

PIEDMONT FRIENDS-YEARLY MEETING & FELLOWSHIP (PFYM&F)
Third Annual Sessions, 2024
Saturday, June 1, 2024, 2:30-4:30
Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business

*Note from recording clerk: In the list of attendees, members of the clerking committee are in **bold**. An asterisk * denotes the document referenced was provided in advance.*

Present: Lyle Adley-Warrick (*Raleigh*), Jennifer Ambrose (*FGC*), **Marian Beane** (*Charlotte*), Lizzie Biddle (*New Garden*), Alice Broadhead (*Raleigh*), Deborah Bromiley (*Raleigh*), Jeff Brown (*Chapel Hill*), John Cardarelli (*Salem Creek*), Philip Carey (*Charlotte*), Ben Chambers (*Charlotte*), Carol Cothorn (*New Garden*), Cecile Crawford (*AFSC*), Susan Davis (*Raleigh*), Vernie Davis (*Raleigh*), Sam Dempsey (*Salem Creek*), Morrow Dowdle (*Eno*), Michelle Downey (*Fayetteville*), Chuck Fager (*Spring*), **Sally Freeman** (*Eno*), Peter Furst (*Eno*), Jane Goldthwait (*Swannanoa Valley*), David Haines (*Durham*), Nancy Haines (*Eno*), Dottie Heninger (*Chapel Hill*), Robyn Josephs (*Swannanoa Valley*), Amelia Kegan (*FCNL*), Jennifer Killen (*Durham*), Paul Klever (*Eno*), Mary Jo Klingel (*Charlotte*), Tim Lindeman (*New Garden*), Amy MacKintosh (*Raleigh*), Dorothy Mason (*New Garden*), Laura Manigrasso (*Eno*), Mary Linda McKinney (*Friendship*), Wendy Michener (*Chapel Hill*), Ann Miller (*Chapel Hill*), Richard Miller (*Chapel Hill*), Bill Moore (*Raleigh*), Liz Nicholson (*Friendship*), Lee Pickett (*Eno*), Stephen Pottoff (*New Garden*), **Nancy Riemer** (*Raleigh*), Laurie Rippe (*Durham*), Will Rogers (*Palo Alto, Pacific YM; sojourning at Friendship*), Faith Josephs Rosales (*Charlotte*) Leslie Rountree (*Chapel Hill*), John Shuford (*Raleigh*), Carolyn Stuart (*Chapel Hill*), Nancy Walker (*New Garden*), Deborah Warot (*Charlotte*), Pat Williams (*Swannanoa Valley*), Mark Wutka (*Friendship*), Skip Yeakel (*New Garden*).

At 2:38 pm, we settled into worship.

Marian Beane welcomed Friends to the 2024 Annual Sessions, and recognized first time attenders. Sally Freeman conducted a roll call of the monthly meetings, naming the ancestral lands on which they meet.

Annual Sessions Agenda*

Sally presented the agenda, which was approved.

Clerking Committee Report*

Nancy Riemer presented the Clerking Committee report, highlighting the Yearly Meeting's ministries in support of our priorities in the past year:

1. Creating opportunities for Friends to gather across Piedmont Friends—both virtually and in-person.
2. Supporting Adult Young Friends group.
3. Encouraging opportunities for young adult Friends, young families, and youth to connect across Piedmont Friends meetings.
4. Strengthening the unification of Piedmont Friends.
5. Sharing opportunities for Friends to join in common concerns and work toward response and action (encourage meetings to

extend opportunities to other Piedmont Friends meetings—workshops, forums, Peace & Social Concerns, Minutes of concern, etc.)

Plans are underway for the 2024 Fall Gathering, to be held Saturday, September 21 at Historic Bethabara Park. The birthplace of Winston-Salem, Bethabara was founded by the Moravians in 1753. More information can be found at <https://www.cityofws.org/1893/Historic-Bethabara-Park>

The Piedmont Friends new Website is up and running and is a repository for information about member meetings including minutes of concern, Piedmont Friends events and concerns, Annual Sessions documents and proceedings including the Spiritual Condition reports. One may find all this information at <https://www.piedmontfriends.org>.

