



## Concord Quarterly Meeting Newsletter Volume 18, Issue 1, January 2021

### Seeking an Earth Restored

*(Ed Note: Our next QM will be held on January 24 via Zoom, with Meeting for Business followed by Meeting for Worship with Goshen Monthly Meeting. The program featuring Friends Committee on National Legislation, and organized by Goshen, will immediately follow the worship)*

“An Earth Restored”? Dare we hope that, after the past four years of unceasing environmental damage, that restoring the earth will ever again be possible? The Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) fully believes so.

“The World We Seek”, (FCNL’S Policy Statement), proclaims “an earth restored” to be one of the four things for which they strive.

Aided by the many expert lobbyists they employ, and “a grassroots network of tens of thousands of people across the country”, FCNL lobbies Congress and the administration to get legislation passed and policies enacted in line with its Policy Statement.

On January 24, 2021, Goshen Monthly Meeting will host a virtual quarterly meeting with a focus on “an earth restored.” Amelia Kegan, FCNL’s Legislative Director of Domestic Policy will speak on environmental stewardship priorities which need our support.

By that date in January 2021, a new Congress will have been sworn in and a new president inaugurated and FCNL will be moving ahead with renewed vigor. To give us a foretaste of some promising 2021 environmental stewardship priorities, Clarence Edwards has written the article below for us. Clarence is FCNL’s Legislative Director for Sustainable Energy and Environment. – *Pat Daly Goshen Meeting*

#### Some Promising 2021 Environmental Legislative Priorities

December 12 is the 5th anniversary of the signing of the Paris Climate Agreement. The Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) added its name to a letter that will go to President-elect Joe Biden applauding his commitment to rejoin the Paris Agreement and urging his Administration to increase the intensity of the US commitments to the international climate arena.

This might have been a less than happy anniversary, but the results of the November 2020 elections translate into the US having leadership committed to addressing climate change. President-elect Biden has committed to - in addition to re-entering the Paris Climate Agreement - a carbon free power sector by 2035 and economy-wide net-zero emissions no later than 2050.

Biden’s Administration will work with a Congress that sees the issue of climate change from many different perspectives, from those who don’t see a crisis at all to those who ring the alarm loudly for change. This is the landscape that FCNL’s Sustainable Energy & Environment program will engage over the course of the next two years.

With the goal of seeking an Earth restored in mind, FCNL will advocate to place a price on carbon as the most direct answer to the problem of too much carbon in our atmosphere.

#### “A Call to Act on Climate” on the FCNL website says:

*We work to build support for and advance bipartisan carbon pricing legislation to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and encourage investment in renewable energy. Our carbon pricing work is guided by specific principles:*

- A price should be set high enough to meet global standards for emission reductions and should increase if benchmarks are not met
- It should ensure strong reporting and transparency measure and should not allow companies to outsource their pollution to countries with less strict controls
- It should ensure that low-income, marginalized, and communities of color, often the most impacted by climate change, do not bear the brunt of increased energy costs

*We have been encouraged by the introduction of two carbon pricing bills, both with Republican support: The MARKET CHOICE ACT in the 115<sup>th</sup> Congress and the ENERGY INNOVATION AND CARBON DIVIDEND ACT (H.R. 763)*

*In the 116<sup>th</sup> Congress, there have been seven carbon pricing bills introduced, four of which have bipartisan support. This demonstrates that carbon pricing is becoming more widely accepted as a tool in addressing climate change.*

*We seek to foster a new approach, through bipartisan, science-led, and respectful advocacy. We bring people to the table and meet them where they are. We believe, guided by Quaker traditions and leadings, that this is the most effective, efficient, and peaceable strategy for realizing the world we seek.*

Also, recognizing the heavy burden placed on the health and communities of minorities and lower income citizens caused by the oil & gas industries’ toxic emissions, we will advocate for a significant increase in congressional funding in 2021 for environmental justice programs managed by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Because a changing climate is not contained by the boundaries of nations, we will also keep our attention on the international arena. We will continue to encourage the incoming Biden/Harris Administration to be bold in its climate diplomacy and to contribute the US government’s fair share in helping those developing countries who are already suffering from the consequences of climate change.

The next 18 months are a critical window for humanity to make real progress on climate change. We look forward to having the support of the FCNL community as we work to achieve these goals. – *Clarence Edwards FCNL’s Legislative Director for Sustainable Energy and Environment*



**Quaker School Parents:** Applications for Concord Quarterly Meeting’s Tuition Aid Program for Quarter members attending Quaker schools in 2021-2022 are now available and can be found at <https://concordquarter.org/documents/?category=Tuition> Requests for aid are due February 19, 2021 to the Concord Quarter Coordinator. For more information contact Lynne Piersol at [concordquarter@pym.org](mailto:concordquarter@pym.org) or call 610-864-3802.

