

Minutes of
***Iowa Yearly Meeting
Of Friends (Conservative)***

2023

***146th Annual Session
Held at Scattergood Friends School
and Farm near West Branch, Iowa
Seventh Month 26-30, 2023***

Iowa Yearly Meeting of Friends (Conservative)

Hickory Grove Meetinghouse
Scattergood Friends School and Farm



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of Friends (Conservative)

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Iowa Yearly Meeting of Friends (Conservative)

146th Annual Session

Seventh Month 26 - 30, 2023

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FIFTH DAY – THURSDAY MORNING –7/27/2023

At the 146th Annual Session of Iowa Yearly Meeting (Conservative) held at Scattergood School and Farm and online from Seventh Month 26 to Seventh Month 30, 2023.

“Love the Lord with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength . . . Love your neighbor as yourself. No other commandment is greater than these.” Mark 12:30

“Love your neighbor . . . no exceptions” Friends Committee on National Legislation

We are pleased to welcome these visitors attending in person: **Michelle Downey** (Fayetteville Monthly Meeting, North Carolina Yearly Meeting (Conservative)), **Susan Lees** (Fayetteville Monthly Meeting, North Carolina Yearly Meeting (Conservative)), **Lillith Swygert** (57th Street Meeting in Chicago)(introduced via email by Nova George from the Friends General Conference spiritual deepening team as our visitor from Friends General Conference), **Judy Lumb** (Atlanta Friends Meeting), Annika Forrest (FCNL), and **Chuck Schobert** (FWCC).

We are pleased to welcome these visitors attending virtually: **Tom Roberts** (Stillwater, Ohio Yearly Meeting) and **Rex Sprouse** (Bloomington, Indiana, Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting).

Caretakers appointed by monthly meetings this year are Judy Cottingham, Jim Cottingham (West Branch), Bill Deutsch (Decorah), Deb Dakin (Whittier), John Andrews (Iowa City), Catherine Dorenbach, Lorene Ludy (Lincoln), Peggy Frantz (Penn Valley), Doyle Wilson (Paullina), Ed Taylor (Omaha), Peter Clay (Des Moines Valley), Stan Sanders (Bear Creek).

* * * * *

The caretakers appointed Edward Taylor and Julie Jones to carry microphones this morning.

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Readers for this morning’s business sessions are Jane Cadwallader - Howe and Deb Dakin.

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Deborah Fisch has agreed to close meeting for worship on First Day.

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Minute: We approve the appointments suggested by the Representatives Committee.

The Representatives Committee has suggested the names of Friends to serve during these sessions.

Exercise Committee: Deborah Fisch and Sonja Sponheim.

Epistle and Special Replies Committee: Bill Deutsch, Stan Sanders and George Bergus.

Audit Committee: Carole Winkleblack, Bob Winkleblack

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Minute: We are grateful for the work of the 2022 Entertainment Committee, including their pioneering work to forge the way forward for hybrid meetings.

ENTERTAINMENT COMMITTEE REPORT

The 2022 annual sessions were planned and hosted by Decorah, Iowa City, West Branch and Whittier Monthly Meetings. This hybrid meeting combined our first in-person yearly meeting gathering since 2019 with continued online participation. Although fewer Friends attended in person than in pre-pandemic years, the combined total of those attending virtually and in-person was comparable to typical attendance numbers prior to 2020.

Evening Collections included a presentation by Jeff Kisling on mutual aid as a paradigm shift in justice work; a panel of Friends from our yearly meeting on becoming a spiritually hospitable meeting community; a sharing of his personal journey toward becoming a Friend by FCNL Outreach Coordinator Bobby Trice; and a panel of staff, students, and parents involved in the Scattergood Middle School program. In First Day pre-meeting, Deborah Dakin, with her viola, shared the role of music in her spiritual journey.

The Entertainment Committee is grateful to the Virtual Access Committee for the success in incorporating online participation into our sessions as well as the Website Committee for assistance with online registration. There was excellent coordination with Scattergood this year, with special credit due to the work of our Scattergood staff liaison, Jessica Ireland.

For the Committee, Jim Cottingham

Entertainment Committee Financial Report

RECEIPTS

Forwarded from 2021 Committee	
For Future Music Ministry	1,965.00
General Funds	1,978.06
2022 Contributions	<u>10,612.00</u>
Total	14,555.06

EXPENSES

Scattergood Friends School	7,736.53
Program Expenses	300.00
Miscellaneous	128.26
To Yearly Meeting Trustees	2,425.27
Forwarded to 2023 Committee:	
For Future Music Ministry*	1,965.00
General Funds	<u>2,000.00</u>
Total	14,555.06

*In 2020 a number of Friends made special contributions totaling \$4,465 to support the planned concert by John McCutcheon. The concert was postponed until 2021, when it became a virtual concert, which was less expensive. The donors requested that the extra funds be carried over to future Entertainment Committees for future music ministry.

Jim Cottingham
Entertainment Committee Treasurer

* * * * *

Minute: We appreciate the sometimes difficult and always detailed work of the Publications Committee, and we are grateful for their patience.

PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT

The Publications Committee is charged with preparing, publishing and distributing the minute book of our annual sessions. The costs

of printing and distributing the *2023 Minute Book* to each monthly meeting and a few institutions who request our annual publication are listed below. There were no shipping costs this year as the books were distributed at Midyear Meeting. The committee is aware that members would like to get the books sooner. Sometimes things don't go as planned but rest assured that is our goal as well. We also wish to remind folks that the minute books from 2003 to the present are available on the IYMC website for viewing or download.

Once again assistance and printing came from Goodfellow Printing in Iowa City.

Printing and Postage Costs for the 2023 Minute Book

155 Perfect Bound Minutes & 58 Spiral Bound Minutes	
Books - 213 @ \$9.15493	\$1,950.00
Shipping and Freight	0.00
Sales Tax	<u>117.00</u>
Total	\$2,067.00

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Minute: We approve the report of the Midyear Planning Committee, and even more we appreciate their work in planning and hosting a wonderful event.

MIDYEAR MEETING COMMITTEE REPORT

Midyear Meeting was held in a hybrid format for both in-person and remote/online participation, on 15-16 Fourth Month 2023.

Eighty-seven households registered for the weekend; thirty-two of those households indicated more than one person would be participating. The Midyear Meeting Committee and Bear Creek Meeting appreciated the tremendous help from Scattergood students and staff in cleaning and preparing the meetinghouse in the week leading up to Midyear. Unfortunately, scheduling conflicts prevented most students and staff from Scattergood Friends School and Farm from participating. The Midyear Committee has already received Scattergood's academic calendar for next year; the committee hopes that identifying a date for Midyear Meeting in 2024 earlier can also make Midyear be more inclusive of the school's students, staff, and faculty.

Helen Thorpe (Mountain View Meeting, Denver) served as this year's resource person, and we deeply appreciated her gift of weaving stories from her lived experience and her personal journey into what she shared on the theme of *Meeting in the Middle*. Friends enjoyed and were inspired by hearing how the use of story and personal experience can be used as an alternative to argument and as a way to mitigate judgment.

The committee also was pleased to be able to provide in-person activities for Junior Yearly Meeting. With an experienced leader, visitors from Des Moines Valley Meeting, and other volunteers, JYM participants met some cockatoos which helped everyone to talk about healing; and there also were bubbles and puppets. JYM also met Helen who led a Vision Board activity related to the theme of *Meeting in the Middle*. The committee is grateful to Des Moines Valley Friends for their involvement in JYM, including helping with plans at Midyear. It was special to have our chef return again to help facilitate the meals for Friends attending in person.

The committee is grateful to the Friends who were responsible for exploring, purchasing, picking up, and installing the upgrades to Bear Creek Meeting's technology so that Midyear could be as inclusive as possible. The technology team did much to prepare ahead and then to host Midyear's hybrid format. In addition, the committee wishes to lift up that the whole experience would not have been as pleasant without the last-minute assistance from a Friend knowledgeable about the sound system that was brought in for Midyear Meeting.

Other highlights include the interest group and discussion about the Peace & Social Concerns Committee and the singing on Saturday evening. After a couple of years when Interim Meeting was held separately, the clerk convened Interim Meeting again during Midyear in a hybrid format to allow as many Friends as possible to participate.

We cherish these expressions of the beloved yearly meeting community.

Many Friends commented on how good it was to be reunited through a hybrid format, and how smoothly Midyear went as a result of the technology and attentiveness of the committee. We all pray that Way will open for us to gather again in person at Bear Creek Meeting for Midyear Meeting in 2024.

In faithful service and on behalf of the committee,
Liz Oppenheimer, Jackie Leckband, co-clerks

Midyear Meeting 2023 Financial Report

Donations: \$3218.00

Expenses:

Food	595.02
Hotel	270.00
Air Fare	192.00
Cook	500.00
Snacks for resource person	20.00
Printing & mailing programs	100.00
Tech related equipment & travel	53.76
Junior Yearly Mtg supplies & expenses/travel for JYM resource person	94.16
<u>Hosting fee</u>	<u>300.00</u>

Total Expenses \$2124.94

Remaining Funds to Yearly Meeting \$1093.06

Osa Bricker, Midyear Meeting treasurer

* * * * *

Minute: Minutes from Interim Meeting, approved at that meeting, and were amended by this body to add the phrase "as way opens" to the end of the third paragraph.

INTERIM MEETING REPORT

Interim Meeting was held 4/15/2023 at Bear Creek Meetinghouse and online via zoom.

Online attendees were Roy Helm of Lincoln Meeting, Dorothy Lifka of Des Moines, Shirley Scritchfield of Penn Valley, and Alice Hampton of Whittier. In- person members of Interim Meeting were Deborah Fisch of Paullina Meeting, George Bergus of West Branch, Stan Sanders of Bear Creek, Doyle Wilson of Paullina, Angelica Shafer of Penn Valley, Meg McCormick of West Branch, Tom Hinshaw, Deborah Dakin of Whittier, Lynda Fife Griffith of Omaha, and Ethan Hillscamp, Scattergood.

Ohio Yearly Meeting’s annual sessions are scheduled for 6/23-25 2023 at Olney School in Barnesville. One person from Iowa City has at least asked for the dates. Deborah Fisch is planning to attend online.

North Carolina Yearly Meeting(Conservative) is scheduled for July 12-16 at Guilford College in Greensboro. Two couples, Deb Dakin

and Bob Yates, and Stan Sanders and Cheryl Sutton, plan to attend in person as our representatives.

The clerk will provide letters of introduction for these named people, saying that they were appointed by the Yearly Meeting. Others who wish to attend could carry letters of introduction from the Yearly Meeting (or be introduced via email), if their monthly meeting clerks inform the Yearly Meeting Clerk prior to the meetings. Letters of introduction do not need to be endorsed by the clerk of Ohio or North Carolina.

The Clerk will share registration information for these yearly meetings with monthly meeting clerks as it becomes available.

The meeting considered whether the Pendle Hill Scholarship Committee can be laid down, since it has not been active in recent years. We decided that it is not yet time to lay down the committee. We expect more people will travel as the pressure of the COVID pandemic eases. This committee can serve to encourage use of the money and help possible attendees get clearness. We considered benefits of having a committee serve in this way for other travel funds. The Yearly Meeting Clerk will remind monthly meeting clerks that these funds exist, encouraging them to seek out younger people or others who may not have the funds to travel. We thank Bill Deutsch and the Nominating Committee members for their work.

At the request of a member, we discussed whether, for the sake of efficiency, Interim Meeting should be laid down and their duties given to the Representatives Committee. Representatives spent time discussing this in 2022 and decided that Interim is a better mechanism for making decisions between annual sessions. Interim Meeting members don't have as much work to do, and having Interim Meeting broadens who is involved. At this time, we are clear to continue having both Interim and Representatives committees continue in their roles.

* * * * *

Minute: Words from our companion Conservative yearly meetings spoke of the unchanging nature of Truth, and the work that Truth does in changing us. They spoke of the delight of Friends in meeting in person after the restrictions of the pandemic. Details of the experiences of young friends at NCYM brought laughter to our meetinghouse. We are grateful that Deborah Fisch was able to attend Ohio Yearly Meeting online in 2022, although she was not

appointed in advance. We thank Cheryl Sutton and Stan Sanders for attending North Carolina YM on our behalf this year. We note that funds are available to help friends do this important intervisitation.

North Carolina Yearly Meeting (Conservative)

Dear Friends of Iowa Yearly Meeting,

The Truth is one and the same always, and though ages and generations pass away, and one generation goes and another comes, yet the word and power and spirit of the living God endures forever, and is the same and never changes. -Margaret Fell

We gathered in person at Guilford College and online via Zoom for our 326th annual sessions, seventh month, 12 -16, 2023. We are still enjoying the novelty of being able to gather together in person for the second time; a gift we hope never again to take for granted. Our worship has been deep and precious.

Our theme this year was *Transformed By Truth*. On 6th Day evening Noah Merrill explored with us the nature of Truth and Transformation, reminding us of the words of Margaret Fell quoted above. Then he led us to the realization of Truth as living encounter with the Spirit of God in which we are changed. Through a beautiful story this Truth was portrayed as a song that makes its home in our hearts. We sing it together and, when one of us forgets the tune, the others sing it back to us until we can sing again.

On 5th Day evening we were entertained and enlightened by a reading from our member, author Haven Kimmel. She shared some of her transformative faith journey. With humor and metaphor she also shared the rudiments of process theology and for the rest of the week there have been references to the choice available in every moment and God as the lure toward right action.

We heard about the outreach that Quaker Earthcare Witness (QEW) is doing to educate people all over the world about the effects of climate change on the world and its inhabitants, with the most severe changes happening to the people and places least able to protect themselves. QEW continues to support local environmental action groups and send observers to UN climate meetings. Several Friends expressed the importance of individual and monthly meeting support of QEW's work to answer "the cry of the poor, the cry of our children, the cry of this precious Divine Creation" right now.

Our monthly meetings reported renewed vitality in coming back together for worship and fellowship. Some meetings have returned to entirely in-person worship while others retain their online connections to Friends outside the meeting room. Although our numbers may not be as large as they were pre-pandemic, Friends are energetically engaged with each other and with their communities. We are enjoying social gatherings and looking for ways to have conversations that were too difficult to have when we couldn't be face to face. We are continuing and renewing our engagement with our wider communities by means of everything from "little free pantries" and re-opening meetinghouses for community use, to lobbying and demonstrating for an end to nuclear weapons.

Through the upheavals in the world and in our meetings in the past few years, we have been changed. We know that returning to the old normal is not an option. Transformation is happening and we have a palpable sense of being led without being able to see exactly where. We continue on in faith.

We received and welcomed Friends Stan Sanders and Cheryl Sutton to our sessions and have sensed their deep spiritual grounding from which inspired vocal ministry arose. We are grateful for the continued visitation between our yearly meetings and feel a special connection with Iowa Friends arising from our shared faith and practices and the travel of Friends among us. If in accordance with Divine will, we anticipate that Susan Lees and Michelle Downey from our meeting will be present when you meet later this month. We would love to have some of you among us again at our sessions in 2024 if way opens.

We wish that you may experience in your gatherings, as we have in ours, the palpable sense of the Holy Spirit among you, nurturing and guiding you. We welcome you to join us at our sessions in 2024 if way opens.

On behalf of North Carolina Yearly Meeting Conservative
Anne Olsen, Clerk

North Carolina Young Friends Epistle

16th of the 7th month, 2023 - Guilford College, Greensboro, NC

Greetings Friends,

North Carolina Yearly Meeting Conservative 2023's adventures began on the fourth day's afternoon, as a few young Friends gathered in the dorm lounge to play games and reconnect. Following a joyous reunion, we relocated to a local playground to make merry.

Things started to pick up on fifth day, as we began our day with a game familiar to some and new to most: frisbee golf. Kerry borrowed frisbees from New Garden Friends School and the game was a hit, a repeat later in the week is to blame for many of the younger young Friends asking to play frisbee golf next year, and the year after that! In the afternoon, we toured the International Civil Rights Center and Museum and had a productive discussion and contemplative silence upon return, finding that the differences in ages between friends highlighted experiential differences in civil rights education across generations. The young Friends finished off the evening with bowling, a favorite activity for many despite an incident where Mike stuck a ball halfway down the lane in a gutter (with bumpers!) That was not all, as three more balls were lost as Ora spearheaded a rescue mission. No bowling balls were harmed in the making of this epistle.

Sixth day was a crazy, exciting, packed day as Friends took a morning trip to a local waterpark, enjoying slides, lazy rivers, water basketball, and lunch by the poolside. After everyone was good and tuckered out, we took a trip across the road to Mendenhall Homeplace, a historic Quaker house owned by Richard Mendenhall. The tour guide enraptured Friends with wonderful stories about Richard's descendants and cool knowledge about historical technology and innovations. Did you know that houses were built with outward facing doors on opposite sides of a room to allow airflow for a rudimentary AC? In the evening, more Friends joined us for games (outdoor games, board games, and hide-and-seek in the dark) and a repeat of frisbee golf. The root beer floats during snacks were just the most fun, as young Friends got to experiment with different soda creations.

Seventh day began with some service work at Friends Emergency Material Assistance Program (FEMAP) in High Point, making hygiene kits for migrant workers. Jack and Vivian held the record for most aid

bags made, at six bags! At the same time, the youngest young friends explored the playground. Ask Vita about her amazing zoological discovery of a worm as big as a snake! After writing notes for this epistle, with a large amount of free time in the afternoon before the much-anticipated talent show young Friends played all the games in the world, from Pandemic to hide-and-peek-in-the-basement to a Friends version of BS (Pardon Me, But I Sincerely Believe That Thee Is Telling A Falsehood). In the evening young Friends came together with slightly less young Friends to enjoy a talent show hosted by Jeffrey and Mike, featuring performances, music, magic, singing and more.

First day was a wonderful conclusion to the week, as young Friends gathered to reflect, settling into silence before moving to finish the epistle and prepare for the close of yearly meeting.

A big thank you to yearly meeting, Goldie Walton, Andrew Wright, Mike Killen, Mia Graddy, and Michael Lozada for leading and organizing, and to Davida Reid, Richard Baltaro, and Judy Reece for helping out, as well as to our parents for bringing us and finally to Guilford College for hosting us.

Submitted by Kerry and Jeffrey Hobson of Friendship Friends Meeting (edited by Michael Lozada of Davidson Friends Meeting), on behalf of all the children and youth.

P.S. We had a total of 14 children and youth attending this year and three returning young adult Friend leaders: Matteo, Rowan, and Nico Baltaro, Ora and Ocean Reid-Eidukas, Ben Buffum, Jonah and Jack Knutson, Vivien Risdorfer, Jeffrey and Kerry Hobson, and Vita, Samuel, and Josephine Haney. Eight of us were previous attenders and six of us were new this year.

Ohio Yearly Meeting of Friends

8th Month 2-6, 2022

*Lift up your heads, O you gates! Lift up, you everlasting doors!
And the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of Glory?
The Lord of hosts, He is the King of Glory. (Psalm 24:9-10)*

Dear Iowa Friends,

This year a number of Friends have gathered in the Stillwater meeting house for our 144th session of Ohio Yearly Meeting. Many unable to come have joined us virtually through zoom. We feel the deep joy in being gathered with Friends seeking to worship our Lord

Jesus and discern together His work in us and the ways in which we should continue in it. One attending through zoom spoke of being able to feel the energy of the Holy Spirit through the computer screen. Our peace is extended all along the brick walk from the Meeting House, to dine or rest in other parts of the campus.

We are glad that David Eley could attend your annual Yearly Meeting sessions in person this year, upholding you in prayer and fellowship. We were also pleased to receive Deborah Fisch visiting from Iowa Yearly Meeting. May you experience God as a growing inward presence without end.

One afternoon we said good-by to Jamie Helmick, who has worked as our compassionate & industrious director of the Walton Home for over 10 years. We are grateful that our Lord has raised up another gifted person serve as the new director. Walton Retirement Home has been a service of Ohio Yearly for many years. At one point during the Ohio Yearly Meeting sessions a baby cried out briefly announcing a welcome recent addition to our midst.

For many generations, Ohio Yearly Meeting carefully maintained a "hedge" to protect our lifestyle and Way of worship from the outside world. In recent years circumstances have necessitated that we learn how to reach beyond our hedge, and the Lord is providing the technology for us to do so. Sometimes we struggle to hear one another, either because the technology is imperfect, or because we use words and phrases that have different shades of meaning in different contexts, and this can be troubling. Still, if we listen carefully, with minds and hearts open to one another, we often hear the same Lord speaking to us and through us across these differences and distances, honoring His Promise to be with us whenever we gather in His Name.