The Clerking Committee is grateful for the opportunity to be of service and is grateful to all Friends who give of their time and Spirit to deepen the life of Piedmont Friends.

The report was accepted with gratitude.

Naming Committee

The clerking committee serving as the Naming Committee for Nominating Committee service recommended John Cardarelli (*Salem Creek*) for a three-year term (2027) and a one-year extension of service for Karen McKinnon (Eno) (2025). These Friends were approved, with gratitude for their service.

Epistle Committee

Marian recognized this year's Epistle Committee: Will Rogers (*Friendship*), Leslie Rountree (*Chapel Hill*), and Carolyn Stuart (*Chapel Hill*) and invited Friends to offer insights or suggestions for the Epistle to these Friends throughout our time together or shortly after. . The draft Epistle will be brought to the Representative Body meeting in August for consideration and approval and then be distributed to 'Friends Everywhere'.

Proposed Minutes from Piedmont Friends Representative Body*

There were two items for consideration from the Piedmont Friends Representative Body (PFRB). The first was a Minute on Establishing A Piedmont Friends representative to Quaker House Board of Directors. The Quaker House Board of Directors is in unity to support adding Piedmont Friends representative to its Board membership. e. It was noted that a Friend who has been appointed to the Quaker House Board by their Friends monthly meeting might also serve as a Piedmont Friends representative. The recommendation was approved.

The second item was a Minute of Appreciation for Paul Klever's years of service as co-clerk 2019-22 and as a member of the clerking committee 2022-23. Friends united with this minute and for Paul's continued service as Piedmont Friends treasurer.

Nominating Committee Report*

Deborah Bromiley presented the roster of nominees on behalf of the Nominating Committee: John Shuford (*Raleigh*) to join the clerking committee (2027), Lizzie Biddle (*New Garden*)

continuing as FCNL (Friends Committee on National Legislation) representative (2025), and Bill Moore (*Raleigh*) continuing as AFSC (American Friends Service Committee) representative. These nominations were approved.

The Nominating Committee is seeking Friends to serve as Piedmont Friends representatives to Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL), the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), Quaker House and an additional member of the clerking committee. We joined with Nominating in expressing appreciation to Jeff Brown for his years (2022-24) of service on the Committee.

The report was accepted with gratitude.

Treasurer's Report*

Treasurer Paul Klever highlighted a few items from the report.

Piedmont Friends operates on a calendar fiscal year, and currently we have about \$17,000 available. PFYM&F has two sources of income – donations from monthly meetings and individuals. We also have four categories of expense: 1) financial support for Friends organizations to which we have representation and for Quaker House, 2) travel assistance for our representatives to attend organizational meetings and/or Friends General Conference, 3) support for the growth and work of Adult Young Friends and 4) support for the Quaker archives at Guilford College. Details are available in the posted report.

Paul expressed his appreciation for the support and work of the Interim Finance Working Group in drafting fiscal guidelines and developing the 2024 budget, which was approved by Representative Body in February. In addition to Paul, the members of the working group are Melissa Meyer (*Wilkes County*), Martin Hubbe (*Raleigh*), Amy Mackintosh (*Raleigh*), and Sam Dempsey (*Salem Creek*).

The report was accepted with gratitude.

Spiritual State of the Meeting Report*

Sally Freeman shared highlights from this year's Spiritual State of the Meeting report on behalf of the Spiritual State of the Meeting Committee (SSOMC): Deborah Warot (*Charlotte*), Mark Davidson (*Raleigh*), and Sally Freeman (*Eno*). Nine monthly meetings in Piedmont Friends submitted spiritual condition reports including Wilkes County, Chapel Hill, New Garden, Durham, Raleigh, Eno River, Salem Creek, Fayetteville, and Charlotte. The committee synthesized these reports into one summary, where they discerned several common themes and distinctive threads.

Many meetings mentioned the continued joy in returning to in-person worship and the challenges and benefits of conducting hybrid meetings. Also mentioned were a renewed appreciation for the unifying power of worship, the joy in expanding youth and children's programs, a desire to follow leadings of service, and the challenges of addressing racism in our communities.