## Report from PYM Continuing Sessions



PYM Continuing Sessions for this fall were held virtually in two parts. The first, on November 7 was for worship, fellowship, programs for youth, and small group sharing. The worship was a Community Worship using the model from West Chester Meeting with a Faith and Play story at the beginning. After youth programs, we gathered later in the afternoon for worship sharing sessions in small groups to reflect on the day and what we would take away into the world.

On December 8, we gathered again for Meeting for Business. After a land acknowledgement, we heard reports from the General Secretary and the 3 Councils (Administrative, Quaker Life and Nominating).

The new Co-Clerks, Frank and Jean-Marie Prestwidge Barch, shared what they have received in response to their request that meetings discern their thoughts on three priorities: our membership process, a proposed PYM witness on climate change, and our movement to address racism. They had asked meetings to look at these issues and the background information involved to help discern new priorities for the Yearly Meeting.

So far, 16 monthly meetings and 2 quarterly meetings have sent in a report or communication. The process will continue and be on the agenda in March with the hope that more meetings will share their thoughts. It appeared that some meetings did not fully understand the questions. The question regarding membership and belonging got some responses wondering why this was being considered. Most want to keep monthly meeting membership but are open to the idea of a yearly meeting

## My Summer Trip



The Book of Proverbs solemnly states that "Pride goeth before a fall." More than just an ancient adage, this is a sound piece of advice, especially for us senior citizens. For over twenty summers, I have immersed myself in the wonders of Maine: exploring, hiking, swimming, and kayaking. As an active and healthy 77-year-old, I have taken every opportunity to enjoy outdoor recreation in my adopted state.

About a year ago, during my annual physical here in Pennsylvania, my primary physician announced that I had developed Osteopenia (At least it wasn't Osteoporosis, I thought!) Knowing my zest for the outdoors, the doc suggested that I use hiking poles on my annual visits to Maine.

Although I did happen to have poles left over from a trip to Wales years ago, I laughed and said that they would probably remain happily in a corner of our Maine cottage.

This last summer in Maine was initially heavenly, as we were somewhat removed from the cloud of Covid. There, I was able to enjoy all of my favorite activities. I even decided on a visit to Vermont, where I could indulge in more hiking with my sister, also an outdoor enthusiast. And it turned out to be quite a memorable "trip".

My sister and I found a beautifully remote wilderness area in which to hike. As we walked along, my eye caught a glimpse of the bay through the trees, and my hiking boot caught the edge of an exposed tree root. I went down. Hard. Upper leg pain. Lots. Lying there, time passed turtle slow while my concerned sister went for reinforcements. Finally, "all the king's horses and all the king's men" arrived and began a three-hour rescue odyssey, featuring a canvas litter, a Zodiac raft, and an ambulance. That night in a Burlington, Vermont hospital, talented surgeons repaired my fractured femur with two rods and various screws. After twelve days of hospital and rehab, I was released.

It's been just over 100 days since my fall from grace. The initially grueling pain has diminished as I embrace the healing pain of Physical Therapy. I've had therapy in Maine and here in Pennsylvania since my return in October, and now my PT is still three times a week. But I am improving every day. (I am fortunate that my therapist is brilliant.) I am dedicated to assisting in my own recovery and acquired a stationary bike which is stabled in our dining room just begging for someone to ride her. (And I do, twice a day! Yeehaw!)

membership or other changes. This is an issue not only for young adults who may be active in a group like Young Adult Friends, but are not members of a meeting, but also adults who may be distant or unable to participate on the monthly meeting level. Currently a person who is not a member of a meeting cannot serve at the yearly meeting level. One Young Adult Friend said that Nominating Council had recognized her gifts for service, but she is not allowed to serve PYM because she is not a meeting member. It was noted that the YAF community does not require meeting membership to serve that group, and some monthly meetings have few roles that require membership. Administrative Council currently has a sprint working on these issues.

As for the issue of climate change the Clerks sense that there is much support for work on climate change. However, there is lack of clarity for the suggested PYM minute. A sprint will be formed review this issue and report at Annual Sessions in July. Suggested names for the sprint can be sent to: [barch@pym.org](mailto:barch@pym.org)

Antiracism is also an important issue to meetings, and the Clerks could see much work being done in this area as meetings shared what they are doing already. There is a new PYM Antiracism Collaborative which is reaching out to meetings to see what they are doing. And there will be a couple of Thread Gatherings this winter that will focus on these issues.

