

# Concord Quarterly News

of the Religious Society of Friends

## Concord Quarterly Meeting Newsletter Volume 18, Issue 3, July 2021

### A Look at the Middle East with the PYM Middle East Collaborative

(Ed Note: The July 18 presentation at our Joint Quarterly Meeting with Western Quarter will feature members of PYM's Middle East Collaborative. Presented here are two reports the group made to the Yearly Meeting in 2020 and 2021)

#### Middle East Collaborative of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Summary of July 2019 to November 2020



At the invitation of Sue Dietz, on behalf of the PYM Quaker Life Council, the following report is a summary of the work of PYM Middle East Collaborative in the last 18 months.

Middle East Collaborative of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting is composed of members and attenders at various PYM monthly meetings, all of whom share an interest in the Middle East region.

We wish to educate PYM Friends about the region and current issues and make suggestions for individuals' actions to support peace with justice and equality in the region.

Middle East Collaborative (MEC) meets on the first Sunday of every other month: January, March, May, July, September, November. Additionally, we have typically presented a workshop or two at PYM Annual Sessions. While our meetings have been virtual [Zoom] since May 2020, our consideration of issues relevant to the Middle East region has not waned.

In a typical 90 – 120-minute meeting, we check in with each other, have brief reports on various topics and then go on to one or two major items for discussion. Brief reports in the recent past have included:

- Ramallah Meeting and Ramallah Friends School
- Israel / Palestine
- Lebanon including Aug 2020 explosion, economic crisis, and Brummana High School and Brummana Friends Meeting in the hills east of Beirut
- Iraq – development projects under care of Mennonites; Chaldean school.
- Armenia / Azerbaijan – recent conflict
- Luke 10 – ecumenical efforts to send aid to Iran in face of US sanctions
- Iran – assassination of military commander; COVID and sanctions.

We have members whom we support in their connections to Ramallah, Iraq, Iran, Lebanon, Syria, Israel, and Palestine.

Friends on our committee carry out their own social action work and help us make direct connections to a number of organizations:

- Christian-Jewish Allies of Philadelphia
- Mennonite Central Committee
- Jewish Voice for Peace
- Friends Committee on National Legislation
- United Nations and UNRWA
- Luke 10
- AFSC and their campaigns in support of justice in Palestine
- Quaker Palestine Israel Network
- Ramallah Friends Meeting and school.
- Al-Bustan Seeds of Culture in Philadelphia

Recent minutes of our meetings have listed resources for Friends through which they may investigate deeper analyses of topics discussed at that meeting. At our most recent meeting we listed four foci for 2021:

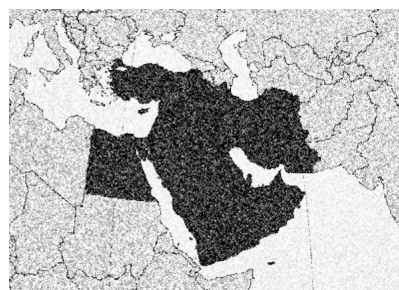
- Further support intersectionality efforts connecting Palestinian rights issues to Black Lives Matter movement
- Familiarize and clarify how we may support Boycott Divestment and Sanctions
- Further connect Why Palestine Matters curriculum to a wider audience of PYM Friends
- Connect to FCNL and legislative priorities for new congress

Thank you to PYM and the Quaker Life Council for all your support and encouragement. Olivia Brangan has been tremendously helpful numerous times in numerous ways. Kate Bregman cheers me on individually and us collectively on a regular basis. *In the Light, Sandy Rea, Clerk*

#### 5/22/2021 Addendum at request of PYM/Olivia Brangan

Since December, MEC has met in January, March, and May. Discussions included:

- Christian Zionism
- Weaponizing Anti-Semitism with focus on the new book by our virtual member and Texas Friend Alex McDonald, *When They Speak Israel*.
- Brummana High School – The Quaker school in Lebanon and the severe challenges it faces as Lebanon deals with governmental, economic, and political crises.
- Continued reports from our liaisons to Christian-Jewish Allies group in Philadelphia as *Why Palestine Matters* curriculum is presented to another faith community. Stay tuned.... Friends of PYM may be offered this course.
- How the Biden administration might move in relation to the “nuclear deal” / JCPOA from which Mr. Trump pulled US support in 2018.
- Updates on Iraq after the US shelling in early March of alleged ISIS sites near Erbil. Two MEC members worked in Erbil for four years and remain in close touch with former Iraqi & international colleagues there.