It is this Unity in the Spirit of the Living God, revealed in the Presence of the Inward Christ within and among us, that we to continue to celebrate in the ways of our forebears, blessed with contemporary tools many of them never imagined. We hear in Scripture: *Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither has it entered into the heart of man, what the Lord has prepared for those who love Him.* (1Cor. 2:9, Isaiah 64:4)

On behalf of Ohio Yearly Meeting of Friends,
Charles C. Thomas, Jr., Clerk

Minute: We appreciate the report of the document committee.

DOCUMENT COMMITTEE REPORT

The Document Committee reviewed the collection of recent Epistles on the Friends World Committee for Consultation site. Several excerpts were selected to provide a sense of yearly meeting gatherings around the world, seeking together God’s call and guidance. The full Epistles and archives may be viewed here: https://fwcc.world/resources_cpt/epistles/

Britain Yearly Meeting 2023

We meet at a time when extensive issues face us both within our aging and numerically diminishing Society and in the wide world. These require urgent responses. Quakers can show leadership and offer council that will help our nation in matters of the degradation of public truth, the climate and ecological crises, and divisive public commentaries around people’s identities and associated rights.

How can we achieve this? We are people of faith, always transitioning on an exciting path of collective and personal exploration. We seek and follow eternal Truth of the Spirit.

Ireland Yearly Meeting 2023

Verse from Hebrews 10:24- let us consider how we may spur one toward love and good deeds.

New England Yearly Meeting(USA) (6-11 August) 2022

...challenging us how we listen to and answer God’s call. Are we truly listening? Do we act on what we hear and are shown? Are we quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry? Are we aware that we can move too fast but also that we can move too slowly?

Belgium & Luxembourg Yearly Meeting (17-19 June) 2022

This mutuality extends into all forms of life throughout the universe. The reality, though, is that a community can never be perfect. We are not saints. We can love each other, disagree, and make each other uncomfortable. Compassion, however, is a relationship of mutual benefit with no dividing line between giver and receiver. We are called to take action and responsibility for one another. Unity is

not uniformity. Unity is found in and through the Divine within us and can hold paradoxes for us.

Illinois Yearly Meeting (USA) (15-19 June) 2022

Mostly we found that unity is joyful. Over and over at our sessions this year, we felt a sense of joy. We understand many issues in the world seem insurmountable and yet we feel joy in searching for God's order.

Yearly Meeting of Aotearoa New Zealand Te Hahi Tuhauwiri

held online April 28-May 1, 2022

We are grateful for the vitality, insight and generosity shown by our Young Friends who are engaging in a way that their energy and numbers allow. Our current statement of affirmation of same sex relationships, written in 1992, is now being revised. Young Friends reminded us that the fact that we are a reconciling and affirming church needs to be highlighted to those searching for a spiritual home.

Minute: We appreciate the report from our representative to the Iowa Peace Network, Peter Clay

IOWA PEACE NETWORK REPORT

The Iowa Peace Network continues to provide a comprehensive weekly email with links to peace and justice events and initiatives around Iowa and beyond. IPN also publishes The Dovetail three times per year (a paper newsletter sent to 700 individuals and churches). IPN links Iowa Conservative Friends with Iowa Yearly Meeting (FUM) and with the other traditional peace churches (Mennonites and Church of the Brethren) along with the United Methodist Church. The Joint Oversight Committee continues to meet regularly on a quarterly basis. The brochure describing the Iowa Peace Network was revised this past year. Your representative collaborated with Joel Beane of Iowa Yearly Meeting (FUM) to make changes to the Quaker portion of the brochure. It now includes the 1660 Declaration of Friends to Charles II utterly rejecting war as Friends testimony along with this section from our conservative yearly meeting's Faith and Practice

"Violence toward any person is an affront to that of God, both in the victim and in the aggressor. Therefore, Friends seek to live "in

that Light and Power that takes away the occasion for all wars.” (George Fox, 1651). Friends are not called to turn aside from conflict but to seek to resolve conflicts with justice and mercy for all concerned.”

The IPN continues to be a valuable resource. Through the weekly emails, the Dovetail and through helping sponsor important events such as the Hiroshima memorial IPN connects those working for peace and justice from a cluster of faith traditions including our own unprogrammed Friends tradition. Together we are stronger and the IPN is one of the few places where Iowa Conservative Friends and Iowa FUM Friends come together.

Submitted by Peter Clay, Representative to IPN from IYMC

We now adjourn to meet again this afternoon at 2:00.

* * * * *

FIFTH DAY – THURSDAY AFTERNOON – 07/27/2023

We return to the business of the Yearly Meeting.

In the stillness of the quiet, if we listen, we can hear the whisper of the heart giving strength to weakness, courage to fear, hope to despair. Howard Thurman

Silence envelops

Hearts gathering together

Waiting to be led

Quaker Haiku by Kathleen Burckhardt, 18

Canadian Yearly Meeting

* * * * *

Minute: We are blessed to have Chuck Schobert with us from Madison Friends Meeting, representing Friends World Committee for Consultation, and Jon Krieg with us from Des Moines Valley Friends Meeting, representing AFSC. We appreciated hearing a letter of introduction for Jon from Sofia di Pietro, though we know him well because he lives in Des Moines and has attended Yearly Meeting for many years. We thank Jon Krieg for his faithful participation in our community, and for his work with AFSC over these many years.

* * * * *

Readers for this afternoon’s business session are Stan Sanders and Sonja Sponheim.

* * * * *

Minute: Hearing these reports makes us feel grateful to be a part of this group of meetings. It is obvious that most meetings feel that they are small and lacking in youth. Many are contemplating the reasons for this, and what we might do about it. It is not only that our numbers are dwindling and those present are older, but also that we are busy with other activities. Can we offer something to the people outside of our meetings who are also engaged in work that we know is important? Do they know we are Friends? Can we be more attentive to Ways that might be Open to us? Though our meetings have experienced losses, they also express much joy in being together, and a sense that our faith is a source of strength. Several meetings have been enriched by visitors whether they become long-term attenders or not. We appreciate that one meeting is planning to plant trees to shade future meeting members, in faith that we will continue.

STATE OF THE MEETING REPORTS

Ames Friends Meeting

Ames Friends Meeting continues to manifest the joy of gathering for weekly worship in expectant waiting for the movement of the Spirit in the post COVID-19 landscape. Members and attenders have eagerly begun to reengage with important social and justice issues facing our nation and world. While our worship style remains hybrid, we are seeing much more weekly in-person attendance and participation in our monthly potlucks.

The Meeting continues to attract attenders at the same time that sadly one of our members passed away. We were blessed to host a meeting for worship with attention to John Spence’s memorial that drew over 20 family and F/friends as witness to the life and contributions of this unique individual. While always holding dear the memory of departed Friends, a new energy by individuals revitalizes our worship in the form of their active engagement in FCNL advocacy issues and legislative priorities at the state and federal levels. This has led to more outreach and collaboration with members of various monthly meetings within the IYMC.

Additional outreach efforts include support of 1) immigrant families seeking asylum, 2) refugees, 3) several young people 150

attending FCNL Spring Lobby weekend, and 4) co-sponsorship of a program that emphasizes family reunification of Mexican grandparents that have not seen their families here in the U.S. for more than a decade.

Additional advocacy also addressed the national issue of past injustices of the federal government's Indian Boarding School Policies including intergenerational trauma experienced by Native Americans and their communities as a result of these policies. Efforts from members of our meeting to encourage Congress to address this issue have resulted in the unanimous vote of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs to reintroduce a bill promoting the formation of the Truth and Healing Commission on Indian Boarding School Policies in the United States.

When not at work in the wider world, Friends continue to find comfort and strength in both our monthly meeting for worship as well as our monthly worship with special attention to healing. Participation in the monthly meeting for business has increased over previous years as members and attenders rise from worship. To date, Meeting remains without the reinstatement of a Peace and Social Concerns Committee. In addition, several Friends continue to participate in the Spiritual Sharing small group opportunities provided by IYMC that weave a web of interconnectedness rarely found in such a diverse membership spanning many states and geographical areas. In a seemingly more chaotic world, Ames Friends are hard at work promoting peace building in a time of increasing hostilities and threats of war. At the same time our state of the meeting reports seem to change little. One issue raised was whether our meeting was complacent about our engagement as a meeting rather than what individuals are called to do on their own.

Opportunities continue for Friends to raise awareness in the community through radio broadcasts and other venues that inform local citizens of the important civic contributions that Friends are making both locally and nationally. After many years of sharing our meetinghouse with the Mennonites, their community has disbanded. We continue to welcome other groups to enjoy our beautiful building and grounds for their events.

Bear Creek Friends Meeting

Bear Creek Monthly Meeting is currently a small group of active Friends (8-12) within a larger membership. We are evolving, having

survived the pandemic, we are engaged as a group on First Days by way of electronic media, which enables screen-to-screen and face-to-face gathering for discussion, sharing, and worship. We acknowledge the blessing this hybrid meeting format brings to allow loving Friends from across the Midwest, many hundred miles distant, to meet and briefly engage one another in meeting. IYMC Midyear Meeting held annually at Bear Creek, was presented in a hybrid format this year, with in-person participation for the first time since 2019.

There is an abiding grace in this meetinghouse. Bear Creek Meeting is a living heritage of Faith and Light that spans back through many generations of faithful Friends, who over the decades, gathered as community in silent worship and waited on leadings from the Spirit. Love and divine guidance in the Spirit is a core of the meeting. We immerse ourselves in this warm grace as we prepare, gather, and worship. Our focus changes, and we move from the forms and actions of our everyday activities into Spirit-centered life. Here, we find solace and connection with the divine and living Spirit.

We attempt to follow a schedule in our sequence of First Day First Hour meetings, the hour before worship: meeting for business, query response, social concerns, and Spiritual Sharing. We are seekers of Truth—we learn from one another. Bear Creek members are engaged with many social and cultural issues at hand that we individually work toward, share, and report in general discussion. In discussion we wonder if we are doing more seeking than finding—is there something that we are called to do collectively as we have in the past—engaged to meet a need, having a meaningful impact?

We grieve the recent loss of members who have passed. We recognize the contributions of Lynette Christenson whose warm and contagious smile is deeply missed. Lynette gave great care and wisdom in her work with struggling young adults and children. Dorothy Weller, a longtime member of our community was a unique and creative artist, a “National Treasure,” whose works will live on. We miss her spirit and enthusiasm—and longevity.

As a meeting, we have been engaged in more sharing with one another, a new and different activity of prompting each to share personal histories. We seek to better know each other, sharing our experiences, travels, adventures, accomplishments, works, and memories. We encourage each to work at compiling a narrative that we can share.

Decorah Friends Meeting

At Decorah Friends Meeting we are grateful for worship on a weekly basis. We returned to meeting in person in our meetinghouse and are thankful for the opportunity to experience the physical connection to each other and our familiar space, which had been missed during COVID times. We continue to appreciate that we have our own meeting space and for the air purifier that has been added. The home and grounds are lovingly cared for.

Our meetings for worship are often without spoken ministry. In the sharing after meeting of joys and sorrows or leadings, we come to know more about each other and our lives. We miss those who have stopped attending for whatever reasons. We wish them well.

We added weekly spiritual nurture meetings this year. When we gather at 9:30 on Wednesday mornings, we feel supported and nurtured through the following structured activities: quiet waiting, writing as a response to a given prompt, sharing what we have written if we wish, and naming how we should like to be held in the Light in the coming week. We find that these practices enrich our sense of Spirit.

Meetings for business are well attended and well clerked. In addition, we celebrate people who serve the Meeting in many capacities. What happens in Meeting, supports members in various roles serving in the community and beyond.

Among our regular attenders is one person “under 50”. We rejoice that from her lived experience, she gives us opportunities for learning about young farmers, soil resilience, economic systems, models for holding land cooperatively, reparations, and sexuality, among other topics.

Des Moines Valley Friends

We continue to offer “blended” meetings for worship, Second Hours and meetings for worship with attention to business, making it possible for Friends near and far to join either at the meetinghouse or on-screen. Many of our members and attenders also took advantage of virtual options to attend both Annual Sessions and Midyear Meeting of IYMC.

We have experienced several opportunities over the past year to come together as a community in support of our members and attenders experiencing a variety of needs. We also continue to

collaborate with meetings in several other states and in Canada to support an Afghan refugee family whose eldest son graduated from Scattergood Friends School and Farm a few years ago. Just as this report was being written, we received the exciting news that the family will likely soon be reunited in Canada!

Over the past year, we have begun discussions on such topics as reproductive rights, Indigenous history and rights and white privilege/structural racism. We will continue to try to gain a sense of our meeting regarding these and other issues of concern and to ascertain the Meeting's role in engaging on such issues.

We struggle with finding enough people with time to devote to our committees and the other work of the Meeting. Dwindling and aging membership contribute to this dilemma, as do individual concerns that consume our time and energy in other directions. This concern spills over into difficulty in finding people to fill positions with IYMC. While we are mindful of these concerns, we are especially grateful to those who make it a priority to do this work on behalf of all of us.

At the same time, we are blessed by both visits and regular attendance from several younger people, which is both encouraging and nurturing to our community.

The departure of AFSC's regional office from Friends House has left us with a number of concerns that are intertwined with the challenges of maintaining the physical structure of the meetinghouse. We are grateful for the faithful representation of our meeting members who serve on the Friends House Board (past and present).

Des Moines Valley Friends Meeting continues to benefit from our longstanding warm connection with the nearby Bear Creek Friends Meeting.

We continue to find nourishment by gathering in worshipful silence together and in working together on behalf of both our meeting and the wider community/world.

Iowa City Friends Meeting

Our meeting continues to be an essential spiritual resource for our attenders. Many attenders have returned to in-person worship but we are thankful for our "hybrid" format which allows those who are at a distance or have health concerns to participate regularly in meeting for worship and business.

A core set of members are drawn to worship because of their concern for and appreciation of the natural world. We are updated regularly on the work of Quaker Earthcare Witness. Many people are led to speak in meeting for worship when they have been touched by nature. Other attenders are involved with groups focusing on peace and social justice. We have attenders participating in advocating through the guidance of Friends Committee on National Legislation Advocacy Teams. Our meeting supports Peace Iowa and Veterans for Peace, local organizations which promote peace initiatives. Other attenders coalesce around Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) and Braver Angels. A Braver Angels workshop was organized by one attender, and AVP programs have been led by an attender both in the meetinghouse and elsewhere.

The reading of Advices and Queries, which we try to do monthly as part of our worship, is important to us. We are enriched by the responses shared and often remark how each set of responses offers new perspectives on the testimony explored.

Business meetings are generally poorly attended. However, when guidance on an issue of substance is needed, attenders respond. When FCNL asked for meetings' input on women's reproductive rights, a series of meetings were well attended. Those discussions demonstrated a profound sense of trust among members as personal experiences were shared. Different opinions were discussed with tenderness and respect leading to a document that was satisfying to all. A final document was approved at meeting for business and submitted to FCNL.

We also discussed and submitted comments about the Guidelines for the Protection of Children at Yearly Meeting Sessions and Functions policy prepared by IYMC's Ministry and Counsel Committee.

Our meeting's central location in a university town brings a unique aspect to the Meeting. We have a number of attenders who are students and are experiencing Friends' worship service for the first time. Some are regular attenders until their time at the university is over. Others attend sporadically. All are seekers looking to fill a spiritual need, and we are blessed by their presence and the new ideas and perspectives they bring to us.

Our demographics are a concern. We are composed of older, mostly retired people who have less energy to give to the Meeting or young people whose lives are busy with school, work and family.

Their transitory position makes them less likely to commit to leadership in Meeting. We struggle to fill committee positions within both our meeting and Iowa Yearly Meeting (Conservative).

We feel grateful for the children who are part of our meeting and enliven the fellowship shared during First Day meeting for worship with attention to potluck. Iowa City Friends Meeting is an important part of the spiritual life of our community, and many of us treasure the wider fellowship and nurture provided by Iowa Yearly Meeting (Conservative).

Lincoln Friends Meeting

We continue to meet weekly in a hybrid format, incorporating virtual and personal interactions. For some, connecting spiritually in the virtual world is challenging and sometimes, not possible. And there does seem to be somewhat of a disconnect between those attending in person and those attending virtually, with more connection amongst those in person and similarly with those in the virtual environment, so that we sometimes feel like two separate groups. That said, there is a shared deep appreciation to be able to connect with each other no matter what realm it is in, with the silence being strong and trustworthy as we find ourselves enveloped in God's Love. Our current format also provides the opportunity to worship with those who are from afar as well as those locally who may not find it practicable to attend on a given day. It should also be noted that it is much less disruptive to join worship after it has commenced in the virtual world rather than to enter the meetinghouse with the door and floors creaking after the silence has begun.

Our collective silence provides a means for us to become grounded and centered, bringing home the spirituality that exists in all of us and allows us to bask in the light that shines within. We also learn by participating and sharing together, along with gaining the courage to engage in some of the difficult conflicts that we face in our lives: there is a certain strength that is gained from the collective support of the Meeting. The collective conscience of the Meeting is that of concern, empathy, and love: together we are able to block out the noise and bask in the glory of the Silence and we are able to find a safe space, with harmony amongst each other and the outer world.

Even with the strength of our silence together, there can be a lack of spiritual sharing, whether it be a joy or a sorrow with the collective group, although this sharing may occur in smaller settings. Sharing is always appreciated by others, with messages received with grace and care. Our monthly time to share and have potluck meals provides an opportunity for us to deepen our relationships, along with laughter and an occasional tear.

Meetings with attention to business are well attended with robust participation and generally consensus is not difficult to find. Attenders of varying lengths of time are involved and informed, which is welcomed by all. As our numbers are somewhat small, we do find some difficulty in filling committee roles, but we do manage to complete the work that needs to be done.

There is also appreciation that we are able to share our space with Alternative to Violence Project (AVP) and find the posters they use as a useful reminder of our core principles – we learn better through participation than by instruction, and we are so very grateful for the seeds that are being planted, both within others and ourselves.

As we contemplate and give discernment over the monthly queries, we are heartened by the introspection and find our responses fluctuating from month to month and even year to year. These exercises are at times difficult but appreciated as they allow us the opportunity to learn and grow – more seeds being planted. All-in-all, we find strength together and are delighted that we have attenders that bring us newfound energy and spiritual affirmation. There are no strangers among us.

Omaha Monthly Meeting

Omaha Monthly Meeting is still meeting as a double-hybrid meeting. For First hour on each First Day, we meet both in person and on Zoom, AND the Omaha Monthly Meeting joins with the Lincoln Monthly Meeting utilizing Lincoln's Owl equipment. After a short break, during Second Hour on the first First Day of the month, we continue to be joined as one group, meeting to share our mutual joys and sorrows having occurred during the past month. In Second Hour of the second First Day of the month, we separate into two groups - Omaha and Lincoln each discussing a Query from Faith and Practice. The two groups have independent methods of when to discuss what Query. The third First Day of the month is a meeting for worship for business in Lincoln and a totally unrelated Meeting for

Discussion of something else on Omaha's Zoom. The final (and also fifth if applicable) is usually continued with Lincoln and Omaha still joined for discussion. As the Lincoln Meeting is quite a bit larger than the Omaha Meeting, they usually have more ideas and materials for our discussions. Omaha also has a non-First Day gathering during the month, usually on the fourth Fourth Day of each month, which is meeting for worship for business.

This joined mix of meetings has both pros and cons as we continue to discuss and consider our future options. During Covid, when everyone was avoiding in-person contact as much as possible, all our gathered members and attenders from all over the country met via Zoom. This made us all feel like a large group joined in meaningful worship and also allowed the people from each group a chance to get to know one another in a more spiritual way. We all seemed to be rejoicing in that sharing.

Now that we are no longer meeting as much together, the separation feels much larger and the differences stand out. Among the questions we are prayerfully considering:

Should the Omaha Monthly Meeting try to travel to Lincoln once a month for meeting for worship and sharing with each other? Currently, we feel like outsiders when we are meeting on Zoom and the Lincoln Meeting is in-person and on their Zoom.

Should we have separate meetings in Omaha and Lincoln, in Omaha using our own Zoom account, so that far flung members and attenders can continue to meet with us on a regular basis and feel a greater sense of belonging?

Should we again consider becoming a worship group under the care of the Lincoln Meeting? One or more of our members may choose to no longer attend with us or feel they are part of the Omaha Meeting.

By having a presence in Omaha, there would still be a home-meeting-feel and is that valuable?

Some of our members/attenders are either unable or unwilling to participate in projects of the Omaha Meeting, while other folks have drifted away from the meeting because they desire a more active spiritual gathering, and/or taking on community or mutual projects. Since we don't do these projects, most members/attenders do various projects and activities for the betterment of the community on our own.

