

**337th Annual Sessions
Philadelphia Yearly Meeting
July 27th- 30th, 2017
The College of New Jersey, Ewing, NJ
Thursday July 27th, 2016- Morning Session**

Worship

The 2017 Annual Sessions of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends convened Thursday morning at 8:30 AM in Kendall Hall of the College New Jersey, Ewing, NJ. The announced theme of our 2017 Sessions is: "Faith Magnified."

At the appointed hour, we settled into worship. We prepared ourselves for our business with All Together Time led by Jennifer Turnbull from Spiral Q. She thanked everyone for their participation in last night's multigenerational event. We were led through stretching and body exercises. She asked Friends questions about what they had learned and experienced last night and encouraged us to discuss this with our neighbors. She thanked everyone for sharing in story circles last night.

Welcome and Introductions

Then, at about 9:30, Clerk Penny Colgan-Davis (Germantown MM), greeted us. Others at the table introduced themselves: Alternate Clerks Alison Anderson (Central Philadelphia MM), Thomas Hoopes (Valley MM), and Amy Kietzman (West Philadelphia MM & Central Philadelphia MM); Recording Clerks: John Lavin (Birmingham MM) and Erika Juran (Harrisburg MM); General Secretary, Christie Duncan-Tessmer (Chestnut Hill MM). Voice to text captioning was provided by Devon Gerber.

Visitors from other yearly meetings introduced themselves: Kristine Ashley from Iowa Yearly Meeting and Marvin Barnes from Birmingham MM in Michigan, Lake Erie Yearly Meeting.

Three attenders and visitors stood and were recognized. Four members of the Yearly Meeting who are attending for the first time stood and were recognized. Five Elders stood and were recognized. The Clerk named the Pastoral Care team and asked if any Friend was having difficulties of any time to reach out to those Friends.

Adoption of Revised Faith and Practice

The Clerk asked Friends to approve Thomas Swain (Middletown MM) in leading the adoption of the revised Faith and Practice part of the agenda. Friends approved.

Presenting the final revised draft were: Sallie Jones (Birmingham MM) serving on the Faith and Practice working group and Suzanne Day (Westfield MM) servicing on the Faith and Practice sprint. Sallie provided the timeline for their work spanning many years and hoped that the additional resources they provided have been helpful. She read from the attached written report. Faith and Practice provides significant background and context for what we do and how we do it. Many opportunities were provided over the years for Friends to provide comments and suggestions. They have received much feedback. They asked Friends to share any concerns with adopting the revised draft. Friends responded with additional suggestions, noting that the draft is not perfect, nor is perfection possible.

Thomas sensed that the body was ready to adopt the revised draft.

Friends approved the adoption of the revised draft of Faith and Practice as presented. Concerns that were raised in the session and any future suggestions or concerns should be submitted to Administrative Council for further discernment and revision. Friends approved the release of the Faith and Practice Revision Group and Faith and Practice Revision Sprint from their work with a minute of deep appreciation of their seven years of work on the yearly meeting's behalf.

Announcement by Quaker Life Council

The Clerk shared with Friends her story of prayer and struggle since the June 24th called session to find a way forward with the concerns about Upper Dublin Monthly Meeting's release of its member Avis Wanda McClinton. Finally, she received a message out of worship: "ask for help." She shared that message with the Quaker Life Council, and the council agreed to come under the weight of this concern. Melanie Douty-Snipes (Fallsington MM) briefly described their discernment on a way forward and that a more formal, detailed report will be made on Saturday, including the minute of their commitment for a deep examination, listening to all concerned and an attempt to find a way forward from where we are today. She asked Friends to hold the Quaker Life Council in the Light.

How meetings can become welcoming and inclusive, part 1

The Clerk referred Friends to the letter she sent out in June about our efforts to end racism in PYM and beyond. She noted that this is a "both/and" concern. White Friends in particular need to personally commit to and work towards this end within PYM *and* this same work must move beyond our own faith community into the larger world. She reminded the body that learning how to listen deeply with an open heart was a major focus of the Called Session in June and that the Annual Sessions Planning Sprint had engaged Spirit Q to help us deepen that practice at its first session. In addition, she noted that, at the Called Session, a Friend shared the experience of a Friend of Color who had been treated badly in a monthly meeting and had had to search for whom they should talk to. Therefore, part of our time together will be to learn how to ensure that our meetings are truly welcoming to all people and, when they are not, that Friends have the skills to intervene quickly, appropriately and effectively. The hope of the Sessions Coordinating Committee is that Friends will take these new skills back to their meetings.

The Clerk introduced Inspira Williams (Haddonfield MM) and Sarah Willie-LeBreton (Providence MM) who led us in the first of two training sessions to occur during sessions. After introductions and instructions, Friends broke up into small groups to respond to their prepared queries.

Friends returned after small groups. Sarah asked Friends to think and discern over the stories in small groups. She reminded us to share the story, but not the storyteller.

Epistle Committee

Friends approved an Epistle Committee consisting of Carter Nash (Harrisburg MM), Gabbreell James (Green Street MM), Jondhi Harrell (Germantown MM), Louis LeFevre (Trenton MM), Naomi Madaras (Chambersburg MM), Ross Hennesy (Germantown MM), and convened by Melissa Rycroft (Pennsdale MM).