MEC proposed and has been accepted to present two virtual workshops for the PYM Runway to Annual Sessions 2021. On May 13, 2021 members Tony Manasseh and Leila Barclay, both Lebanese Quakers who grew up in Lebanon, presented *The Middle East Conflict As a Global Issue of Injustice*. Their conversation

combined with commentary and questions by Friends attending (via Zoom) led to a detailed and rich exchange about the current picture in Lebanon and nearby countries in the region, Israel, Palestine, Syria, and Jordan.

Our second workshop is set for Thursday evening June 17, 2021. We hope to present a film as a beginner of examination of the injustices in the Israel-Palestine, on the ground realities. *Wrestling with Israel – Palestine: Equality, Rights, Justice, and the Future*. Friends are encouraged to register for this workshop via the [www.pym.org](http://www.pym.org) website. The title was selected in advance of the 11-day conflict between Israel and Palestine of May 10 to May 21, 2021. Our considerations that evening will surely include this most recent, violent engagement.

*-Thank you, Sandy Rea, Clerk, PYM Middle East Collaborative*

## Concord Quarter Welcomes Bianca Santini-Dumas as New Coordinator

Greetings Friends!

It is my pleasure to introduce myself, your new Concord Quarterly Coordinator. My name is Bianca Santini-Dumas, OPC'10 Alumna. I am a mother to a rising 3rd grader who may be attending meetings with me. I appreciate all topics related to wellness, productivity, music and travel. I enjoy nature and its ability to provide an escape into familiarity.

My time at Penn Charter, a Friends school founded in 1689, gave me an introduction to the importance of embodying virtues, values & principles to the best of my ability under all circumstances. The pandemic tested me in almost every way possible but ultimately strengthened my heart, my connection with my family and ignited my call to action. Connecting and providing resources is a passion of mine and I look forward to doing my part by uplifting the community through this position.

I have been coordinating meetings and events for a little more than a decade throughout high-school, college, my professional career and as an active member & volunteer of Lambda Theta Alpha Latin Sorority, Incorporated.



I am excited to meet each of you in person as the world continues to open up, safely. I am eager to learn and never been known to be shy. Please make your presence known as you feel called. If you have any questions regarding meetings or events, I am available during regular business hours except for most Wednesdays.

Be peace - Bianca Santini-Dumas, CQM Coordinator

## What has the CQ Aging Concerns Working Group been up to for 4 years?

In the October 2016 Concord Quarterly Meeting newsletter, Pam Leland, then The Hickman Executive Director, described a unique program of New York Yearly Meeting to help aging Friends. That program called ARCH (Aging Resources Consultation and Help) "seeks to strengthen the capacity of Meetings and of individuals to care for aging community members by equipping people with information, skills and appropriate boundaries, a network of support and resources, and the spiritual grounding of Quaker values." The article was an invitation for Friends to attend a presentation by Callie Janoff, Director of ARCH, about this organization. About 20 interested Friends attended. In May of 2017, 11 people, representing all the Meetings in our Quarter, attended a kickoff meeting of those interested in aging concerns at The Hickman, clerked by Pam Leland

On June 23, 2017, the group met again with a few more members. The group decided to propose that it become an officially recognized working group of the Quarter. This was presented and approved at Concord Quarterly Meeting for Business on July 23, 2017 to (1) demonstrate to the Meetings and Members of the Quarter that the Quarterly Meeting approved moving forward in bringing aging concerns information to the members and attenders of our community; and (2) open the possibility of applying for grants for programs from Quaker organizations that support aging concerns. Rich Ailes of Middletown Meeting agreed to be Clerk of the Working Group.

By that time, the group was already planning a workshop for January 2018, and exploring the possibility of offering an ARCH Visitor training for those interested in Concord Quarter. This weekend training happened in April 2018 with the help of a grant from Friends Foundation for the Aging. We trained 20 people to become Aging Concerns Facilitators, most from Concord Quarter, including most of the Working Group, along with some from meetings outside the quarter. Trainers were Callie Janoff from the NYYM ARCH program, and George Schaefer, the Aging Concerns staff person from Philadelphia Yearly Meeting.