For the full minutes and reports: <https://www.pym.org/minutes-of-pyms-meeting-for-business-in-sessions-december-8-2020/>

- *Lynne Piersol, CQM Coordinator*

Physical Therapy will continue at least until January. It has been a long and winding road, with many lessons, but I intend to graduate with honors early in the New Year.

Why am I sharing all this? Remember that Pride and the Fall adage? Remember my doc's suggestion about hiking poles? If I had heeded her advice, would I have fractured my femur? Who knows? But I'll guarantee that my chances of avoiding this painful journey, would have been improved.

As our years (and mileage) increase, so does our risk of debilitating physical mishaps. Falls, slips, twists, all lie in wait. I was so confident, so strong, so capable, then - wham! My freedom of movement changed in an instant. Oh, I intend to hike again, paddle in my kayak, and maybe even run up and down the stairs. But not for a while.

Sadder but wiser, I am able to offer advice in hopes of preventing others from sharing a similar experience:

- Do you have scatter rugs in your house? Do they have non-slip pads underneath? (They are called scatter rugs for a reason.)
- Are the lights in your house sufficient for navigating both day and night? (Or do you embrace the challenge of stumbling around in the dark on your way to the bathroom?)
- Are all cords safely secured to avoid tripping? (Even if you were a jump-rope champion.)
- Do all your stairs have railings? (Are you able to grip them firmly with one hand while juggling laundry with the other?)
- Do your outside areas have the same safety features?
- In winter weather, do you keep an eye out for icy patches, wet leaves and steps, particularly when getting in and out of your car?
- Do your winter shoes have adequate tread? Do you own a pair of ice shoes? (I've known of two friends who have broken their legs from slipping on ice.)

As for me, I am now proactive in order to prevent another mishap. Now, I am a more careful and deliberate walker. Now, I am more focused, and pay more attention to the steps and spaces inside and outside my home, including moving some furniture and placing more lights in strategic places. Now, I'm definitely counting on a great summer 2021 in Maine, doing all the things I love.

Then, I will dust off those hiking poles. And yes, I will use them.

- *Laurie Worth – Westtown Meeting & the CQM Aging Concerns Group*



## Open Doors Project at West Chester Meeting

Our Meeting has just completed its first major Meetinghouse renovation in more than 150 years – a project we’ve named “Open Doors.” This project makes our building far more accessible to people requiring assistance from devices such as wheelchairs, walkers, or canes.

Prior to the project, it was difficult or impossible for such folks to enter the Meetinghouse without considerable help. Now that our renovations are complete, almost everyone can move from the Meetinghouse’s south side parking lot to our large, covered side porch; from there into the Meetinghouse; and from there on into our Social Room and do so without assistance. Although Meeting had wanted for decades to correct this accessibility issue, it was only recently we found an Architect who showed us how we could resolve this using the guidelines of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) without sacrificing the historicity of the building or the atmosphere of peace and serenity that the Meetinghouse provides for us. (In other words, without needing mechanical lifts or other intrusive structures.)

The impediment to getting mobility-challenged people into the Meetinghouse had always been an 8 inch high threshold at the entry door from the side porch. Our initial solution had been a small wooden ramp from the porch floor to the floor level of the building. But ADA requires such a ramp to be more than 3 feet wide and 8 feet long, with metal handrails on each side: a much larger apparatus than the ramp we’d built.

Initially, we requested our Architect to draw up several potential paths for an ADA-compliant ramp. We replicated these designs with chalk drawings on the actual porch floor, using a different color chalk for each design. During our next Meeting for Business, members went to the porch to examine these designs. We decided that all the layouts were unacceptably intrusive and would seriously impair the feeling of serenity we wanted to preserve.

Our Architect then suggested an alternative solution that we vastly preferred: Remove all the bricks from the porch floor, raise the underlying surface, and replace the bricks at a height that exactly matched the elevation of the Meetinghouse floor, eliminating the eight-inch threshold completely. And because the East end of the re-laid porch floor was flush with the parking lot, a wheelchair-bound person could move from the parking lot onto the porch and from there directly into the Meetinghouse.

## Membership and the Need to Change

During the years I’ve been involved with Friends, membership in a Monthly meeting has been a barrier for Young Adult Friends (YAF’s). We have heard many Friends (generally those of the Boomer generation) express how important they felt membership in a monthly meeting was, and I have always felt an implication that to be a “real Quaker” one has to be a member of a Monthly meeting.

Membership in a meeting has always been the way our Society has defined who is or is not a Quaker. Likely as a result of this reality, membership in a Monthly Meeting became a pre-requisite for participation in Quaker business and leadership. For most of Quaker history this system “worked” well enough that changes to it were not seriously discussed.