We adjourned, intending to reconvene at 8:30 AM Friday morning, God willing.

Respectfully submitted,
John Lavin, Recording Clerk
Erika Juran, Assistant Recording Clerk

**337th Annual Sessions
Philadelphia Yearly Meeting
July 27th- July 30th
The College New Jersey, Ewing, NJ
Friday, July 28, 2017- Morning Session**

Worship

Present on the stage: Clerk Penny Colgan-Davis (Germantown MM), Alternate Clerks: Tom Hoopes (Valley MM), Amy Kietzman (West Philadelphia MM and Central Philadelphia MM), (Central Phila. Meeting); Co-Recording Clerks: John Lavin (Birmingham MM) and Erika Juran (Harrisburg MM), and General Secretary Christie Duncan-Tessmer (Chestnut Hill MM). Talk to text transcriber was Devon Garber.

Worship was ended with a welcome at 9:03 AM by Clerk Penny Colgan-Davis, and the clerk's table introduced themselves as above.

We were led in All Together Time by Meg Rose, Tara Rubenstein, and Hannah Mayer, coordinators of the Children's, Middle School and Young Friends programs.

Welcome and Introductions

A visitor Keith Harvey introduced himself. Five attendees who were here for the first time introduced themselves. We were led in song by Jonathan Snipes and Melanie Douty-Snipes (both of Fallsington MM).

Nominating Council Report

Melissa Rycroft (Pennsdale MM) presented the Nominating Council report, asked for help in recruiting Friends and presented nominations and releases. Outgoing members of the Council, Peter Lane (Westtown MM) and Edith Roberts (Haddonfield MM) were thanked for their service over many, many years. Melissa reported that there is a need for 3 Quarter representatives to serve on the Nominating Council, as well as for 2 at-large members. Meetings always contain either a "Zoom" or conference call option, so distance should not hinder potential service. There are also many open positions on other councils that need filling. Gratefulness was expressed for the Faith & Practice version adoption, which now allows Nominating Council to bring forth nominations to November's Continuing Session. The Council needs names to bring forward then, so Melissa asked Friends to reach out to her directly or another member of Nominating Council with names to suggest. Needs include: Rising Clerk, Alternate Clerk, 2 Recording Clerks, Assistant Treasurer, Elder, Administrative Council and Quaker Life Council. Also: AFSC, FGC, Friends Peace Teams, and FWCC representatives. A "stellar resume" is not required. Please consider those outside of the traditional people you might think of.

The Nominating slate presented by Nominating Council Clerk Melissa Rycroft (Pennsdale MM) was reviewed and approval.

Andrew Anderson (Friends of Philadelphia MM) was approved to serve as Treasurer.

The slate of Elders as presented with the addition of Walton Burwell of Germantown MM was approved.

The slate of Administrative Council appointments was approved as presented.

The slate of Quaker Life Council appointments was approved as presented.

The nomination slate of representatives to American Friends Service Committee, Friends Committee on National Legislation, and Friends General Conference were approved as presented.

The nomination slate of representatives to our affiliated organizations Friends Fiduciary and Westtown School was approved as presented.

With great gratitude, the release of Alternate Clerk Alison Anderson was approved.

With thanks and appreciation, and regret, the release of Recording Clerks John Lavin and Marty Smith was approved.

The release of Elder Mary Waddington was approved.

The release of Administrative Council members Fred Melroy, Joyce Moore and Tom Peterson was approved, with a correction that Tom is a member of Unami MM.

The release of friends in service as representatives to American Friends Service Committee, Friends Committee on National Legislation, and Friends General Conference was approved, with a note that Elizabeth Piersol Schmidt is a member of West Philadelphia MM.

The updated and corrected slate will be attached to these minutes and was approved in entirety.

Melissa made one more plea to consider Friends within your monthly meeting as potential talent and energy. The Council needs Friends' help! The Clerk reinforced our need for service. When the question was asked, do people need to be members of a monthly meeting of PYM, it was replied, yes, for some positions, it is required; for others, it is not.

Treasurer's Report

The budget was presented by Andrew Anderson (Fof Phila.MM), Treasurer, and Linell McCurry (CPMM), Associate Secretary for Business & Finance. They began by thanking all the Friends who assisted with their work and reviewed the highlights of the attached report (proposed FY 2018 Budget for approval, a three-year budget for information, and Budget Notes).

In terms of historic property, we are well along in our strategic goals for the Arch Street Meeting House Preservation Trust. The Trust is covering more of Arch Street's costs through dedicated revenue from grants and its own fundraising efforts. Later in Annual Sessions, the Administrative Council will seek approval to transfer Burlington Meeting House Inc. from PYM to Burlington Quarter.

The FY 2018 Budget was designed with only a modest surplus. To "refill the granaries" after the 2012 financial crisis, PYM deliberately budgeted surpluses that could be added to an Operating Reserve Fund. That fund is now 91% of its goal of \$1.2 million, which allows the current budget to be "lean."

In response to questions, Andrew said that PYM had previously accepted the Theodore H. Nitsche Fund, a large pending restricted bequest. After Nitsche's death in 1979, one of his relations challenged the terms of the will. PYM vigorously defended its interests and won an Orphans' Court adjudication in 1981. The funds are finally coming to PYM following the death of the last life tenant and another significant and successful legal effort to secure this bequest.