Paullina Friends Meeting

We are aware of our ageing of attenders and members as another year passes. We celebrate the time we spend together and look forward to the interaction that we have. Our ageing campus requires upgrading, and removal of trees and shrubs that are older than some can remember. Emerald Ash Borer, age, and drought are the main reasons for this required maintenance.

Paullina Meeting community has spread to far and away places but still receives support and continues to have ties through modern technology. We have had reunions of families who feel their need to reconnect with their memories and the current community. We look forward to these gatherings, just as we look forward to gathering to do mowing, maintenance, potlucks, and worship. We question ourselves as to why the next generations of potential members of the community are not choosing to join us, as has been true for the past generations. Our answer is not forthcoming and may not be to our liking. We plan on replacing the trees, shrubs, and maintaining our facilities as we have hope that the future will surprise us.

We stay in touch with the wider Quaker world through Iowa Yearly Meeting (Conservative) and being involved in other Friends organizations.

Our community is precious to us as are our times of worship on Sundays.

Penn Valley Monthly Meeting

Penn Valley continues to move forward. We are a work in progress. With concerted effort we have decided to stop criticizing what we have as a Meeting and begin the task of visioning the Meeting we want.

We still have no children in our meeting, and this is a loss. We are blessed, however, with much elder energy. We are learning to appreciate and understand the wide variety of gifts and callings among us.

We are able to see how conflict is an opportunity for growth. We have an abundance of opportunity. Whatever was God thinking when God gave us free will!

Covid really caused our small community large problems. We became a blended meeting, both in-person and on Zoom at the same time, and this helped us stay connected from great distances. This separation during Covid left us with a few people caring for the

Meeting's business and maintenance of the Meeting House. Burnout is a real challenge for us. Hold us in the light as we step up, step aside, step down, let go, or change as the Divine Will guides us.

We are for the most part a group of seekers and refugees from other faith communities who have found a home here in Penn Valley. That of God in all of us is the glue that holds us together. Several new members and attenders have joined us this year and each brings gifts we can all celebrate.

The programs this year were for the most part presented by our own attenders who have stepped up to lead. The Queries continue to inspire us.

Our Bible Study has grown over the past few years. We go to the Revised Common Lectionary for scripture readings and we read from several translations during Bible Study. We all are taking turns leading. Attenders read the word with who we are. In sharing our lives lived all are enriched. Sharing openly and honestly with each other has brought deep meaning among us and fueled us for lives new challenges.

Our Library is now able to share books due to the hard work of cataloging that has been done. We extended our shelving into our old office space and created areas to comfortably read.

Our annual retreat at the Hollis Center was refreshing to all attenders. Our focus was on deep listening to each other and searching ways to connect, as well as what it is that brings us together. In a world that is spinning apart this is important to our Quaker Community and the World as the divides are healed.

We are so grateful for our Quaker forefathers and mothers for serving as placeholders for the Holy so we have a place to be and tools to do what is ours to do.

May the Love of the Divine and the Peace that passes all understanding find you in Health and Harmony.

West Branch Friends Meeting

Friends have always believed that every sincere, inwardly attentive worshipper can, unassisted, ascertain the will of God, not only as it appears to him but to his fellow worshippers. It is not a solitary search. - Daisy Newman

We, the members and attenders of the West Branch Friends Meeting(C), find ourselves walking the long road of recovery from a global pandemic. We have come to appreciate the

technology that helps us connect with distant Friends and cherish the times when we can be together in person. We continue to be, as Daisy Newman noted, inwardly attentive worshippers who regularly sit in the Light and listen for the Divine within each of us.

During this past year, our faith has deepened. We value our times of worship on First Day morning, and the richness of sharing that takes place during regular query discussions, adult continuing education, and our monthly book group discussions. All of these, along with our participation in Midyear Meeting at Bear Creek and Yearly Meeting Annual Sessions at Scattergood deepen and enrich our lives.

Almost 10 years ago we agreed to continue to consider the Advices but discontinue reading the Queries aloud. Advices continue to encourage us as individuals and a meeting to open our hearts and minds to the possibility of new directions and insights.

We appreciate being able to resume fellowship with coffee and treats after meeting, at potlucks, with speakers and special events, and at our annual Christmas and Easter celebrations. Good food and sharing always take place when we gather during these special times.

Our committees give life to meeting aspirations. This year we have been more intentional, asking committees to meet every two months and encouraging them to suggest ways we may more actively witness to our faith. In this way, we continue to expand our friendly connections and service to the communities in which we live.

We miss those who have stopped attending Meeting for various reasons. We wish them well and know through our valued informal contacts that their Light continues to be actively present in the world.

We look forward to being together in worship each week, and to being a part of a beloved community of seekers. We trust that the light of the Divine will guide us in our journey together.

As Daisy reminds us, "Quaker worship is a living experience, not (something) embalmed in history."

We value our participation, individually and collectively, in this life of faith and worship.

Yahara Friends Worship Group Report to West Branch Monthly Meeting

During the years since the Yahara Monthly Meeting was laid down, the two remaining members have struggled to find the time and energy to carry on the Worship Group. During the Covid years these Friends forged a strong connection with West Branch Monthly Meeting. They used Zoom technology to worship regularly with West Branch members and even to perform some committee work.

At Midyear Meeting 2023 the two were able to talk in person and found that they were in unity with laying down their worship group. The convener took this concern to the West Branch Monthly Meeting and asked them for this report to be read at their meeting for business, and that it accompany the Monthly Meeting's 2023 State of the Meeting Report in being forwarded to the Yearly Meeting.

We wish to emphasize our appreciation to West Branch Monthly Meeting for patiently holding us in their care during our years of struggle. This consistent care has carried us to a place of readiness. Now we can report our unity on laying down the Yahara Friends Worship Group to the Iowa Yearly Meeting (Conservative) as part of the 2023 Yahara State of the Meeting Report.

NOTE – *It is the understanding of the IYMC Ministry & Counsel Committee that both members of the former Yahara Friends Worship Group are members of West Branch Meeting and participate via Zoom and in person on a fairly regular basis, including serving on committees.*

Whittier Monthly Meeting

...A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance. A time to scatter stones, and a time to gather them; a time to embrace, and a time to be far from embraces. Ecclesiastes 3:4-5 (KJV)

Friends at Whittier wept, laughed, mourned and danced this year. We mourned the deaths this past year of two people who played a vital part in the life of Whittier Monthly Meeting. Tim Merfeld died First Month, 2023. Tim was a local farmer who came to his first Quaker meeting at Whittier a few years ago and found the spiritual home and community he had long been seeking. He especially loved Whittier potlucks and even though very ill with cancer, showed up bearing food to share with us, just a couple weeks before he died.

In Fifth Month, Maxine Williams died. Her spiritual home and community lay elsewhere, but being married to a birthright Friend, Bob Williams, she was deeply committed to the ongoing maintenance of our building as well as helping keep our historical records, maintaining the cemetery and related business. For decades, Maxine was the one behind the scenes doing necessary work to ensure Whittier continuing presence in the community. We remember Tim and Maxine with gratitude and joy from having known them and feel blessed that they played such an important part in our monthly meeting.

Whittier also hosted a celebration of life for the son of one of our members, a vibrant and amazing young man who died tragically young. Kevin Rutledge had a huge impact on many people through his work for AFSC, his worldwide travels and his daily interactions with others. We remember him with much love, and hold in the Light his mother Sarah, brother, father, aunts, cousins, extended family and the wide network of loving Friends throughout our yearly meeting and beyond, whose lives he touched greatly.

There were notable occasions for dancing this year as well. One of our members requested to be married under the care of our meeting. There had not been a wedding at Whittier for years, and the clearness committee process was a new experience for us. It taught each of us quite a bit about ourselves. Though the dancing had to wait till after, the wedding itself was both reverent and joyful.

It is common to find anywhere from two to 11 people sitting on the benches at First Day worship.

Many active members are unable to attend meeting in person because they live a great distance away or their work schedule prevents them. Some live with serious illnesses that make it impossible for them to come. All of these Friends remain vital to the life of our meeting, and we hope to support their faith journey as needed in any way.

While the number of people worshipping on any First Day at Whittier remains unchanged from years past, what HAS changed is that the pool of people we draw from has suddenly enlarged. It has been well over a decade since any one of us lived nearby to the meetinghouse. Now, our newest attenders live in the Whittier area. One attender acts as caretaker for the meetinghouse as her gift to the meeting, and we are very grateful. Our attenders share other similarities. They seek a religious practice that speaks to them and

find sitting in expectant waiting Silence to be very meaningful. Each are connected to the land and farming in different ways. They have families and are raising children. We are now sometimes blessed to have young people, ranging in age anywhere from toddlers to teenagers, joining us for worship (and of course!) potluck.

And yet, one of our new attenders recently shared his observation at rise of meeting. He said that when he came in and sat down on the bench to join us for worship, he looked around the room and thought to himself, “This is the most diverse group of people I’ve ever been in.” It was an apt description. In many ways, (ways that many of us nowadays look at our neighbors in this country) we do share more differences than similarities. Potlucks and common interests help us enjoy each other, but the tie that binds us together is the worship itself. Love of this form of worship is what we share, from newest attender to most seasoned member. The worship nurtures and sustains us.

Help us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom. Psalm 90:9 (KJV) We look back with tenderness at our time together this past year and look forward to the time ahead as we continue to uncover where our faith leads.

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We heard the assistant clerk's selection of responses of our monthly meetings to Queries 1-6. Selected responses to Queries 1 - 12 start on Page **82**.

We now adjourn to meet again tomorrow morning at 9:30 a.m.

SIXTH DAY – FRIDAY MORNING - 07/28/2023

We return to the business of the Yearly Meeting.

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It is not our differences that divide us. It is our inability to recognize, accept, and celebrate those differences. Audre Lorde

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Readers for this morning’s business session are Martha Davis and Carole Winkleblack.

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Minute: We are grateful for the careful work of the Yearly Meeting Trustees. We approve this report.

YEARLY MEETING TRUSTEES REPORT

We have reappointed Lee Tesdell to continue to serve as a Scattergood Foundation Trustee for a term ending in 2025. He has asked to step down from his current role as Clerk, and the Foundation Trustees will be selecting his successor in that role. We are thankful for his work as Clerk and appreciate his willingness to continue as one of the Trustees. We have appointed Bob Jones to replace David Johnson, who is leaving the Foundation Trustees after serving for many years as their treasurer. We are very thankful for David's years of service in this role. The activities of the Foundation Trustees are described in their annual reports, which are attached to this report.

In 2021 we agreed to a request from the Representatives that the Yearly Meeting Trustees accept responsibility for managing a gift of about \$3800.00 from Omaha Friends Meeting, to be used as a fund to support monthly meetings in meetinghouse building projects, meetinghouse purchases, or technology upgrades to allow for better access. We have not yet received any requests for these funds.

There were no funds spent on Hickory Grove meetinghouse maintenance during the past year. This year we will have four of the five Trustees on campus in person, and we will be surveying the meetinghouse to assess current needs. We expect that our current funds, along with our anticipated annual allotment in the Yearly Meeting budget, will be sufficient to cover anticipated expenses.

Trustees Financial Report 2023

Initial balance 7/1/22	\$6,659.65
From Iowa Yearly Meeting Conservative	2,000.00
From 2022 Entertainment Committee	2,452.27
Interest	<u>4.10</u>
Total Funds Available	\$11,089.02
Total disbursements	0.00
Funds available 6/30/2023	\$11,089.02

Meeting House Fund

Initial Balance	\$3,927.13
Interest	<u>1.59</u>
Meeting House Fund Balance 6/30/2023	\$3,928.72

Bank Balance 6/30/2023 **\$15,017.74**

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Minute: We appreciate the positive news in this report, and we thank Richard Johnson for his years of skillful and dedicated service as treasurer of the Scattergood Friends School Foundation Trustees. We approve the report. The yearly meeting clerk will write a note to Richard conveying our thanks.

**SCATTERGOOD FRIENDS SCHOOL FOUNDATION
TRUSTEES REPORT**

The Scattergood Foundation is charged with the stewardship of the school's growing endowment, currently valued at approximately \$6 million. Through a diversified portfolio of socially responsible investments, primarily stocks, bonds, cash, and farmland, the Foundation makes annual distributions to support the school's mission. At present, approximately one quarter of the distributions supports capital improvements to the campus, one quarter supports the operations of the school, with the remaining half supporting scholarships to students. Funds are invested with a balanced approach to capital preservation and moderate growth.

In calculating the annual disbursements to the school, the Foundation follows the instructions of donors as well as the Foundation's own standard payout policy. During the 2022-23 school year, the Foundation distributed \$107,250 to support tuition scholarship, as well as \$91,850 plus \$28,150 for a total of \$120,000 toward capital improvements and the operation of the school. The Foundation has committed to new distributions for the 2023-24 academic year totaling \$109,800 for scholarships, as well as \$92,850 plus \$28,550 for a total of \$121,400 toward capital improvements and operations.

Assets Held by the Scattergood Friends School Foundation as of 6/30/2023:

Westwood Trust #1 (Scholarships)	\$ 1,958,209
Westwood Trust #2 (CapEx/OpEx)	\$ 2,654,575
Westwood Capital A/C (CapEx/OpEx)	\$ 640,266
Pemberton Farm (estimated value)	\$ 200,000
South Dakota Farm	\$ 325,000
Hills Bank checking	\$ 230,291

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Minute: The report from the farm manager brought us joy as he shared his experiences with the plants, animals, and children throughout the year. It is obvious that this is part of Mark's ministry, and we are grateful that he continues it faithfully. We are encouraged by the school's renewed focus on bringing students and their families into the admissions pipeline and nurturing them along the way to make sure that students who should be here are admitted. We are grateful to John Zimmerman, head of school, for his vision in this regard. We greatly appreciate the clarity and thoroughness of the reports of Kim Jones, Business Manager. We are filled with appreciation for members of the school committee for the volunteer work they do, giving the head and staff support and a Quaker perspective, especially Ruth Hampton, Clerk, and Roy Helm, Assistant Clerk. We approve these reports from the school and the school committee.

FARM REPORT

Dear Friends,

Time is measured in many different ways, some common like Yearly Meeting annual sessions, equinoxes and solstices, the sows begging for more food by mid-afternoon and the early morning alarms prodding us to the fields before the days get too hot. Other time measurements are less understood like the evolutions of our prairie plantings, intervals between derechos or previously-500-year-now-80-year-floods. In my 2004 report to the Yearly Meeting, I briefly mentioned how the students helped plant what was then our new asparagus bed. This planting fed us well over the years, sometimes much more than many would have preferred. Of course those students are now fully in adulthood, the asparagus field has declined, but the soil remains. This spring we entered Unit 2 of Asparagus Time, with several hundred new crowns planted and now looking strong. Borrowing and adapting from Henry David Thoreau: Time is but a field I go a-planting in.

Much student time was spent on the Scattergood Farm the past year. The Middle School began each day at the farm with chores, Collection and often science class. High School students took Farm Term classes about Insects, Dairy Production or Fairies, and then many also enrolled in a Physical Education class that focused on

harvesting and animal husbandry. A Food Preservation class helped put by plenty of Farm produce last fall and another class learned about fungi in the spring. Everyone took part in the Farm Fun Day during orientation, building community with plenty of time spent working, playing, eating and worshipping together. We also began a successful weekend chore program for interested high school students who worked on the Farm for pay.

The Scattergood Farm was again deeply involved with outreach to the wider community. We provided food to Iowa City's gleaning organization Table to Table, as well as to patients at the Iowa City Free Medical Clinic. We were a rest and food stop on the Farm Cycle ride when hundreds of cyclists toured the countryside and raised money for the Iowa City Bike Library. Staff and students did farm service work at the White Rock Conservancy in Coon Rapids, Iowa and the Savanna Institute in Spring Green, Wisconsin, as well as provided childcare for the Practical Farmers of Iowa Annual Conference. We presented at the Great Plains Growers Conference, the PFI Cooperators' Meeting, received the Spencer Award for Sustainable Agriculture from the Leopold Center and consulted with the Abington Friends School Experiential Farming Program. Farm Staff and a student also attended the Paul Johnson Land Stewardship Policy Forum at the Harkin Institute in Des Moines and Mark will soon join the steering committee for the Rodale Institute Midwest Organic Center and remains on a grant committee for USDA SARE (Sustainable Agriculture, Research and Education). Visitors to the Farm have included staff and students of Grinnell College, representatives of Practical Farmers of Iowa, the Xerces Society and the Pesticide Action Network, many guests on campus for the wedding of two former staff members, parents and friends attending Commencement and Scattergood Weekend, as well as the many children enrolled in the Scattergood Summer Camps and Taproot Nature Experience.

Ben Heller has been instrumental in so many of these endeavors and is constantly seeking ways to get students involved on the farm in their classes and free time. Dana Foster continues to shepherd the Middle School students on their Farm adventures and Irving Treadway, Adam Hanson, Theo Byrnes and Karen Huff taught so much about the Scattergood Farm through their work in the kitchen. Kent Tjossem provides valuable leadership and consultation on the School Committee, while Emily Fagan and Hannah

Breckbill volunteer as associate members of the Farm Subcommittee.

Perennial plantings are necessarily hopeful and humbling: they hint at increased productivity and renewal, but often do so mysteriously and on their own schedule. Though the new asparagus patch will not be fully harvestable for several years, already it produces thoughts on transience, sustenance and the paradoxes of time spent working with plants on land immemorial.

In Peace,

Mark Quee, Farm Manager

HEAD OF SCHOOL REPORT

The 2022-2023 school year at Scattergood Friends School has been one of challenges, opportunities, surprises, reflection, and learning. We entered the year with a renewed focus on preparation and planning with a goal of making the year less stressful. While I am happy to report that we were most certainly successful in planning ahead and being prepared for the year as it unfolded, it seems that some level of stress is inherent to the operation of a boarding school.

Recent state legislation has both limited the rights of our community members and posed difficult questions about the moral lens through which we view the decision-making and operations of the school. We have begun conversations with the ACLU of Iowa and local educators to seek guidance and wisdom in responding to these and future initiatives from the state of Iowa. It is our intention to remain a safe learning community for all of our students, regardless of race, religion, sex, sexuality, status, or financial means.

To help with that goal, one of our largest supporters, The Measey Foundation, has dramatically increased their annual distribution of funds to Scattergood. This additional funding comes at a critical time and allows us to continue our long-term strategic plan of growth and staffing in spite of lagging enrollment. These funds, when partnered with state savings accounts and scholarships, mean that we are able to provide generous support to families who may otherwise be unable to attend Scattergood, without the need for staff to subsidize these efforts through stagnant wages and under-staffing.

We welcomed 48 students to Scattergood throughout the year across both programs. As of this writing, our enrollment for the Fall is below our goals with 37 enrolled for the upcoming school year,

and several prospective students still in process. While there are many factors that impact enrollment, we can only focus on those areas within our control. To that end, we have taken steps to restructure our admissions efforts in an attempt to strengthen our communication, customer service, and marketing. While this new model has only been in place since June, we have already seen an increase in both inquiries and applicants.

On Sunday, June 4th, we celebrated the graduation of 9 seniors: Chris Gauder, Dina Wettig, JP Cortez, Lily Jampoler, Lola Flick, Miles Knake, Moose Koester, Paisley Crouse, and Sigourney Bradshaw. For their senior project, these students worked with staff to refurbish the outdoor lounge behind the art building and install several swings across campus. We will miss this departing class very much and wish them well in the future as they scatter good along their journeys.

This year we say goodbye to a number of beloved staff members, each of whom has contributed to Scattergood's program and community in both their work and friendship. Mark Blackman (Director of Admissions), Chloe Nagel (Health Coordinator), Greta Optz (College Counselor), and Lisa Kofed (Business Office) will be moving on to other communities and roles. Their work will be picked up by a number of current and new staff members including Eli Ehlinger (Maintenance Coordinator), Kate Furman (Business Office/Registrar), Dana Chastine (Marketing), Jess Havlicek Epps (Health Coordinator), Bug Shaprio (Student Activities Coordinator), Jennifer Peterman (Computer Science Teacher), Barbara Fisher (Learning Support Coordinator) and Saunia Powell (College Counselor). We are saddened to say goodbye to our friends and colleagues, but excited to welcome our new staff and their families into the community.

Our academic program continues to thrive as students from both the Middle and High school programs explored a myriad of topics ranging from algebra to the intersection of art and architecture. New teachers brought new passions and interests, some of which have sparked the curiosity of our students, including a renewed interest in woodworking and printmaking. This fall, our middle school students presented an original play "Pop's Diner" which was written as a class. This spring our High School students performed the musical *Pippin* to rave reviews and thunderous applause. Several of our middle school students participated in the Grant Wood AEA National History Day competition and advanced to the state finals,

while several of our High School students journeyed to Olney to compete in a weekend of Ultimate Frisbee. Overall, our program continues to deepen and grow as we find ways of building connections both within and outside of the Scattergood community.

