

**Piedmont Friends—Yearly Meeting & Fellowship
Representative Body Meeting
August 19, 2023, 10:00 am**

Note: * indicates an advance document.

Present: Ellie Beach (*Eno*), Marian Beane (*Charlotte*), Lizzie Biddle (*New Garden*), John Carderelli (*Salem Creek*), Susan Carlyle (*Friendship*), Michelle Downey (*Fayetteville*), Ted Edgerton (*Wilkes County*), Sally Freeman (*Eno*), David Haines (*Durham*), Paul Klever (*Eno*), Amy McIntosh (*Raleigh*), Karen McKinnon (*Eno*), Melissa Meyer (*Wilkes County*), Bill Moore (*Raleigh*), Leslie Rountree (*Chapel Hill*), and Deborah Warot (*Charlotte*).

Presiding Clerks: Sally Freeman and Marian Beane

Sally welcomed everyone. She asked that we introduce ourselves and share what brings us joy this morning. After introductions, Sally noted that the following Friends sent regrets because of family emergencies and scheduling conflicts: Nancy Riemer (*Raleigh*), Doris Wilson (*Upstate*) and Mary Jo Klingel (*Charlotte*). We settled into worship.

Approval of Agenda

The agenda* was approved.

Approval of Annual Sessions Minutes

The minutes* from Annual Sessions were approved. One Friend asked if we would continue the Piedmont Friends Fellowship's practice of "minuting in the face of the Meeting." After a brief discussion, this was referred to Executive Committee for further discernment.

Approval of the Annual Sessions Epistle

Leslie Rountree read the Epistle*. The Epistle was approved.

Minute of Appreciation for the Epistle Committee

The clerking committee brought forth the following proposed Minute of Appreciation for the Epistle Committee:

Piedmont Friends Yearly Meeting & Fellowship expresses deep gratitude to the Epistle Committee for lovingly crafting an epistle to convey to Friends everywhere the activities and sense of joy and fellowship of the PFYM&F 2023 Retreat and Annual Sessions. Thank you, Leslie Rountree (Chapel Hill Friends Meeting), John Shuford (Raleigh Friends Meeting), and Susan Carlyle (Friendship Friends Meeting).

The minute was approved. Marian noted that the Epistle would be distributed by the clerking committee to all of PFYM&F monthly meetings, Quaker organizations, and North American yearly meetings. Currently we receive two or three epistles from other yearly meetings. One Friend recommended a practice from Illinois Yearly Meeting: at their Annual Sessions, they appoint someone to read excerpts from other yearly meetings' epistles.

Clerking Committee/Executive Committee Report

The clerking committee brought forth the following proposed Minute of Appreciation for Paul Klever:

Piedmont Friends Representative Body expresses great appreciation to Paul Klever for his faithful service as assisting co-clerk and presiding co-clerk of Piedmont Friends Yearly Meeting 2019-2022 in partnership with his wife and partner Sally Freeman, and then as a member of the clerking committee in 2022-23. His vision and collaborative leadership were core in discerning the formation of Piedmont Friends – Yearly Meeting & Fellowship as a unified body of Piedmont Friends Fellowship and Piedmont Friends Yearly Meeting. That was accomplished at the 2022 annual meetings with a focus on collaborative efforts to carry out the work of the Spirit among Friends in the Piedmont region and beyond.

We acknowledge Paul's gifts and generosity in stepping into work where there was a need - recording minutes, creating formats for annual sessions, managing registrations, and assisting with website design and management. And in that spirit, as he concluded his service as clerk, he accepted the invitation to serve a three-year term as Piedmont Friends Treasurer with spirit and vision.

The minute was approved and will be read at Annual Sessions in June 2024.

Sam Dempsey (Salem Creek), our PFYM&F representative to Friends World Conference on Consultation, Section of the Americas, plans to attend the FWCC World Plenary Meeting in South Africa in August 2024. It will be their first hybrid meeting; one appointed representative may attend in person, and one may attend virtually. Sam has requested a minute from PFYM&F as it is required for his registration. The committee has proposed the following minute:

The representative body for Piedmont Friends- Yearly Meeting & Fellowship meeting on the 19th of August 2023 minutes its endorsement of Sam Dempsey to serve as Piedmont Friends in-person representative to the FWCC World Plenary Meeting of Friends in August of 2024 on the theme of "Living the Spirit of Ubuntu: Responding with hope to God's call to care for creation and one-another."

Sam currently serves as Piedmont Friends appointed representative to the FWCC Section of the Americas. We are grateful for his faithfulness to this service and his leading to participate in the World Plenary Gathering. We hold the Planning Body and all those who are called to participate in our hearts as preparations proceed in this next year.

The minute was approved.

Five monthly meeting clerks participated in the Member Meeting Clerks call on July 29. It was a productive call that lifted up among other things a concern for the yearly meeting to engage young families. Other concerns included grappling with in-person and/or virtual gatherings, crafting a minute on women's reproductive rights, and sharing ideas and invitations to virtual activities. Marian noted that the monthly meeting clerks continue to find the calls to be a valuable source of support.

Nancy Riemer will be leading the effort to update the Leadership Directory in September. Friends are encouraged meetings to use the Directory as a resource for collaboration.

The Executive Committee recommends a donation of \$500 to be made to Josh LeRoy, the Orange County Correctional Center Chaplain who was our keynote speaker at the Piedmont Friends Retreat and Annual Sessions in June. It has been our custom to provide such an honorarium in recent years. Treasurer Paul Klever, reported that the retreat took in about \$2,000, and had incurred about \$1500 in expenses. The \$500 honorarium was approved.