Sally reminded everyone that the full report, as well as the individual monthly meeting reports, is available on the PFYM&F website.

The report was accepted with gratitude.

• BREAK •

Upon returning from a short break, we settled and out of the silence Sally Freeman read the names of member meetings Friends who had passed away this year.

Organizational Reports*

Marian Beane introduced the representatives to Quaker organizations. Each in turn spoke briefly to work and areas of concern in this past year. **Adult Young Friends (AYF)** Will Rogers, AYF convener, gave a summary of the Adult Young Friends' activities. Currently there are about 35 young Friends on the group's listserv. Over the past year, the group has gotten together in-person twice: once for an improvisational singing workshop and a second time to tour an eco-friendly community for intentional living. The AYF group continues to meet occasionally via Zoom and members are participating in a meeting for worship with attention to the Gaza Crisis.

American Friends Service Committee (AFSC)

CC (Cecile) Crawford, program director for AFSC North Carolina, brought us up to date on recent efforts they have undertaken. The Greensboro office has been working to alleviate disparities in housing, education, and economic justice. After conducting a listening project, AFSC staff responded to the need for housing for everyone at every life stage. Their research revealed that 16,000 households in Guilford County are at risk for eviction. AFSC began organizing and advocating for eviction prevention and safe and stable fair housing. They have worked with elected officials and via community organizing to have the city match the county's budget on eviction prevention efforts. There is now \$440,000 allotted for these efforts in the proposed city budget that they hope to get passed. CC also noted AFSC needs Friends to volunteer for eviction court watch. Please contact her office if interested.

Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) *

FCNL representative Lizzie Biddle presented highlights from their annual report. She emphasized that FCNL advocacy teams work to build relationships with congressional staffers, even as the targeted policy changes from year to year. This year, the focus has been Pentagon spending. She spoke of how Quakers are able to make inroads by building trust, appreciating nuances, and zeroing in on specific opportunities for collaboration. FCNL is launching a new capital campaign this year. Lizzie encouraged Friends to consider attending the FCNL annual meeting in late fall. (November)

Friends Committee on North Carolina Legislation (FCNCL)*

Vernie Davis (*Raleigh*), past clerk of FCNCL, recognized those in attendance who were FCNCL volunteers and/or representatives to its General Committee. At their annual meeting last October, FCNCL had about 40 people in attendance. He reminded us that FCNCL was formed under the care of PFYM, and that its success proves there is a place for a Quaker voice that

speaks truth with tenderness in contentious NC politics. They continue to actively promote antiracism through connections with key BIPOC members of the General Assembly and other advocacy groups, support for legislation that supports BIPOC communities, and supporting BIPOC owned vendors for catering and printing needs.

In April, FCNCL sponsored two movie screenings and panels on *The Smell of Money* at the Chelsea Theater in Chapel Hill. This new model for expanding educational outreach is more expensive than some other activities, but FCNCL is encouraged by the number of attendees and hopes to build on the results.

FCNCL's Advocacy Day in 2023 for Medicaid Expansion was a huge success in building relationships with our legislators and helping participants learn how to have an effective lobby visit with legislators. This year's Advocacy Day in Raleigh will be Wednesday, June 12, 2024, with a focus on funding for Public School Education rather than diverting tax dollars to pay for the wealthy to attend private schools.

FCNCL is currently discerning policy priorities for 2025-2026 legislative session to guide their work. He spoke with appreciation of meetings, thus far 10, who have offered recommendations for the priorities.

Friends General Conference (FGC)*

David Haines (*Durham*), representative to FGC, spoke about this year's annual Gathering that will take place at Haverford College in Pennsylvania from June 30 to July 6. The theme is "Rooted in Story." David reported that there are 1100 registrants to date, the most they've had in a long time. The next in-person gathering will be in New Hampshire in 2026.

FGC completed a successful capital campaign in 2024, raising 2.4 million dollars to support an endowment for the Gathering and programs such as its Ministry on Racism and Youth Ministries.