Linell said the Rent expense line covers everything PYM owes to Friends Center. It covers space charges for PYM's occupancy as a tenant and other PYM payments as an equity partner in Friends Center with the AFSC and Central Philadelphia Monthly Meeting. As an equity partner, PYM contributes to capital expenses and to repayment of a 30-year municipal bond that financed green renovations. The bond has another 20 years to go. Friends Center is responsible for the debt and covers payments from its own operations and from the equity partner contributions.

General Secretary Christie Duncan-Tessmer replied to a question about the number of FTEs (full time equivalent employees). Employees are not included in FTEs or in the General Fund operating budget if their salary and benefits are fully covered by grants or restricted funds. Several staff members fall in this category.

A Friend asked PYM to consider increasing its contributions to outside organizations. These are mainly religious groups such as AFSC, FCNL, FGC, FWCC and the National Council of Churches. Contributions were cut during the financial crisis and then raised, but they have been flat for several years.

Presiding Clerk Penny Colgan-Davis responded to a question about Green Street Monthly Meeting withholding its covenant. Green Street's contribution is not built into FY 2017 expectations or the FY 2018 budget, but the money is only symptomatic of the breach in relationship between PYM and Green Street. PYM leadership is under the weight of restoring the relationship with Green Street.

A Friend asked for more context around the General Fund budget, which is just one part of PYM's financial picture. Andrew said Annual Sessions must approve an operating budget each year in advance of the new fiscal year. At the close of the fiscal year, PYM's audited financial statements include restricted spending, which follows donor intent, and the balance sheet. Audited statements and a summary 2016 Financial Overview are posted on the website. Andrew said he made a judgment call as Treasurer about how much detail to present with the budget. He offered to provide more detailed information on request and to consider what should be included in next year's presentation.

The Proposed FY 2018 Budget, as presented by Treasurer Andrew Anderson (Monthly Meeting of Friends of Philadelphia) and Linell McCurry, Associate Secretary for Business & Finance, was approved.

Carter Nash read the July 2016 epistle from Australia Yearly Meeting, which is attached in its entirety.

Following announcements, Meeting for Business adjourned at 11:53 AM after a brief period of worship with intent to return for business at Continuing Sessions on Saturday, July 29, 2017, God willing.

Submitted in service,
Erika Juran
Co-Recording Clerk of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting

**337th Annual Sessions
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July 27th- July 30th
The College of New Jersey, Ewing, NJ
Friday, July 28th- Evening Session**

Worship

After an opening period of worship, Clerk Penny Colgan-Davis (Germantown MM), greeted us.

Welcome and Introductions

Others at the table introduced themselves: Alternate Clerks Alison Anderson (Central Philadelphia MM), Thomas Hoopes (Valley MM), and Amy Kietzman (West Philadelphia MM & Central Philadelphia MM); Recording Clerks: John Lavin (Birmingham MM), and Erika Juran (Harrisburg MM); and General Secretary, Christie Duncan-Tessmer (Chestnut Hill MM).
Voice to text captioning was provided by Devon Gerber.

Reading of an Epistle

Gabbreell James (Green Street MM) read an epistle from Alaska Friends Conference. They described reconstruction of their meetinghouse after flooding, their acceptance of LGBTQ+ and their political advocacy for ensuring rights of all people. They approved requesting mandatory military cuts to America's budget.

How meetings can become welcoming and inclusive, part 2

Inspira Williams (Haddonfield MM) and Sarah Willie-LeBreton (Providence MM) led us in the second and final part of their work to help meetings become truly welcoming and inclusive. A Friend said they had a different feeling in Annual Sessions this year compared to last year: last year ended with many unresolved issues and heartache. Sarah responded that if there is too much heat, things get burned. If there's not enough heat, things don't get cooked. The heat needs to be just right. Friends then broke out into small groups to discuss microaggressions, and to roleplay and discuss solutions to them.

We returned from small groups and shared some of our experiences. We were asked how we could be more welcoming in our own meetings. Every single one of our meetings needs to engage in this work to be more welcoming to people who are different than us. There are high stakes with regard to oppression that make this work crucial.

We adjourned, intending to reconvene at 8:30 AM Saturday morning, God willing.

Respectfully submitted,
John Lavin, Recording Clerk

**337th Annual Sessions
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Worship

After an opening period of worship, Clerk Penny Colgan-Davis (Germantown MM), greeted us.

Welcome and Introductions

Others at the table introduced themselves: Alternate Clerks: Alison Anderson (Central Philadelphia MM), Thomas Hoopes (Valley MM), and Amy Kietzman (West Philadelphia MM); Recording Clerks: John Lavin (Birmingham MM), and Erika Juran (Harrisburg MM); and General Secretary, Christie Duncan-Tessmer (Chestnut Hill MM). Voice to text captioning was provided by Devon Gerber.

Visitors stood and introduced themselves. Three Elders stood and were recognized. The Clerk introduced the Pastoral Care team and noted that if any Friend is having difficulty at any time to reach out to any of those Friends. Then, Melanie Douty-Snipes (Fallsington MM) led us in a song "Standing in the Need of Prayer."