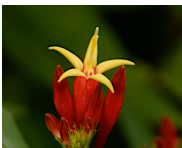
Since then, the Working Group has organized about two workshops a year for the public, on a variety of topics including aging in place, decluttering, legal/financial issues, hospice, housing options (other than your own home), and safety. In person workshops included lunch and the socializing was appreciated. Summaries of many of the workshops and resources can be found on the CQ website. <http://concordquarter.org/aging-concerns> Several times a year, the Working Group invites an outside person to one of its monthly meetings to share knowledge or experience that helps us be of greater assistance to our meeting communities. Topics have included the trajectories of dying, one family's experience with a family member who

had not planned ahead, the services of The Hickman and Barclay Friends, and how People of Color fare in our health system.

Meetings are held nearly monthly either in person or on Zoom. We spend time checking in with each other, sharing news and new resources, and about the work we are doing in our meetings. We also spend the time planning new workshops or deciding on topics that will enrich our knowledge. These are open to anyone interested in aging concerns in the Quarter. We also developed "At Your Fingertips", a document to keep lots of important information in one

place and where to find it in your house. This can be found on the CQ website in the aging concerns section where there are lots of other resources. The next meeting is September 8, hopefully in person. Contact the Coordinator if you are interested: [concordquarter@pvm.org](mailto:concordquarter@pvm.org)

New in 2021 is the Choosing Senior Housing Research Group which grew out of the workshop on Housing Options in the fall of 2020. Finding a housing option that works can be quite difficult, especially for those who are middle/low income. The group developed a spread sheet to help make comparisons of services and costs. They have also heard from several individuals about their choices, as well as from someone from Senior Directory, a comprehensive listing of resources. This group meets monthly via Zoom. As of July 1, the Working Group will have a new clerk, Evelyn Brownlee from Wilmington Meeting. - Lynne Piersol



With gratitude for a job very well done, we bid adieu to CQM Coordinator Lynne Piersol. She has been key to CQM's successes for the last four years. We will miss Lynne's enthusiasm, extraordinary note taking and record keeping, and attention to details great and small. She kept us connected and was always present, with a smile and a stack of agendas! We have been blessed by her friendship and dedication. We wish Lynne a long, relaxing and joyful retirement. - Debbie Murray Sheppard, Clerk

## Black Voices in Classical Music

We asked Clipper Erickson to reflect on the composers of African descent he chose to highlight for the "Troubled Water, Black Voices in Classical Music" performance hosted by West Chester Meeting at our last Quarterly Meeting in April:

R. Nathaniel Dett (1882-1943) has been a central part of my musical life for many years. My friend Donald Dumpson, magnificent pianist and choral director from Philadelphia, introduced me to his music around 25 years ago. I graduated with my doctoral degree from Temple University the same year as Donald did, writing my dissertation on Dett's piano music. In 2015, I released Dett's complete piano works on an album, *My Cup Runneth Over*, which was honored as a Critic's Choice by *Gramophone UK*.

Dett was a seminal figure in American music, bringing the style of spirituals into large choral works, piano suites, and vocal works. Born in Niagara Falls, Ontario, his mother was likely descended from Underground Railroad refugees. He was the first African descent composer to graduate from Oberlin with a degree in piano and composition. He followed a career based on academic positions at HBCU's, most prominently founding the music department at Hampton University in Virginia. There he built the choral program to the point that he was able to take its choirs on tour to Carnegie Hall, the Library of Congress, and a major tour of European capitals in 1930.

His piano music centers on 6 large suites of which I play excerpts from the second and most well-known, *In the Bottoms*, and the final one, *Eight Bible Vignettes*.

Dett writes of "His Song" from *In the Bottoms*: "The psychological phenomenon is historic, that the moods of suppressed people have oftenest found their most touching expression in song. An aged Negro will sometimes sit for hours in the quiet of an evening, humming an improvised air, whose weird melody seems to strangely satisfy a nameless yearning of the heart."

