

## **Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting and Association, Virtual Setting, 50th Annual Meeting, Sixth Month, 05-13, 2021**

### **Saturday, June 5 (Session I)**

#### **50-01 Opening Worship**

Friends met virtually for the 50<sup>th</sup> annual gathering of SAYMA beginning with an extended period of worship.

#### **50-02 Introductions of Visitors**

Robert McGahey, SAYMA Clerk, welcomed everyone and asked visitors to introduce themselves. Visitors present were: Liz Dykes from Gainesville Monthly Meeting, Southeast Yearly Meeting, Angela Hopkins of Friends Center on Racial Justice, Jessie Palatucci and Alicia McBride from FCNL, Alison Kirkegaard member of Claremont MM, Pacific Yearly Meeting, and Shelley Tannenbaum from Quaker Earthcare Witness.

#### **50-03 Roll Call [Attachment A: Attendance]**

Meeting attendees were asked to raise their virtual hand as their meeting was called by the clerk. Seventeen of the twenty-five meetings and worship groups were represented.

#### **50-04 Clerk's Letter to SAYMA Body, June 2021 [Attachment B: Clerk's Letter I]**

I envision SAYMA's yearly sessions as an occasion for renewal of the spirit. It is a gathering of monthly meetings of all sizes, and provides a place for isolated Friends and small worship groups to have a larger Friends community, a place to experience spirit-based hospitality. My first SAYMA yearly gathering was at Warren Wilson in 1971, the second annual sessions. We were not yet a yearly meeting, but an association for fellowship in the manner of liberal Friends. This was a group of Appalachian folk of European descent, where the greatest diversity I experienced was through a young Baptist woman in our worship group who washed our feet. What a blessing! In the years since, our diversity has increased somewhat, and four years ago we accepted the challenge to make our meetings more welcoming to Friends of Color. We need to renew the graciousness of spirit and place of deep retreat of those early years, without retreating into 1970's naivete about unraveling racism. Since last summer, my clerk's letter has emphasized our spiritual focus as a religious body. The ongoing example is the distinction between critical race theory and its powerful sociological analysis of our disordered white supremacist society, and the practice of Friends, a tradition established by a group of white lower-middle class Englishfolk, not unlike our rural Appalachian context, who set out to emulate the behavior of the early Church, based on loving one another while befriending truth. This has always included challenging one another as well, but in a spirit of patience, forbearance, and deep listening. As Friends, we do not sit in judgment of each other, but wait for the Spirit to move in each of our hearts before acting as a body. Unfortunately, as we approach SAYMA yearly sessions, there are those among us who would enforce their deeply held convictions

through pressuring, judging, and threatening behavior. One plenary speaker and two workshops have been challenged and threatened with disruption. One of those workshops has been cancelled, and the leader of the second feels genuinely threatened by escalating attacks, asking for protection. As an open religious society, our protection comes from the divine, which resides deep within each of us, acting from within the body, not from a hierarchy of leaders. But if we do not trust one another, invoking deep listening in a spirit of worship when we experience differences, then we are profoundly vulnerable. So we meet in a place of vulnerability, some in fear, others in a place of anger and judgment, sorely needing to listen to each other and build trust in our fundamental tenet as Friends, that there is that of God in each of us. Whatever transpires in our time together over the next week, let us accept that vulnerability as a place of instruction, while vowing to hold each other in loving safety as we continue to work out our differences.

I would like to add that I have noticed profound work on these issues since I wrote the above letter, it shows what we can do when we work together in community.

Robert McGahey SAYMA Presiding Clerk 50th Annual Sessions, June 2021

A Friend raised the concern that the people who are challenging and questioning are framed negatively.

**50-05 Agenda Review [Attachment C: Agenda]**

The clerk reviewed the agenda. The agenda was accepted.

**50-06 Inquiry regarding any sections of the Guide to Our Faith and Practice in need of review**

The clerk asked Friends if any monthly meetings had brought minutes asking for review of Faith and Practice (F&P) sections. A Friend brought forward Cookeville's report about a change to the F&P. The clerk noted this will be addressed Friday at Session III.

**50-07 Outstanding reports from March Rep Meeting [Attachments D and E]**

**URJ report from Rep March 2021 [Attachments D]**

The clerk asked for acceptance of the URJ report from Rep Meeting 146, March 2021. Upon request clarification was provided explaining acceptance means we heard the report and it is accepted into the record as part of the minutes, but does not mean "approval". A Friend questioned whether the submission was a report or a commentary.