Behind the scenes work has continued on several major projects. Ethan Huelskamp has been hard at work organizing both the upcoming alumni reunion and the impending comprehensive campaign, all the while maintaining our annual efforts for fundraising and communication. Dani Evans-Schreiber has continued to lead our staff in conducting the self-study portion of the ISACS accreditation process, with our on-site visit scheduled for November of 2023.

The year ahead proves to be an exciting and critical year for our beloved organization. While we conclude our ISACS accreditation, launch our comprehensive campaign, and continue to deliver an excellent academic program and student-life experience, we will be devoting much of our institutional energy towards enrollment and restoring a sense of fullness to the Meeting House. With the continued help and support of our extended Scattergood community, I am confident that our momentum will continue to grow and with it, our student body.

Respectfully submitted in peace and gratitude,
John Zimmerman

SCHOOL FINANCE REPORT

While we have been blessed with a recent influx of funds for both targeted and general purposes, we remain challenged by the inconsistent flow of cash caused by our admissions timeline and enrollment numbers. This year, however, we were able to respond to these challenges by utilizing recently created reserve funds designed to address this very situation. Our ability to do so in the future relies upon the wisdom and willpower to replenish these funds in a timely manner as our enrollment and revenue allow.

During the 2022/2023 school year we received news that the Measey Foundation would be adjusting their distribution payout formula. As a result we received a large influx of funds that have been allocated towards paying down debt, supplementing the operating budget, and increasing admissions efforts. This influx will

be followed by a continued increase to the annual distribution and has thus allowed us to be proactive in hiring staff and increasing staff compensation during a time when enrollment is still lagging.

Not all of the funds we have received are unrestricted. In fact, we have already received over \$700,000, primarily in the form of a long-anticipated estate gift, in contributions for the upcoming Comprehensive Campaign. The tracking and book-keeping for these funds will create a sense that we possess more cash on hand than is actually available. It is important that we view these monies as separate from the operating budget and our regular expenditures. While we cannot rely on these funds in the short-term, we are excited and encouraged to see donations coming in to support these larger and necessary projects. This focus on the upcoming campaign has also resulted in a decrease in donations for the annual fund, but this was an anticipated outcome and a necessary side-effect of focusing on a major campaign.

In conclusion, while we are certainly not in the position we found ourselves several years ago, we are not yet where we would like to be. It is clear that enrollment and tuition revenue remain the key to Scattergood's successful business model and a clear focus of our efforts heading into the coming school year and beyond.

SCHOOL FINANCIAL REPORT

(See next page)

			2023-2024	2022-2023	2022-2023	2021-2022
			Proposed Budget	YE Actuals	Budget	Budget
INCOME			1,837,843.83	2,993,763.91	1,448,482.62	1,450,707.00
Contributions			1,025,888.83	2,177,915.52	804,782.62	825,282.00
	Annual Giving		250,000.00	970,368.44	250,000.00	280,000.00
		Annual Giving	250,000.00	171,479.76	250,000.00	280,000.00
		Fees		(\$ (118.92)		
		Estate		799,016.60		
		Comp/Campaign		91,541.90		
	Designated Donation			48,723.62		
	STO 2022	STO/Financial	35,688.83	27,018.62	27,018.62	
		Quakerism		4,870.00		
		Berquist		1,710.00		
		Equipment		5,000.00		
		Reunion		500.00		
		Trips		4,625.00		
		Special Designations		5,000.00		
	Summer Program		30,000.00	18,324.25	30,000.00	20,000.00
	Reimbursable Income			20,650.09		
	Designated Capital		74,975.00	66,975.00	56,750.00	63,825.00
		Admissions portion			20,000.00	21,275.00
	Iowa Yearly Meeting		54,000.00	54,000.00	54,000.00	54,000.00
	Measey Foundation		425,000.00	831,649.12	225,264.00	237,907.00
	SFS Foundation		156,225.00	167,225.00	161,750.00	148,275.00
Tuition Revenue		Net Tuition	780,000.00	624,798.81	625,000.00	600,825.00
NonTuition Revenue			31,955.00	100,633.78	18,700.00	24,600.00
Fee&Charges	Enrollment Fees				3,000.00	
	Application Fees		1,255.00	1,161.92	1,400.00	1,500.00
	Fees & Charges		1,000.00	83.59		7,800.00
	Interest Earnings		1,000.00	562.11	1,000.00	1,000.00
	Other Operating		2,500.00	2,233.00	5,000.00	5,000.00
	Rental Use		2,000.00	2,754.15	4,000.00	4,000.00
	Farm		2,000.00	6,183.10	2,300.00	2,300.00
	Meat/Produce/other		1,000.00	150.00	2,000.00	3,000.00
	Grants		1,200.00	87,505.91		
	Summer Program		20,000.00	2,859.90		
Capital Expense				6,950.00		
DD				404.82		
Payroll			1,018,500.00	787,262.37	835,921.60	790,412.00
EXPENSES			1,760,844.25	1,843,834.90	1,490,920.60	1,482,969.00
Payroll Expenses			75,878.25	58,958.55	62,276.16	58,884.00
Personnel Costs			218,711.25	232,990.02	177,295.00	148,844.00
Residential Life			23,902.00	33,916.02	13,555.00	12,555.00
Health			3,000.00	4,205.51	6,000.00	10,000.00
Communications			14,800.00	14,566.90	14,300.00	11,520.00
Contracted Services			32,300.00	67,079.26	25,000.00	31,000.00
High School			16,800.00	19,244.53	9,720.00	11,600.00
Middle school			7,800.00	4,084.23	5,300.00	7,075.00
Farm			20,250.00	31,208.62	16,650.00	20,580.00
Food Services			60,200.00	68,912.16	58,000.00	48,000.00
Insurance			75,367.00	61,770.00	76,984.00	46,547.00
Administrative			38,327.00	69,159.58	25,300.00	39,790.00
Summer Camp			27,000.00	22,551.30	21,000.00	20,000.00
ARTS (Programs)			2,000.00			
Professional Services			44,440.00	61,860.71	39,350.00	50,900.00
Admissions			30,000.00	60,141.42	30,000.00	51,000.00
Development			12,272.00	27,825.72	12,450.00	14,800.00
Technology			38,400.00	78,943.03	39,720.00	31,587.00
Vehicles/Equipment			10,475.00	54,138.33	11,075.00	12,275.00
Operational Costs			95,300.00	101,113.12	94,300.00	85,600.00
NET INCOME/ (LOSS)			76,999.58	1,149,929.01	-42,437.98	-32,262.00

SCATTERGOOD SCHOOL COMMITTEE REPORT

This was a year of the continuing behind-the-scenes steps towards improvement, both to build momentum and lay the groundwork for stability. There is much to be noted and celebrated, and to quote from our Head of School's September report to the School Committee, "...the steady pace of small, meaningful changes is having a noticeable impact that will last for years to come."

Admissions and Outreach efforts have been focused on restructuring and bettering internal systems, updating the marketing plan and materials, and building a web of support—especially locally and with other Quaker schools. There were open houses and visitations throughout the year, and upcoming months will see more travels to make connections around the country. Growing enrollment continues to be a primary objective. As the Farm provides both food and a living classroom for the school, we want to note and celebrate that our Farm Manager Mark Quee and the Scattergood Farm have been a regional ambassador for the school for many years. Last September the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture awarded Mark the Spencer Award for his contributions to sustainable agriculture practices. Another exciting outreach event this year was a campus visit by 20 Education majors from William Penn University in Oskaloosa, Iowa. These students sought out Scattergood to deepen their understanding of Quakerism and Quaker-based education, and spent a day on campus observing and participating. This kind of sharing with educational institutions and Quaker organizations nurtures and widens our community, and we welcome this direction.

Over the last two years the School Committee has conducted a review and update of our Handbook, and we will now consider other policies to add to this living document. Though not much has happened this year on the topic, we also continue to contemplate ways for the business structure of the school to mature and still maintain the deep ties with the Yearly Meeting. We hope for more conversations about this in the future.

Thanks to much work by many, the intensive Self-Study Year of the accreditation cycle has concluded, and the school will receive visits from ISACS (Independent School Association of Central States) and FCE (Friends Council on Education) this fall. We look forward to their counsel and feedback. Work continues on the Healing

project, especially significant is the ongoing internal work of training staff and students around boundaries, behavior awareness and response. This is part of building and strengthening a healthy culture, and should be celebrated.

The planning for the dorm sprinkler project and other facilities upgrades has reached a new stage as our Feasibility Study has recently concluded. We are grateful for the work of Ethan Huelskamp and the Steering Committee overseeing this Comprehensive Campaign, and for its newest member Nick Knight who has joined the team to lend his construction expertise and advice.

Though we still have a need for higher enrollment and more positive cash flow, June 30th marked the third year in a row the school closed the books with no deficit, and *without* including gifts towards the capital projects. There has been an increase to staff salaries, and additional hires to help with their workload. By joining a Professional Employer Organization, the school has access to better health insurance plans as well as a third-party annual review of all handbooks to help us stay in compliance with any changes in the laws. We are grateful to John Zimmerman and Kim Jones for their creative efforts, ongoing improvements to management practices, and for working with consultant Chris Searle who helps Quaker schools with their internal business systems. The school finished a full financial audit, and will continue to develop the multi-year projection tools to help with planning. This year's financial situation was also aided by an increase in funds from the Measey Foundation, a Quaker organization helping Quaker schools provide financial assistance to students. All this we can note and celebrate.

A Scattergood Reunion 'with attention to the Arts' will be held the first weekend of August. Along with being fun and meaningful for participants, this is another outreach opportunity to strengthen connection with our wider base, and to encourage those from the past to learn about what is happening in the present at the school. We especially hope to encourage alumni to consider Friends or Artist in Residence opportunities on campus.

Scattergood has weathered many storms over the years: gales of financial stress due to low enrollment; the pummeling winds of a derecho; navigation of a project to help heal wounds of our past; and survival as the world was turned upside-down from a global pandemic. This year, as we are conducting the quieter work of self-

assessment, improvements and furtherance, it is Iowa’s political squall and challenging legislature that has been deeply felt. We have had to make challenging choices regarding the Education Savings Account, and we want to express clearly that the School and the School Committee are committed to ensuring that our students can safely be themselves while on campus. We hope the Yearly Meeting will stand by the School in maintaining freedom for students to live openly as who they are, in particular our trans students, as they have been targeted by our state in recent months.

Over the years we have occasionally posed the question to Scattergood’s seniors “What have you gained from being here, what do you take away with you?” The main reply has been 1) a good work ethic, and 2) a true sense of belonging to a community. This is certainly to be celebrated, especially in a world that encourages division and isolation. Our gratitude overfloweth for those who hold this complex experiment of a school with such grace and care, allowing young people opportunities to thrive and grow from these foundational experiences.

On behalf of the School Committee,
Ruth Hampton, clerk

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We adjourn to meet again this afternoon at 2 p.m.

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SIXTH DAY – FRIDAY AFTERNOON - 07/28/2023

We return to the business of the Yearly Meeting.

We are not for names, nor men, nor titles of Government, nor are we for this party nor against the other . . . but we are for justice and mercy and truth and peace and true freedom, that these may be exalted in our nation . . . Edward Burrough

There is something in every one of you that waits and listens for the sound of the genuine in yourself. It is the only true guide you will ever have. And if you cannot hear it, you will all of your life spend your days on the ends of strings that somebody else pulls. Howard Thurman

Martha Davis and Deb Fink have been appointed readers this afternoon.

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Minute: We appreciate the passion and serious work of the Yearly Meeting P&SC committee and others who met with them this week. The \$1,100 budget allocated by the representatives will come from the fiscal year that is just beginning. We approve this report.

PEACE AND SOCIAL CONCERNS COMMITTEE REPORT

Last year a Clerk was appointed to gather members of the Yearly Meeting's Peace & Social Concerns Committee and to clerk at their meetings. Unfortunately, she was unable to serve in that capacity longer than a few months. A search for a new Clerk was unsuccessful until yesterday when Jon Shafer, Penn Valley Meeting, agreed to serve until someone younger with more energy, and better hearing and memory could be found.

Last evening the IYMC Clerk sent Jon Shafer a letter outlining the IYMC's Peace & Social Concerns Committee responsibilities & some suggestions for how to proceed. This committee met this morning for about an hour and decided to use a summary of the monthly meetings' Peace & Social Concerns Committees' reports prepared by Bob Winkleblack which follows as the main portion of our report.

This morning the committee also discussed the \$1100 which is allocated to the committee to disperse to Peace and Social Concerns projects. We decided that we should invite monthly meetings, members or their peace & social concerns committee to recommend to our committee what projects they suggest should receive funds. Our committee will consider these recommendations and their supporting documentation over the next months before deciding on which suggestions to recommend funding.

The committee Clerk, Jon Shafer, also announced that he will be establishing contact with monthly meetings of the IYMC Peace & Social Concerns Committee for a while as we work on funding recommendations and what concerns we want to add to our IYMC website. Please contact him if you wish to be added to the list of those contacted or have suggestions. The Clerk can be reached at jonmshafer@gmail.com or by calling or texting him at 715-733-0480. -Report prepared on 27th day of 7th month, 2023.

Summary of Peace and Social Concerns reports to Yearly Meeting (Reports were submitted by West Branch, Penn Valley, Iowa City, Decorah, Omaha, Bear Creek, Lincoln and Paulina meetings.)

Monthly meetings continue to respond to issues concerning peace and justice. Many rely on the leadership of Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL), advocating for funding for federal peacekeeping programs that identify and support local leaders in conflict areas to proactively deal with issues that may escalate into violence.

Meetings also form relationships with other organizations with like-minded objectives such as Veterans for Peace, Sustainable Iowa Land Trust (SILT), Interfaith Light and Power, People 2 People (P2P), Alternatives to Violence (AVP), Braver Angels and others. Local programs like food pantries and free clinics as well as peace vigils were part of most meetings' outreach.

Recurring themes of the Peace and Social Concerns reports highlight the treatment of indigenous people particularly their treatment in forced boarding school attendance. Many of those schools were supported by Quakers. Meetings also participated in specific tribal issues with Lincoln establishing a fund to help with indigenous people's programs.

Women's reproductive rights became an issue after Roe vs Wade was overturned. FCNL requested assistance in determining a policy for national legislation. Some meetings were able to work together lovingly to share their experiences and guide FCNL towards a policy statement.

A concern for groups such as the LGBTQ+ community and immigrants prompted meetings to engage in supportive efforts of inclusion. Bear Creek and Penn Valley are actively involved in helping a single emigrating family, one of whom was a Scattergood graduate, to be reunited in Canada. West Branch meeting is supporting Open Heartland which works with the needs of immigrant families by volunteering monthly. West Branch and other meetings have begun to be concerned about state responses to vulnerable groups. These state issues may warrant a Quaker advocacy response.

Changing the polarized political atmosphere was taken up by Iowa City Meeting by hosting a workshop run by Braver Angels. Some Penn Valley attendees are working with Better Ballot KC to bring about rank choice voting.

Iowa City Meeting was uniquely concerned with the influence of pharmaceutical companies in government health policies. The war in Ukraine was also a concern. An informational presentation is in planning.

Guided by the spirit, both individual Quakers and meetings “see what Love can do,” love in both their communities and the wider world.

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IYMC REPRESENTATIVE TO FRIENDS WORLD COMMITTEE FOR CONSULTATION

Though our official representatives were not able to attend, Lorene Ludy attended the FWCC Section of the Americas this year via zoom. She enjoyed the keynote and other sessions, and the bilingual translation process which paced the proceedings.

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PENDLE HILL SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE

Note from the Clerk: We did not receive a report from the Pendle Hill Scholarship committee. The Yearly Meeting does have a budget line item to support people who wish to attend Pendle Hill classes or workshops. Some online classes are now offered.

* * * * *

Minute: We approve the report from our FCNL delegation and appreciate their work.

FRIENDS COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATION (FCNL) REPRESENTATIVES REPORT

Our yearly meeting has six representatives on the Friends Committee on National Legislation General Committee. One of them is concluding work as clerk of FCNL’s critical Policy Committee, which is tasked with distilling input from across the country to present policy and priority drafts for approval by the General Committee. This year the Policy Committee has re-visited the delicate question of whether or not to include abortion in our work

toward comprehensive healthcare for all in our country. Other representatives serve on the Nominating Committee and as Treasurer of the FCNL Education Fund.

A number of Yearly Meeting folks have joined FCNL Advocacy Teams to use our power as constituents to effect national policy. A key part of this is the continuing process of building relationships with the offices of our representatives and senators, even when our positions seem to fall on deaf ears. Shared faithfulness and persistence have buoyed these efforts and strengthened individual resolve.

Our yearly meeting sent two young people to the 2023 Spring Lobby Weekend. One of them was able to lobby with their elected officials on the benefits of violence interrupter programs in preventing deaths and injuries in tense situations.

The FCNL website (fcnl.org) has a wealth of information on what is happening in Washington, how the FCNL staff responds to national and international events, and how individuals can become involved in creating peace and justice.

At a time of discouraging atrocities, disasters, wars and unrest, FCNL is a lifeline of hope and optimism.

On behalf of the Representatives
Deborah Fink

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MINISTRY AND COUNSEL

A summary by M&C of Monthly Meeting religious education reports from Monthly meetings was read at this time and will appear with the M&C report on 7th day.

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Minute: We appreciate the careful report from IYMC representatives to the American Friends Service Corporation, and their hard work over the past three years. We approve the report.

**AMERICAN FRIENDS SERVICE COMMITTEE
REPRESENTATIVES TO THE AFSC CORPORATION REPORT**

The theme of AFSC’s annual corporation meeting this year was “Connecting for Lasting Change.” Gathering both in Philadelphia and on Zoom, April 13-15, 2023, all rejoiced in recognizing that this

was the first in-person meeting since 2019. The pandemic had kept us apart, meeting by Zoom for the three intervening years. Business sessions were held in waiting worship and centering silence.

The past several years have been challenging to AFSC as the Board, the Corporation, and the wider Quaker community considered various proposals made by the Board Working Group to restructure the organization in order to carry out the vision and plans of the new 10-year Strategic Plan, approved by the Board in 2020. There have been differences of opinion about various options proposed for restructuring AFSC. Numerous “listening sessions” held on Zoom, and widely promoted among yearly and monthly meetings, provided opportunity for folks to ask questions and express their opinions.

Early drafts of the restructuring proposal seemed to reflect the intention to abolish the regions we are familiar with, that, for many decades, have been organized geographically, and substitute for them overarching “themes.” Some felt that if this plan were adopted, connections that Friends had to local AFSC staff and programs would be broken. In the end, the regions were not abolished, but rather strengthened by plans for increased cross-region cooperation and coordination around three themes (Just Peace and Peace-building, Just Migration, and Just Economies). To facilitate this plan for increased coordination, a fourth emphasis will be Global Cohesion Across Themes. Sonia Tuma, whom many of you remember as the director of the Central Region from 2005 – 2012, has been appointed Associate General Secretary for Global Cohesion, a job which seeks to bridge the gaps between international and domestic programs and staff.

The Board of Directors met last October to reach unity and approve the final draft of the restructuring plan. They acknowledged that the result showed the power of Quaker process, of patience and of listening carefully. Board members, for the most part, felt that over the three years of controversy and dialogue the process had caused fatigue for all, but in the end it brought new energy to the organization.

Meanwhile, our highly motivated and dedicated staff continue to work around the world “to see what love can do” to create a more just and peaceful world, relieve suffering, and promote self-determination. Here are just a couple of examples of the work AFSC does:

In Burundi, AFSC partners with local people and groups, including some individuals affiliated with Friends Peace Teams such as Parfaite Ntahuba, to build economic resilience and to help communities develop skills to prevent violence and resolve conflicts peacefully. Here we see the synergy of two Quaker organizations working towards common goals.

In Michigan, Natalie Holbrook-Combs directs the Michigan Criminal Justice program for AFSC which is heart-led work that she has done for twenty years. Advocating against lifetime and long sentences and for collective accountability, the Michigan AFSC team continues to make a real difference in lifting up new, healing models. The team includes both currently and formerly incarcerated persons, and these relationships are the key to progress.

In further Corporation business, a new Director of Quaker Engagement, Brian Blackmore, was introduced. With the Friends Relations Committee, he will work to create stronger liaisons with monthly meetings, suggesting ways that Friends can become more engaged with AFSC. We should all be hearing more about his plans in the near future.