But membership as a requirement to serve in leadership does not work for many YAFs because their lives are often incompatible with what is necessary to be a member of a Monthly meeting. Due to the realities of stagnant wages and multiple economic recessions Young Adults tend to change both jobs and living locations frequently (every 1-2 years or less).

This transience has two important effects: It makes attending any one meeting difficult, (which by extension makes becoming a member of a meeting harder) and for those who are already members of meetings it means that they move away from that meeting for periods of time, and often do not wish to give up membership in the meeting they left behind.

Next, we had to deal with a consequence of this raising the porch floor. The sidewalk adjoining the porch had been level and physically contiguous with the porch itself. But raising the porch level made the porch floor higher than the sidewalk. To account for this discrepancy, the Architect designed a short wall to separate the porch floor from the sidewalk. The wall complemented the overall design of the building, and will, in and of itself, be a useful addition to the building’s functionality.

Needless to say, this approach has cost considerably more than a simple ramp, but we feel the “payoff” justifies the expense. It solves the initial problem without impairing the building’s historicity and aesthetic, and it also gives us a larger level surface that will accommodate outdoor Meetings for Worship, shared lunches, and many other activities. And the aforementioned short wall will also provide seating space for West Chester Friends School students awaiting parental pick-up.

We then addressed the remaining issue: getting mobility-challenged people from the Meeting Room into the Social Room, a passage that previously could only be accomplished by a set of steps. Having already discarded the idea of a mechanical lift, our remaining option was a ramp. Fortunately (and remarkably!), the space behind our “Facing Benches” was almost exactly the right width and length to accommodate an ADA-compliant ramp. Properly designed and built, such a ramp would look as if it had been part

of the original building design. And the addition of a short wall directly behind the Facing Benches largely conceals the ramp from the view of Friends seated for Meeting for Worship.

We are pleased to have increased our Meetinghouse’s accessibility and functionality with renovations that leave the historical and aesthetic character of our Meetinghouse intact. We look forward to reaching out to residents of the four retirement facilities located near us, inviting them to come and worship with us, enjoy a concert, or share a meal when such events are again possible. We also hope these improvements will enable us to broaden our welcome to residents of West Chester borough and the surrounding community. -Randy & Deb Lyons -West Chester Meeting



Even when YAFs are more stable in their lives, finding a meeting that provides a spiritual home that welcomes them is often challenging. Requiring membership in a monthly meeting to serve in the leadership of PYM is a barrier to participation for Young Adults. It is one of the reasons there are almost no Young Adults in PYM leadership.

Many solutions have been discussed over the years, including making the PYM YAF community a Quarterly Meeting and direct membership in the Yearly Meeting. The most elegant solution, in my opinion, is the one that has increased in popularity in recent years: Removing membership as a requirement to serve in leadership at all levels.

There are friends who are active in their Quaker communities who are not members of meetings. There are also Friends, like myself, who are very active in other Quaker communities but are not active in their own meeting. Why can I be eligible for leadership under the current system because I grew up in a meeting, but other non-members just as active as me cannot be eligible?

YAFs are part of future Quakerism (As many older Friends have reminded me over the years), and when discussing or discerning what membership should look like in the future, I invite you to consider this query: Will our membership system work for people who will be Quakers in the future, and people who we want to be Quakers in the future?

- Carl Stanton - Chester Meeting and YAF Recording Clerk

# Concord Quarter January-February 2021 Announcements & Calendar of Events

## Announcements

The draft minutes from our October 25 Quarterly Meeting via Zoom are on the website:

<https://concordquarter.org/documents/?category=Minutes> Please send any comments about those minutes to the Recording Clerk, Marty Boston, at [mboston0916@gmail.com](mailto:mboston0916@gmail.com) by January 15, 2021

Concord Quarter meetings are worshipping virtually, in person, and hybrid. Meeting information is on the Concord Quarter website: <https://concordquarter.org/special-events/worship-during-pandemic>

Concord Quarterly Meeting has a Tuition Aid program open to member families with children entering grades K-12 in the fall of 2021. Applications can be found here and are due to the Coordinator by February 19, 2021 <https://concordquarter.org/documents/?category=Tuition>

PYM's Children and Families Program has a number of events including the Giant Children's Meeting every 4th Sunday, and Community Playdates. For info and to register: <https://www.pym.org/children/events/>

Pendle Hill offers virtual workshops and gatherings. <https://pendlehill.org/learn/workshops-courses-events/>

PYM Friends General Conference now has year round programs for children and youth, programs for Friends of Color, virtual worship opportunities and more: <https://www.fgcquaker.org/virtual-opportunities-fgc>. Retreats for high school aged youth of color: <https://www.fgcquaker.org/deepen/help-your-meeting-challenge-racism/virtual-retreats-youth-color>