Some Friends raised concerns about the makeup of URJ and what worship group they belong to. The [acting] Nominating clerk responded that the clerk of URJ has been accepted into SAYMA and performs the duties of the clerk as a Friend at large. Other Friends reminded the Meeting that participation is not based on membership status.

The report was accepted with Charles Schade of Charleston standing aside.

**Friends Committee on National Legislation [Attachments E: FCNL report from March 2020]**

The FCNL report from March 2020 was submitted but the Rep meeting was not held due to the Covid pandemic and therefore the report was not accepted at that time.

The report is accepted.

**50-08 Treasurer's Report, Kendall Ivie, acting, West Knoxville MM [Attachment F: Treasurer's Report]**

Kendall Ivie as acting Treasurer reviewed the attached report which covers the time period of October 2020 to May 2021.

A Friend asked how many donations made up the ~ \$900 sent to URJ. The Treasurer responded 8-9. A Friend asked for clarification about payroll taxes outstanding. The Treasurer explained the accrual basis versus cash basis for payroll tax payment as explanation for the two months of accrual this quarter to be paid in July. Friends thanked Kendall for taking on the responsibilities of acting Treasurer.

The report was accepted.

**50-09 Finance Committee Reports Geeta McGahey, Finance Clerk, Celo MM, First reading of the proposed 2021-2022 budget [Attachment G: Finance Committee Report Proposed Budget]**

Geeta McGahey provided the Finance Committee report, noting that the Finance Committee had a very active year complicated by the pandemic and deaths of the treasurer and another key finance committee Friend which required the assumption of roles without a turnover.

Geeta responded to questions about the operating budget. A Friend asked for a projection on the rate of spend-down and raised a concern about reducing our reserves. The Treasurer noted that our projections generally exceed our actual spending.

The finance clerk invited Friends to a meeting on Wednesday evening to discuss the budget. Representatives from each MM are encouraged to attend.

Future finance committee work includes developing a conflict of interest policy, a grants policy, and a financial continuity policy. Their final item is to request to present the Fiscal Year end financial report in the fall, when the FY ends, rather than waiting to present the year-end report six months later in the spring. This request is on the agenda for discussion during business meeting IV.

The finance committee report was accepted.

**50-09-01 Friends approved the current budget we have been operating under (2020-21)**

**50-10 Nominating Committee, Wood Bouldin, Greenbrier WG - First reading [Attachment H: Nominating Committee Report]**

Wood Bouldin gave the initial Nominating Committee report. He noted that assistant clerk and treasurer positions are vacant and asks for Friends to listen to the spirit for leadings. Wood reviewed the nominations noting that most individuals on the nominating report are renewals. Kendall Ivie brought forward Wood's name for the outreach committee since Wood could not bring his own name forward.

There was a request to see a report of vacant positions which Nominating will provide on the website. A Friend applauded those willing to continue to fill the positions and encouraged others to step forward to relieve the pressure. A Friend noted that not all committees provided reports and encouraged Clerks to do so in the future. Another Friend suggests we consider shortening the time period for serving to one year with options to continue longer, which might make it easier to fill positions.

Approvals for Nominating Committee positions will be noted at Session III on Friday.

**50-11 Agenda items not covered**

Selection of the Epistle Committee moved to a future session.

Session I narrative approved at Representatives Meeting (RM) 147.

**Sunday, June 6 (Session II)**

**50-12 Opening Worship**

The meeting began with a period of worship.

**50-13 Clerk's Second Letter to SAYMA Body, June 2021 [Attachment I: Clerk's Letter II]**

Dear SAYMA Friends, My recent clerk's letter was composed in a time of a developing crisis. I was in protective mode, which was folded into the position I've taken with respect to our tradition of worship and process. I need to acknowledge that I was being paternalistic, and at the same time inadvertently protecting the yearly meeting's place of privilege in a colonialist polity built on all the arrogant assumptions implicit in the old term, Manifest Destiny. I would like to move from the more general terms I have consistently used to some specific examples. However, the more specific I become, the more I expose individuals and meetings who need to speak for themselves. Each situation is complex and nuanced, and whereas generalities cannot express these complex truths, specific examples can harm people. So I proceed with caution. Let it