Jason Drucker, Assistant General Secretary for Advancement, gave a financial report indicating that AFSC has had 4 years of a balanced budget and assuring us that AFSC's investments are well managed and in accord with Quaker principles. AFSC's pension plan is fully funded.

Prominent civil rights leader, former Congressman, U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, and Mayor of Atlanta, Andrew Young gave the plenary address, recalling the warm relationship he had with AFSC over the many years during which he and Service Committee staff worked to improve race relations in the American South.

Programmed worship was led by Wess Daniels, Director of Friends Center & Quaker Studies at Guilford College. He spoke of the need to "resist Empire," i.e., to resist consolidating power, the importance of keeping the wisdom of God and heeding "false joys." He asked, "Are we in solidarity with those whose backs are against the wall?"

During its meeting, the Corporation was informed that there have been several staff resignations by people of color because of their painful experiences of racism and marginalization within AFSC. At least one Board member has resigned for similar reasons. It turns out that "good intentions" are not enough, even among Quakers and

those who profess to live by “Quaker values.” It is a stated goal of those in leadership positions within AFSC to learn from these painful experiences to which they have (perhaps unwittingly) contributed. As Corporation members, we hope that AFSC leadership takes to heart this commitment.

AFSC is not a perfect organization, but it is *our* organization. Its staff work around the world on our behalf, in places where we can’t be, but where the need is great. In spite of its organizational struggles, it deserves our support.

With love and gratitude,
Ann Stromquist, Bob Yeats, Peter Clay
IYMC representatives to AFSC Corporation

* * * * *

QUAKER EARTHCARE REPORT

Minute: We are glad to have this informative report from our representative to Quaker Earthcare Witness. We approve the report.

"Only when we see that we are part of the totality of the planet, not a superior part with special privileges, can we work effectively to bring about an earth restored to wholeness." Responding to this sentiment written by Elizabeth Watson, there arose among the attenders at Friends General Conference in 1987 an urgent leading to address as a group our relationship with the earth. The resulting organization was first called Unity with Nature. In 2003 the name was changed to Quaker Earthcare Witness. Today it is a network of North American Friends focusing on ecological sustainability and environmental justice. I am one of 50 steering committee members, and I have felt privileged to be a part of such a vital and important group. Our mission is to speak out, connect Friends in earthcare work, share resources, and empower individuals. QEW gives workshops, distributes videos, offers mini-grants, and has a wide variety of pamphlets, books and curriculum. To learn more, their webpage offers particulars about all of these things.

I began to represent IYM as a steering committee member last summer. Due to the pandemic, all meetings of QEW have been on Zoom, which has made it easy for me to attend from Iowa. I was initially oriented in a small meeting of new members, and then

attended the large yearly fall gathering, which ran for four days. At that point, I became part of the Publications Committee and I meet with them once a month to work on revising and updating older pamphlets as well as beginning some new book projects. This committee also oversees the website and media sites and publishes the organization's newsletter BeFriending Creation.

I also became a member of the No Name working group. I am especially grateful to be part of this monthly gathering. We begin by sitting in silence, and then share with the others as we seek the larger truths that inform our environmental work. This has been of immense value to me in my personal efforts to make a difference in a world that has such profound challenges. It has inspired me to continue writing my blog, Green Tribe of Belonging, which is focused on the earth. And it has connected me in meaningful ways with a widespread group of concerned and diligent individuals.

I am grateful to be Iowa Yearly Meeting's representative to Quaker Earthcare Witness, and look forward to continuing that work in the future. At the time of this writing, I am arranging to have a display of QEW publications at the upcoming yearly meeting session.

Nan Fawcett

* * * * *

BOOK TABLE REPORT

Minute: We accept the report of the book table committee.

The committee will examine our practice of offering books for sale at yearly meeting to see if this remains a viable option for us. We ask Friends to help us in our discernment by sharing their thoughts on this matter with members of the committee.

(Jane Cadwallader-Howe, Sarah Andrews or Deborah Dakin)

* * * * *

SPECIAL NEEDS REPORT

Minute: We are pleased that the yearly meeting values accessibility and note that the work of the Special Needs Committee has improved the ability of many of us to participate. We approve this report.

The Special Needs Committee has continued to be a voice for those requiring a little help to attend and fully participate in our meetings. We continue to support sound and hearing aid enhancement, improved stage access, improvements in the situation for those with chemical sensitivities and improved campus mobility. We helped in the setup of last year’s hybrid meetings.

Although the Scattergood campus has a long way to go to be truly accessible, we will continue to make improvements to the best of our abilities and resources. If you have particular suggestions, please speak to a member of the committee.

Minute: We are extremely grateful for the work of the virtual access committee, especially the large screen that allows the people in the room to see the people on zoom. The sound system is also very helpful. We appreciate the support of Scattergood to make the systems work here in the meetinghouse. We accept this report.

VIRTUAL ACCESS COMMITTEE

Catherine Dorenbach, clerk; John Andrews, Julie Gaida, Tom Hinshaw

This committee oversees and assures virtual access for IYMC meetings of all types: Yearly Meeting, Mid-Year Meeting, Spiritual Sharing groups, Yearly Meeting committees and other Yearly Meeting projects.

The hybrid meeting system set up last year has had a few adjustments but continues to work smoothly. Most people are now familiar with the process of having both in-person and online attendance.

Last year during annual sessions at Scattergood School we had the use of a very large monitor in the meeting house. That screen has been mounted in a classroom elsewhere on campus and is no longer available for our use.

For this year’s annual sessions we will use a projector (provided by Scattergood) and a 9’ screen rented from Aero Rental in Iowa City.

Expenses over the past year have been:

Zoom Subscription	160.76
Zoom Refund from class	
action settlement	(70.99)
HDMI Splitter Box	45.02

Screen Rental 189.47
Total: \$324.26

For committee meetings held during Yearly Meeting sessions, clerks of those committees need to have their own laptops for conducting meetings that include online participants.

Catherine Dorenbach, Clerk

* * * * *

WEBSITE COMMITTEE REPORT

Minute: We appreciate the work the committee does and approve this report.

The Website Committee continues to maintain, refine, and update website content with each year’s reports and minutes in accordance with the Yearly Meeting’s direction. The website provides access to our minutes, Faith and Practice, epistles, helpful links and the “find a meeting” app. We hope that it is a useful resource for our yearly meeting as well as seekers or those who are curious about who we are as a faith community.

We continue to provide a private working site for the IYMC clerk to organize reports and other documents in preparation for Annual Sessions. We would like to remind our monthly meetings that if they would like to set up or update an existing website we are happy to assist. Monthly meetings are responsible for the content on their site and, once up and running, its maintenance.

On behalf of the committee,
Katie Jacoby, clerk

* * * * *

We now adjourn to resume business tomorrow morning at 9:30.

SEVENTH DAY – SATURDAY MORNING – 7/29/2023

We return to the business of the Yearly Meeting.

Do not fear truth . . . never give up the search after it, and let me take courage and try from the bottom of my heart to do that which I

believe truth dictates, if it leads me to be a Quaker or not. Elizabeth Fry

We have found . . . that the Spirit, if rightly followed, will lead us into truth, unity and love: all our testimonies grow from this leading. "Britain Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, Quaker Faith and Practice, 4th edition

* * * * *

Readers for this morning's business sessions are Roy Helm and Doyle Wilson. Ed Taylor and Bill Deutsch are carrying the microphones.

* * * * *

Minute: We are delighted to have these young people here with us this week, and treasure their presence in our monthly meetings. We are glad they got to practice making decisions together, (a task that challenges us) and we admire that you could do this. We also want to express our gratitude for their leaders, Sonja and Evelyn, and others who helped out this year. We approve their report.

EPISTLE FROM FRIENDS OF JUNIOR YEARLY MEETING

Dear Friends Everywhere,

We gathered at Scattergood Friends School, at Iowa Yearly Meeting Conservative's annual gathering, and we did many fun activities. We enjoyed playing ping pong in the game room (which is also called the student lounge). We also liked swimming in the pond and going for a bike ride followed by ice cream. It was fun to visit the Scattergood farm where we fed pigs, played on hay bales, and went into the barn with Rosie the cat, Ned the donkey and a sheep. Meeting Rosie the cat was the favorite part of yearly meeting for some of us. She is 17 years old. We picked basil at the farm that people will eat at dinner tonight, but we got a little hot while doing so.

A lot of us are looking forward to going to a water park together tomorrow, and also playing capture the flag on the lawn tonight, maybe with some Scattergood high school students. We are also looking forward to playing with water balloons after we write this Epistle.

We had a good time at our yearly meeting and hope you had a good time at your yearly meeting too.

Yours Truly,
The Friends of Junior Yearly Meeting

* * * * *

Minute: We are grateful for the work of the treasurer and auditors, and gladly accept these reports. We are reminded that these amounts are not just numbers, they are part of the way we work in the world. The responsibility for the correctness of these numbers belongs to all of us.

AUDIT COMMITTEE REPORT

We met with IYMC Treasurer Rebecca Bergus at her home on July 18, 2023. Rebecca talked us through the 2023 fiscal year’s income and outlay with the help of a color-coded spreadsheet she had prepared. The year’s ending bank balance matched the balance shown on the spreadsheet. Yearly Meeting financial records are in good order thanks to our Treasurer.

Carole and Bob Winkleblack, Audit Committee

TREASURER REPORT

Fiscal Year ended June 30, 2023

Contributions	Budget	Actual
American Friends Service Committee	1,000.00	1,000.00
Friends Committee on National Legislation	1,000.00	1,000.00
Friends General Conference	500.00	500.00
Friends World Committee for Consultation	700.00	700.00
Iowa Peace Network	100.00	100.00
Friends Peace Teams	500.00	500.00
Scattergood & IYM Project	5,000.00	0.00
Pendle Hill	500.00	500.00
Peace and Social Concerns Committee	1,100.00	0.00
Quaker Earthcare Witness	500.00	500.00
Quaker United Nations Office	500.00	500.00
Right Sharing of World Resources	500.00	500.00

Scattergood Friends School	54,000.00	54,000.00
Scattergood Facilities	2,000.00	2,000.00
Quaker Voluntary Service	500.00	500.00
Delegate Expenses		
FCNL	1,200.00	0.00
Friends Peace Teams	600.00	600.00
FWCC - General	1,200.00	0.00
Quaker Earthcare Witness	1,200.00	0.00
Yearly Meeting Expenses		
Conservative Yearly Meeting Visitation	1,200.00	1,200.00
Archives Committee	200.00	0.00
Clerk's and Other Adm. Expenses	400.00	18.79
Committee Expenses (Other)	300.00	0.00
Conscientious Objector PSC subcommittee	100.00	0.00
Friends Travel & Conference	3,000.00	0.00
Iowa Yearly Meeting Trustees	1,000.00	2,000.00
Junior Yearly Meeting	1,500.00	1,149.51
Pendle Hill Scholarship Match	400.00	0.00
Publication Committee	3,500.00	2,067.00
Virtual Access Committee	1,000.00	321.52
Website Committee	450.00	179.88
Quaker Youth Camp Scholarship	500.00	0.00
Special Needs Committee	750.00	0.00
Young Adult Friends	300.00	0.00
Young Friends	1,500.00	0.00
Midyear Planning Committee(contingency fund)	500.00	0.00
Clerk's Contingency Fund	2,000.00	700.00
TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS	\$91,200.00	\$70,536.70
Statement of Cash and Funds		
Total Cash July 1, 2022		\$35,414.07
Receipts		
Monthly Meeting Apportionments	72,100.00	
Other	1,189.05	

TOTAL RECEIPTS		\$73,289.05
Disbursements		
2022 - 2023 budgeted items	70,536.70	(70,536.70)
Total Cash July 1, 2023		38,166.42

Minute: We thank the representatives for their work during the year. We request that the representatives add a line for travel by our representatives to the AFSC corporation in next year's budget, since the AFSC no longer covers this, and we don't want financial ability to limit participation. We approve this report.

REPRESENTATIVES COMMITTEE REPORT

This year marks the fifth year that the Representatives Committee has functioned as a standing committee of the yearly meeting rather than having meetings only in-person during the week of annual sessions. The committee met 10 times in the past year by video conference.

For the past couple years, Representatives Committee recommended, and the yearly meeting approved spending \$5,000 for a joint IYMC and Scattergood project. The committee proposes this expense again in the budget for 2023-2024. Our vision is to foster a closer relationship between the school and the yearly meeting. We ask that monthly meetings, Scattergood staff, students, and yearly meeting committees consider ideas for a project which could focus on environmental or racial justice and the history of the school in these areas or some other area of interest. If the budget for this is approved at annual sessions, we request that proposals for a project be brought forward to the Representatives Committee by November 1st.

We submit for yearly meeting consideration a budget and officers for the coming year as follows.

Apportionments & Budget:

We propose a budget for 2023-2024 with the following changes. In apportionments, Penn Valley decreases by \$1,000, Des Moines Valley decreases by \$2,500. The contribution for Scattergood decreases to \$50,000 per the request of the school. Other budgeted items remain the same. (See attached budget).

Yearly Meeting Officers:

We decided this year to add the role of assistant statistical recorder to the yearly meeting slate of officers so that we have more than one person who understands the tasks involved in keeping our membership records. We appreciate our current officers and thank them for their service in the past year and recommend the following people to serve the yearly meeting for 2023-2024: clerk, Carol Gilbert; assistant clerk, Bob Winkleblack; treasurer, Rebecca Bergus; assistant treasurer, (open); statistical recorder, Tim Shipe and assistant statistical recorder, Carole Winkleblack.

We wish to remind Friends that our next annual sessions are scheduled at Scattergood Friends School & Farm, near West Branch, Iowa, seventh month 24-28, 2024, as Love allows.

For the committee,
Penny Majors, clerk

PROPOSED IYMC BUDGET 2023 TO 2024

INCOME

Apportionments

Ames	\$4,400.00
Bear Creek	\$5,500.00
Decorah	\$2,500.00
Des Moines Valley	\$12,000.00
Iowa City	\$6,000.00
Lincoln	\$7,200.00
Omaha	\$3,250.00
Paullina	\$8,500.00
Penn Valley	\$4,500.00
West Branch	\$11,250.00
Whittier	\$3,500.00

TOTAL	\$68,600.00
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EXPENDITURES

Contributions

Scattergood Friends School	\$50,000.00
Scattergood Facilities	\$2,000.00
Peace and Social Concerns Committee	\$1,100.00
American Friends Service Committee	\$1,000.00
Friends Committee on National Legislation	\$1,000.00
Friends World Committee for Consultation	\$700.00
Friends General Conference	\$500.00
Friends Peace Teams	\$500.00
Pendle Hill	\$500.00

Quaker Earthcare Witness	\$500.00
Quaker United Nations Office	\$500.00
Quaker Voluntary Service	\$500.00
Right Sharing of World Resources	\$500.00
Iowa Peace Network	\$100.00
Total Contributions	\$59,400.00
Delegate Expenses	
Conservative Yearly Meeting Visitation	\$1,200.00
FCNL	\$1,200.00
Friends Peace Teams	\$600.00
FWCC - General	\$1,200.00
Quaker Earthcare Witness	\$1,200.00
Total Delegate Expenses	\$5,400.00
Yearly Meeting Expenses	
Archives Committee	\$200.00
Clerk's and Other Adm. Expenses	\$400.00
Clerk's Contingency Fund	\$2,000.00
Committee Expenses (Other)	\$300.00
Conscientious Objector PSC subcommittee	\$100.00
Friends Travel & Conference	\$3,000.00
Iowa Yearly Meeting Trustees	\$1,000.00
Joint Scattergood & IYM Project	\$5,000.00
Junior Yearly Meeting	\$1,500.00
Midyear Planning Committee if receipts inadequate*	\$500.00
Pendle Hill Scholarship Match	\$400.00
Publication Committee	\$3,500.00
Quaker Youth Camp Scholarship	\$500.00
Special Needs Committee	\$750.00
Virtual Access Committee	\$1,000.00
Website Committee	\$450.00
Young Adult Friends	\$300.00
Young Friends	\$1,500.00
Total Yearly Meeting Expenses	\$22,400.00
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$87,200.00

SOURCES OF FUNDS

2023-2024 Budget	(\$87,200.00)
Monthly Meeting Apportionments	\$68,600.00
Carryover Funds (cash on hand)	\$34,916.42
Reserve Funds	(\$16,316.42)

Minute: NCYM records are deposited at Guilford College. Ohio YM records are in a large safe in the basement at Olney.

Both paper and digitized records will be stored. Both safety and access are important to us. We would want to be careful about giving blanket permission to our records. Is the SHSI as reliable as it used to be, given current government? Will culture wars get involved with our records? We have 4 bankers boxes and 8 Hollinger boxes, plus the same volume for monthly meetings.

Friends are in unity about the importance of safely preserving our records and making them available to us, to historians, and to the public. To this end, it seems clear that deeding the records to the SHSI is the right action to take. Because of the complexity and care that must be taken to make these arrangements, we request that the yearly meeting trustees extend the current deposit agreement. We request that the Archives Committee begin work now to move to a deed of gift arrangement as soon as practical. We ask that the archives committee and the yearly meeting clerk draw up an arrangement and present it to the Yearly Meeting body for approval when it is ready.

We approve having the Archives Committee begin the process of inventorying existing oral histories and other types of history as described in their report.

We are grateful to the Archives Committee for attending to this important business.

ARCHIVES COMMITTEE REPORT

Dan Treadway, Jeff Kisling, Tim Shipe, and Shel Stromquist, clerk

At last year's annual sessions of Iowa Yearly Meeting (Conservative) (2022), the Archives Committee was asked to consult with the State Historical Society of Iowa (SHSI) about the future of the yearly meeting archival collection and to consider what options for the future there might be.

The IYMC records currently reside with SHSI—Iowa City on the basis of a five-year renewable “deposit agreement,” first entered into in 1978. Some monthly meetings have donated records under the terms of that deposit agreement; others have deeded their records to SHSI. The current five-year agreement expires at the end of 2023. Under the terms of the agreement, the SHSI agreed to safely house and care for the records and provide public access. If IYMC should decide to end the agreement or withdraw the records, it must

provide the SHSI a microfilm copy of all materials in the collection. Scattergood School and Hostel, by comparison, have deeded their records to the SHSI.

Standard archival practice is that records housed by an archive are deeded to that repository for care and management, with public access limited only by whatever restrictions the donating individual or organization may request. That has been the practice of SHSI with very few exceptions (among them some Quaker collections.) A number of archives at Quaker-affiliated colleges (Earlham, Haverford and Swarthmore, for example) do accept records of some yearly meetings on the basis of “deposit agreements” but in perpetuity. In almost all such cases, the archive charges yearly meetings an annual fee for care of the records, typically \$1500-\$2000. In some cases, yearly meeting records have been deeded to the repository. At Quaker-affiliated college archives, the records of Quaker schools and other Quaker-affiliated organizations have typically been deeded to those repositories.

According to State Archivist, Anthony Jahn, the SHSI would prefer to move to a deed of gift for the records of IYMC and subsidiary meetings. Such an arrangement would “afford a higher degree of intellectual and physical control” of the materials. Under those terms, the collections would be more fully inventoried to the file level and described in more detail, and the public (and researchers) would have better access to the collections.

What are the advantages and disadvantages of deposit agreements compared with deeds of gifts?

Advantages: (to IYMC):

Since 1978, the deposit agreement has been the tradition under which records are donated by the yearly meeting and held by the State Historical Society of Iowa. The practice of monthly meetings has varied. The donated records remain the property of the yearly meeting, which would have the option of withdrawing the records, if for any reason it chose to do so, with the expense of providing to the SHSI a full microfilm of the entire collection.

IYMC has the assurance that the records will be saved, protected, and at least minimally processed, with access maintained by the SHSI at no cost to the yearly meeting.

Disadvantages (to IYMC):

Yearly meeting records, while saved and protected, are only minimally processed and described. They do not receive the same priority for staff time or funding as do deeded records. The public and researchers therefore do not have the same level of access to the materials as they do to other archival materials. If the records require conservation or repair, they will also not have the same priority as other records that have been deeded to SHSI. (This is also true at the Haverford and Swarthmore College archives.)

In the case of digital records, under the deposit agreement those data would simply be stored (on a donated portable hard drive or other storage medium), but they would not be processed and therefore would be without organization or description, and virtually inaccessible. If they were deeded, the SHSI would preserve the records “in a digital environment” where they could be managed, audited and described.

The Archives Committee discussed two options, either of which would require action by the yearly meeting.

Option 1: Renew the existing deposit agreement for another five-year period. The State Archivist indicated that he would reluctantly be willing to do so for one more five-year period but not likely beyond that.