Nominating Committee Report

Karen McKinnon presented the report for the nominating committee. Vernie Davis (Raleigh) was recommended to serve as Piedmont Friends representative to Friends Committee on North Carolina Legislation. Nominating Committee is also seeking Friends who may be led to serve on the yearly meeting's clerking committee, and the newly formed State of the Meeting committee. The nomination of Vernie Davis was approved.

[FIVE MINUTE BREAK]

Friends resettled into silent worship.

Treasurer's Report

Paul Klever spoke to the mid-year finance report* that had been sent an advance document. There were no questions or feedback at this time.

Paul had invited all of the monthly meeting treasurers to an initial conversation as the Interim Finance Working Group began its work. Paul noted that meeting treasurers tend to serve in their role for a long time, which reflects the commitment to their meeting community. Some of the issues identified for the work ahead includes – PF reports to member meetings, gathering support from wider Friends communities, and discerning a budget for 2024. The timing of the various Meetings' contributions varies. Some monthly meetings have a July-June fiscal year; others – including the yearly meeting – use the calendar year as their budget year. Paul suggested if a monthly meeting has a finance committee its clerk should be added to the Interim Finance Working Google Group.

Currently we have \$1600 - \$1700 in reserve, but with an ongoing shortfall, are there monthly meetings capable of increasing their contribution? Thus far we have not solicited increased conditions or donations. These issues will be taken up by the Interim Finance Working Group.

Priorities for the Coming Year

For reference, last year's priorities are listed below:

- *Opportunities for Friends to gather—both virtually and in-person, i.e., ice breaker queries, worship sharing, sharing individual meeting opportunities, workshops (Fall/Spring Retreat - Apr. 1, meetings' events)*
- *Supporting Adult Young Friends group*
- *Facilitating the continuing unification of Piedmont Friends*
- *Creating opportunities for Friends to share common concerns and work together toward response and action*

Marian on behalf of the Executive Committee presented the proposed new priorities for discernment:

- *Creating opportunities for Friends to gather across Piedmont Friends—both virtually and in-person.*
- *Supporting Adult Young Friends group.*
- *Encouraging opportunities for young adult Friends, young families and youth to connect across PF meetings.*
- *Strengthening the unification of Piedmont Friends.*

- *Sharing opportunities for Friends to join in common concerns and work toward response and action (encourage meetings to extend opportunities to other PF meetings—workshops, forums, Peace & Social Concerns, Minutes of concern, etc.).*

In response to the last priority, Sally spoke about her leading to compile and catalog member meeting events that are open to the others (i.e., forums) into a monthly email bulletin. She hopes to work with clerks and/or Publications and Records committees to foster broader communication among Piedmont Friends.. In considering the full set of priorities we were reminded that Piedmont Friends as an organizational body provides the *infrastructure* for the member meetings to execute the listed priorities. The proposed priorities were approved.

Bill Moore for the Website working group gave an update on the status of our new website. He and Paul Klever have contracted with Green Geeks to secure the site's platform, and in the next few months they will begin layout and content development. Bill noted the website would not be used for archiving. One Friend suggested that a directory of member meetings, their addresses and worship times would be very helpful. A brainstorming session for such ideas was suggested for our next representative body meeting.

Piedmont Friends Fall Gathering

The Clerking Committee is looking to plan a fall gathering on Saturday, October 28. At Annual Sessions, there was some discussion of perhaps holding it at Quaker Lake camp, but further investigation has proven it to be cost prohibitive (\$2,000 for the day). The committee suggests instead we book a group tour at the International Civil Rights Museum in Greensboro. We would gather for fellowship at 11 am (location, TBD), followed by a bring-your-own picnic at noon. At 1 pm, we would begin our tour, which lasts 95 minutes. Lastly, from 3 to 4 pm we would gather in a museum classroom for worship sharing and reflections. The museum admission fees are \$20 per adult, and \$15 per student. To encourage families to attend, the clerking committee proposes that the yearly meeting cover the admission costs for all students and children. One Friend suggested we offer a children's activity concurrently with the worship sharing time to allow the parents to fully engage. Another Friend expressed concern that the museum tour might highlight material that would be difficult or frightening for children. The First Day School religious education coordinator at New Garden Friends might be available to preview the tour and work with the museum staff to ensure the best experience for all. Friends agreed that we need to get the word out early to encourage young families with children to attend.

2024 Retreat & Annual Sessions

Next year's Annual Sessions and Retreat has been tentatively scheduled for the weekend of May 31-June 2, with an in-person gathering at Guilford College. The Executive Committee is looking for folks to volunteer to help plan the event. Comments about last June's gathering have been positive. If you are interested in helping, please contact the Clerking Committee.

Proposed Dates for Representative Body Meetings (2023-24)

The date for the next PFRB meeting is Saturday, November 11, from 10 am to 12 pm. Generally, we meet on the third Saturday of November, February and April, but as November 18 might prove difficult for some families traveling over Thanksgiving, we will meet on the 11th.

Upcoming dates:

November 11, February 17, April 20, June 1 (Annual Sessions)

One consideration for future discussion is if we want to have an in-person gathering or continue with virtual meetings.

The meeting closed with silent worship (12:07 pm).

Leslie Rountree, Recording Clerk