

Piedmont Friends-Yearly Meeting & Fellowship

Peace & Social Concerns Conversation
January 31, 2026; 3pm (via Zoom)

Attending:

Anne VanNewkirk	CFM
Marian Beane	CFM/PF Clerking
Astra Titus	CHFM
Tom Ludlow	CHFM
Mary Ross	DFM
Deborah Bromiley	RFM
Beth Keiser	SVFM
Sally Freeman	EFM/ PF Exec. Comm.
Paul Klever	EFM/PF Exec. Comm.

Agenda

- Welcome, Introductions and Check-in
- Settling Worship
- Overview of each meeting's PSC priority concerns
- Screen-share Peace & Social Justice webpage
- Q&A
- Next meeting
- Closing Worship

Charlotte:

Trying to be proactive, rather than reactive, to act locally and to build community, including sharing concerns with other PF meetings.

Series for newcomers; Margaret Rowland and Eileen Flanagan forums; Time-Out Youth and working on a transgender affirming minute.

Chapel Hill:

Peace & Justice Committee is reshaping, revitalizing, collaborating with other committees. Major areas of focus including Gaza and discerning signing onto the genocide statement, immigration, native American communities, racial equity and unconscious bias. Durham and Raleigh meetings participating.

Swannanoa Valley:

RFM Seeds of War/Seeds of Peace event in Nov. with Asheville Friends, Cherokee concerns last summer with broader community involvement. Supporting Palestinian olive oil, supporting Palestinian farmers and Gaza soup kitchen.

February 15, Alternatives to the Death Penalty and Racist Roots: Origins of North Carolina's Death Penalty, with panel discussion. Signed onto the AFSC Gaza Genocide statement.

Raleigh:

RFM Seeds of War/Seeds of Peace group is held by the meeting, not Peace & Social Concerns. Committee working on immigration and ICE interruption policy, including

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role play training; Siembra training for ICE Watchers; Northstar Network; AVP-NC at Butner; LGBTQ working group; anti-racism working group; food pantry support; Raleigh Reparative Justice Resolution; Moral March- February 14th.

Durham :

Immigration action, proclaiming a 4th Amendment Workplace, with protocol for an ICE appearance and “No Weapons Allowed” posting. Repairers of the Beach Moral Monday vigil on Tuesday, Feb. 3. Working on discerning AFSC Gaza Genocide statement. Seeds of War/Seeds of Peace forum. New subcommittee on LGBTQ and a racial equity committee. Joined the NC Faith Table, new coalition of progressive faith organizations.

Eno :

Friends y Amigos Support Teams, looking at forming new Teams with lower-risk partners from other faith communities and new at-risk families.

Sharing Minutes of Concern with other PF Meetings and for posting on the PF website.

Several Friends shared the discernment processes their meetings have/are undergoing toward minutes of concern, including Charlotte’s Transgender Affirming Minute, Raleigh and Durham’s ICE policies, Anti-Racists Minutes, discernment about signing the AFSC Gaza Genocide Statement, etc.

Friends entered a spirited consideration of “nimble decision making and responding to advocacy requests within Quaker process.”

The group explored the PF Website and P&SJ webpage. <piedmontfriends.org> including P&SJ recourses, the Monthly Events Listing, News and Posts, the meetings’ Minutes of Concern, etc.

Sally will share the monthly Events Listing with the Peace-Justice-Group.

2026 PF Retreat & Annual Sessions

Nimble decision making within Quaker Process?

Next Meeting: Saturday, April 25

Peace & Social Concerns Conversation
Sept. 6, 2025; 10am (via Zoom)

Attending:

Anne VanNewkirk	CFM
Marian Beane	CFM/PF Clerking
Mary Jo Klingl	CFM
Vernie Davis	RFM

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Betsy Jenson	NGFM
Tina Fisher	NGFM
Mary Ross	DFM
Nate Crew	Fayetteville
John Cardarelli	Salem Creek
Beth Keiser	SVFM
Anne Cassebam	Friendship
Sally Freeman	EFM/ PF Exec. Comm.
Paul Klever	EFM/PF Exec. Comm.

Agenda

- Welcome, Introductions and Check-in
- Settling Worship
- Overview of each meeting's PSC topics
- Q&A
- Summation and Way Forward
- Announcement- PF Fall Gathering, Oct. 11
- Closing Worship

Origin and Purpose

One of the 2025-26 priorities for Piedmont Friends is *sharing opportunities for Friends and member meetings to join in common concerns and work toward response and action.*

The PF Executive Committee initiated the outreach to meetings and clerks of Peace & Social Concerns committees to test the willingness and desire to come together to share meetings' engagement in peace, social and justice concerns.