If this were the option chosen, the Archives Committee would hope that Yearly Meeting would begin a process now for considering whether it would be prepared to deed the records at the end of this deposit agreement or withdraw the records for deposit elsewhere.

Option 2: Prepare to sign a deed of gift now with the SHSI under which the IYMC records would be deeded to SHSI. This would apply to all previously donated records, and the practice would continue for records donated in the future. If IYMC chose this option, it would develop, in consultation with SHSI, language covering the donation, including any restrictions, copyright, deaccessioning, and care and management of any digital records to be donated.

The Archives Committee did not reach agreement on a recommendation of either option.

Other matters:

Oral histories of yearly and monthly meeting members and attenders. We recommend that the Archives Committee be asked to undertake a survey of yearly and monthly meeting members and attenders to determine:

- 1) What oral histories have been done—how many and with whom (specifically)?
- 2) In what format do those oral histories exist—tape or video recordings, written transcripts or summaries?
- 3) Where or with whom do they currently reside?
- 4) Would those who conducted the interviews be prepared to donate them to the IYMC collection at the SHSI?
- 5) Did the persons interviewed and the interviewer sign (or would they sign) release forms for the oral histories to be used by the public or researchers?

On behalf of the Archives Committee
Shel Stromquist, clerk

QUERY RESPONSES

Summaries of monthly meeting responses to queries 7-12, prepared by the assistant clerk, were read at this time. Responses to all Queries begin on page 82.

We now adjoin our morning session to meet for our final session at 3:00 pm today.

SEVENTH DAY – SATURDAY AFTERNOON – 7/29/2023

We return to the business of the Yearly Meeting.

Death is but crossing the world as Friends do the sea; they live in one another still. For they must needs be present, that love and live in that which is omnipresent. William Penn

Thee lift me and I lift thee and together we ascend. John Greenleaf Whittier

Stan Sanders and Bob Yeats are readers this afternoon.

Minute: We miss these Friends and feel the losses deeply. At the same time, we are aware that they and others are in some way with us still. We stand on their shoulders, or they whisper to us or hold our hand, maybe even here in this room this week.

RECORDER'S REPORT

Deaths

Ames	John Spence	May13, 2023
Bear Creek	Lynette Simms Christensen Dorothy Ridpath Weller	January 3, 2023 May 1, 2023
Iowa City	Dorothy D. Rogers	March 28, 2023
Paullina	Hollis A. Peterson Craig Henderson	October 14, 2022 December 26, 2022
Penn Valley	James Kavanaugh Kenney	April 5, 2023
West Branch	Timothy Woods Walsh	June 15, 2023

Births

None

Marriages under the Care of the Meetings

Whittier	Janet Ellen Lemmermann to Roland Roy Lobsinger	October 28, 2022
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New Members by Request or by Certificate of Transfer

Penn Valley	Jack Niemuth	February 5, 2023 (by request)
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(Report continues on next page)

Meeting	Births	Deaths	Certificates of Membership Received (Transfers In)	Memberships Transferred Out	New Memberships Granted	Memberships Discontinued	Total Membership
Ames	0	1	0	0	0	0	26
Bear Creek	0	2	0	0	0	0	71
Decorah	0	0	0	0	0	0	12
Des Moines Valley	0	0	0	0	0	0	60
Iowa City	0	1	0	0	0	0	68
Lincoln	0	0	0	0	0	0	16
Omaha	0	0	0	0	0	0	11
Paullina	0	2	0	0	0	0	65
Penn Valley	0	1	0	1*	1	0	72
West Branch	0	1	0	0	0	0	91
Whittier	0	0	0	0	0	0	33
TOTALS	0	8	0	1	1	0	525
NET LOSS							8

* Transfer in September 2021, not previously reported

Minute: We approve the report of the Ministry and Counsel committee with gratitude for their faithfulness in carrying out their many responsibilities throughout this year.

MINISTRY AND COUNSEL REPORT

As members of the IYMC Ministry & Counsel reflected on their work in the past year, one Friend said, with what seemed a mixture of surprise and awe, that the committee had done A LOT in the past year! Friends began nodding in agreement, but they also acknowledged that God isn't giving us a goal of "doing a lot."

M&C has received reports from the various ad hoc committees charged with the responsibility of helping plan and carry out projects/programs under the Committee's care. The spiritual well-being of IYMC, its meetings and its members and attenders remains

the main charge of M&C and it seeks to continue to be faithful to the Divine and Yearly Meeting in this work.

Besides being tasked with reading the State of the Meeting Reports and summarizing the Religious Education reports the M&C also has the following projects under its care: Spiritual Sharing Small Groups; revision of the proposed Child Safety document; monthly meeting clerks' retreat; visitation of monthly meetings by M&C members; providing support and spiritual care to Deborah Fisch, who has a continuing call to Gospel ministry; and seeking to become more aware of the spiritual health of our monthly meetings.

Spiritual Sharing Small Groups (SSSG) – This is the third year of the SSSG project. Meeting over a six-month period, F/friends have the Opportunity to share their spiritual journeys and reflect on self-selected topics related to those journeys. M&C continues to hear what a huge difference it makes to Friends' spiritual lives and in feeling more connected to each other and to Yearly Meeting. Friends who have participated are urged to share their experiences in their meetings as Way opens. A new round will begin in Ninth Month and those shepherding will be sending out more information soon as week as on the *ymc.org* website.

Ad Hoc Child Safety Revision Committee (CSRC)– The Ad Hoc Child Safety Policy Revision Committee is charged with further revision of the proposed child safety policy for IYMC. Last fall the CSRC provided monthly meeting clerks with the most current iteration of the policy, asking their meetings to provide feedback (responses were detailed and provided important suggestions) and with that information it began revising the document. As sections were completed they were shared with M&C. And later a detailed outline was shared with Friends who have had or currently have a role in this work. Their good feedback resulted in the CSRC undertaking a second rewrite, breaking the lengthy draft into three independent documents – one for youth leaders, one for parents and one for planning committees that worked together to make up the proposed manual for the youth planning committees. The CSRC then offered two on-line information sessions for Yearly Meeting Friends, but there wasn't enough time remaining for M&C to be able to thoughtfully consider the proposed revisions before Annual Sessions and so another year will be needed. The current draft will be made available on-line to IYMC members in read-only format soon after Annual Sessions and the Ad Hoc Committee welcomes comments concerning content,

but not general editing, as there are Friends willing to assist with that final part of the project.

Visitation of Monthly Meetings – This year members of the committee volunteered to visit many of our monthly meetings during the year. Several Friends have now made those visits and others hope to do so while the weather is still good. It has been a satisfying experience for those who have been able to make their visits.

Seeking to Provide Spiritual Support for IYMC Meetings – M&C continues to seek more ways to better serve monthly meetings and be aware of their spiritual condition. This year Friends were invited to share how the Spirit has been at work in their meetings and their own lives “since last M&C met.” In this way we have been able to be more aware of the work of the Spirit in our meetings and also ask if there is some way the Committee can be of help if a meeting finds itself in a difficult place.

Meeting for Monthly Meeting Clerks – After three months of seeking, the committee discerned that Way had not opened to have another monthly meeting clerks’ meeting in 2022/23. There are plans to revisit this again in the coming year.

Anchor Committee & Report from Deborah Fisch – Deborah gave a report concerning the Gospel ministry to which she has been called. Videoconferencing has made it possible to attend distant meetings and offer ministry as led. Since last Annual Sessions she has visited two yearly meetings in sessions in this way and one of our monthly meetings in person. At the suggestion and with the help of Friend Helen Thorpe of Intermountain Yearly Meeting she has begun writing a book about what she has been learning as she seeks to be a faithful F/friend of Christ.

M&C affirms Deborah’s calling to Gospel Ministry.

Annual State of the Meeting Reports and a summary of monthly meeting Religious Education (RE) Reports were given earlier during Annual Sessions.

Cheryl Sutton and Lorene Ludy were appointed to serve as co-clerks for the 2023/24 Ministry & Counsel Committee. We appreciate Deborah’s clerking M&C in the past year and are grateful for her service.

On behalf of the M&C Committee,
Deborah Fisch, clerk/Cheryl Sutton, assistant clerk,
Nancy Jordan, assistant recording clerk

Summary of Religious Education Reports

Bear Creek Meeting Religious Education Report 2023

During the past year, Bear Creek Meeting faithfully convened Pre-meeting Discussions in a hybrid format, with topics that spanned from secular issues to spiritual matters steeped in Quakerism. In addition, Friends who gathered in person had a few occasions to meet with neighbors and community members, sometimes for visits, and other times for events. During the most casual of interactions, such as those that have occurred during Iowa Interfaith Power & Light meetings at the meetinghouse, and when guests have been welcomed for a short sojourn in the adjacent cottage; as well as during more formal events, such as the hosting of Midyear Meeting--these are all Opportunities that can bring about new learnings about one another and about the movement of the Spirit in our lives and in the life of the Meeting.

Our regular Query discussions continue to provide us tender and thoughtful sharing about our beliefs, our actions in the world, and our concerns from a Quaker perspective. We are getting to know one another more deeply as a result. Also, we learn what has been laid on our hearts during our frequent Peace & Social Concerns discussions and learn how those concerns grow out of leadings, taking the time to ask questions of one another and moving between the mystical-spiritual and the justice-oriented.

A sampling of topics and events include:

- Joining with Des Moines Valley Friends to view short videos made by two members about their respective "Journey to Friends"
- Learning more details about Friends' involvement in boarding schools for Native American children, including a few individuals who were active in Bear Creek Meeting at the time
- Hearing from a Friend about the ties that Mutual Aid has to the indigenous practice of sharing with one another out of an abundance mentality rather than out of a capitalistic frame
- Sharing our spiritual journeys, which began a year or two ago. Friends remain interested in hearing from others through this format
- Receiving inspiration to consider new and old questions by watching *QuakerSpeak* videos together
- Setting aside a pre-meeting and three evening sessions to focus

on reviewing the IYM(C) M&C draft of Guidelines for the Protection of Children.

Though Bear Creek has no young families who worship regularly on First Days with us, on occasion there have been sweet and playful interactions with nearby families who might use the playground equipment on the land, and chance conversations with Scattergood students who helped clean the meetinghouse ahead of Midyear Meeting.

We miss seeing the Religious Education Reports of other monthly meetings, given recent changes in structure and process at the Yearly Meeting level. Learning what other meetings are doing for religious education and growth plants seeds for new ideas for Bear Creek to explore.

Jackie Leckband & Liz Oppenheimer
Religious Education Committee, Bear Creek

Des Moines Valley Friends Religious Education Report 2023

First Day School for several Middle School and High School aged children moved to primarily in-person this year, with “blended” or virtual meetings when circumstances made it necessary. First Day School for a family with two younger children met only on Zoom for the first part of the year until the family transitioned to in-person activities closer to home. The First Day School teachers are grateful for the opportunity for involvement with this family and for the joy of working with the children.

The teens have started a garden at DMVF. In addition to helping start the seeds indoors and transplant the plants outside, the teens talked about why they wanted to have a garden and discussed what they wanted to grow. They also put together a proposal to Business Meeting and then with approval to the Friends House Board, (the nonprofit that owns our land) requesting use of outdoor space for the garden.

We recently had an evening potluck for the teens with two teens, one parent and two teachers attending. We hope to have more of these and to invite other Friends to make more and stronger connections between the teens and the Meeting.

We have not yet resumed in-person First Day School for younger children or childcare. Our religious education committee is discussing how best to do this. While we have no younger children yet who would attend regularly, we hope to practice, “If you build it,

they will come.” We were delighted recently with the visit of the toddler grandchild of members. It was a joy to hear a child’s voice and laughter as part of worship.

For more than a year, our meeting has been enriched by a weekly Quaker Minute immediately after meeting for worship. Researched and presented by a long-time member of DMVF, these have included thoughts on Quaker history, beliefs and practices. We appreciate this opportunity to learn more about our Quaker roots.

Lincoln Meeting

In addition to rich Query considerations and personal sharing, our educational activity this year has been: reading *Quakers Do What? Why?* by Rhiannon Grant; participating in the webinar, *Call to Farms: A Conversation about Localism, Nonviolence and Creating a Peaceable Economy*; considering the *Urgent Call to the Religious Society of Friends*, AFSC’s “North Star Vision for Criminal Justice Reform;” reviewing and submitting edit suggestions for IYMC’s proposed *Child Safety Guidelines*; and considering FCNL’s request for input on their statement on reproductive health.

Paullina Friends Meeting Religious Education Report 2023

We have not resumed First Day School for either children or adults since the pandemic. The continuing decline in the number of regular attenders has reduced interest in, and made it more difficult to organize and schedule activities.

West Branch Religious Education Report 2023

We were pleased to have a small regular group of attendees which, when possible, met before meeting for worship on the third Sunday of the month. Together we read from resource books and pamphlets, stopping from time to time to hear what the author was trying to say, or reflect on our own response to the words.

Friends Journal articles, one about atonement and another about leading a fruitful life in the slower lane as we age, gave us food for thought, as did the Pendle Hill Pamphlets by Elaine Pryce.

Good exchanges of ideas helped deepen our friendship and worship.

The Library Committee continues to cull books from our meeting library in order to add titles that are of more current interest to Friends. We appreciate our subscription to the *Pendle Hill*

pamphlets, which are often read and reflected upon. The Meeting Book Group has enjoyed sharing monthly about books of interest to our small group.

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Minute: We approve the report of the Nominating Committee with the corrections noted, and with gratitude for the work of that committee. This includes committees appointed by the yearly meeting and committees appointed by the monthly meetings. The Scattergood School Committee includes members appointed by Northern and Illinois Yearly Meetings as well as "at large" members appointed by the School Committee itself.

NOMINATING REPORT

Archives Committee

2024	2025	2026
Dan Treadway	Jeff Kisling	Tim Shipe
Shel Stromquist, clerk		

Book Table Committee

2024	2025	2026
Sarah Andrews	Deborah Dakin	Jane Cadwallader Howe, clerk

Document Committee 2024

Ginny Winsor	Martha Davis	Jackie Leckband, convener
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Entertainment Committee

2024	2025	2026
Ames	Decorah	Paullina
Des Moines Valley	Iowa City	Omaha
Penn Valley	West Branch	Lincoln
	Whittier	

Interim Meeting

Each monthly meeting can name up to 2 members to represent them on Interim Committee.

2024	2025	2026
AM Fink (A)	Bill Deutsch (D)	Meg McCormick (WB)
George Bergus (WB)	Bob Ramaley (O)	Dorothy Lifka (DMV)
Alice Hampton (W)	Deborah Fisch (P)	Stan Sanders (BC)
Bob Winkleblack (IC)	Roy Helm (L)	Bob Henderson (DMV)
Shirley Scritchfield (PV)	Angelika Shafer (PV)	Ginny Olson (O)
		Andy Juhl (P)
		Steve Cannon (A)

Junior Yearly Meeting (at Yearly Meeting)

2024	2025	2026
Karen Greenler	Kathy Van de Walle	Sonja Sponheim
Ann Robinson	Evelyn Bergus	

Midyear Planning Committee

2024	2025	2026
Liz Oppenheimer, co-clerk	Russ Leckband	Bill Deutsch
Deborah Fink	Jackie Leckband, co-clerk	Osa Bricker
Tom Hinshaw		

Junior Yearly Meeting (at Midyear Meeting)

2024	2025	2026
Carol Gilbert	Bill Deutsch	

Ministry and Counsel

Each monthly meeting can name up to 2 members to represent them on Ministry and Council

2024	2025	2026
Jane Cadwallader Howe (WB)	Sharon Eiker (PV)	Kathy Van De Walle(WB)
Lorene Ludy (L)	Nat Case (BC)	Amanda Emerson (PV)
Liz Voss (IC)	Alice Hampton (W)	Billie Wade (DMV)
Deborah Fisch (P)	Decorah- no appointment	Cheryl Sutton (BC)
Daniel Willems (W)	David Wilcox (A)	Ginny Winsor (O)
Peter Clay (DMV)	Marshall Massey (O)	Sarah Andrews (IC)
		Nancy Jordan (L)

Nominating Committee 2024 (Appointed by Monthly Meetings)

A.M. Fink (A)	Russ Leckband (BC)	Bill Deutsch, clerk (D)
Dorothy Lifka (DMVF)	Carole Winkleblack (IC)	Roy Helm (L)
Carol Gilbert (O)	Doyle Wilson (P)	Jon Shafer (PV)
Judy Cottingham (WB)	Bob Yeats (W)	

Peace and Social Concerns Committee*

2024	2025	2026
Quinn Dilkes	Bob Jones	Peter Clay
Russ Leckband	David Hansen	
Margaret Jean Hansen	Caroline Hogan	
	Anthony Robinson	
	Jon Shafer	

*we were unable to identify a convener/clerk for this committee

Pendle Hill Scholarship Committee

2024	2025	2026
Shirley Scritchfield	Callie Marsh, clerk	Pam Blackburn

Publications Committee

2024	2025	2026
Bill Wines	Ann Stromquist	Katie Jacoby, clerk
Nat Case		Ruth Dawson

Representatives Committee

Each monthly meeting can name up to 2 members to represent them on Representatives Committee.

2024	2025	2026
Jon Shafer (PV)	Catherine Dorenbach (L)	Carol Spaulding Kruse (DMV)
Ruth Hampton (W)	Carole Winkleblack (IC)	Ann Robinson (DMV)
Bill Deutsch (D)	Ginny Winsor (O)	Penny Majors, clerk (WB)
Doyle Wilson (P)	Bob Yeats (W)	Stan Sanders (BC)
Sonja Sponheim (BC)	Rebecca Bergus (WB)	Deborah Fink (A)
Sarah Andrews (IC)		Bob Ramaley (O)
		Roy Helm (L)

Scattergood Friends School Committee

Iowa (FUM), Illinois YM and Northern YM are also invited to name a representative to the committee.

2024	2025	2026
Ruth Hampton, Clerk	Roy Helm, Assistant Clerk	George Bergus
Matthew Gillespie	Kent Tjossem	David Wilcox
	Katie Jacoby	

Scattergood Friends School Foundation Trustees – appointed by YM Trustees

2024	2025	2026	2027
Lowell Wilson	Bob Yeats	Barb Garlinghouse	Lee Tesdell
Dan Treadway	Cheryl Sutton	Carole Winkleblack	Bob Jones

Special Needs Committee

2024	2025	2026
John Andrews, co-clerk	Deborah Fisch	Bob Yeats

Virtual Access Committee

2024	2025	2026
Catherine Dorenbach, clerk	Julie Gaida	Tom Hinshaw
John Andrews		

Website/Technology Committee

2024	2025	2026
Katie Jacoby, clerk	John Andrews	Cheryl Sutton

Yearly Meeting Trustees

2024	2025	2026	2027
Jim Cottingham, clerk	Bob Winkleblack	Jonathon Fisch	Bill Deutsch
		Deb Dakin	

Young Friends for Yearly Meeting Committee

2024	2025	2026
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We have been unable to identify persons to serve with this committee.

IYMC REPRESENTATIVES TO FRIENDS AGENCIES

AFSC Corporation

2024	2025	2026
Ann Stromquist	Jon Shafer	Peter Clay
Bob Yeats		

FCNL General Committee

2024	2025	2026
Penny Majors	Ebby Luvaga	Carole Winkleblack
David Hansen	Deborah Fink	Rebecca Bergus

Friends Peace Teams Council -- Peter Clay

FWCC

2024	2025	2026
	Liz Voss	

Quaker Earthcare Witness Steering Committee - Nan Fawcett

Iowa Peace Network Joint Oversight Committee - Peter Clay

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Minute: We approve the epistles drafted by the committee with gratitude, and with two changes: adding the paragraph about FCNL to all and omitting the phrase "The list is long". We approve the innovation of sending the special epistle to Iowa Yearly Meeting (FUM). The clerk intends to reach out in friendship to the West Branch Friends Church with invitations to attend yearly meeting events.

2023 EPISTLES FROM IOWA YEARLY MEETING (CONSERVATIVE)

To Friends Everywhere:

But they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint. Psalm 27:14

Greetings from Iowa Yearly Meeting (Conservative) as we meet online and in person for our 146th annual session at Scattergood Friends School and Farm, near West Branch, Iowa, Seventh Month 26 through 30. The temperature outside has been unusually hot,

even for the last week of July in Iowa. We cautioned one another, family members, to be careful in this heat, stay hydrated, seek the cool of air-conditioned spaces, as we gather in the shelter of each other and the Holy Spirit.