## Calendar of Events

- Jan 6** **Concord Quarter Working Group on Aging Concerns via Zoom.** All interested in aging concerns are welcome. Contact the Quarter Coordinator for the Zoom link or questions: [concordquarter@pym.org](mailto:concordquarter@pym.org)  
10:30am-12
- Jan 23** **Addressing Anti-Blackness in and Beyond Monthly Meetings,** a PYM Thread Gathering, cohosted with Chestnut Hill Meeting. For more info and to register: <https://www.pym.org/event/addressing-antiblackness/>  
9am - 2:30
- Jan 24** **Concord Quarterly Meeting via Zoom,** hosted by Goshen Meeting featuring Meeting for Business (with a report from Delaware Valley Friends School, Community Worship and Amelia Kegan from FCNL! For more info and to register: <https://concordquarter.org/nextqtm-pastqtm/2021/cqm-goshen-meeting-january-24>  
8:30 am to  
12:30 pm
- Jan 31** **CQ Planning Committee via Zoom.** Open to all interested in the activities and workings of Concord Quarter. Contact the Coordinator with questions and for the Zoom link at [concordquarter@pym.org](mailto:concordquarter@pym.org)  
2:00 pm
- Feb 6** **Seasons in the Life of a Meeting, a PYM Thread Gathering.** Envisioning our meetings as dynamic entities constantly undergoing change. For more info and to register: <https://www.pym.org/event/seasons-in-the-life-thread-gathering/>  
9am to  
3pm
- Feb 26-27** **The PYM Young Adult Friends (aged 18-35ish) Winter Retreat (virtual):** For more info and to register: <https://www.pym.org/event/yaf-winter-retreat-2021/>
- Feb 27** **Truth & Transformation, a PYM Thread Gathering.** The Ministry & Care Committee of Quaker Life Council explores a Truth & Transformation process having the goal of creating a space within PYM for individuals to be heard concerning experiences of oppression including incidents of racism that may have left unhealed hurts and wounds. For more information: <https://www.pym.org/event/truth-transformation-thread-gathering/>  
9 am to  
3:00 pm

### **New Support Group starting for those researching retirement communities!**

Concord Quarter's Working Group on Aging Concerns is starting a support group for those actively pursuing residential housing options for our later years. We are hoping to develop a "template" useful for gathering information about various facilities, especially those located in our Quarter's geographic area. If you or your loved ones are thinking about eventually moving into a more supportive environment, and the idea of working with others on this project appeals to you, this might be a group for you. We are inviting individuals who will commit to collecting information and sharing their findings with the group. Please note this group will focus on moving into facilities other than our own homes. At another time we may start a support group for those wishing to age-in-place.

If this is of interest to you, or you have questions, please email the Coordinator, Lynne Piersol at [concordquarter@pym.org](mailto:concordquarter@pym.org). We plan to start meeting at the end of January 2021.

# Concord Quarterly Meeting January 24, 2021 Goshen Meeting

This is a ZOOM event. Registration is required (see below) in order to receive the Zoom link.

- 8:30-9:45 Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business  
10:00-11:00 Meeting for Worship (Melinda Wenner Bradley will share a family friendly story at the beginning)  
11:15-12:30 Presentation: Amelia Kegan, Friends Committee on National Legislation's Legislative Director for Domestic Policy, on Environmental Stewardship

Families are invited to attend the Community Worship. Families with preschool and elementary school aged children could also join the PYM Giant Children's Meeting at 9am (separate registration: <https://www.pym.org/event/giant-childrens-meeting-2/2021-01-24/>)



## WE SEEK AN EARTH RESTORED

"An Earth Restored"? Dare we hope that, after the past four years of unceasing environmental damage, that restoring the earth will ever again be possible? The Friends Committee on National Legislation fully believes so.



Join Amelia Kegan, lead staffer for FCNL's domestic policy team, as she takes us through FCNL's expectations and policy goals for the legislative year ahead with a new President and Congress.

Before joining FCNL, Amelia worked with national non-profits in D.C. and Chicago, focusing on federal budget, tax, and low-income policy. She recently spent six years at Bread for the World as the Deputy Director of Government Relations. Amelia received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Government from Smith College and a Juris Doctorate from the University of Washington School of Law. She is a member of the Illinois bar and serves on the board of the Washington Council of Lawyers.

Please register at this link:

<https://concordquarter.org/nextqm-pastqm/2021/cqm-goshen-meeting-january-24>  
For more info and a map to our meetings, go to <http://concordquarter.org/meeting-maps/>  
You can also email Lynne Piersol, Coordinator, at [concordquarter@pym.org](mailto:concordquarter@pym.org)  
or call 610-864-3802 and leave a message.