Notes:

- In this initial gathering, those present shared priority concerns and activities each of their meetings is carrying.
- Meetings are engaged:
 - Through collaborations with local organizations, advocacy
 - Through connections with state and national Friends orgs (FCNCL, FCNL, AFSC, etc.)
 - Through sharing financial resources, grants and charitable allocations
 - Through direct action in MANY areas.
- Common Threads/Topics: (Primary)
 - Concern for Immigrant Neighbors
 - In-meeting trainings
 - With Siembra NC—4th Amendment Protection, Ice Verifiers
 - Roleplay “if ICE comes to the meeting house”
 - Considering the Fayetteville Minute of Intent to Protect
 - Joining local immigrant advocacy coalitions
 - Distribution of “Red Cards”— know-your-rights cards
 - Give to food pantries; leave with tips for restaurant workers
 - Friends y Amigos Support Teams (directly engaging immigrant families)

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- Palestine, Gaza Genocide, Israel Occupation of West Bank
 - Encouraging BDS—Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions
 - Signing onto the AFSC Statement re: genocide
 - Supporting Ramallah Friends School
- Nonviolent Resistance-Noncooperation against authoritarianism
 - Local, state and national advocacy
 - Participation in rallies & protests
- Additional Common Threads/Topics:
 - Climate Change, QEW, Zero Waste
 - Food security
 - Homelessness, housing
 - Women's healthcare and rights
 - Healthcare, Medicaid vulnerability
 - Prison ministry, re-entry support, death penalty abolition
 - Racial Justice, Community Remembrance Coalitions
 - Education
 - ICAN Nuclear Weapons Ban
 - Beyond Land Acknowledgement—indigenous community engagement
 - Trans-Youth
- Follow-up, Way Forward:
 - Periodic virtual meetings—3-4 times per year.
 - Creation of a Peace&Justice@piedmontfriends.org Google Group
 - Posting of meetings' PSC activities on the PF website

RESOURCES:

- PF MONTHLY EVENTS LISTING:
<https://www.piedmontfriends.org/piedmont-friends-monthly-events/>
- Siembra NC siembranc.org
- Red Cards-Know Your Rights—to order:
 - Nonprofit orders: https://ilrc.my.salesforce-sites.com/formrc/apex/b3f_Form?key=brqgibG4GFttUCj%2BJQc4M7BTg3NCx3T3O7J%2FynEYk52kotPty0J2oasSJsNCZulrHkSMlpooDA%2FbdkFc6D2460i0GnLPsEQsoZoobR7e11JcmpK30srLi3X5SDRxL6vh
 - <https://www.redcardorders.com/product-page>
- Eno Friends y Amigos Support Teams and Immigrant Emergency Planning Guide: contact Paul Klever, pklever@earthlink.net.
- AFSC Statement on Genocide in Gaza:
<https://afsc.org/newsroom/quakers-discern-genocide-occurring-gaza-and-urge-courageous-action>
- AFSC BDS-Boycott, Divest, Sanctions for Palestine:
<https://afsc.org/programs/action-center-corporate-accountability>
- Breaking the Bonds (NC BDS coalition): <https://breakthebondsncc.org/>
- Voices for Justice in Palestine: <https://voicesforjusticeinpalestine.org/>
- Beyond Land Acknowledgement <https://nativegov.org/news/beyond-land-acknowledgment-guide/>

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- ICAN-International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons:
https://www.icanw.org/the_campaign
 - First Nations Version New Testament:
<https://firstnationsversion.com/book/first-nations-version/>
 - We The People Have No King; 5 Ways Friends Can Preserve Democracy (Friends Journal, Sept. 2025) <https://www.friendsjournal.org/we-the-people-have-no-king/>
 - National Tax Strike: <https://actionnetwork.org/forms/we-will-not-give-money-to-a-king/>
- Raleigh Friends Seeds of War/Seeds of Peace
An offer to lead programs at interested Piedmont Friends Monthly Meetings from the Raleigh Friends Meeting Working Group on Seeds of War/Peace:

Inspired in part by John Woolman's example, The Seeds of War/Seeds of Peace Working Group at Raleigh Friends Meeting has been meeting for over a year to explore how we are called to examine how our lives are connected to all the forms of violence in Palestine/Israel and how we might respond as Quakers, both collectively and individually.