We listened with gratitude to the State of the Meeting reports. Many of our monthly meetings continue to be hybrid meetings allowing Friends to attend in person or by video. Many of these reports spoke to concern of meetings' small and dwindling size. In addition to our decreasing numbers, our ageing means that many of us have less energy to invest in our meetings; that it can be difficult to get members and attenders to agree to take on responsibility.

Yet Friends are working on timely concerns including climate change and institutional racism. Many voiced surprise that despite our focus on these crucial issues of our time we are not attracting others to join us in these struggles. What does God call us to do?

We listened with gratitude to the reports from the Scattergood School committee and farm. We are thankful Scattergood is on solid financial footing. Scattergood's boarding high school continues its tradition of educating youth to lead a world of peace and justice with Quaker values. A day-use middle school now extends the academic offerings and will help grow the enrollment in the high school. The farm and greenhouse facilities offer unique educational experiences and connection with the natural world, as well as healthy provisions and fresh food for meals.

Beyond the business of our yearly meeting, we enjoyed a full schedule and go forth from this brief sojourn enriched by study, presentations, discussions, and personal exchanges among Friends old and new. In early morning bible study we were led through an exploration of the story of Moses from the book of Exodus, examining the text with a focus on word choices used in several contemporary versions of the Holy Bible. We read through this sampling, weighing our responses for personal and emotional impact; an interesting study.

Anika Forrest, Legislative Director, Domestic Policy, of Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL), presented a summary of current efforts in Washington to influence the U.S. Congress toward more humanitarian approaches of handling the immigration and migration issues at our borders and embassies. Anika leads FCNL's legislative and migration policy program. Her remarkable understanding of a crisis that is tending toward catastrophe on a

world scale was very stirring. We are encouraged to support the FCNL efforts and to engage in on-site participation, but most effectively, she urged us to contact our congressional members.

IYMC Member Marshall Massey presented excerpts from his book-in-progress about the environmental crisis and how the original roots of Quaker Earth Care Witness developed from discussions and exchanges. Marshall showed how the rising trends in atmospheric carbon dioxide have coincided with trends of atmospheric warming, destabilization of climate, and radical weather patterns. His query to us reaches to our spiritual response, how can we engage and prepare for the crisis if not spiritually?

Paula Palmer, member of Boulder Monthly Meeting, provided a slide presentation on her ministry toward *Right Relationship with Native Peoples*, the history of Quakers and indigenous boarding schools. Paula has collaborated with indigenous peoples as an ally, bringing together native and non-native people to build relationships based on truth, respect, justice and our shared humanity. Paula asks for our immediate response to the images and narrative of this troubled history, seeking a continuing dialog toward healing.

We enjoyed a renewed energy in our yearly meeting as we gathered together on the beautiful Scattergood campus and engaged in our relationships with each other and the Divine. We hope to see you again among our numbers.

In Love,
Carol Gilbert, clerk
On behalf of Iowa Yearly Meeting (Conservative)

(Note: The wording of the epistles to North Carolina and Ohio is identical except for the following first paragraphs.)

To Friends of Ohio Yearly Meeting

Dear Friends of Ohio Yearly Meeting,

And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength. The second commandment is this: love your neighbor as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these.

--Mark 12:30-31

Greetings from Iowa Yearly Meeting (Conservative) as we meet online and in person for our 146th annual session at Scattergood Friends School and Farm, near West Branch, Iowa. The heat of an Iowa summer cautions us to be careful, while the Spirit encourages and connects us for these sessions, Seventh Month 26 through 30. We gather in the Hickory Grove Meeting House with the theme: Knowing ourselves; knowing our neighbors.

Thank you for commending to us your member Tom Roberts, who has been part of our holy space for this yearly meeting in session. This is our second annual session that includes both in person and remote participation, and we are grateful for this experience. Tom's participation has enlarged our spirit-filled week.

To Friends of North Carolina Yearly Meeting (Conservative)

Dear Friends of North Carolina Yearly Meeting (Conservative),

*For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command:
"love your neighbors as yourself."*

Galatians 5:14

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

Psalms 119:105

Warm greetings from Iowa Yearly Meeting (Conservative) as we meet online and in person for our 146th annual session at Scattergood Friends School and Farm, near West Branch, Iowa. The heat of an Iowa summer cautions us to be careful, while the Spirit encourages and connects us for these sessions, Seventh Month 26 through 30. We gather in the Hickory Grove Meeting House with the theme: Knowing ourselves; knowing our neighbors.

Thank you for commending to us your members Michelle Downey and Susan Lees, who have been part of our holy space for this yearly meeting session. Michelle and Susan's participation has enhanced our spirit-filled week. This is the second annual session to include both in-person and remote participation. We are appreciative that this allows people to participate who are unable to travel for multiple reasons.

To Iowa Yearly Meeting of Friends

Dear Friends,

Warm greetings from Iowa Yearly Meeting (Conservative) as we meet online and in person for our 146th annual session at Scattergood Friends School and Farm, near West Branch, Iowa, Seventh Month 26 through 30. The temperature outside has been unusually hot, even for the last week of July in Iowa. We cautioned one another to be careful in this heat, stay hydrated, seek the cool of air-conditioned spaces, as we gather in the shelter of each other and the Holy Spirit.

We listened with gratitude to the State of the Meeting reports. Many of our monthly meetings continue to be hybrid meetings allowing Friends to attend in person or by video. Friends are working on timely concerns including climate change and institutional racism. We live in a time of too many hats and too few heads; despite our focus on these crucial issues of our time few join us in these struggles. What does God call us to do?

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In Love,
Carol Gilbert, clerk
On behalf of Iowa Yearly Meeting (Conservative)

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CLOSING MINUTE

At this, our 146th annual sessions, we gathered with at least 75 attending in-person on the campus of Scattergood Friends School, including nine children. At least 20 participated via videoconference.

We joined other regions of the world in feeling the effects of what science affirms is climate change that we helped create, when dangerous heat and humidity arrived in Iowa just in time for our annual sessions. We had the luxury, or necessity, of being able to retreat to air-conditioned spaces when needed.

An evening session on the spiritual roots of the climate crisis, led by Marshall Massey, included a sobering look at a not-too-distant future climate that will be hostile to ourselves and other beings. Marshall asked whether our human abilities to form communities, communicate, solve problems, and attend to the promptings of the Spirit, can help us respond rightly to the crisis. We were reminded that the Alternatives to Violence Project, which was built by Friends and is practiced by several in our meetings, teaches participants to rely on these same abilities.

An evening program with Paula Palmer informed us about Quaker boarding schools that were part of the movement to separate indigenous children from their families, causing untold trauma, loss of life and health, and damage to cultural identity. Though many Friends who worked for boarding schools did so in obedience to their discernment of God's will, and their efforts may indeed have reduced harm, the hurt has persisted through the generations and healing is needed all around. A discussion the next day helped us along the path of healing.

On First Day morning a member of Des Moines Valley Friends will help us re-focus on the topic of unrelenting racism against Black people in America, that continues to inflict harm. There was a time when Friends believed slavery was acceptable. What are we closing our eyes to? We must continue to search for "the seeds of war" in our way of life and the choices we make.

We were much cheered by news about our beloved school. Unexpected income is helping them not only maintain a balanced budget but invest in areas that will help them grow. This means making necessary repairs and improvements to buildings, but even

more important, allowing them to increase staff compensation and student enrollment. We affirm the importance of the school's increasing role as a safe harbor for young people who are not well accepted at their own public schools because of issues such as gender identity. We are exercised by the fact that the school will derive benefit from a new Iowa law that will harm public schools by providing taxpayer funds for students attending private schools.

Despite our keen awareness of troubles, we are surprisingly joy filled. We daily experience the power of Love in our time together at Yearly Meeting. The children remind us how much fun it is to run and play. We have lost dear Friends, yet new people have appeared on the scene, to take up the work. We shelter one another from the storm. We have faith that we will be given what we need. Everywhere we look there are gifts.

We adjourn planning to reconvene for our 147th annual sessions on seventh month 24-28, 2024.

Carol Gilbert, Clerk

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SELECTED RESPONSES TO QUERIES

Each year the IYMC assistant clerk receives the responses of its monthly and preparative meetings prior to Annual Session. The assistant clerk chooses excerpts of those responses to be read in Annual Session as time permits. The assistant clerk looks for responses that represent similar ones from other meetings, as well as responses that stand out because they are different from the norm and warrant consideration. They are printed here at the request of the Body.

Query 1 - Meeting for Worship

Are our meetings for worship held in a spirit of expectant waiting and communion with the Holy Spirit? How do we prepare our hearts and minds for worship? How do we refer to that which is divine? How does ascribing gender to the Holy Spirit affect our worship? How do we integrate our daily lives with meeting for worship? Do we see opportunities for worship outside of meeting? How does the vocal ministry of the meeting contribute to its spiritual life? In what ways do we recognize and nurture vocal ministry and other spiritual gifts?

Response: The use of words has the potential to bring us closer together, but it can also separate us. If we use words humbly, vulnerably describing our own experience of that which is infinite, that can help us feel connected. If we use words with a sense that we have ultimate truth, that can be divisive. Speaking at great length tends to be received negatively as does arguing with another's message. Just as some rehearsals for a performance can proceed with a sense of order and grace, some meetings for worship can do likewise and may be called "gathered" meetings.

Several refer to reaching for silence in their daily activities, that silence is the touchstone to connecting worship to daily activities. We enjoy comforts from such verses as "Be still and know that I am God" Psalms 46:10 and "Be still my soul: they God doth undertake to guide the future as he has the past. Thy hope, thy confidence let nothing shake; all now mysterious shall be bright at last" from Finlandia by Jean Sibelius.

Solitary practices of reaching for God are also valuable. Ideally, we stay awake to the possibility of God leading us on weekdays as well as on First Days. We find spirituality in art and nature, and in math and science. We want to stay awake to Truth.

As we gather for worship to center and wait for the Divine's presence, in the silence there is a sense of peace and calm that unites those who are present. Meeting can be meaningful in silent worship and when others share their truth as led by the Spirit. Preparation comes in the form of finding ourselves stepping away from the noise of the world around us to see the beauty in nature, to seek discernment within ourselves and connect with others who wait for guidance from the Spirit in their daily lives as well.

Friends refer individually to the Divine in their own way, usually not assigning gender, but speak of the Spirit, Holy Spirit, God, that of God, the still small voice. Respecting the sensitivity of refraining from gender names for the Divine allows individuals to quietly center and listen for the still small voice within.

Vocal ministry may speak to some and not always to everyone but sharing appreciation for the ministry shared continues to encourage sharing of the leading of the Spirit within each person.

The dictionary offers us a definition of the word, “worship.” To worship is to honor, revere the Holy Spirit, what we commonly understand as “God.” Another way of considering the meaning of worship may be an honoring of the Mystery. We may understand much about our Universe, but we are a small part of God’s world. Meeting for Worship gives us the gift of a living silence in which we can open to the “being” of God, open our hearts and minds to the reality of that vast Mystery.

Query 2 – Outreach

Do we encourage intervisitation within Yearly Meeting and with other Friends? What are we doing to share our faith with others outside our Friends’ community? How do we speak Truth as we know it and yet remain open to Truth as understood by others? In what ways do we cooperate with persons and groups with whom we share concerns? How do we reach out to those with whom we disagree? How do we make the presence of our meeting known to the larger community? Do we invite others to share in our meetings for worship and other meeting activities? Do we welcome everyone and appreciate the gifts that differences such as race, creed, economic status, disability, age, gender or sexual orientation may bring to us?

Response: A neighboring family was invited to an informal potluck meal at the Meeting house. A member of the new family asked if they were being recruited, a friend replied “No, but you will likely be adopted.” There are opportunities to share our faith when we participate in groups where there is a diversity of individuals and where there are common concerns and interests as well as activities that grow out of them.

One Friend noted how she prioritizes friendships above differences in politics and belief. Speaking truth from a lived experience can allow opportunities to raise difficult topics that bring people into deeper consideration. It can become more powerful to share personal joy than to discuss ideas, opinions, and abstract concepts. Speaking of love rather than principle.... speaking of experience in life, rather than what one was raised to believe, these can lead to an openness to the beloved community with an awareness of the

implication of what it can mean to preach or proselytize from that same lived experience.

Outreach does not result from telling others how to believe or live; it is not based on intellect; it does not judge. We attempt to live our faith, as a reflection of our experience of the Living Teacher, the Inner Light of God, found in all of us.

Query 3 - Meeting for Business

How can we hold our meetings for business in the spirit of love, understanding and patient search for unity without becoming frustrated by differences of opinion or the pressure of time? How do we respond when no one else in the meeting seems to hold the views that we do on an issue? How do we respond to a dissenting minority? How do we share responsibilities among Friends in our meeting? How do we serve our meetings?

Response: We don't vote, which is unique. As you work through the process you find it is effective; however, it can be slow. Tough business meetings are when one individual has a personal gut feeling of being wronged when they believe they are on a righteous course. Being a dissenting minority and standing aside on an issue requires humility and can be very difficult.

One clerk wanted Friends to be fully present to help hold the space and encourage faithfulness. We hope that we can be mindful to do the same for our meeting clerk. There is a tension between faithfulness and effectiveness. Friends may find that a rigid formality during Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business could lead us to miss out on something that might emerge in a more casual discussion. We do not wish to exclude Friends who have different life experiences or backgrounds (e.g. social class). There may be a challenge in carrying out our business without pushing others aside who may not understand our practice. At times we may be unexpectedly moved when we let Friends know that our heart is tender around a matter, and suddenly Way opens for a resolution that we hadn't considered on our own before.

Our clerk comments that they struggle with this set of queries the most in that it is difficult to be worshipful when discussing small details, like when to hold a meeting "clean-up" day. They are

reminded that even about small things, we should maintain the Quaker process of business. More than once the clerk has been helped by another attender to determine the “sense of the meeting” and to remain patient. Another Friend who is a past clerk of our meeting remembers how important it was to look for signals during business meeting – what is said and what is not said. This is made particularly difficult by our current hybrid format, observing both Friends in the meetinghouse and those on the screen.

Query 4 - Harmony within the Meeting

What can we do to deepen our relationships with one another? How does gender affect the way we relate to each other? How does our meeting balance the needs for honesty and kindness? What topics do we avoid for the sake of “unity”? When in conflict with others, do we cultivate a forgiving spirit? Do we look to that of God in ourselves and seek to address that of God in those with whom we disagree?

Response: A way to deepen our relationships is to come to Meeting. It’s hard to cultivate relationships when someone is not there. Love as “opening to the Divine” feels different and invites us to try to stay in that space. We are asked to love our neighbor as ourselves, and we wonder just how well we love ourselves. Showing up with a sense of self-righteousness is probably not loving myself well. We wonder what our negative feeling really is; is it fear or perhaps disappointment when our hopes are not fulfilled?

We wonder if we actually experience enough disharmony in our Meeting to adequately address this query. Some of us remember a visitor who seemed disruptive to some as if we couldn’t offer the help we thought she needed. Or was it that our job was simply to love, not find a solution. Can we be a community that loves each other into wholeness?

We heard about a metaphor used by some groups of creating a web using yarn in a circle of people. At the end of the activity, the circle of people connected by the web of yarn can then physically feel what happens when one person pulls on a part of the web: everyone feels the tightness and tension. This metaphor of the

interconnection we have across the Divine Web can slow down the human desire to lash out. We instead can remember that what we do to one person, we do to the web and ultimately to ourselves.

Getting to know each other can help us work together better and reduce conflict. One activity the meeting has discussed has been providing opportunities to hear each person share their spiritual journey. These opportunities provide a deeper look into our lives. These stories can satisfy a need for understanding how we or others used to live, which in turn can shed light on how to live during these difficult times and/or in preparation for what is to come. Our Meeting community thrives best when our shared spiritual journeys can reach a level of intimacy in the shelter of openness, forgiveness and love.

One Friend expressed that the deepest part of this query, for them, is the words of Jesus: “Love one another as I have loved you.” This quote distinguishes the human notion of love from the love that comes from the Divine; this Friend knows something about that love from experience but the words with which to talk about it are elusive. It feels like the efforts made without the emotions behind them are weak compared to those strong emotions, but more and more this Friends trust using their mind.

There is always something new that jumps out at one when reading or listening to the queries. For another Friend, this is the phrase: “Do we look to that of God within ourselves . . .” speaks of forgoing pettiness and judgement and act out of that indwelling spirit that God has given each one of us. Another Friend reflected on his growing-up years within a Southern Baptist church. In that church the TRUTH was KNOWN. There is some comfort in this surety but, in the end, it is problematic, well captured by the phrase in the Query #4 Advice that we must “be aware of the possibility that we may be mistaken.” This idea is much appreciated. In seeking, each of us may find different answers.

One topic we sometimes avoid speaking about is the future of our Meeting (due to shrinking membership). What is going to happen to our Meeting, our cemetery, our historic school, and Meetinghouse is too sad and painful for us to envision. As we continue to reduce in size within our small Meeting it will be very

important to work on keeping unity, be kind and thoughtful listeners and most important remember forgiveness is a gift.

Our conflicts can take many shapes and forms. When we see people we love in deep disagreement and hurt, we do not always have the wisdom to know how to help. We need more wisdom, more understanding about how to give credit. We can think of harmony within our meeting as like harmony in music, with multiple voices contributing to the overall sound. And as in music, the whole can be made richer by dissonant voices and their resolution

Query 5 - Mutual Care

How do we respond to each other's personal needs and difficulties in sensitive and useful ways? Do we encourage both men and women to share win caregiving? What are we doing to welcome and draw members and attenders of all ages into the fellowship of the meeting? How do we help our children feel the loving care of the meeting? How do we keep in touch with inactive and distant members and attenders?

Response: The new technology of Zoom vastly changes the issue of keeping in touch with distant members. We celebrate our new reality of being able to be together in silence with both distant and near-by members and attenders. And, this new reality brings new challenges: how to make the experience for both distant and in person attenders as similar as possible. How to make the experience of shared silence meaningful for all and bring all into one community?

We try to remain mindfully aware of the unique circumstance and personalities in each situation as we address our response to one another's personal needs and times of difficulty. We share our memories as examples and note times when friends and family have refused our assistance, that acceptance is sometimes difficult for some for a variety of reasons. One remembers a generous friend of twenty years who was reluctant to accept help though he had provided assistance to others again and again. We note such barriers block an exchange that can benefit the connections of friendship and love. Unrequested, unwanted giving can cause resentment and tear relationships. Our tenderness and sensitivity

can sometimes overcome resistances, soften barriers and lead us to know how to give help without encumbering the one in need.

Query 6 — Education

How can we most effectively foster a spirit of inquiry and a loving and understanding attitude toward life? What effort are we making to become better acquainted with the Bible, the teachings of Jesus, our Judeo-Christian heritage, the history and principles of Friends, and the contributions of other religions and philosophies to our spiritual heritage? In what ways can we encourage an educational process that is consistent with the values Friends cherish? How do gender based expectations affect the goals we set and the way we learn? Do we take an active and supportive interest in schools, libraries and other educational resources in our communities and elsewhere? How do we prepare ourselves and our children to play active roles in a changing world?

Response: We affirm the words in the Advice that we seek an education that prepares us to “face difficult moral issues with courage.” We aspire to offer education that has a spirit of humanity and encourages us to open our hearts, while understanding that an open heart must hold pain. While we know that, in a sense, children are like sponges, absorbing everything they come in contact with, at the same time we put great effort into educating them. While it may be uncomfortable for them, it may be very important to talk with children about their feelings.

We pondered the concept of spiritual maturity. As a culture, we have been found lacking in response to the technological advances within the last 100 years. This lack of spiritual maturity has had profound effects on our care and respect for the natural environment and our spiritual wholeness. Often, the Quaker education practices can view information gathering and spiritual development as an integrated process. The question of “What does good daily living look like?” can perhaps be a helpful query.

Our discernment about the Bible and the nature and our relationship with other spiritual teachings reflected our diversity in background, experience and spiritual interests. To some, the Bible is valued as a touchstone and integral to how to navigate our daily lives. Others

have a contrary relationship to the Bible with regards to ultimate authority.

One Friend expressed sadness at how schools in Iowa are not in line with the Advice offered in our Faith and Practice. The idea that children should be exposed to many points of view has been terminated by legislation that refuses to accept “divisive concepts” like our country’s history of structural racism and white supremacy. This Friend is grateful for Scattergood Friends School that still cleaves to the Quaker education ideal.

Another Friend struggles with the questions asked in this query today. The word “life” is challenging to talk about: as a person of childbearing age, many people in our country believe that my life is not worth as much as the life of a fetus. How are children of the future going to have “freedom of thought” and a “spirit of inquiry” when they may be forced to become parents sooner than they should be? How are we being nurturing and caring to the people living and breathing if we do not allow them to make decisions about childbearing? There will be people whose lives will be irrevocably changed because of ideas about our “Judeo-Christian heritage.” This Friend is really struggling.