## Concord Quarterly Meeting by Zoom, October 25, 2020 - Minutes

### Opening Worship

**Debbie Murray-Sheppard (Clerk)**

Debbie welcomed attendees to the meeting and began the meeting at 9:45 AM with a period of worship.

### Welcome Newcomers

**Debbie Murray-Sheppard (Clerk)**

Debbie welcomed Tom Ceresini from Middletown Meeting and Pat Daley from Goshen Meeting.

### Monthly Meeting Count (Birmingham, Concord, Goshen, Middletown, West Chester, Westtown, Willistown, Wilmington)

Thirteen friends were present as the meeting began. All the Meetings except Concord and Westtown were represented.

**Approval of Agenda:** The group approved the agenda as written. **Debbie Murray-Sheppard**

### Approval of Minutes from July 26, 2020

**Debbie Murray-Sheppard**

The minutes from July were approved as written. Debbie thanked Marty Boston, the recording clerk, for doing the minutes.

### Joys and Challenges Report from Westtown Meeting (attached)

**Bruce Harrison**

Bruce Harrison from Westtown Meeting was to give the Joys and Challenges from Westtown, but he was unable to attend today. The clerk will ask him to report at the next quarterly meeting.

### Joys and Challenges Report from Willistown Meeting (attached)

Steve Kupferschmid gave The Joys and Challenges report from Willistown Meeting. The group held the Friends at Willistown in the Light.

### Treasurer's Report (attached)

**Charles Spadoni**

Charles Spadoni gave the Treasurer's report. Richard Ailes asked if Friends Fiduciary is eliminating all investments in fossil fuels. Charles said that is correct. The Green Fund is being restructured and it continues to invest in clean energy. Debbie thanked Charles Spadoni, the treasurer, for his work on the financial report.

### Working Group on Aging Concerns Report (attached)

**Rich Ailes**

Rich Ailes gave a report from the Working Group on Aging Concerns. Rich invited everyone to the group's next meeting on November 11th. Lynne Piersol said that information about the Aging Concerns Working Group's recent program on Housing Options is now on the Quarter's website. Debbie thanked Rich for the report.

### Coordinator Report (attached)

**Lynne Piersol**

Lynne Piersol gave the Coordinator's report. She has been working on an event with Western Quarter for children. She shared the flyer about an Indoor scavenger hunt that will happen on November 21, 1:30-3:00 PM. Lynne will be sending the flyer out soon. Rich Ailes asked about what the Friends Schools are doing. West Chester Friends is meeting in person, but they have the option to meet remotely if necessary. Westtown School is now meeting in person through the eighth grade. The Westtown Upper School is returning to in-person meeting next week. Wilmington Friend's School is meeting in person for kindergarten through fifth grade. The Wilmington Friends Upper School is meeting in person four days a week. Delaware Valley Friend's School is planning to return to in person school soon. Rich Ailes suggested having in person events for the children and youth in the Quarter. Marty Boston shared about a Zoom game night at Birmingham Meeting. Serita Spadoni shared that Birmingham Meeting is having the children's program in person, but outdoors rather than in the meeting house.

### Joint Quarterly Meeting with Western Quarter, how often?

**Lynne Piersol**

Concord Quarter has been meeting with Western Quarter for the past two years. Lynne Piersol asked the group to decide how often Concord Quarter would like to have joint quarterly meetings with Western Quarter. The last meeting was in July in the place of having Concord Meeting host Quarterly Meeting. Concord Meeting is not able to host Quarterly Meeting in the near future. Lynne asked how flexible meetings in Concord Quarter would be to changing months of when they host Quarterly Meeting. Birmingham Meeting prefers to host in April. Wilmington Meeting and Willistown Meeting are flexible on the date when they host, however Willistown would prefer not to host in July because of the heat. The group decided it would like to have a joint quarterly meeting with Western Quarter annually. Debbie will ask for a subcommittee to put together a program for July 2021.

### Query: What processes have meetings been using to reflect on the request sent out by the PYM clerks to consider the priorities of climate change, racism, and membership? (attached)

**Debbie Murray-Sheppard**

The group questioned the process for the request from PYM to consider priorities on climate change, racism, and membership. The group felt that the timeframe suggested to discuss the topics was not adequate and the priorities should filter through the monthly meetings to the quarterly meeting then to PYM. The Quarter would like for good process to be observed. The Quarter will give this feedback to PYM.

### Reading of Minutes for Approval

**Marty Boston (Recording Clerk)**

The Quarter approved having an annual joint quarterly meeting with Western Quarter. Debbie Murray-Sheppard will ask for a subcommittee to put together a program for July 2021.