Our group of 10-12 regular attenders offers to share what we have learned with others by leading programs at other Monthly Meetings in hopes of supporting and inspiring others.

Topics we have explored and would be glad to address include:

1. What is the full meaning of peace and its relationship to forms of indirect violence (structural and systemic violence) as well as direct violence?
2. Why is nonviolent civil resistance an effective force for social change?
3. How do we recognize our love and concern for Jews as well as Palestinians as we call out the glaring reality of genocide and ethnic cleansing that Israel is carrying out in Gaza and the West Bank?
4. Following Woolman's call, how do we examine our own lives in ways we support this violence through our government and our personal financial decisions?
5. What Quaker resources are available through FCNL (Friends Committee on National Legislation) to help guide our understanding and ways we can most effectively communicate with our legislators?
6. What Quaker resources such as AFSC (American Friends Service Committee) can we draw on to help guide us in our understanding and action through the BDS (Boycott, Divest, Sanction) movement?
7. How does this apply to other Quaker concerns such as the work of EQAT (Earth Quaker Action Team) to boycott Vanguard?

Interested Meetings could contact Vernie Davis (verniedavis@gmail.com) or Alice Broadhead (broadheada@gmail.com) if interested.

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Peace & Social Concerns Recent Activities

CFM has tried to connect educational sessions with outreach and service efforts. Recently these have included:

- Training on strategies for connecting with state reps prior to an FCNCL day in Raleigh
- Forum on Identity and Orientation – related to our work with LGBTQ+ youth and participation in
 - Charlotte PRIDE. Much of the materials for the forum were based on an open source:
 - Queer: A Graphic History transreads.org
- We are planning a forum on Reproductive Rights, connecting with our minute on **Women's Reproductive Health**
- A number of us have attended a local training on **immigration rights** and we are looking for effective ways to be supportive.
- We combined a **prison** book collection drive with a fellowship opportunity at a local used bookstore
- In our concern **trans youth** we have supported the local Time Out Youth Center by providing supper on a periodic basis. We are scheduling a Forum on trans concerns for education awareness and how we might be a more welcoming meeting.
- Our concern for **homeless** has most recently led to us collect toiletries and water in these hot months for the Roof Above program and we plan to hold an intergenerational sandwich making project with our youth.

Contacts for Charlotte Friends Peace and Social Concerns are Anne Van Newkirk annevan1@bellsouth.net and Kerry Traynum klinktraynum@gmail.com

Peace and Social Concerns Committee – Durham Friends Meeting

Updates:

Action for Palestine

On September 21, a listening session is being organized by the Action for Palestine ad hoc subcommittee. One topic of the listening session is the Break the Bonds campaign (<https://breakthebondsn.org/>) and the potential for DFM to sign on. This campaign is demanding that North Carolina State Treasurer, Brad Briner, divest from poor returning Israeli Government Bond investments and invest in our communities. The subcommittee shared information about this campaign with DFM recently including information on how individuals can sign onto the campaign.

Afghan Refugee support

Contacts: Denny Hood/Barney Dale and Françoise Heyden

Back-to-school is always a busy time for us to assist our four refugee families with procuring school supplies and clothing; filling out paperwork for new schools; meeting the new teachers to let them know we are the backups for our often illiterate parents; attending open houses with our families to help with bus routes and figuring out new

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policies (for ex parents should now use an app to report absences); navigating last minute surprises like when our sixteen year old at Jordan who thought he was going in for his senior year was told he had already graduated! Having attended public schools here for a couple of years now, the refugee children are excited to return to school and know the drill so are often able to translate for their parents. The youngest children have mostly mastered English and are able to read/write on grade level, but our oldest students often still struggle with the basics, esp once they've aged out of ESL classes. Parents will need ongoing financial support if/when SNAP and Medicaid programs are defunded and are most appreciative of all our assistance.

Immigration

A training and discussion session on 4th Amendment Workplace (<https://4thworkplace.org/>) for DFM was held on August 17. It was well-attended with lots of engagement and discussion. A second discussion session was held on August 29. The immigration working group will bring a draft plan or concept document for consideration at October business meeting.

Religious Coalition for a Nonviolent Durham

DFM has initiated a re-entry team! What is a reentry team? It is a group that meets with the partner; the main requirement is to just be together. Some teams cook a meal together, some play board games, etc. During the first couple of months they figure out what works. When a partner spends a year with a reentry team the likelihood of rearrest is reduced from 60% to 10% in 5 years. The time commitment for a reentry team is 3-4 hours per month. In August, Glaeshia O'Rourke convened a group of volunteers who will work with RCND to support a partner who has been released after long-term incarceration. For more information, please contact Glaeshia at glaeshia@gmail.com.