Administrative Council Report

Clerk Bruce Haines (Providence MM) summarized his prepared report which is attached. He recognized the members of his council and thanked them for their service. Bruce talked about their focus over the past year: to simplify and focus administration of the yearly meeting's work and to attempt to create new opportunities for access and participation in the life of the yearly meeting. He noted that the first year of the council was about setting up committees and creating a structure and this the past year was a transitional year for building anew. Bruce shared three things with Friends:

1. Concerns on the changes to staffing shared with the Administrative Council. This demonstrated to the council that they did not have a clear process for how to handle such issues. The Administrative and Quaker Life Councils are jointly working on a policy.
2. Green Street Meeting raised a concern with the Administrative Council about the Cremation Fund that they have managed on behalf of all the monthly meetings of PYM. Both the council and Green Street approved the transfer of the responsibility of this fund to PYM.
3. The Administrative Council has accepted changes to the process for the annual evaluation of the General Secretary and plans to take up that work in the early fall. The annual review will include review of the events of the staffing concerns. They continue to labor under this issue and will have an update on their work at continuing sessions in the fall.

A Friend asked about PYM's grievance procedure. The response was that they did not address that concern yet but the Personnel Committee, in concert with a third party, is reviewing and planning on recrafting all the personnel policies for PYM staff with a particular focus on its grievance policy. Bruce expects to have more information to share with the body in November.

Friends accepted the report, and minuted their appreciation that the Administrative Council and Personnel Committee will undertake the review and revision of the personnel policy and in particular the grievance policy for PYM staff.

Bruce called on Harry Bryan (Downington MM), a member of the Council, who on behalf of the Council made the recommendation that the yearly meeting approve the transfer of the Burlington Meetinghouse and its grounds back to Burlington Quarter. The overview of the proposal is attached. Harry gave the context for how PYM has gotten to this point and that the original goals of the meetinghouse have not been met and all Friends involved feel that it is more appropriate to give back the property to the Quarter so that they may take control of the meeting house and make use of it. Between 2013 and now, use of the building has kept the property operating on a modest cash positive basis excluding depreciation. The agreement on the management of the grounds has now expired and the question before the body now is what to do next. The Quarter has expressed a strong desire to keep the property open and of use as a conference center.

Bruce also introduced Tony Capozzoli (Princeton MM), Treasurer from Burlington Quarter. Tony reiterated the idea that the space has not been used as well as everyone would like. He agreed that the arrangement as proposed is equitable and the Quarter appreciates the many years that PYM has supported and grown this project. He admitted that there is still a lot of work to be done, but the Quarter does want to take over this work and supports the transfer wholeheartedly.

A Friend asked why the agreement has endowment income split between PYM and Burlington Quarter. When this endowment was created, it was for not only a conference center but also to support PYM youth programs. The agreement to split the income recognizes the split in purposes of Friends who have donated to the fund originally. Both sides of those that worked on the arrangement agreed that it was a fair division of funds.

A Friend expressed the hope that the space continues to be available to PYM for events and retreats and encouraged Friends to continue to think of using the facility in the future. Tony affirmed that the Quarter still intends to make the space available as a conference center, but with an enhanced experience.

Friends approved the transfer of ownership of the Burlington Meetinghouse and property from Philadelphia Yearly Meeting back to Burlington Quarterly Meeting under the proposed terms of the agreement described by the attached summary.

Ken Park (Providence MM), Clerk of the Granting Committee, shared its work over the past year. Since the committee's formation by the Implementation Committee several years ago, it has been responsible for overseeing the work of all granting groups. It is committed to being a learning organization. Ken presented the list of granting groups and the funds they are responsible for: Greenleaf, Aging Assistance, Indian Committee, Willits Book Trust, Membership Development, Travel and Witness, Quaker Buildings and Programs, Fund for Sufferings, and COFE College Grants. The Granting Committee strives to behave as a board of trustees, with each member acting as a liaison to a specific granting group.

Last year, the committee researched the sources of grant funds. The committee found that just about everything they needed was present in some form, but they had to organize that information. Each granting group is reviewing that information with assistance from their liaison from the Granting Committee. There are 45 funds and this research will continue. Ken noted

that they believe that many of these funds aren't granting funds, but other restricted funds. The committee will share information on their progress as they continue their work.

A Friend suggested that a gathering for grant seekers may be helpful for informing Friends on the resources available. Ken agreed and will seek to undertake it. A Friend wondered if grants are available to preparative meetings. The response was there are a variety of eligibility requirements that differ from fund to fund. Some will apply to monthly meetings only. A Friend asked if the granting groups abide by the priorities adopted by the yearly meeting. Ken responded that the granting groups are legally bound to abide by the restrictions on the funds they oversee. While they can attempt to look through the lens of the strategic plan, it is much more difficult to do than in our unrestricted funds. It was noted that the Quaker Life Council has funds that can be used for priorities that directly address our strategic plan priorities. A Friend asked what is done when the stated intent of a fund is no longer relevant. The Granting Committee works with the Finance Committee and uses legal consultation to assist them in reinterpreting the requirements on the fund to "modernize" the intent. For example, a fund dedicated to feeding horses that bring Friends to Yearly Meeting was reinterpreted to assist Friends in need of funds to travel to yearly meeting gatherings.