Friends World Committee on Consultation, Section of the Americas (FWCC-SOA)*

FWCC representative Sam Dempsey (*Salem Creek*) gave an overview of FWCC activities outlined in the report. FWCC holds NGO status at the United Nations, and is the only faith-affiliated group to function as an integral part of the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. A private garden adjacent to their UN offices has allowed FWCC to host confidential talks between countries or groups in conflict (North and South Korea, Hamas and Israel, are examples) in its efforts to promote peace and collaboration.

Sam will attend the World Plenary meeting in Pretoria, South Africa in August, a gathering inclusive of all branches of the Religious Society of Friends. Sam pointed out that one does not need to look widely to find diverse branches of Friends. For example, he said that in Forsyth County alone there are five monthly meetings with different yearly meeting affiliations. He suggested that we reach out in our counties and communities to find other Quaker meetings and our common ground.

Quaker House*

Chuck Fager, a past director of Quaker House gave a recount of Quaker House's early history. He noted that Quaker House is in need of financial support, especially as it is competing with

election year fund-raising. While Quaker House Director Wayne Finegar was unable to attend we are grateful for his full report that is posted on the PF website and for his faithful service.

All the reports were accepted with gratitude. Links to additional organizational reports are available at www.piedmontfriends.org.

Invitation to be a signatory on the Vision Statement for Peace in Palestine & Israel*

Executive Committee recommends that Piedmont Friends accept the invitation to be a co-signatory along with other representative bodies of Friends.

“A different future is possible: Quaker organizations share a vision for peace in Palestine and Israel” is a vision statement for peace jointly drafted by these organizations: American Friends Service Committee, Canadian Friends Service Committee, Friends World Committee for Consultation, Friends Committee on National Legislation, Quakers in Britain, Quaker Council on European Affairs, Quaker Peace and Social Witness, and the Quaker United Nations Office.

After a period of worship Sally Freeman introduced the recommendation by reading the full statement. She noted the actions the signatories are requesting and invited Friends to speak their hearts from a worshipful place.

Friends offered messages of support, of concern and with questions. Of concern about ‘rubber stamping’ a prepared statement; that the yearly meeting had not fully seasoned the request, discomfort with the statement supporting an arms embargo against Israel. Recognition that a statement would never be perfect. A voice of strong support from the peace and social concerns of one meeting; the time to act is now given the long-standing suffering of Palestinians; putting our trust in the Quaker brothers and sisters who discerned in preparing this statement; in signing the statement we must not lose sight of our obligation to engage in the work; recognizing that this is a VISION statement for peace, not peace itself.

After further discernment and worship, Friends approved the recommendation for Piedmont Friends to be a signatory to the vision statement. Wendy Michener (*Chapel Hill*), Mary Jo Klingel (*Charlotte*) and Nancy Haines (*Eno*) requested to be recorded as standing aside.

We resettled into worship with the recognition that we are called to live more deeply into this concern.

Remembering George Fox on his 400th (quadrennial) birthday

We are grateful to Mark Wutka (*Friendship*) for sharing out of the silence some of George Fox’s words and ministry to early Friends and their power and witness with us as our annual sessions came to a close.

“When all my hopes in them and in all men were gone, so that I had nothing outwardly to help me, nor could tell what to do, then, oh, then, I heard a voice which said, “There is one, even Christ Jesus, that can speak to thy condition”; and when I heard it my heart did leap for joy. “

“I told them I knew from whence all wars arose, even from the lust, according to James’s doctrine [James 4:1]; and that I lived in the virtue of that life and power that took away the

occasion of all wars; and that I was come into the covenant of peace which was before all wars and strife.”

“Be patterns, be examples in all countries, places, islands, nations, wherever you come.”

Thoughts for the Epistle

The clerks invited Friends to share thoughts for this year’s Epistle. Among those offered: appreciation for the opportunities for fellowship, both on and off the agenda; inspiration in Amelia Kegan’s morning talk; after lunch walk in the Guilford woods; singing the freedom songs; evidence for the yearly meeting’s maturation and vibrancy including a commitment to faithfully “walk the walk” in many capacities; gratitude for the wisdom and discerning guidance of the clerking team; and appreciation to all those who helped to make today possible.

We settled out with worship at 5:32 pm to meet again at the appointed time in 2025.

*Respectfully submitted by
Leslie Rountree, recording clerk.*