suffice to say that white people often cause unintended harm, due to their inability to see that they are acting from a position of power within a system that privileges them. As one of you said during the initial part of these sessions, we are like fish swimming in a sea that we cannot see. And when we are surprised, hurt and defensive when shown this, we are demonstrating what has been duly named “white fragility.” In our first plenary, Hal Weaver repeatedly emphasized the importance of centering the narratives of people of color. We need a much more inclusive set of narratives as a basis for our empathy, so that we do not just respond routinely like fish in the White Sea. A few years ago, we were blessed with one of these narratives by a Friend of Color who gave a plenary talk about his dual heritage, African-American and Native American, against the backdrop of structural racism and systemic brutality. There are other such narratives within SAYMA that we badly need to hear, and some are emerging right now. Not long ago, I attended a small gathering where a white woman shared a story of continuing brutality towards Black people. She was trying to reach out from a place of deep empathy to a Black woman in the group, and broke into tears as she shared the story. Attending those tears, I did not speak, though I was uncomfortable, for I noticed that the Black woman quietly left the circle. Afterwards, I reached out to her, admitting that I had joined the inadvertent white centering (those tears!) and apologized. The response from the Friend of Color was that we inevitably make mistakes as we try to disentangle our racist heritage, and that we have to accept our mistakes and move on. She closed with, “the LOVE behind our intentions will win out.” This is a crucial point, out of line with critical race theory, which points to the importance of actions, not intentions. But it is firmly within our Friends tradition, growing out of the ministry of Jesus. There are many more stories large and small, and they need to be told by the people themselves, not second-hand. But it is imperative as we move towards our goal of becoming an anti-racist community, that we do not allow one Friend of Color to abrogate the right of other Friends of Color to tell their stories and have their own points of view. As Friends, we are an inclusive community, and each person in the Meeting is honored, because underneath our diversity we are a unity. If we weren’t, we couldn’t search for a sense of the meeting. As Paul of Tarsus said, we are all parts of the body of Christ, each with a gift that makes up the whole. Even as universalists, I think we each understand this essential truth. Racism and our responses to it make for a complex tapestry, with a pattern that is difficult to discern, especially when we only study one or two of the threads in the pattern. We need to acknowledge this complexity, recognizing our brokenness. It is important to recognize that childhood and generational trauma exist among white and black, but because the majority has been part of the colonialist and supremacist American culture, we have a particular moral responsibility to look beyond our moments of feeling wronged by those who would point out our complicity, moving ever more deeply into self criticism over that complicity. But there needs to be forbearance as well on the side of those, white and black, who are wielding the tools of justice. A visiting Friend, who was part of a deep period of prayer in one of our workshops, said to me afterwards, “Your yearly meeting still prays, whatever the context of your struggles may be.” The ability to center down and pray, which I have witnessed frequently this week, is a treasure we must remember and rely upon, especially in the most vexed moments. But it must not be a retreat into the comfort of the dominant party in a society that thrives on control of resources, material and human. Think of those good Quaker slavers, some of whom met in a

sense of unity long into John Woolman's campaign to open their eyes and hearts. For others, one by one, a seed was laid to mend their ways. But this took time, and of course Woolman's work is unfinished. We must pray together in a place of deep listening while leaving the conflict in the room, asking for healing of the Society, those of us who are in conflict, and of ourselves. Friends, we need to accept the pain of being confronted with our structural complicity and often, of new racist sins in the moment, sometimes of being falsely accused. But we cannot tolerate abusive behavior. If you take these two statements together, you have the crux of our painful dilemma. Some of us are so wounded that reopening those wounds is too much to bear. Others need to toughen their skins, look inward, and get on with the work. Friends, SAYMA needs a new beginning. We need to genuinely forgive one another for past misunderstandings, slights, and outright abuse. It will not be easy, but if we approach our struggle with an attitude of mutual respect, with forbearance, and speak and act from a place of deep reflection, we may yet open the door where Spirit waits to lead us.

Robert McGahey, June 10, 2021

#### **50-14 Welcome & Introductions of Visitors**

Robert McGahey, SAYMA Clerk, welcomed everyone and asked visitors to introduce themselves. Friends welcomed Robin Mohr, Executive Secretary of Friends World Committee for Consultation.

#### **50-15 Roll Call [Attachment A: Attendance]**

The clerk asked for Friends who did not attend Session I to introduce themselves. Additional Friends from Nashville and West Knoxville joined, but no new meetings were represented. We remained at seventeen of twenty-five meetings in attendance.

#### **50-16 Agenda Review [Attachment C: Agenda]**

The clerk moved the Selection of the Epistle Committee from Session 1 to this session. The agenda was accepted.