*Eight Bible Vignettes* may be viewed as a culmination of Dett's outlook, philosophy, and life. Together the movements weave a narrative of racial reconciliation, and human oneness. "Father Abraham" is a combination of a spiritual and a Hebrew melody, Leoni. "Desert Interlude" and "As His Own Soul", show Dett's great lyric gift and depict the story of Abraham's slave, Hagar, and the love of David and Jonathan. The final movement, "Madrigal Divine", is a setting of Psalm 23, "The Lord is my Shepherd." It is a magnificent close to a body of work that eloquently expresses a life's journey and hope for a better world.

My dear friend Holly Gash suggested that we do Harry Burleigh's (1866-1949) Five Songs of Laurence Hope. I had enjoyed Burleigh's spiritual arrangements but was amazed at the drama, and harmonic sophistication of these songs. Burleigh was one of the earliest African descent composers

## Palestine and Israel, A Personal Encounter by Max Carter

Max Carter is no stranger to Philadelphia, having taught at Friends Central and Friends Select and worked for his PhD in American Religious History at Temple University. And some may have known him if they attended Guilford College, as the Campus Ministry Director for twenty-five years. If you've seen his barrel chinned bearded photo you can glean his personality, a big hearted, compassionate, straight talker that has earned him an outsized reputation in Quaker circles. Back in 1970, young Max was a Quaker conscientious objector from the Vietnam War whose assignment landed him at the Friends School in Ramallah, Israeli occupied Palestine. This began his 50-year concern for the Palestinians and a deep interest in Palestinian/Israeli relations. The book begins then and ends in 2005.

It is a very personal and compelling account about how Carter came to know the Palestinian experience of that conflict and how he was drawn into relationship with the various supporters of the school and the

to gain prominence and a very important force in the preservation of spirituals, one of the richest bodies of music anywhere in the world. Burleigh was a student of Dvořák when he came to America to teach at the new National Conservatory. Dvořák challenged budding American composers to find their voice using their own folk idioms, as he had done in his native Bohemia. Burleigh was a scholarship student at the Conservatory and cleaned the halls (basically his work-study job), while singing the spiritual melodies he had heard his mother sing. Dvořák overheard him and realized that these could be the basis for a new

American music. Dvořák's own *American Quartet* and the *New World Symphony* are direct outgrowths of this experience. A generation later, it was Dett's own hearing of the *American Quartet* at Oberlin that spurred him to leave behind the ragtime and waltz styles of his youth and use spirituals as his guide.

Florence Price (1887-1953) was another trail blazer, becoming the first African descent woman to have a major work played by a Symphony Orchestra. Born into a prosperous Little Rock family, she studied at the New England Conservatory and migrated to Chicago in the 1920's during a period of increased racial repression in the South including the Tulsa massacre. The second movement of the *Piano Sonata in E minor* features an ingenious transformation of the common Cakewalk short-long-short rhythm into a long and rich melody in spiritual style.

Price's music is receiving much renewed attention after the discovery of several of her manuscripts.

Margaret Bonds (1913-1972) was Price's student in Chicago. She was an expert pianist, evident from the effective piano writing of *Troubled Water*. She also excelled in vocal and choral writing, working on many collaborations with Langston Hughes, the dean of writers of the Harlem Renaissance. Most impressive are the multi-layered contrapuntal texture and masterful rhythmic complexity. Intensity and defiance indicate its creation during the civil rights movement of the 1960's.

Tania León (1943-) migrated from Havana to New York where she has worked with the Harlem Dance Theater, receiving a lifetime achievement award from the governor of New York in 1998. *Momentum*, the first of many piano works, strongly suggests choreography. Afro-Cuban rhythms, gradually gathering momentum, and melodic inflections, infuse this infectious piece.

*Clipper Erickson is dedicated to nurturing the love and understanding of music in his classes and private lessons at Westminster Conservatory in Princeton and Temple University. He regularly gives master classes and performs in schools, encouraging and bringing out the gifts of future generations of musicians. For more info go to <https://www.clippererickson.com/>. For an interesting website on African descended composers, conductors and instrumental performers, go to <http://AfriClassical.com>*

population in the surrounding area. It is full of anecdotes of encounters with warm families, politicized students, and hardworking entrepreneurs, all striving to react to the Israeli occupation with a firm resolve that tries to follow a peaceful path but, in the end, seems forced to violence.

