, the clerk's letter should provide an explanation.
4. The QLC Clerk calls together 3 people from a Gifts and Leadings PYM Sprint Readiness Committee. The 3 individuals form a Sprint to season and learn about the nature of an individual's religious leading.
5. The Sprint and the person requesting the minute for travel for religious service would bring a recommendation to the next QLC meeting for approval.
6. If approved the minute would be sent to the Clerk of PYM for signature. The minute would then be read at the next gathering of the PYM body.

Queries to Consider by the Gifts and Leadings SPRINT

- If this service is within the Yearly Meeting, where will it be conducted?
- What opportunities within the Yearly Meeting are there to carry out the religious service?
- If it outside the Yearly Meeting, where will the service be conducted?
- Does the minute clearly state the purpose of the leading?
- How does one know when the service is completed?
- What plans are there for presentations at the Monthly , Quarterly , and Yearly Meeting levels?
- What obligation is being placed upon the Yearly Meeting?
- What openings does this create for the Yearly Meeting?
- What openings does this create for the member if approved by the Yearly Meeting?

Excerpt from Faith and Practice p.51-2 digital copy p.74-75 Hard copy

From the beginning Quakers have both experienced and identified themselves as a community that transcends geographical and cultural boundaries. This encourages the offer of hospitality to traveling Friends, on the one hand, and the confidence of welcome, on the other. Friendly intervisitation has, for more than three hundred and fifty years, provided an important opening for understanding and cooperation in the affairs of Friends and for mutual ministry and spiritual growth. Friends are encouraged, therefore, as they travel on business or otherwise, to allow time for visits with meetings or with individual Friends and families in the regions they pass through.

Letters of Introduction Friends intending to travel benefit from obtaining a letter of introduction from their home meetings. Such letters usually state the fact of membership, give some account of the individual's participation and witness in the affairs of our religious society, and express such greetings as are deemed appropriate. Letters are signed by the clerk and duly noted in the minutes of the monthly, quarterly or yearly meeting. Since Friends travel for a wide variety of purposes, letters of introduction do not suggest specific obligations either on the visitor or on those visited and may be issued by the clerk without formal consideration by the meeting. Such letters are often endorsed by those visited and used to send greetings back to the visitor's home meeting.

Minutes of Travel for Religious Service As in the past, Friends today can find themselves under a sense of divine leading to travel in support of an important public witness or to nurture the religious life of Friends families and meetings. In carrying out such leadings, they find it useful to take with them a formal minute for religious service from their meeting.

A meeting should issue such a minute only after the concern has been laid before its committee on worship and ministry, a clearness committee, or such other group as the meeting may suggest and has been favorably recommended to the monthly meeting for approval. A minute for religious service, signed by the clerk, states clearly the nature, scope and duration of the proposed service and affirms the meeting's support of the Friend(s) concerned. The meeting issuing such a minute should consider whether it is under an obligation to ensure, insofar as possible, that the proposed service is not hampered by a lack of funds or other support.

A Friend who proposes to travel under religious concern may find, as have Friends in the past, that it is a source of strength and comfort to be joined by another Friend sympathetic to the concern and able to share counsel and encouragement.

A minute of travel for religious service, after being adopted by a monthly meeting, is usually submitted for endorsement by the quarterly and yearly meetings, especially if the Friend expects to travel beyond the bounds of the yearly meeting.

Friends traveling with such minutes are customarily welcomed by those among whom they visit and invited to share their concerns with appropriate gatherings. It is also customary for minutes of travel for religious service to be signed at the conclusion of the gatherings by the person(s) presiding.

Upon the completion of the service proposed, a minute for religious service should be returned promptly with a verbal or written report to the meetings that had earlier reviewed the concern and minuted their support.

Church World Service Information

More on the Church World Service (CWS)

- This is the webpage of Church World Service, where you can learn about them:
<https://cwsglobal.org>
- Find out more about the refugee resettlement work at greateratl.org.
- The CWS Mission Statement: Church World Service is a faith-based organization transforming communities around the globe through just and sustainable responses to hunger, poverty, displacement and disaster.
- Description from their website: “CWS has worked for seven decades with one goal: building a world where there is enough for all. We affirm the power of individuals and communities to take ownership of their future. We meet them right where they are, helping them create solutions they can maintain – and build on. That means a refugee family who is able to start a new life. Or someone rebuilding after disaster finds safety with dignity.”
- Here is a link to the [annual report](#).
- Here is a link to a powerpoint about the [history of membership](#).
- We are already a member of the Church World Service because we are a member of the National Council of Churches (NCC).
- CWS inherited its membership from the NCC; all the churches that were members of the NCC became members of CWS by default. Now Church World Service is a separate organization, still working in close partnership with the National Council and its General Secretary and President.
- Historically, there have been no explicit expectations made by CWS of any of its member churches.
- Now, CWS is asking whether “Member Communions” choose to be voting or non-voting, indicating a level of involvement.
- PYM’s strategic directions point toward increasing relationships with other organizations.
- There remain no formal intentions on PYM’s part and no formal expectations on CWS’s part, with the significant and recent exception that CWS would like us to get clear on what type of membership we have with them.
- We can become a non-voting member, which means we maintain the status quo, changing nothing about the relationship between PYM and CWS.
- We can become a voting member, which means greater participation in the life of this organization. For example, the General Secretary would add CWS to the list of organizations whose Annual Meetings she visits.
- There are many ways to participate in the life of Church World Service, and no financial contribution is set. It is asked that a member participate, and encourage its meetings or congregations or members to participate.
- For example, ways to [take action and participate](#) are:
 - CROP Hunger Walks [in its 50th year]
 - Advocacy Alerts and sign-ons
 - Congregational Tools and Blankets programs
 - Team CWS virtual fundraising
- There is no specific financial contribution required by member organizations.