#### **50-17 Selection of Epistle Committee**

The clerk moved the Epistle Committee appointment to this session. Star Smith put her name forward, the clerk asked for two additional members to submit their names by Friday if they felt led.

#### **50-18 Committee Reports [Attachment J and K]**

##### **Faith and Practice Revision Committee – Thais Carr, Nashville MM [Attachment J: Faith and Practice Revision: Queries]**

Thais Carr provided an overview of the responsibilities of the Faith and Practice (F&P) Revision Committee. She noted the F&P revisions have been on the website. This review is for queries and not advices. Any queries not approved will be removed.

A Friend asked how the revised version is more inclusive? This responded that several queries were added in section C and section E. Friends agreed that query E18 was not sufficient to encourage reflection on how indigenous lands are used by SAYMA and it should be reworked. The other queries were approved.

**50-18-01 Friends approved the revised query section of the Faith and Practice with the exception of E18. E18 should be reviewed to consider language acknowledging justice for indigenous people on whose land SAYMA meets. This query is referred back to the committee who will work with Monthly Meetings and the URJ Clerk during this yearly meeting and will be brought back by the end of this yearly session.**

**Uplifting Racial Justice Committee Report - Star Smith, Paul Cuffee Worship Group [Attachment K: Uplifting Racial Justice Report, appended June 2021]**

The SAYMA clerk requested an update from the Paul Cuffee Worship Group on happenings since March. Star Smith, URJ Committee Clerk, began her report noting that URJ has had no funding since 2018 and she continues to be the subject of slander.

Requests from the URJ Clerk were centered around three topics: a budget, the conflict transformation process, and the recognition of the Paul Cuffee Worship Group.

During this discussion the meeting did not observe due order and became disruptive. Friends spoke without recognition from the clerk, rebuttals were made to individuals, individuals recognized to speak were talked over, and a Friend called out abusively at the clerk of URJ. A Friend who identified himself as a white male noted that he considered this comment racist. The SAYMA Clerk brought the session back to order noting that several Friends were not observing right order.

The SAYMA Clerk advised that all three asks (budget, conflict resolution, and recognition of the worship group) are on the agenda in Business Sessions III, IV and V.

The Clerk requested the following minute:

**50-18-02 During a period of disorder during this session, things were said that were hurtful, displaying paternalistic power dimensions without regard to their impact on other Friends. Friends are reminded they are in Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business.**

Friends noted that we did not read the narrative portion of the minutes for Session I at the start of Session II. The clerk acknowledged the concern and will take it under advisement.

**50-19 Wider Quaker Organization Reports [Attachment L and M]  
Friends World Committee for Consultation in the Section of the Americas – Robin Mohr [Attachment L]**

Robin Mohr expressed appreciation for the support they have received from SAYMA Friends. The work FWCC is doing continues with a need greater than ever.

The focus of FWCC is to practice being in relationship with people who are like us and people who may be unlike us and find the common aspects through dialogue. Robin provided information on how Friends can participate in World Quaker Day which occurs the first Sunday in October. See their website [worldquakerday.org](http://worldquakerday.org).

The report was accepted.

### **Friends Committee for National Legislation Representatives Report - Jane Hiles**

#### **[Attachment M]**

Jane Hiles reported attendance at the FCNL Conference nearly doubled in 2020 attributed to accessibility for more people due to the virtual meeting format. They will continue meeting in a hybrid method to allow those who can only attend virtually to participate. Jane reminds us that FCNL is working on many pieces of legislation, but there are two of particular note SJ Resolution 10 to repeal the 1991 and 2002 Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq (without consultation with Congress) and The George Floyd Justice in Policing Act which is being reviewed by a group of senators now.

The report is accepted.

### **50-20 Meeting minutes re URJ: Swannanoa Valley and Charleston [Attachments N and O]**

The SAYMA clerk asked to review both the Swannanoa Valley minute and the Charleston minute together since they both relate to SAYMA URJ.

### **Meeting minutes re URJ: Swannanoa Valley [Attachment N: Swannanoa Valley Minute re: URJ, Jan 2021]**

Only item one of the four items was reviewed since it is the only item that includes a request for an action.

Item one expresses concern over “pass-through funds” for URJ. The Finance Clerk clarified that donor restricted funds are not “pass-through” funds, they are funds that do not have a line item in the budget.