Wally Evans (Doylestown MM), the Clerk of the Arch Street Meetinghouse Preservation Trust, presented a report on their work over the past year. They have completed upgrades for new educational material and exhibits from a \$60,000 grant and encouraged Friends to take a tour of their work. They have completed their resource development plan which has led them to hire a development consultant. One action so far has been to switch from an annual fundraiser to an annual fund. He hoped that Friends will consider giving to this new fund to support Arch Street. They are actively working on a \$167,500 grant to perform capacity building. This is the first in a series of plans that they intend to work on. The Trust also intends to work on an interpretation plan, identifying educational opportunities, a marketing and communications plan, and a space utilization plan in the coming year or two.

Wally thanked all the greeters and docents that have welcomed the over 25,000 visitors to Arch Street every year. He invited Friends to visit their new website: www.archstreetmeetinghouse.org and to contact him or Lynne Calamia for more information on how Friends can volunteer to help.

A Friend asked what considerations are being made about the Arch Street parking lot and the graves beneath it. The Arch Street Meetinghouse Trust is beginning the process of gathering as much information as possible on who is buried there and they intend to put together a database of that information.

Epistle Reading

Louis LeFevre (Trenton MM) read an epistle from Lake Erie Yearly Meeting from July 28-31, 2016 at Bluffton University, Ohio. They focused on attempting to answer the question: "What would John Woolman do today?" They worked on addressing the concerns of institutional racism, climate change, economic & racial justice, financial stewardship, implicit racial bias in our court system and in ourselves. Their Epistle can be found at the following location: <http://fwcc.world/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/Lake-Erie-YM-2016.pdf>

Quaker Life Council Report

Clerk Lane Taylor (Plumstead MM, worshipping with Quaker X) asked members of council to stand, be recognized, and thanked them for their service to the yearly meeting. In the past year, the council has created internal committees to create and sustain the processes of the council,

and the program and funding committees have been combined. Lane asked Friends to consider serving on that committee as they are in need of assistance. The council stewards collaboratives which support Friends' shared desire for ministry. She encouraged Friends to apply via the PYM website. Membership in a monthly meeting is not required to serve on a collaborative and the Quaker Life Council webpage has a list of all current collaboratives.

The council is working on a two year plan for Resource Friends enhancement and availability. They are also reconsidering the definition of membership in the yearly meeting and how it can become more inclusionary. Many don't have a strong attachment to a monthly meeting, but want to participate and be active in yearly meeting activities. She noted that QLC is also working with Administrative Council on how best to steward the youth programs and serve them well. The council is threshing the subject of physical and emotional safety for volunteers. She noted that this has affected her personally and that we must actively search for an answer. This work includes the safety and inclusivity of transgender Friends. The yearly meeting does not have a policy since the prior one was suspended. She noted the use of pronouns on the nametags is one small step to help make all Friends feel comfortable and welcomed.

Lane announced that the council is now under the weight of the concern of what happened at Upper Dublin. It is the council's goal to listen deep without any preconceived notion of what the outcome will be. They minuted:

PYM has struggled with several concerns over recent years, in particular the tensions between Avis Wanda McClinton and Upper Dublin Monthly Meeting which culminated in heavy feelings and wounded hearts. Their relationship has suffered an unfortunate outcome. The experience has left a painful wound despite many efforts by representatives of PYM and others to help them reconcile their differences. The failure to find a peaceful resolution leaves us with many questions and challenges. We must accept the consequences as they stand presently. Therefore, out of deep concern for the health of our yearly meeting community, we will refrain from further consideration of this during PYM business sessions. Instead, we ask everyone to hold this painful concern in the Light.

The Quaker Life Council feels led to discern further movement of the Spirit in this matter, to hold all involved faithfully, and to do any remaining listening that is needed. Any wisdom or direction that comes from this labor will be presented at the Fall Continuing Sessions. We ask the body to hold in the Light the work of the Quaker Life Council, hold all who have been touched by this matter, and especially hold in love Avis Wanda McClinton and Upper Dublin Monthly Meeting.

Friends serving on the QLC recognize the strong emotions and deep concern that have surrounded this matter. We are reminded that our work towards right living is never done. We are here to be nourished and refreshed by the Spirit and to love one another. When we do this our faith is magnified and we are made whole.

Lane stressed that PYM is not finished with this concern. The council is honored and humbled by members who have consistently labored under the weight of this concern. She has faith that this process will be powerful and real.

A Friend shared the hope that some additional Friends of Color are invited to work with this council and that the committee also works on a process so that future conflicts don't fester and grow. Another Friend shared that Friends of African Descent, a twenty-five year old institution in

Philadelphia with its Peace Center, stands ready to offer support to the yearly meeting on this concern.

A Friend asked if this minute has been shared with all parties involved and have they agreed to the minute? The response was yes, there has been contact with both Avis Wanda McClinton and the co-clerks of Upper Dublin. They have agreed to work with the council.

Friends received the Quaker Life Council minute regarding the Upper Dublin Monthly Meeting conflict feeling deep pain, humility, and concern. Hearing the experiences of Friends, we commit ourselves to hold each other in prayer as we love and listen to each other in Spirit and continue to move through the process.

We adjourned, intending to reconvene this evening, God willing.