Durham CAN

DFM hosted Durham CAN's monthly Metro Council meeting in August, and they were very appreciative of the beautiful space. We heard updates from the four Research Action Teams that are developing actions and questions to be addressed to the Durham candidate (Mayor and 3 City Councilmembers) assembly in October. There are Research Action Teams are meeting for four focus areas: Education, Violence, Affordable Housing and Immigration. We will update DFM on actions as they are finalized this month.

One immediate action: Durham CAN worked with the City Council on a resolution to make Durham a 4th Amendment Workplace and the resolution was passed unanimously at the September 2 City Council meeting!

Shelter Dinner

We had another successful dinner at Urban Ministries on **August 30**.

Faith Table – an organization of NC progressive faith organizations

On September 4, Margie Dingman, Mary Ross and Karen Stewart participated in a quarterly meeting of the **Faith Table**. Margie and Mary participated in a kickoff meeting for this newly formed organization in May. *** more ***

From Faith Table: “At this gathering, we will celebrate those who have officially joined the table, share updates on the development of our three working groups - Advocacy, Safety & Care, and Infrastructure - and offer a presentation on how this table works to activate people of faith in service to our state-wide movement for justice.”

From Fayetteville Friends:

Thank you so much for the enriching time of sharing you hosted this morning. I found it refreshing, informative, and invigorating. As requested, here is a summary of info from Fayetteville Friends Meeting (slightly more than I shared on Zoom).

Last year, roughly around the same time as our meeting united in signing the AFSC statement for peace in Palestine and Israel, another large, more local and more practical concern arose with a focus on defending and supporting immigrants. The “Minute of Intent to Protect” was birthed through us, and, to obey and follow through on that leading, our meeting formed a committee for “peace and social action”. So far, committee members have just been my wife Amanda Crew (CC'd here) and I, but with much involvement and help from others. This work has brought our meeting in active contact with a number of aligned local faith groups and other organizations in the work.

The major practical element of this initiative has been partnering closely with SiembraNC (siembranc.org) in several ways, especially in helping to expand and activate their rapid response “ICE Watch” network in this region of the state. Other related activities have been:

- Immigrant know-your-rights information sharing and Red Cards distribution
 - Physically attending town and county board meetings to build our own awareness / involvement in local happenings including “law enforcement” status
 - Quietly preparing to provide sanctuary if and when it is sought by those in need
 - Writing a number of newspaper editorials as well as making personal appeals to lawmakers
- A continued periodic effort to reach out to area churches who have so far failed to speak up or stand up for right treatment of our neighbors

That basically sums up our approaches to addressing our current main focus. However, in addition to those immigrant-support issues, a couple of other initiatives have popped up recently.

Firstly, we have recently enlisted Quaker House to have an information table at the annual Veterans Day event in Wagram, NC (our hometown) where that wonderful organization will be able to highlight their free counseling for veterans. This is in order to help address the seeds of violence in our overly militarized society by shining a light on and offering help with issues of mental health such as PTSD and moral injury, as well as conscientious objection, etc. among military members and veterans alike. (I should note that many new ICE Agents seem to be veterans.)

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And secondly, not as a committee project but generally as a meeting, a group of us are attending the Cherokee event September 30th to learn, help memorialize and seek healing together from the damage of boarding schools to the indigenous tribes of North Carolina. In this as in other things, we are feeling for the guidance of the Spirit, our living Creator, in discerning how to move forward into more truth, reconciliation, and restoration of justice.

A personal note loosely related to that last paragraph: I want to mention that several of us at Fayetteville Friends have recently become aware of and blessed by the First Nations Version, which is "a New Testament in English by Native North Americans for Native North Americans and all English-speaking peoples". I've been moved by and highly recommend this inspired storytelling narrative for, among many other things, its deeply beautiful rendition of the Beatitudes (and much of the rest of the Sermon on the Mount, and Matthew in general). Hope you don't mind this little aside.

Raleigh Friends Meeting shares the following:

- We have an antiracism working group that is still working on the Reparative Justice Resolution for the city of Raleigh, still hopeful that a Task Force can be formed.
- AVP remains quite active at Butner Federal Prison; working to try to get into the NC State Prisons
- We have formed an LGBT reading group at RFM
- We are supporting a food/toiletry pantry at Knightdale High School in eastern Wake County
- Preparing a second hour to role play ICE coming to our Meeting; we have a written policy in place.
- We continue to be challenged by homeless individuals using our porch and grounds for sleeping and toileting. We have tried to address this by working with homeless support available in Raleigh and by sharing a list of resources. This is a continuing problem.
- We have an active working group "Seeds of War/Peace" that is focused on the Middle East. We have had some positive response from other Monthly Meetings to our offer to visit and offer programs on a variety of topics.