The Treasurer clarified that donor restricted funds are items that have a set-aside so individuals can contribute money to that specific fund (purpose). The major distinction is unspent dollars in line items go away at the end of the year, unspent set-aside funds roll over to the next year.

Friends asked for clarification about the terms pass-through and set-aside. Per the Treasurer, pass-through is an item that is not reviewed and money is directly available to the committee. A set aside is a fund that has a budget from which the committee can request payment from those



funds. The treasurer makes payment after reviewing the request. At the end of the year, any remaining amount rolls over to the next year. SAYMA does not use pass-through spending.

The clerk asked Swannanoa to clarify whether the intent of item one is to cease allowing money to be sent to URJ? Two Friends from Swannanoa agreed that the intent was to stop “pass-through” funds to URJ, not all funds. Since this was not the process SAYMA uses, the request for action was withdrawn with the following minute:

**50-20-01: Jane Goldthwait, as representative of Swannanoa, withdraws part 1 of the Swannanoa Minute because it was a misunderstanding by their Monthly Meeting.**

**Charleston revision and addition [Attachment O: Charleston Minute re:URJ, Feb 2021]**

In the Charleston minute, the first item is a statement about the minute and does not include an actionable item. Item two relates to pass-through funding in which Charleston clarifies SAYMA policy, that SAYMA does not use pass-through funding for committees, and there is no need for a minute on this item. Item three is a request to address conflict in our yearly meeting which will be addressed in a future session and does not require a minute.

Related to item four: the SAYMA Clerk points out this item is moot since no one individual speaks on behalf of SAYMA. He stated that Star Smith speaks on behalf of her committee and further clarified that she does not speak on behalf of SAYMA.

There was no minute regarding the minute from Charleston Monthly Meeting.

**50-21 Agenda items not covered**

The following agenda items were not covered and referred to a future session by the clerk:

Peace and Social Concerns - Hank Fay

Nominating: begin approving slate

Session II narrative approved at RM 147.

**Friday June 11 Session III**

**50-22 Welcome & Introductions of Visitors**

Robert McGahey, SAYMA Clerk, welcomed everyone and asked visitors to introduce themselves. Visitors present were: David Etheridge from Friends General Counsel, Shelley Tannenbaum, General Secretary of Quaker Earthcare Witness, Bobby Trice from Friends Committee for National Legislation, and Avis Wanda McClinton from Abington Friends Monthly Meeting, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting.

### **50-23 Roll Call [Attachment A: Attendance]**

The clerk asked for identification of new attendees. No new meetings were represented. Attendance remains at seventeen of twenty-five meetings and worship groups represented.

### **50-24 Clerk Reminders**

Clerk provided protocol for being recognized and sharing time.

### **50-24 Agenda Review**

The clerk moved Nominating approval of the slate to this session. Naming the epistle committee is not on this agenda.

### **50-25 Nominating Clerk Second Reading and First Reading of supplemental nominations. Wood Bouldin, Greenbrier WG [Attachment H: Nominating Report with Nominations and Attachment P: Nominating Committee - Open Positions]**

Wood Bouldin named the nominees and Friends considered approval on each name. A Friend reiterated, as noted several times during Yearly Meeting, that submission of a report by the committee is an expectation of each committee clerk.

Throughout the approvals challenges were made concerning Friends ability to perform the duties of the positions. A Friend suggested a clearness committee is needed when there are disagreements between Friends, especially when it affects the ability for Friends to follow their leadings.

### **Positions and Approval status:** (note all terms are for 2021-2023 unless otherwise noted)

SAYMA Assistant Clerk - Barbara Esther, Asheville, continue as Interim until a replacement is found - approved

Archivist - Missy Ivie, WKFM - approved

Finance Clerk - Geeta McGahey, Celso, continuing as Interim, approved (with two Friends, Pat Gailey and Star Smith, standing aside based on a conflict of interest concern)

WQO Allocations - Jim Cavener, Asheville, nominated and we did not find unity.