One of the notable aspects of Carter's accounts is his striving to present the Palestine experience through a sympathetic lens while at the same time acknowledging the complexity of the various religious and ethnic factors that Jews, Catholics and Muslims face when dealing with the conflict. Since 1997 he has led numerous delegations of students on trips to Ramallah with an emphasis of doing some reconstruction work seasoned with a heavy dose of meetings with groups representing multiple sides of the conflict. A takeaway for me, was to understand more the difficult position of the Palestinians and how there might be worth in the Israeli's taking a softer position towards them. – *Rich Ailes*

*The book is published by Barclay Press and is available at [Quakerbooks.org](http://Quakerbooks.org)*



Clockwise from top: Dett, Leon, Price, Burleigh, & Bonds

# Concord Quarter July-August 2021 Announcements & Calendar of Events

## Announcements

**The draft minutes from our January 24 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 July 14, 2021 so they can be presented for approval at the July 18 Quarterly Meeting.

**Philadelphia Yearly Meeting has many events for all ages.** In May it started the "Runway to Annual Sessions" with various offerings. For more info and to register for runway offerings or Annual Sessions: <https://www.pym.org/event/341st-annual-sessions-2021/>. Also, sign up for your own news at the bottom of any PYM web page!

**Pendle Hill** has a number of programs this summer: <https://pendlehill.org/learn/workshops-courses-events/> and is open on a limited basis for in person personal retreats: <https://pendlehill.org/stay/extended-stays-sojourns/>

**Looking for a job with a Quaker organization?** PYM has some listings from several organizations, part-time and full: <https://www.pym.org/our-organization/employment/>

## Calendar of Events

- June 27**  
8 pm  
**Twilight Meditation**, organized by Newtown Square Meeting, at Ashbridge Preserve (Willistown Conservation Trust), Chesco - off Goshen Rd. To travel together, meet at Newtown Sq. Meeting, 120 N. Newtown Street Rd, Newtown Square, PA at 7:45 pm.
- June 30,**  
**July 14,**  
**July 21,**  
**Aug 4, &**  
**Aug 18**  
**Westtown Meeting's Lake Suppers at 6:30pm** on the south shore of Westtown Lake. This year, everyone brings their own picnic (including napkins, drinks, and utensils). We encourage all coming who are 12+ to be vaccinated. Please spread out when visiting. Later in the summer we will assess whether we will add grilled food or shared beverages to the plan, but for now everyone should bring what they need. No rain dates or indoor locations this year. More info here: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c0d45aba72da4f58-westtown4>
- July 18**  
8:30 am to  
1:15 pm  
**Joint Quarterly Meeting with Western Quarter online:** Meeting for Business, Community Worship and a program on the Middle East with members of the PYM Middle East Collaborative. Join us for all or part of this annual event! More info elsewhere in this newsletter. No registration necessary. Zoom link is here and will be emailed out again: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/92668234836>
- July 25**  
2:00 pm  
**Concord Quarter Planning Committee via Zoom.** Open to all interested in the activities of the Quarter, generally meets 4 times a year. For more information and the Zoom link: [concordquarter@pym.org](mailto:concordquarter@pym.org)
- July 27**  
**PYM Annual Sessions Spiritual Formation Retreat:** Join Friends for a grounding experience before Annual Sessions: <https://www.pym.org/event/annual-sessions-spiritual-formation-retreat/>
- July 28 –**  
**Aug 1**  
**PYM Annual Sessions online.** Programs for all ages - meeting for business, plenaries, runway workshops, children and youth programs. For more information and links to registration (free): <https://www.pym.org/sessions/>
- Aug 1**  
7:45 pm  
**Twilight Meditation** - organized by Newtown Square Meeting, at Newtown Meadows Preserve, Newtown Township, Delco – off Route 252, next to Episcopal Academy. To travel together, meet at Newtown Sq. Meeting, 120 N. Newtown Street Rd, Newtown Square, PA at 7:30 pm
- Aug 8**  
12:30 to  
4:30 pm  
 **tubing on the Brandywine** at MaryEtta Clendinin's home with Western Quarter IN PERSON! More details to come about what to bring. Hot dogs will be provided. Adults and children will need a medical release: <https://concordquarter.org/documents/?category=Youth>. For more information, contact the CQ Coordinator at [concordquarter@pym.org](mailto:concordquarter@pym.org)

