

Piedmont Friends Fellowship

**Representative Body Meeting
November 5, 2016, 1:00**

Charlotte Friends Meeting

Present:

Jeff Brown (clerk)	Chapel Hill
Marian Beane	Charlotte
Laura Lipps Buffum	Durham
Dylan Buffum	Durham
John Hunter	Durham
Linda Hunter	Durham
Tony Lowe	Fancy Gap
Scott Taylor	Fancy Gap
Karen McKinnon	Hillsborough/Durham
Virginia Driscoll	New Garden
Robert Mers	New Garden
Joyce Mers	New Garden
John Cardarelli	Salem Creek
Gary Hornsby	Salem Creek
Melissa Myer	Wilkes County
Ted Edgerton	Wilkes County
David Montane	Davidson

The meeting began with a period of silent worship, followed by introductions.

Review of Minutes

Friends present found that no changes were necessary to the Minutes for the Representative Body meeting on August 20, 2016 as distributed.

Reports

Communications

David Montane has been ListServ Friend/coordinator for the past year, and finished updating of the listserve during that time. Names and addresses are kept in the Google groups drive and in the PFF Directory at this point. David will be traveling and seeking a new home, so PFF is searching for a new coordinator who will continue updating the databases. Laura Buffum volunteered to be our ListServ coordinator, and David will teach her how to make updates. PFF minuted its appreciation and expressed relief for David's good work. New information for the ListServ or the Directory may be emailed to Laura Buffum: Laura.lipps@gmail.com.

Nominating Committee

PFF Representatives are taking turns recording in the absence of a Recording Clerk. The Nominating Committee seeks a new Recording Clerk, typically for a three-year term.

Treasurers' Report

Laura Buffum reported that PFF has a current balance of \$19,324.76 as of 9/30/2016. A copy of the report is attached to these minutes.

Working Group for Financial Support for PFF Representatives

A draft proposal has been sent out by Dylan Buffum, with feedback expected from the working group. The group consists of Dylan Buffum, Martin King from Raleigh, and Karen McKinnon. PFF/PFYM appoints representatives to Friends General Conference (FGC), and PFYM appoints representatives to Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL), Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC) and American Friends Service Committee (AFSC). We hope to have this report before the December meeting of PFYM.

Discussion / Decision

FGC Central Committee Report

Karen McKinnon reported on the working groups of the Central Committee, focusing on who we are as an organization and a review of how the Central Committee might be reorganized. Listening to many voices was very important, and an upcoming assessment will be made around the issues of diversity, openness to Friends of color, and what else can be done to review and perhaps change FGC.

John Hunter reported that the word "General" in FGC refers to the intent of gathering and meeting Friends from many different yearly meetings, and having workshops available at The Gathering each summer. The weeklong Gathering has been a very successful enterprise, engaging many people into the workings and heart of Quaker meetings and Quakerism. Yearly meetings can have a similar impact. The Central Committee is the governing body of FGC and organizes many different programs with dedicated committees to a variety of tasks. FGC is a huge undertaking with programs managed by structured committees. Outreach, First Day School education, Spiritual Deepening, and the New Meetings project are some examples. The Central Committee meets annually to review the work of its many committees and conducts Meetings for Worship with Attention to Business for the entire FGC Central Committee. There is much appreciation for the gatheredness of these FGC business meetings. About 130 Friends gather for Central Committee. There is considerable concern stemming from the experience of Friends of color at the latest Gathering in Minnesota, and the perennial issues of racism and amount of diversity within our monthly meetings.

Experiences of discrimination at the Gathering last summer will have a ripple effect on many yearly meetings and Quaker institutions to address and work on these concerns. Monthly meetings hope to grow as more inclusive bodies and deepen spirituality using both resources and materials from FGC.

FGC's Quaker Cloud has over 150 meetings enrolled, and are hoping to enlarge this enrollment and offer modified services. FGC has let go a number of staff persons, and this presents a big struggle with current donations to FGC. The Quaker Bookstore is of particular concern, and has had staff cutbacks. Proposals to change financial decision-making are in the process of seasoning. PFF will consider how to discern these issues and seek ways to approach the concerns surrounding race stemming from Central Committee.

FGC Executive Committee meets regularly four times a year, and our representative has been John Hunter. Karen McKinnon as one of PFF/PFYM representatives to Central Committee has agreed to serve as our representative to the Executive Committee. Karen and Marian remind us of the next Gathering in Niagara Falls, NY with a theme of "Ripples start where Spirit moves."

Observations on Today's Retreat

A different weekend would have been preferable instead of the weekend before elections. Much appreciation was expressed for the work and programs of Quaker House, and especially for each of the highly skilled and personable staff members who do this work. A notable accomplishment has been increased integration with the Fayetteville community and bridges being built with members of the military serving the counseling needs of active duty service members. PFF representatives are encouraged to share this information with their monthly meetings. A thank you note was suggested and approved to be written by Laura Buffum.