Respectfully submitted,
John Lavin, Recording Clerk
Erika Juran, Assistant Recording Clerk

**337th Annual Sessions
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Worship

The Presiding Clerk, Penny Colgan-Davis (Germantown MM), opened the meeting for business with an announcement that former Clerk, Jada Jackson's father had passed. A moment of silence was held.

Welcome and Introductions

After a period of worship, Clerk Penny Colgan-Davis, greeted the body. Others at the table introduced themselves: Alternate Clerks: Alison Anderson (Central Philadelphia MM), Thomas Hoopes (Valley MM) and Amy Kietzman (West Philadelphia MM); Recording Clerks: Anthony Taylor (Fallowfield MM) and John Lavin (Birmingham MM); and General Secretary, Christie Duncan-Tessmer (Chestnut Hill MM). Voice to text captioning was provided by Devon Gerber.

Approval of Minute of Action, from Saturday Morning Session

Recording clerk John Lavin read the minute of action for the body.

Friends approved the transfer of ownership of the Burlington Meetinghouse and property from Philadelphia Yearly Meeting back to Burlington Quarterly Meeting under the proposed terms of the agreement described by the attached summary.

A Friend expressed that that the sense of the meeting was not fully captured by the minute, particularly the last sentence. Another Friend added some context to the topic, in an attempt to explain how the core of the minute, as it is written, captures the spirit of the meeting. Several Friends expressed that the Friend speaks their mind.

Draft of outgoing epistle

A draft of the outgoing epistle was shared by committee members Naomi Maderas (Chambersburg MM), Ross Hennesy (Germantown MM), and Melissa Rycroft (Pennsdale MM). After hearing the epistle draft, the clerk asked the body if there were any questions, for clarification.

A Friend expressed that the wording of the minute which states that this is “just the beginning of the work” may take away from the work that has already been done. Another Friend added suggestions to include outreach that has taken place. A Friend suggested an addition to include greetings to younger Friends. Another suggested adding a statement about the transportation mishap that the Young Friends experienced during the Friday evening session. The situation presented a challenge that brought the community of Friends together to find a solution.

A Friend suggested adding the title of the workshop that Inspira Williams and Sarah Willie LeBreton conducted: *How Meetings Can Become Welcoming and Inclusive*. A Friend suggested adding the date of the *Friend's Journal* article by Avis Wanda McClinton, that was referred to in the draft. A Friend asked to add something about work that has been done at Burlington. Another asked to highlight the sense that Friends seem to be listening to one another more. Another Friend reminded the body that the epistle is meant to serve as an instrument to share lessons that have been learned during Annual Sessions, not a record of activities, such as minutes.

Clerk's Report

Tom Hoopes took over as clerk and asked Penny Colgan-Davis to present her report.

Penny introduced the concept of a multicultural institutional audit -- also called a “self assessment.” In preparation for the discussion regarding the multicultural institutional audit, the Clerk presented the body with some background about the nature of such an audit, and what it is intended to accomplish. Institutional audits first came into use at the university level and in the corporate world when more racial inclusion began taking place throughout the nation. The process of such audits can vary in their implementation. The purpose for conducting an institutional audit is generally to test if the professed ideals of an institution match the reality, in PYM's case, are we living up to what we say we believe.

The cost of such audits can range from \$20,000 to \$300,000. Penny then called on Marvin Barnes, a representative from Friends General Conference (FGC) to share about FGC's experience going through this very same process. FGC had experienced its own problems dealing with racial issues, particularly at their Gathering of 2016. Friends of Color felt harassed by security and did not feel comfortable and welcomed at the site. They shared their concerns with FGC leadership, who brought it to the body and a commitment was made to 1) be more mindful when selecting future sites of the Gathering that *all* attenders are fully welcomed, well treated and safe and 2) to conduct an institutional audit of their own. After the opening remarks, Tom Hoopes asked if there were any questions.

A Friend, who took part in the FGC process, stated that FGC is not undertaking their audit simply because Friends of Color asked for it, but because FGC needed it. Another Friend, who also took part in the FGC process, added that such an audit helps to create a space in which each of us can share our experiences and concerns, and that we as individuals cannot do it alone. A Friend asked if FGC has found a consultant that could do the work that they needed. The answer was yes. Another Friend expressed that it would really be

wonderful if we as a body could really magnify our faith. A Friend asked what organization FGC chose. The answer was Crossroads Antiracism Institutional Training (Crossroads), based in the Philadelphia area.

A Friend asked for clarification of exactly what is being asked of the body. The Clerk reiterated that the body is being asked to approve beginning the process of conducting an institutional audit, by creating a steering committee to select a consultant to lead the process and report in November on who the consultant is and what the cost will be. Final approval will be asked for then.

A Friend asked if November would allow enough time for a steering committee to accomplish the work that is needed. The hope is yes, but it may not be possible. A Friend expressed that there is a sense of urgency regarding this that the body should be aware of. Another expressed that this work needs to be done well, rather than from a sense of urgency.

A Friend asked how the steering committee would be formed. The Clerk shared she had been soliciting names from organizations, such as the Undoing Racism Group and the Fellowship of Friends of African Descent, as well as meetings that have been in the vanguard of this work. In addition, all PYM members will be invited to submit names. Once a master list of names is compiled, the three governing councils (Quaker Life, Nominating and Administrative) will select 12-15 people each to serve on the Steering Committee, and the Nominating Council will name the clerk and assistant clerk. The intent is to include as many members of PYM as possible in the naming process and that the Steering Committee fully reflects our many diversities.