### Second Count of Meetings and Members in Attendance

**Marty Boston (Recording Clerk)**

At the second count of the attendees, nineteen people were in attendance. All the meetings except Westtown Meeting were represented.

### Westtown Monthly Meeting 2020 Joys and Challenges

This year has been a challenging year in many ways for Westtown Meeting. We have struggled with many of the same issues as other Meetings but ours began before the pandemic hit.

Bruce Harrison and Margaret Haviland had been serving as Co-clerks for the Meeting until Margaret accepted the position of Head of school for Westfield Friends School. Another member of the meeting was asked to serve with Bruce as Co-clerk but just after he accepted his work life changed drastically with additional responsibilities and lots more travel. He could not serve as Co-clerk at this time. Bruce Harrison has continued to serve with the help of the Pastoral Care and Concerns committee and other members of the community.

To help find a new Co-clerk and to evaluate the work of the Meeting and the various committees and how members serve the Meeting, a new Committee was formed composed of past Clerks and seasoned Friends. The Nurture and Coordination Committee. They have been communicating the needs and concerns of the meeting and its members to each other and listening deeply. It is still early days, but they are becoming the glue that helps bind us together.

Because we are on Westtown Schools campus and many of the boarding students of the school join us on Sunday morning, our years really follow the school calendar starting in September. The school's Religious Life committee had begun experimenting with changing the compulsory attendance requirement on Sunday for boarding students. Many boarding students who lived locally would go home allowing them to skip Sunday Meeting. Students who were international or from far away ended up having to attend Meeting every Sunday. Now all students are required to attend a set number of Sunday Meeting

each semester. We see fewer students each Sunday (which makes many of us sad) but we will see all the students during the year. Students still provide an energy and occasional ministry to the Meeting, but they are much more invested in their Thursday student Meeting for worship. Students have stated that they feel a sense of ownership and investment in Thursday Meetings for worship which allows them to become spiritually powerful event.

Winter 2020. On Sunday February 2nd Westtown Meeting celebrated our Centinela with Meeting for Worship in the Meeting House followed by an archival photo of our members on the facing benches and in front of the Meeting House. We enjoyed a cake and light refreshments in the East end collection room of the main building.

Spring 2020 as the pandemic began to spread the Head of School, Tori Jueds was in contact with the Meeting about our use of the Meeting house and the schools needs to follow best practices as recommended by the CDC. We began to ask members who were in the high-risk groups to not attend meeting. The Westtown students were about to leave for Spring break. We held Meeting in person one last time with a special camera perched on a ladder to allow members to join us through Google Meet.

We joined together via the internet with a camera focused on the empty benches in the meeting house. The next week we had a microphone so you could hear the birds and noises from the Meeting house. Westtown Meeting was so very fortunate to have Carl Beehler as a member and our technology guru. He continued to change and adjust our equipment in the Meeting house and eventually move us to the Zoom platform.

Summer 2020 we returned to meeting in person in the Meeting house with a sign-up genius and hard limit of 25 persons wearing masks. Leaving all the doors and windows open we can really hear the birds and occasionally have one fly in to worship. The blessings of Zoom meeting for worship is that members who have moved away can and do now join us regularly from places like Chicago, Sacramento and Maryland. Our oldest member, my mother Isabella Harrison (93) joins us most Sundays from her apartment at White House Village on her I-pad. Members and attenders will sometimes stay on the Zoom link at the end of meeting to chat and exchange greetings.

Fall 2020. Some international students have returned to campus and the Meeting will have to change and adjust as the school begins to feel its way through a new school year in the middle of a pandemic (Pivot). Our use of the Meeting house and just being on the school grounds is conditional and based on the needs of the school and its students. Our Meeting for worship has been an important community building opportunity for alumni and school community members. We have made an invitation to current parents of lower, middle and upper school, along with Alumni to join us on Sundays with the Zoom link.

Winter 2020 & 2021 We do not plan on holding our usual in person Christmas and New Year events. We will continue to hold Meeting in the Meeting house and on zoom. The doors will remain open for full ventilation and the schools steam heat will try to maintain a comfortable balance. We are planning to hold our annual Christmas Plant Sale fundraiser, in hopes of maintaining some sense of normalcy. Normalcy: We have had two requests of clearness for marriages in 2021 and have a great sense of joy that love will not be put on hold for a pandemic. - Bruce Harrison, Clerk of Westtown Meeting