Program Planning for March 10-12, 2017 Retreat

The Clerk described a proposal for the adult program centered on Quaker Earthcare Witness and environmental sustainability. A connection to additional Quaker testimonies was suggested, particularly equality. Also it was suggested that connections between environmental concerns and peace/justice concerns might be made more explicit. Sharing of leadings and activities on social justice and environmental concerns coming from individuals and/or monthly meetings might also be included.

Registration will be coordinated by Salem Creek, housing by Chapel Hill, facility by Durham, meals by Charlotte and Davidson meetings, middle school program by Chapel Hill, and high school program by Durham meeting. John Hunter and Tony Lowe agreed to help with publicity. Elementary school, preschool/infant care, and evening events Friday and Saturday still need to be filled by volunteer Meetings. Jeff Brown will contact Karin Heller at New Garden meeting to consider coordinating the elementary program,

Wilkes County Meeting and Melissa Meyer will coordinate the FGC Bookstore presence. Jeff Brown will be our liaison with the presenter, and he will contact Raleigh and Friendship meetings about the evening entertainment.

Youth Activity Opportunities

Durham Meeting would like more participation from PFF meetings to join their middle school retreats.

Clearness for Hillsborough Worship Group

PFF/PFYM needs a few more people to serve on the clearness committee to assist with Hillsborough considering joining PFF/PFYM as a Monthly Meeting. If someone feels led, they should speak with Marian Beane or Jeff Brown.

Clearness for Abingdon (VA) Friends Meeting

Karen McKinnon (Hillsborough), Marian Beane and Martin Doherty (Charlotte), and Christina Connell (Salem Creek) traveled to Abingdon for a meeting for worship and a discernment of clearness to join PFF/PFYM. Marian read a report of this clearness committee (see attached), and the committee recommends welcoming Abingdon into affiliation with PFF/PFYM. Friends accepted the report and approved the recommendation of the clearness committee, and welcomed Abingdon Monthly Meeting into PFF. Once PFYM considers the report in December, the final recommendation will be presented at the next annual meeting of PFF/PFYM in March, 2017.

Next PFF Meeting

The next Representative Body meeting will be held on January 22, 2017, at Salem Creek Friends Meeting. Friends are encouraged to attend meeting for worship preceding lunch and the meeting beginning at 1:00.

We are hoping to meet at Spring and Friendship Monthly Meetings sometime in the future.

Announcements

PFF minutes its appreciation to Charlotte Friends for a wonderful lunch and hosting of today's retreat, and to John Cardarelli for serving as recording clerk.

Closing Worship

The meeting closed with silent worship.

John Cardarelli
Temporary Recording Clerk

Attachments

Report from clearness committee on Abingdon Friends Meeting seeking affiliation with PFF/YM.

Early on First Day morning, the 23rd of tenth month, members of the clearness committee for Abingdon Friends affiliation traveled north and then west through the tree covered hills of North Carolina and farms of Virginia to the bucolic town of Abingdon. There we were warmly welcomed by clerk Kathy Walker and settled into worship in the octagonal- shaped Spirit House of Elderspirit - an intentional community designed for individuals and couples who are 55+. At the rise of meeting the clerk welcomed visitors and at her invitation several lifted up joys and health concerns for those not present. We then adjourned to the community's dining room for fellowship and conversation while partaking of homemade soups and fresh bread and returned to the Spirit House for a rich time of sharing on PFF & PFYM and Abingdon Friends.

Those present, some 12 in number, spoke about their individual journeys that led them to the meeting and how the meeting community provides spiritual grounding and support for its members and attenders. Some live in the Elder Spirit community and others nearby in the surrounding community. While they have had some rough patches around differing understandings of Friends practices they feel that they have come through these periods stronger and more well-knit as a meeting community. Abingdon Friends Meeting is currently affiliated with Baltimore Yearly Meeting (BYM) but being located in the farthest point west they find it a challenge to fully participate in Yearly Meeting activities (some 8 hours away).

Separate from their consideration of affiliation with PFF/YM they have decided for a variety of reasons to withdraw their membership in the Yearly Meeting. Closer to home Abingdon Friends have appreciated being among Friends at the Blue Ridge Friends Gathering a regional group of Quaker meetings that meet annually for worship, fellowship, and shared concerns. (We noted that Fancy Gap also participates in the Blue Ridge Gathering). They feel that the proximity of PFF/YM (2-3 hours) will allow them to participate more fully in yearly meeting activity and be in fellowship with other Friends. They are also drawn by the simplicity of the PFF/YM structure, vision, core values and expectations for financial support from monthly meetings. They understand the expectation of appointing representatives to PFF & PFYM representative bodies and are looking forward to the opportunity to join with PFF/YM at this year's spring retreat at Carolina Friends School.

The clearness committee came away from our time with Abingdon Friends feeling refreshed and enriched in spirit. We understand the Meeting to be in unity in their desire to affiliate with and actively participate in PFF/YM and we unite in our recommendation to welcome Abingdon Friends Meeting into affiliation.

Members of the clearness committee: Karen McKinnon (Hillsborough Worship Group/Durham Friends), Martin Doherty (Charlotte Friends), Christina Connell (Salem Creek Friends), Marian Beane (Charlotte Friends).

Third of November, 2016