# Joint Concord/Western Quarterly Meeting Virtual on Zoom - July 18, 2021

- 8:30-10:00am Concord Quarterly Meeting for Worship with attention to Business  
10 - 10:15am Break  
10:15 - 11am Joint Multigenerational Community Worship with Faith & Play Story  
11 - 11:45am Lunch Break (eat offline or eat while sharing fellowship on screen)  
11:45-1:15pm Middle East Program with the PYM Middle East Collaborative  
Zoom Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/92668234836>  
1:30-3:00pm Western Quarterly Meeting for Worship with attention to Business



## A Look at the Middle East with the PYM Middle East Collaborative (MEC)

For many years the Middle East has turned despair, pain, and conflict into everyday experiences. Quakers have been involved there for decades and their work is now more urgent than ever. Come and bring an open mind and heart as members of the PYM Middle East Collaborative introduce you to their multi-faceted work and answer your questions.

### Participants will include:

**Dr. Sandy Rea**, Central Philadelphia MM, clerk of MEC, experience in Ramallah and Lebanon

**Georgette Hamaty**, Abington MM, Al-Bustan Seeds of Culture

**Jonathan Evans**, Westtown MM, formerly with FCNL & Catholic Relief Services

**Joan Broadfield**, Chester MM, Compassionate Listening Project Tour in Palestine / Israel, & Christian-Jewish Allies

**Deb Wood**, Westtown MM, Christian Peacemaker Teams & Compassionate Listening Project Tours in Palestine / Israel, and Christian-Jewish Allies

**Tony Menassah**, Central Philadelphia MM & Brummana Friends, Lebanon

You can also email Bianca Santini-Dumas, Coordinator, at [concordquarter@pym.org](mailto:concordquarter@pym.org)  
or Deb Wood at [coordinator@westernquarterquakers.org](mailto:coordinator@westernquarterquakers.org)  
Event Website: <https://concordquarter.org/nextqm-pastqm/2021/joint-concord-western-qm-mec>

## Concord Quarterly Meeting via Zoom on April 25, 2021 Minutes

**Opening Worship** - The meeting began with opening worship.

### Welcome to Newcomers

Debbie Murray-Sheppard (Clerk)

Debbie Murray-Sheppard welcomed everyone. No newcomers were present.

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

At the opening count 16 Friends were present. All Meetings were represented except Goshen.

**Approval of Agenda** - The agenda was approved as written.

**Approval of Minutes from January 24, 2021** - The minutes from January were approved as written.

**Joys and Challenges Report from Birmingham Meeting (attached)** - Celia Lang read the Joys and Challenges Report from Birmingham Meeting. The Clerk thanked Celia for the report.

**Treasurer's Report (attached)** - Charles Spadoni presented the Treasurer's report. Charlie explained how Friends Fiduciary has made changes to its investment strategies. In the Friends Fiduciary Growth and Income Fund, it has divested in any companies that invest in fossil fuels. After review, Friends approved the budget for 2022.

**Nominating Committee report (attached)** - Deb Wood gave an update from the Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee has considered and approached Friends about the Assistant Clerk role. Charles Spadoni was approved for one more year as Treasurer. Deb Lyons was approved to serve on the PYM Nominating Council for three years. Ginny Sutton was approved for an additional term on DVFS Care Committee.

**Working Group on Aging Concerns (attached)** - Rich Ailes gave a report from the Working Group on Aging Concerns.

**Coordinator Search Committee report** Rich Ailes and Debbie Murray-Sheppard gave a report on the search for a new Concord Quarter Coordinator. Friends approved extending the deadline for applying for the position of Concord Quarter Coordinator from April 30th to May 14th. The job description has been sent to the PYM website and to nearby Quarters. Friends minuted their thanks to Lynn Piersol for her service as the Concord Quarter Coordinator with much gratitude.

**Coordinator Report (attached)** - Lynne Piersol gave the Coordinator's report. She said that if a new Concord Quarter Coordinator is not hired by June 1st, she will stay on until a person is hired.