Swannanoa Valley Friends Meeting

Thank you for convening a rich and deep sharing of concerns as Piedmont Friends seek ways to join together in responses and actions toward a common good. Representing our Swannanoa Valley Friends Meeting's Peace & Social Concerns committee, I was grateful to begin a deeper acquaintance with similarly tasked Friends from seven of the Meetings who are part of Piedmont Friends Yearly Meeting. I look forward to communicating with our P&SC committee about the initiatives we heard about today, several of which are relevant and possibly replicable. As well, I will report to our Meeting as a whole the warm welcome we received from Piedmont Yearly Meeting to join in the

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gathering, and my sense of this fellowship as a valuable resource and right fit for SVFM.

As requested, here's the gist of my report on three key concerns of our Meeting's Peace & Social Concerns committee.

SVFM has focused recently on seeking authentic allyship with local Cherokees, understanding the experience of white supremacy and generational trauma caused by Indian Boarding Schools, some of which Quakers established and/or staffed. We are responding to an invitation to join in a Day of Remembrance September 30 at Cherokee for children and families who suffered the impact of the misguided educational mission that demeaned and erased students' cultural roots and identity.

In SVFM's post-Helene location (in Fellowship Hall of the Presbyterian Church on Warren Wilson College campus), SVFM hosted in August two educational events led by Paula Palmer (co-founder of Toward Right Relations with Native People, now part of Friends Peace Teams), On September 21 John Meyer will share research specifically on the school in Cherokee founded and for a time directed by Quakers. We are partnering with Asheville Friends Meeting and Beyond Land Acknowledgement, a coalition of local churches formed after a weekend workshop (pre-Covid) with the Navajo educator, Mark Charles, followed by an all-day workshop (during Covid) at UNC-Asheville with educational leaders from Cherokee.

Peace & Social Concerns carried a Friend's strong leading to support Women's Reproductive Freedom through a lengthy educational and discernment process with the Meeting as a whole, issuing in a Minute, articles and op-eds in local newspapers, and SVFM's public endorsement, as well as financial support, for organizations providing abortions after the repeal of Roe vs. Wade.

Peace & Social Concerns has recommended that SVFM endorse the recent statement from AFSC and other Quaker organizations naming the genocide of Palestinians and calling for courageous action to end it. This will be on the Meeting's agenda in October, and there will be support for it, but simply to sign on is not the aim. We don't need yet another SVFM Minute on peace and justice for Palestine and Israel posted on our website. We have not held a consideration of the situation since two worship-sharing sessions in November 2023. Last year a concern to explore SVFM becoming an Apartheid-Free Community did not find unity in Peace & Social Concerns. We need help understanding the roots of the current horrors and how to discern steps toward ending our recent silence on the subject. The offer from the task force at Raleigh Friends to lead a program to consider actions we can take, corporately as a Meeting and with other Friends, is most welcome.

In peace,
Beth Keiser

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Peace & Justice interests in **Chapel Hill Friends Meeting:**

We are more or fewer active in each

- Faith Connections for Reproductive Rights
- Bridging the Gap (educational gap of Black kids in Orange County public schools)
- Orange County Remembrance Coalition (EJI affiliation to commemorate lynchings in our county)
- Gaza interest group to lobby Tillis, et al. Keep up with AFSC activities in Gaza.
- FCNCL
- Prison ministry at Orange County Correctional, Yokefellows and transition and support for released men, support chaplain
- Ramallah Friends School - head of school invited to speak, fund raising, reports and updates
- Interfaith Council for Social Services - food drives, monthly cooking two meals, CROP walk
- Assist with settling Syrian refugee family
- Indigenous peoples: beyond land acknowledgements -- forum in November, retreat in February. Attending Asheville interest group.
- Lots of demonstrating/protesting! at various venues

ENO FRIENDS MEETING

- **Local Food Security & Social Safety Net**
- AVP
- OCCRC- Racial Justice
- FCNNCL
- Ramallah Friends School
- Death Penalty Abolition
- **Prison Ministry-OCC, Re-Entry Support**
- **AT-RISK NEIGHBORS WORKING GROUP**

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