### **Willistown Friends Meeting October 2020 Challenges and Delights**

**THE CHALLENGES:** The Pandemic of course! We had our last in-person Meeting for Worship in February. We quarantined in silence for two months. The Clerking Team (with Nelson Wicas taking on the initial Hosting job) began doing Zoom worship sessions in April, getting the Zoom meeting codes, password, out to our membership, to try "Virtual" Meeting for Worship. This process took nearly two months to get a variety of folks connected from their homes. By this time, several members asked to try in-person Meeting for Worship with no more than 12 people, safely physically distanced and masked in the Meeting House, with windows open for ventilation. We tried "blended" worship with the "Host" using his computer while sitting in the Meeting House. When this worked, the Meeting decided to invest in a large screen and microphone for the Meeting room. We were fortunate to have Betsy Swan's input and knowledge for getting this system in place, working, and with written directions for those doing Host, Facing Bench and other Meeting room duties.

**THE DELIGHTS:** The joy for us is in seeing members from Maine, New Jersey shore, New York State, Seattle, Portland, as well as more local members whose distance or health problems have been preventing them from attending. Such a joy to see their faces and hear their voices again! I would never have associated the word "ZOOM" with Friends' processes! The Pandemic Challenge has inspired Friends to use our gifts within our community to meet the challenges, each with different gifts, have used all of them to unite our Meeting to this new millennium. A prime example was the Zoom 95th Birthday Party a family in Seattle gave attended by people from all walks of life and from all over the country! Our Meeting was founded in 1798. Friends have adapted to moments of emergency because of the spiritual wisdom of our Founders in different times of turbulence in the "worldly" society.

### **Coordinator Report for Quarterly Meeting, October 25, 2020**

**Lynne Piersol**

It's been a challenging year on many levels! I have been working remotely since March with the assistance of Zoom. I have continued to visit the meetings that have virtual connection for worship and other things. Earlier this fall I did attend the in-person Chichester Fall Meeting for Worship since there was ample ventilation and very few attendees, but otherwise, being in the high-risk age group, I will be working virtually with all of you for the time being. Other administrative tasks have included working on a document retention policy for the Quarter which will be presented to Planning Committee on November 1. I have shared numerous resources with meetings about how to set up hybrid worship, sometimes from outside organizations, but also from the meetings in the Quarter themselves who have developed formats that work. Most meetings are now having in-person worship; for some outdoor worship preceded the indoor setting. I also continue to share resources when I have attended programs and written them up such as the Caln Quarter Membership Development series, and the recent PYM Meeting Leadership Gathering.

I attended the Delaware Valley Friends School/Concord Quarter Care Committee in September. The committee reported extensively earlier this year, and the pandemic has hampered our efforts to collaborate on events, so there isn't much to report this fall. The school will report in January; they have done a wonderful job of keeping the school going virtually with some in person education too.

I also continue to support the CQ Working Group on Aging Concerns by taking minutes, setting up the Zoom links and helping to organize workshops such as the recent Housing Options for your Later Years, reported on by the Clerk, Rich Ailes.

Finally, I am working with Western Quarter to create a fun afternoon event on November 21 focused on children (preK-6<sup>th</sup> grade) and families. We haven't been able to organize in person events yet, so this will "substitute" for the traditional Parents' Morning Off event we usually do in the late fall.

It continues to be challenging to make decisions about future events, and how to plan things that build community. I was saddened this past weekend to learn that Friends General Conference Gathering for July 2021 will be virtual again – a very understandable decision, but it brings home the seriousness of the pandemic. It will be a long time before "normal" returns if ever. I'm holding in the Light all of us that are saddened by the losses, both big and small, that we are experiencing. And the vaccine makers!

*Editor's Note: The Working Group on Aging Concerns Report, Treasurer's Report, and PYM Clerks' Message to Monthly Meeting Clerks are available on our website at <https://concordquarter.org/documents/?category=Minutes>*

**Concord Quarterly Meeting Newsletter**  
**Volume 18 Issue 1 January 2021**

Rich Ailes, Editor  
310 Park Avenue  
Swarthmore, PA 19081

Clerk: Debbie Murray-Sheppard  
Asst. Clerk: Chris McKenney  
Recording Clerk: Marty Boston  
Treasurer: Charles Spadoni  
Coordinator: Lynne Piersol

Address Service Requested

**Concord Quarter Meetings**

Appoquinimink Preparative (Under Care of Wilmington MM)  
Birmingham  
Chichester Meetinghouse (Under Care of Concord MM)  
Concord  
Goshen  
Middletown  
West Chester  
Westtown  
Willistown  
Wilmington

**Editor:** Rich Ailes

**Published:** January, April, July and October

**Phone:** 610-543-7321

**Submissions Due:** March 17, June 17, September 17 and December 17

**Staff E-mail:** concordquarter@pym.org