**PYM request to Meetings for discernment: sharing** - Debbie Murray-Sheppard asked the Meetings about how they are responding to queries from PYM regarding membership, climate change, and racial equity. The following responses were given:

Birmingham clerk, Celia Lang reported that Birmingham had called meetings about climate change and racial justice. A working group has been set up on membership. David Leonard reported that adult young Friends at PYM wanted to know if Meetings object to having people have membership in PYM without being members of a monthly meeting.

Concord Meeting has not had time to work on these issues due to their small membership.

West Chester Meeting reported making good progress on the climate change and racial equity queries. They are working on membership. They have not submitted anything back to PYM yet. Bruce Harrison said that Zoom meetings have attracted people from other places and they may not be official meeting members. West Chester wants to encourage these people's continued attendance.

Westtown Meeting has addressed the topics in various formats.

Middletown Meeting has considered the queries from PYM. Middletown wants to encourage young adult friends, but they say many Quaker processes are tied to monthly meetings (like clearness committees) that may be difficult to do if a person is not tied to a monthly meeting. Rich Ailes reported that in the past it was difficult to get young people or people raising children to serve on PYM standing committees and they don't want to discourage young adult Friends who want to serve on PYM committees.

**Reading of Minutes for Approval - Marty Boston (Recording Clerk)** - Friends approved the Concord Quarter budget for 2022.

Charles Spadoni was approved for one more year as Treasurer for Concord Quarter. Deb Lyons was approved to serve an additional three years on the PYM Nominating Council. Ginny Sutton was approved for an additional three-year term on the Delaware Valley Friends School Care Committee.

The Quarter minuted its appreciation to Lynn Piersol for her service as the Concord Quarter Coordinator with much gratitude.

The group approved extending the deadline for applying for the position of Concord Quarter Coordinator from April 30th to May 14th, 2021.

### Second Count of Meetings in Attendance

Marty Boston (Recording Clerk)

At the second attendance count, there were twenty-five people present and all Meetings were represented.

### Joys and Challenges 2020/21 - Report to Concord Quarterly Meeting - Birmingham Friends Meeting - Celia Lang, Clerk

The Christmas Cookie Platter still sits on the bench in Birmingham Meetinghouse, waiting to be claimed by its owner. It is a reminder of our lovely Carol Sing in December 2019, before the whole world changed. The pandemic impacted how we worship, how we meet in committees, how we conduct pastoral care and how we reach out to one another and stay connected. It is the major challenge Friends faced in 2020 and early 2021.

Our primary joy is that Birmingham Friends has remained a vibrant faith community, continuing our work together to find meaning and truth in our lives. The Clerk and many other Friends learned how to conduct meeting for worship and business by Zoom. The Worship and Ministry Committee supported this effort with their thoughtful discernment on how best to move forward. Birmingham Meeting now has four new active Working Groups. These Working Groups have engaged many Friends in the work to keep our faith community connected in worship and fellowship.

**Reopening Working Group** - prepares Guidelines for Outdoor and Indoor Blended Worship and reopening the meetinghouse.

**Zoom Host Working Group** - supports virtual worship.

**Tech Support Group** - provides guidance for tech equipment and training

**Special Projects Group** – works with the Fellowship Committee to offer activities and events in the absence of in-person gatherings.

The joy of Virtual Meeting for Worship is that we are now joined with Friends who live at a distance or have been unable to worship with us in person. Reconnecting and expanding our community has given added depth and joy to our worship experience. During the summer months we combined worship outdoors with our expanded virtual community. We worshipped to the sounds of nature as well as the sounds of the modern world. In November 2020, we began worship inside the meetinghouse under Guidelines based on State directives.

One deep concern of Birmingham Friends since the pandemic started is keeping our children and youth engaged in the Meeting. Dedicated Friends have continued to work with our children outdoors. We have utilized the Peace Garden and our beautiful grounds for the study of nature and the relationship Quakers had with the Lenni Lenape who once inhabited the land upon which our meetinghouse stands.

The Property Committee and Fundraising Working Group successfully raised funds for and completed the long-awaited ADA accessible restroom. The new space is as beautiful as it is functional. With the meetinghouse being unoccupied, the Property Committee arranged to have the East Room floors refinished. The meetinghouse with all of its improvements waits for all Friends to return to our beautiful space.