Another Friend is wondering if the queries around this topic need to be altered or expanded. Possible additions: “How do we teach our children to listen to that of God in them” and “How do we respond to powerful forces that dictate?”

Query 7 - Home and Family

How can we make our homes places of love and hospitality? What different expectations do we hold for women and men, boys and girls? How can we bring more equality into our relationships? How do we develop and maintain lines of communication? In what ways do we share our deepest experiences, struggles, concerns and beliefs with our children and others, yet encourage them to develop their potential as the Spirit leads them? What place do we make in our daily lives for meditation, spiritual renewal and reading of inspiring literature, such as the Bible? How does our meeting support families of all kinds?

Response: A Friend is sharing their writing with the University of Iowa's Women's Archives. They wondered if the material the Friend had to share would be wanted as it contained history of sexual violence, but all was readily accepted. Family stories revealing negative aspects are as important as those demonstrating positive aspects of family relationships. And it is right to include in the Queries that it is important to talk about both.

The phrase "family, whatever its composition" speaks to us. The "disintegration" of the family is talked about a lot these days but this Friend finds this untrue when looking at their children's and friends' relationships. There are blended families; families that contain gay and transgender individuals; intentional communities like Prairie Hill cohousing where a group of people practice group decision making and living in community. The definition of a family is a group of individuals who love and care for one another. Another Friend was also struck by the phrase in the Advices lifting up the importance of "respect for truth, as each person discerns it." This phrase could have easily been left out but it has been included, and it has been so since the beginning of Quakerism.

One person spoke of having moved from a rural home to town to a life-care retirement community, and how for many years the family was connected deeply to the rural nature of their place. Living in town in an apartment building with many other older people has brought a new awareness of the potential for a spiritual belonging.

Several members have shared their homes by inviting others over and holding welcoming events and gatherings. We have shared meals together in our homes, and also at local parks. Friends have opened their homes to exchange students as well as to visiting Scattergood students. Modern life has changed the old ways of hospitality, where it was not uncommon to allow even strangers passing through to sleep in an empty bed. May our homes once more become places more for people and less for things.

Query 8 - Personal Responsibility:

How do we center our lives in the awareness of God, the Spirit, so that all things may take their rightful places? How do we structure our individual lives in order to keep them uncluttered with things

and activities? How does Meeting help us examine our personal lives for simplicity? Do we choose recreational activities which foster mental, physical and spiritual health? How are our lives affected by tobacco, alcohol and drug use? What can we do to recognize and deal with unhealthy ways we treat ourselves? How do we ensure that we act with fairness and integrity? Are we sensitive to our own use of language which may be offensive or oppressive?

Response: We affirm that living lives of honesty and simplicity are an essential part of a life of peace. Seeking to lead lives that are “uncluttered” both in our thoughts and with possessions are part of the practice of living with integrity. Being care-full with our words as well as what we choose to speak about can be a part of this practice.

The simplicity of Friend’s method of worship helps us reflect on ways other aspects of our lives could be made less complicated. That hour of listening in silence helps us to hear what is important in our lives and gives us the strength to say no to additional tasks and responsibilities.

For many of us our concept of spirituality is intertwined with the beauty and wonder of the natural world.

We notice that the word *integrity* stands out noticeably in the advice. In the matter of refusing to take an oath that one is telling the truth, Quakers have found swearing that one is speaking truth implies that one does not always speak truth. Jesus said not to take oaths, that there would be divine retribution.

We note also that Friends look to whether they are speaking truth to the letter or considering the spirit of truth and integrity. We think of the Friend who was questioned about what he had in his wagon. He was carrying slaves, aiding their escape from slavery. His answer was that he was carrying “hides.” He spoke the truth and managed to defy the law with his clever use of language. His integrity was firm.

We appreciate that the Advice is not worded as a rule, but that we are encouraged to think and act with integrity of the spirit.

Query 9 - Civic Responsibility:

What conflicts do we perceive between the laws of the State and our religious convictions? How do we resolve those conflicts in our lives? In what ways do we assume responsibility for the government of our community, state, nation and world? How do we share our convictions with others? Do we express our opinions with courage, yet with love, mindful of the Divine Spirit in everyone? How do we maintain our integrity when we find ourselves in a position of power? How do we respond when we feel powerless? Do we really respect and help those we seek to serve? Are we careful to reach our decisions through prayer and strengthen our actions through worship? Are we open to Divine leadings?

Response: Friends spoke of ways they have found hope in these times and with this darkness. There are young people with energy providing structure and form and inviting us to join them. Hearts can open by the telling of real stories about real people; by putting a face on what is happening. There are everyday victories such as helping people find a little power over a bad situation.

Our political landscape has taken a darker turn with increasingly mean-spirited legislation aimed at LGBTQ+, poor, and voiceless communities. We seek to find ways to counter these areas of public discourse. Recently, a few members attended a rally at the Statehouse to voice support for the transgender among us.

Recognizing our Quaker educational history and witness gives us a hopeful balance to many of the social and political dilemmas that we encounter. If we embrace our “peculiar” testimonies, we can reveal our vision that can be a mechanism for awakening the light in others, perhaps even our elected representatives. This “audacity of hope” can truly bring about a transformation in our world. We need to share optimism both about the inherent quality of the Inner Light in humanity and about the possibilities of bringing justice to the world, but only by non-violent action.

The polarization of belief apparent in our society and our political parties continues to be a problem for all of us. This polarization increases our awareness of how members of this society have widely differing views of what constitutes civic responsibility and how they

should properly and effectively act upon it. Some groups seem to be energized and activated by the differences among us. Others may find the chaos created to be overwhelming and may back away from involvement of any kind.

While no single individual act will turn the tide on the many issues facing the human family, we do understand that engaged living, grounded in spiritual discernment, does have a corporate effect. Questions of how much meat we eat; how much gas we use; how much we consume; how much we throw away; how we express our views to legislators and neighbors; how we offer care to communities in need, all contribute to our common life.

Query 10 - Environment

What are we doing about our disproportionate use of the world's resources? Do we see unreasonable exploitation in our relationship with the rest of creation? How can we nurture reverence and respect for life? How can we become more fully aware of our interdependent relationship with the rest of creation? To what extent are we aware of all life and the role we play? What can we do in our own lives and communities to address environmental concerns?

Response: We value the perspective of those who have a sense of tenderness in their relationship with nature's creatures. Children may experience such a sense. We also appreciate those who sense the power in the natural world; we can now experience that in the storm fronts coming through — powerful, beautiful and terrifying. Some of us have hope as we sense the power of the earth. We have hope through FCNL and its work lobbying Congress for better care of the earth; for this we are grateful.

In meeting we hear our mutual sense of helplessness in slowing or turning the rapid rise in our human impact on the planet because the problems seem so overwhelming. "What are we doing about our disproportionate use of the world's resources?" The query assumes that we individually ARE disproportionately using resources. Some of us express exasperation—how is this measured? How much is our proportionate share? How many square feet, how much air and water, how many calories or meals

per week? Our wealth in possessions and means separates us from others less fortunate. Are we called upon to sacrifice and diminish our fortunes? Of 7.9 billion humans, what is an equitable share? What abundance is too much?

One Friend appreciated the tone of the Advice and that it speaks of the good basic relationship every person has with the environment. It does get sticky when addressing specific policies and practices that affect the whole of nature—politics and polarization can enter in and divide people. It would be helpful to keep in mind the tone of the Advice when enmeshed in discussions and decisions that are divisive.

Another Friend states they love this Advice and Query. The questions are challenging and beautifully stated.

A Friend talked about their moments of resonance in the natural world and sharing those moments – that joy – with others. That sharing generates joy in both the giver and receiver.

Another speaker is happy to see young people who are very active in the environmental movement. There is a synergy between militarism and environmental degradation which needs to be explored. War and environmental concerns are dots that should be connected.

The query mentions “proportionate use.” Of course, we in the U.S. take a disproportionate share, but even if resources were allocated equally across the 8 billion people on earth, should we be thinking of nature as “resources?” Do animals and plants have a claim? What is a “reasonable” exploitation of nature?

Query 11 - Social and Economic Justice

How are we beneficiaries of inequity and exploitation? How are we victims of inequity and exploitation? In what ways can we address these problems? What can we do to improve the conditions in our correctional institutions and to address the mental and social problems of those confined there? How can we improve our understanding of those who are driven to

violence by subjection to racial, economic or political injustice?

Response: We feel there is incredible loss to society as a whole and to individuals within that society when we do not value each of us equally and provide opportunities for nurture, safety, education, food security, and respect for each of us. We may need to be exposed to another culture to become aware of the limitations of our own culture's views; we need to be opened up to wider perspectives to begin to grasp the potential of all.

We live in a culture that seems to lean more toward punishment than assistance and to look with disfavor on those receiving help. A change in such attitudes is needed.

There are concerns that the criminal justice system is broken, and that prison populations are disproportionately men and women of color. Sentencing guidelines need to be based on rehabilitation and recovery.

We wonder what motivates, for example, those involved in the January 6, 2021 insurrection. There seems to be a strong fear of losing status in the future if one doesn't fight now to maintain status. A fear that others will take one's place or that people not like oneself will be running things – will be in charge.

The verse from Matthew at the beginning of the advice indicates that God wants us to help one another with our own hands. The good Samaritan story teaches that we should help one another with our own hands in addition to giving money. It's odd that the query seems to be more about supporting institutions that help others. We encounter people in need on street corners as we drive around town, but don't usually stop to help them. We support them with taxes and donations, but seldom with our own hands. Even to speak up as advocates, it would be better if we were involved either as someone who has needed help or as someone who has helped.

There is a need for long-term solutions for disparities in economic and social conditions. If every individual is to be loved and cared for, opportunities must include: 1) a sound education, 2) useful

employment, 3) proper health care that is sustainable, 4) adequate housing and correction of a shortage of material and people to build, and 5) a social and economic system aimed to give people a feeling of dignity. These opportunities for social and economic justice need to be addressed nationally and locally.

12 - Peace and Non-Violence

What are we doing to educate ourselves and others about the causes of conflict in our own lives, our families and our meetings? Do we provide refuge and assistance, including advocacy, for spouses, children, or elderly persons who are victims of violence or neglect? Do we recognize that we can be perpetrators as well as victims of violence? How do we deal with this? How can we support one another so that healing may take place? What are we doing to understand the causes of war and violence and to work toward peaceful settlements of differences locally, nationally, and internationally? How do we support institutions and organizations that promote peace? Do we faithfully maintain our testimony against preparation for and participation in war?

Response: One Friend takes war to include any intent or action that causes both unintentional and intentional harm. What is hopeful is that we can be mindful of trauma informed modalities in care and healing. Assume everyone you encounter has experienced harm. If you start at that assumption, it allows that other person or group grace. Understanding is key. We all need to develop the inner power and strength to allow others to be who they are and overcome their challenges. We need to drop our own egos to work for a peaceful world.

Another Friend objects to the term “overpopulation” in this query. Overpopulation is a term left over from the 1980’s and triggers white European American concern about the birth rate among Black and brown people in the Southern Hemisphere. What should be expressed here is the problem of inequitable distribution of the resources around the world as a cause of violence and war.

We need to expand our definition of peace to include personal relationships. Being a victim and a victimizer are not two separate things. Violence perpetuates violence. This query needs to

recognize the extent to which our mass media has covered up our country's involvement in war and violence.

Being against war is not enough. The problem is to decide what it means to be peaceful and what is the difference from just being kind.

We appreciate Friends and other pacifists. Our faith encourages us to hear the voices of Friends. We are grateful for everyone in this room in our attempts to live in ways to heal wounds.

We are aware that much of our effort in seeking peace is in finding equality in a world of injustice and inequality. We see a lot of violence and feel we have little power to change it. As individuals, as Americans, we know we are also guilty of violence, and often feel dismayed at the prospect of changing ourselves.

We know that peace is more than a lack of violence. Peace comes with the power and love that we know when we are One with the Spirit. Then it is possible to find Oneness with each other through connection and understanding. We know that fear underlies the causes of war listed in the last words of the Advice. Fear can break the experience of being One with the Creator. Love builds peace one step at a time.

REPORTS RECEIVED BUT NOT READ DURING SESSIONS

EXERCISE COMMITTEE REPORT 2023

The baptism of Jesus in the Gospel of John is a bit different than the other Gospels. In John, Jesus is not baptized by a person. John is *witnessing* the baptism. He says, "Behold," as the Holy Spirit descends like a dove. John isn't left to do much with water. "Behold" has a lot going on behind it. What are we asked to behold? Here we are in waiting worship, waiting on the presence of God to descend on the gathered meeting. It is such splendor. What could you say besides, "Behold"? What could you say besides, "Come. See. Experience it"? Behold. Praise God!

As we navigate a hybrid meeting, what centers me is our purpose in seeking together what the Spirit has for us and what Spirit needs of us.

What a blessed time as we sink into the holy space, into Christ within each of us, becoming more where we join together in worship. I think of the Friends that have worshipped with us. Their spirits are with us in the room as a cloud of witnesses and now we are the older Friends. What work of the Spirit do we have? How will we mind the work of the Spirit as we take up the work of Yearly Meeting? This is a dance of the Spirit: "You're all together." "We can try again." "So, let go of things." "Center." "Let us hear each other and the Spirit within each other." "Ask what God is asking us to do."

I came among Friends 24 years ago and was amazed to find people coming together, giving themselves over to God and as a community seeking together to be faithful to leadings, paths we are being called to take as Friends. And 24 years later this still brings tears to my eyes. I wonder if sometimes we lose sight of how precious this gift really is. I ask Friends in the meetinghouse to remember those on electronic media and hold people who couldn't be with us in the Light. Our meetings for worship are a time for transformation. Some preconceived ideas melt away and we are able to move from the secular world to being part of a spiritual community. Thank you for offering this experience and making it available to people around the world through continuing to make video conferencing for IYMC Annual Sessions available.

I have heard it shared that God doesn't ask us to do anything for which we have not already been given what is needed to carry it out.

I remember from years ago when someone reported that when attending a Friends World Committee for Consultation event in Africa members of the host meeting were continually "sprinkling Friends with blessings." If I could, I would not only *sprinkle*, I would *deluge* the Virtual Access Committee with gratitude for all the work they have done and are doing to make electronic access available, and the large screen available so we can see members attending Annual Sessions from their homes!

Do I love all of creation as much as God loves me? This is the query that came to me this morning.

I think about how we ask the children to come up front so we can shower them with Love. We have many adults who didn't grow up in this meeting and did not have the opportunity to be showered with Love. Are there ways we can be more intentional to shower the adults with the same Love as we do the children? Perhaps we should invite all committees to come forward as their reports are read so we can shower each other with Love! I am just thinking outside the box.

I carry a concern about people speaking about young folks as "young people," as if they all carry the same traits, gifts, etc., the biggest being only that they are *young*. I believe that instead of focusing on how many "young people" attend or join the meetings, we should focus on the questions, "Where is the Life in the meeting?" and "Do others know we are Quakers by how we live in the world?"

All of my students know I am a Quaker and love it. It has also given me opportunity to share about Quaker practices with students who are of other faith traditions and are alive with the same Spirit. I am happy to find ways in which God, Allah, the Spirit works in all of our lives.

I find a blessed Presence in this old meetinghouse and look forward to worshipping here each year. It is similar to what I feel in my home meetinghouse and other places Friends have sought to hear God over many years.

It is impossible to be unarmed when the "weapon" you fear is the blackness of my skin.

The glory of the Lord is alive within you.
The Lord will arise among you.
Arise and shine for the Lord has come
And the glory of the Lord
Has risen within you. (Ministry given in song.)

In her presentation during Pre-Meeting this First Day our presenter asked us to stop frequently, step aside and consider what it is like to be a Black person where you are. What she didn't ask was for us to do this – to put ourselves in the place of considering White supremacy. That won't be so hard. How do our careers and accomplishments compare to helping one another or a person in need?

I've felt pain and sorrow in sitting with the trauma of past generations and I also feel the weight of my own ancestors who helped cause this harm. I feel the suffering that was inflicted on Indigenous people and People of Color and our own precious earth. The trauma has been passed generation to generation. I seek forgiveness that is not a passing off of the fact, not an absolution. I came to know I was being called to forgive my ancestors. In forgiving them, I find reconciliation. I find freedom. I can release some of the weight. I offer this query, "What burden, what trauma am I a part of and how can I step out of it to help make the space I live in not be a part of a historical trauma spoken of in the future?"

This Yearly Meeting (Annual Sessions) taught me the phrase, "Being yoked to one another." This means the yokes are fitted with Love, but also I must have a willingness to allow myself to be yoked. As we move into a future where the Earth is changing and we face new traumas, when we learn from life experiences other than our own, I want to be willing to yoke with many Friends, including those different than me. In this way I can help carry the burden of others and they mine. We are both able to open to each other and be more bonded in F/friendship than fear each other.

The Spirit of Christ around which our Society gathered three and a half centuries ago is still the Spirit around which we gather today. The Spirit is in our midst. We cannot know it when we are full of ourselves. We must empty ourselves. The emptying allows us to unite. Let us hear one another! Through humbling myself, I've been able to hear hard things this week. George Fox said, "Sink down to the Seed, by yielding and letting go." In sinking, we find the humility that allows us to experience the Ocean of Light. We find the Spirit of humbleness and willingness to yield. As I've been with F/friends this week I have not found anyone here that doesn't know how to begin

the process of yielding. This is indispensable to sanity and healing.
This is my joy this morning.

In an hour or two most of us will be going home. Wendell Berry said,
“Be joyful, though you’ve considered all the facts.” An earlier
Psalmist said,, “The trees will clap their hands and they’ll go forth in
joy.” So let us go back out into the world with joy, doing our part to
help mend the world, and to remind the world what it can be.

I have been given hope in our faith community when we have the
opportunity to worship together as a called people, to consider what
we are called to do as the Religious Society of Friends. It is clear we
are being called to act together. I feel a willingness to work together
to be a part of the re-creation, to look at the hard stuff, to forgive
ourselves, and our ancestors so that no one else has to suffer. What
does Spirit want us to do as individuals and as a faith community?
We have to take the first step and the next step will be given to us.
In learning to love ourselves, we better learn to love others. What
would love have us do? Can we, as a People, surrender more to that
Spirit that is found deep within the Seed? What fruit will grow?

The following guidelines did not arise from the Yearly Meeting sessions but are printed here for reference.

Guidelines for Request for Reimbursement from Iowa Yearly Meeting (Conservative)

The Iowa Yearly Meeting (Conservative) treasurer makes all reimbursements for budgeted funds.

Clerks of yearly meeting committees that have approved budgets should submit bills for payment and/or requests for reimbursement directly to the Yearly Meeting treasurer. Receipts should be included when requesting reimbursements. Clerks are also responsible for giving names, addresses, and clear instructions regarding to whom the check is to be written and where it is to be sent. For example, the clerk of the Publication Committee can send the bill for printing of the Yearly Meeting minutes directly to the yearly meeting treasurer.

Members of committees with expenses that are reimbursable by the Yearly Meeting are asked to submit their receipts to the clerk of their committee who will then forward them to the yearly meeting treasurer. For example, someone from the Junior Yearly Meeting Committee may purchase supplies for the Junior Yearly Meeting. They should submit the receipt for those supplies to the Junior Yearly Meeting Committee clerk who will then forward them as approved to the yearly meeting treasurer.

Members of the Yearly Meeting who are official representatives to a wider Quaker organization on behalf of the yearly meeting, such as AFSC, FWCC, or FCNL, can submit travel expenses with receipts and/or documentation directly to the yearly meeting treasurer. Funds are disbursed on a first-come basis. Representatives are asked to visit with their co-representatives to get an idea of who expects to be traveling and what kind of assistance they might need from the travel funds. Traditionally, these funds are underused, and we urge Friends to seek reimbursement if needed. Friends seeking to use unassigned budgeted funds, such as the scholarship money available for Quaker Youth Camp, are asked to submit requests to the Yearly Meeting clerk for approval before April 1, 2022. After April 1, those seeking assistance will be informed of the amount available. Those seeking assistance for the first time will be given priority so that as many young people as possible have the opportunity to attend a Quaker camp. If no requests are received by April 1, the clerk will approve requests on a first-ask basis.

Unbudgeted requests: All requests for financial assistance not in the fiscal year budget should be submitted to the yearly meeting clerk, who will consult with the Interim Committee clerk if action must be taken before the next annual sessions. If there is an urgent request, the Interim Committee, which conducts the business of the Yearly Meeting between sessions, may be called to meet.