A Friend asked if the work is so important, why not make a decision now? And, if it is so important, costs should not matter. Another expressed that they are in support of the original minute that had been distributed, but that more clarification in the drafting is needed.

The original minute was read, yet, there was not a full sense of unity.

A Friend expressed that there are times when a leap of faith is needed. Another added some clarification of the original language.

A sense of unity was reached. The minute was approved.

Friends approved Philadelphia Yearly Meeting undertaking the process of a multicultural audit, including:

- **Appointing a steering committee that will select a consultant**
- **Reporting back to the body at continuing sessions, in November, 2017**

The meeting adjourned after a period of worship.

Respectfully submitted,

Anthony Taylor
Recording Clerk

**337th Annual Sessions
Philadelphia Yearly Meeting
July 27th- July 30th
The College of New Jersey, Ewing, NJ
Sunday, July 30th- Morning Session**

Worship

Worship was ended with a welcome at 9:03 AM by Clerk Penny Colgan-Davis, and the clerk's table introduced themselves.

Welcome and Introductions

Present: Clerk Penny Colgan-Davis (Germantown MM), Alternate Clerks: Tom Hoopes (Valley MM), Amy Kietzman (Central Philadelphia MM and West Philadelphia MM), Alice Anderson (Central Phila. Meeting); Co-Recording Clerks: Anthony Taylor (Fallowfield MM), Erika Juran (Harrisburg MM); General Secretary Christie Duncan-Tessmer (Chestnut Hill MM). Talk to text transcription by Devon Garber.

Report of the General Secretary

The concept of the Scavenger Hunt was introduced by General Secretary Christie Duncan-Tessmer (Chestnut Hill MM). All meetings are encouraged to participate.

Christie then presented the General Secretary's report. Christie began by saying her report was in three parts.

Part 1: Christie highlighted the fact that there is a long list of processes that are simultaneously "in motion," in our yearly meeting. They include our new governance structure, new strategic directions including a new expectation of engaging in corporate witness, and taking on the charge of our shared witness toward addressing racism. She also noted the political climate and the changes in PYM staffing contributing to the that "in motion" climate. She also noted the fact that when PYM staff members used to be expected not to speak in business because they are seen as staff and have a strong presence in our community already however recently that expectation has relaxed but has a heavy charge of double and triple testing their leadings to be sure that their speech is rightly ordered.

Part 2: Christie said she had learned much this year about how she works and what the yearly meeting needs. She shared an example of a pattern she has of identifying an effective solution and acting quickly. She named that this isn't always the best pattern because it limits the opportunity for wisdom and contributions from others. She acknowledged that staffing changes could have been more consultative with more conversation with staff, committees and others before making a large announcement which then came as a surprise. She explained that the new staffing for youth programs will work differently but will not lead to a decrease in current programming. She described the current youth programs as essential, for the youth and the adults who participate, and that the positive effects of the programming is exponential in the way it affects the meetings and the schools and other communities in which the participants are active. The numbers of youth engaged in the current programming are decreasing and there is unmet need for meetings to have support to manage their youth programming mix. The new staffing will maintain those programs while also making available staff support for monthly and quarterly meetings themselves. In another change in staffing Christie described an intentional loss of hours of administrative support to herself to free up resources to support other parts of the PYM staff. Affected staff changes were given 6 months' notice to find a new positions.

Christie also said that she might have unintentionally set a standard of not accepting feedback in advance. She then apologized for the impacts of these changes on our programming, staffing, leaders, and the Quaker Life Council. She understands the impact of the changes overall.

She then shared her intentional shifting of mindset and action, including giving more detail as plans are made to the Councils, so they can ask questions. She has also held more regular conversations with staff. There is a need for increase in communications infrastructure, and Christie affirmed her need to slow down and ask for help when needed. She also writes a monthly report, and this will be posted online after Councils review it.

She noted that the concern for ending racism for PYM, and understands that this area was not a background strength for her, particularly transformational anti-racism work at an individual or institutional level. She has asked the Administrative Council to help create a threshing council that would support Christie in her work from an anti-racism perspective. She is being supported by some Friends of Color to help her in the meantime and welcomes other recommendations for this support. The Human Resources position was laid down in December and will rise again in a more strategic way. This planning is underway.

She noted that at times she had forgotten to ask for help or resisted asking for help, as well as noting where racism exists. She asks for all of us to read PYM communications, share these, and be sure to connect with Christie directly so there can be a conversation about concerns.

Part 3. Christie reported that the upcoming year will include implementation of a new database that offers great detail and resource. The Resource Friends program will be implemented and will include training and good communication with monthly meetings so they can take advantage of what these Friends have to offer. The focus areas for Resource Friends this year will include Pastoral Care, Social Justice, and supporting youth programming at a meeting level. Another part of the new structure will be inaugurated this year: Bridge Contacts. This program matches members of meetings who love knowing what events and activities are going on throughout the yearly meeting with members and attenders within their meetings who might like to join in.

Christie shared that the Community Engagement Team continually seeks out training and resources. PYM and the Arch Street Meeting House Trust will continue to support Arch Street Meeting House to be sure that it is rightly and well supported. There may be a General Secretary tour again in Spring 2018.