The Oversight and Pastoral Care Committee continues to be attentive to the needs of our faith community, utilizing the care groups that have been formed. This support has helped many of us to stay connected and to help the larger community to understand the needs of our members and attenders. Meals, flowers, personal notes, virtual and phone visits and other support have kept us in touch with one another and offered solace to those in need.

Birmingham's two annual dinners that raise funds for charities were cancelled. A Special Projects Working Group planned an outdoor dinner with music and take-out dinners that successfully raised funds for the Chester County Food Bank. The Peace and Social Concerns Committee held a flower bulb sale enabling the purchase of two new land mine detectors to be distributed by the UN. On a sunny day in December 2020, Friends gathered outdoors around a fire pit for worship, refreshments and to purchase holiday cookies organized by the Youth Committee. Proceeds were donated to Friends Association for Care and Protection of Children.

One evening in February 2020, the meetinghouse was filled with laughter as the Fellowship Committee organized a game night, not knowing this would be the last gathering we would have together before quarantine. Undaunted, the Fellowship Committee planned and carried out two very enjoyable virtual game nights later in the year.

This year Friends began working on anti-racism initiatives. An Anti-Racism Action Group has been formed to plan and implement initiatives that will move us forward in this work.

The lesson of the pandemic is that Birmingham Friends rose with love and care to meet the challenge. It is due to the spirit led efforts of so many in our beloved faith community that Birmingham Meeting has thrived.

#### **Concord Quarterly Meeting Coordinator Report for April 25, 2021**

Somehow the last three months have zipped by, and in some ways, things seem brighter now. More meetings are holding hybrid meetings again, with growing numbers actually attending in-person. More have access to the COVID vaccine and are feeling safer once they are vaccinated.

We could not hold the traditional Square Dance this February, but we did hold a very successful outdoor event, "Hiking in the Land of the Lenni Lenape" at the Okehocking Preserve on March 13. I worked with 4 other people from several meetings to plan this and it could not have happened without them! It was fully enrolled (we had to register folks in order to limit the numbers for both safety reasons and also because the permit process was going to be quite complicated). All registrants attended and stayed through the wonderful creation story read by Melinda Wenner Bradley at the end of the hike. It was so wonderful to watch people of all ages who had not seen each other for a year greet each other so warmly.

I am beginning to plan for the joint Quarterly Meeting on July 18 with Western Quarter. We had an initial planning meeting with a representative from Willistown (whose turn it would normally be) and people from Western Quarter and will bring that report to Planning Committee next week. If you are interested in helping to plan, let me know.

The draft Archiving/Retention Policy for Quarter documents has been further refined and will also go to Planning Committee. I appreciate all the comments from the people who made suggestions.

I have continued my work with the Working Group on Aging Concerns and hope to stay involved as a volunteer there. There is nothing like it in other PYM Quarters.... I also serve on the Quarter's Nominating Committee in my Coordinator role and the committee has been hard at work in 2021. There is a Delaware Valley Friends School/Concord Quarter Care Committee meeting coming up, which I will also attend – this group is open to any interested in addition to the official CQ representatives.

As well, the regular communication work continues of responding to email, sending out the general monthly announcements, and quarterly newsletter, along with sending more specific information to smaller groups, such as Peace and Social Concerns Committees, or to families who have attended events. I also post on our Facebook page and add documents to the website such as minutes, and aging resources. I attended several PYM Thread Gatherings and Continuing Sessions along with some of the Caln Quarter Membership Development series and shared information from these with meetings. And I publicize meeting events when asked.

Lastly, I want to express my appreciation to all of you in Concord Quarter as I wind up my tenure as Coordinator. It has been a pleasure to get to know you, serve you and learn with you. My paid work career is definitely ending on a high note! If you know anyone who might be interested in the job, they can go here: <https://concordquarter.org/special-events/2021/coordinator-search-LynnePiersol>

*Editor's Note: The Treasurer's Report, Nominating Committee report, and Aging Concerns Working Group report for these minutes are available on our website at <https://concordquarter.org/documents?category=Minutes> Also I wish to thank Lynne Piersol for her excellent proofreading skills that were both timely and precise which made our newsletter type-litter free throughout her years of service.*

**Concord Quarterly Meeting Newsletter**  
**Volume 18 Issue 3 July 2021**

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**Concord Quarter Meetings**

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