Christie highlighted that anti-racism spreads through all our strategic work, whether it is explicitly stated or not. The commonality of all these items is the work to bring Friends together and to make a positive impact on the world. She posited that "God's Big idea" for PYM is that PYM is a loom that connects us all, and leaders and staff are the artists and technicians. The picture it forms is that all these Friends have the understanding and support and expectation of shared concern for holding the center with God in their everyday lives and interactions.

She closed sharing her gratitude to our staff and to this community, understanding that she needs their support to live faithfully.

Given the fullness of our agenda, Penny asked that questions and feedback be shared with Christie at a later point.

The body then centered into worship to await the children and youth programs. A Friend spoke about our goals of sustainability, consolidation, support of each other, and need for redemption. Another felt that worship after Saturday evening's business was the most covered worship he had experienced at Annual Sessions. We have the opportunity to redeem ourselves for this "great Lie," meaning that we can live into the opportunity that our forefathers did not follow. A Friend thanked Christie for her report, which was a sharing of her journey, courageous and opening. Another noted that the giving of water to Christie during her report was a metaphor of our need and wish to provide support for her in this very difficult and important work.

Outgoing epistles

Penny welcomed the youth to our Meeting for Business, as we entered into consideration of outgoing epistles.

The youth, supported by Meg Rose, Interim Children's Religious Life Coordinator, on behalf of the **Fishers**, presented their epistle, that they learned about "love wolves" and "fear wolves," had picked berries, made dreams' catchers, god's eyes, built forts, and saw goats. Their epistle was received with gratitude.

The **Fells** shared that they tie-dyed, had fun, played games, and went on a farm trip. It was silly, and they wanted to stay the longer they were here. They projected a photo of their class mandala and individual mandalas. This epistle was received with great gratitude.

The **Middle School Friends**, supported by Tara Rubinstein, Interim Middle School Friends Coordinator, and Elizabeth Croce, Middle School Friends Assistant, presented their epistle. New friendships were made, and formed through worship, activities and games and workshops. They navigated the challenges of losing transportation to the rafting trip and appreciate the volunteers who stepped in to make it happen. They hosted Vespers and used the theme of the "love and fear wolf," including Mad Libs, improve theater, and prayer flags. They managed conflicts and understanding they are not perfect, but are resilient and growing. They reminded us to feed our love wolves every day. The epistle was received and they were thanked.

The **Young Friends**, supported by Hannah Mayer, (West Philadelphia MM) Young Friends Coordinator, presented their epistle. They participated in the Spiral Q exercise and story circle and bonded with new members. They joined on Thursday with the All Together Time activity to make books with Spiral Q, focused on feminism, engaged in the interfaith picnic, and joined the plenary. They went shopping together, joined the MSF in the rafting trip, and thank the flexible adults who supported this. On Saturday, they engaged in a worship experiment, and discussed topics, and look forward to the institutional audit with enthusiasm. They practiced the skills for Meeting for Business. They then shared their minute:

Young Friends were shocked to hear the staffing changes, and express their concern with the content of the announcement and way that decision was reached, as well as the lack of engagement of Young Friends in the process. They did not understand that the comments given were official, and they question the validity of the process. They do understand the additional explanation but have trouble trusting the process of the staff. We look to the future for conciliation, and active work to mend the rifts. They thank Hannah for her service.

The epistle is received with great gratitude.

The outgoing epistle from the body was read, and concerns were shared.

A Friend asked that we refer to the ongoing conflict of Upper Dublin MM rather than referencing an article which presents only one side of a conflict. The Friend noted that by doing so, it might jeopardize the very task being taken on by the Quaker Life Council to listen to all involved and to hold the whole story. Alternative ways to include a reference to the article were suggested and considered, and after consideration and worship, the body agreed to keep the reference in the epistle.

Other comments included a request that, in the section about the audit, to delete “with great enthusiasm” and replace it with “humility, gratitude and resolve.” A Friend asked to change the section about the audit since it had not previously been approved (sic). Another asked that we find the practice of beginning to trust our committees.

The clerk asked us to settle into worship and accept the epistle as written. Six Friends asked to be recorded as standing aside. The clerk asked those Friends to present names to the Recording Clerk.

The outgoing epistle, attached in full, was approved, with the following Friends asking to be recorded as standing aside.

The PYM staff leaving us were named by General Secretary Christie Duncan-Tessmer in appreciation, including Gage Beemish, our QVS fellow, Marille Thomas (Green Street MM), Meg Rose, Tara Rubinstein, and Hannah Mayer. Penny added that they will always be in our hearts, and that she hopes that PYM staff will always be in our hearts, having done good and important work, and those learned both ways. John Lavin was appreciated as a recording clerk, helping to organize the team. Emily Blanck was appreciated as Sessions Coordinator in her skills and energy, and the staff and volunteers who helped support Sessions were thanked and appreciated.

Announcements were given.

Meeting for Business adjourned at 12:13 PM after a brief period of worship with intent to return for business on at Continuing Sessions on Saturday, November 4, 2017 at Arch Street Meeting House in Philadelphia, God willing.

Submitted in service,
Erika Juran
Co-Recording Clerk of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting

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