Personnel, Clerk – Barbara Esther, Asheville (continuing as interim ex officio until Asst Clerk position is filled), approved

Personnel, member – Melissa Preast, WKFM, approved

SAYF Support, member – Kathleen Mavournin, WKFM, approved

SAYF Support, member – Jennifer Dickie, Atlanta (continuing as ex officio SAYF Steering Rep to SAYF Support)

SAYF Support, member – Aaron Ruscetta, Atlanta, one year term 2021-2022, approved

YMPC Member for Bookstore – Judy Geary, Friend at Large

Outreach, clerk – Wood Bouldin, Charleston, Green Valley Worship Group (CF, GVWG), (Kendall read this nomination), approved

Outreach, member – Hank Fay, Berea, approved

AFSC representative – Bonnie Isaacs, CFM, GVWG, 2021-2024, approved

FCNL representative – Deni Elliott, CFM, GVWG 2021-2024 despite one Friend, who chose to be identified as a Friend of Color, being opposed, the sense of the meeting was to approve. Free Polazzo stands aside in using adjectives to describe speakers.

FGC representative -Margaret Farmer, Asheville 2021-2024, approved

FWCC representative – Geeta McGahey, Celo, 2021-2024 we did not find unity

RSWR representative – Bonnie Issacs, CFM, GVWG 2021-2024, approved

Finance - Karen Morris continuing, approved.

Wood reviewed the additional positions added to the nominating slate and published on the website. Those positions will be reviewed for approval at a future session of this yearly meeting.

**50-26 Wider Quaker Organizations Reports FGC and QEW [Attachments Q and R]  
FGC Report - David Etheridge, FGC and Kit Potter SAYMA, Nashville MM [Attachment Q]**

David Etheridge provided a comprehensive report of the actions and activities available from FGC. He noted the annual Gathering begins June 27 - July 3 and is virtual. He also reported the 2022 Gathering will be held at Radford University, Virginia and will be held in person.

Appreciation was expressed for Kit Potter’s support over the years.

Friends accepted the report.

**Quaker Earthcare Witness – Shelley Tannenbaum [Attachment R]**

Shelley Tannenbaum from QEW provided information about climate change and how the earth made lemonade out of lemons but the ability to do so is diminishing due to our ecological and socially unprecedented times. Her stories highlighted what Friends are doing; see their newsletter for the stories and more information.

Friends accepted the report.

**50-27 Request to reconstitute the Earth Justice Committee – Roy Taylor, Atlanta MM [Attachment S: Earth Justice Committee Report]**

Roy Taylor reported that the committee works closely with Quaker Earthcare Witness and he would like a representative from SAYMA on QEW. He reported the Earth Justice Committee is the new name for the reconstituted SAYMA Earth Action Network. The SAYMA clerk reminded Friends that the committee was not laid down, the positions remained vacant. They are now reactivated. Friends are encouraged to join this group and support their work.

Friends accepted the report

**50-28 Finance Committee: Second reading of budget, Geeta McGahey, Celo MM [Attachment T: Budget vs Actual and Attachment U: Operational Budget version 2]**

Approximately 15-18 Friends attended the Wednesday budget informational meeting. The

Finance Committee clarified processes and answered questions about the set aside budget. The Finance Clerk reported that Friends asked for consistent funding, reached no unity on changes to set aside funds or on the operational budget.

Kendall addressed questions on our historical budget versus actual spending. Kendall noted that since 2012, SAYMA's actual spending typically resulted in a lower or even zero deficit than predicted by the budget.

### **Discussion on the Operational Budget.**

Friends noted that the Ministry and Nurture and Earth Justice Committees did not submit a request for a budget. If these committees need a budget, they should submit the request before the Fall Rep meeting. A Friend suggested the contingency pool, line 62 of the proposed budget, be increased in anticipation of these requests.

**50-28-01 Friends approve the amendment to the budget increasing the contingency fund from \$500 to \$1,000**

**50-28-02 Friends approved the operating budget as amended for fiscal year 2021-2022**

**Discussion on set-aside budget:** The discussion degraded into a debate about URJ and often about the Clerk of URJ. Friends on both sides of the issue felt unheard, some felt pushed out of the way by priority voices. Several Friends said they would stand in the way of line item 82 (funding set-aside for URJ) and others said they would stand in the way if line item 82 was the only item not approved. A Friend raised the concern that Friends were coming to Yearly Meeting with pre-planned decisions based on the past instead of using discernment in the present. A sense of the meeting was not reached.

Two Friends proposed conflict transformation to resolve the budget issues. The clerk agreed and suggested exploring conflict transformation with Angela Hopkins, Friends Center for Racial Justice. This will be on the agenda at business Session V.

**50-28-03 Friends did not approve the set aside budget as unity was not reached on line item 82, Uplifting Racial Justice, during this session.**

### **50-29 Uncovered Agenda Items**

Assigning the Epistle Committee

Reading of Minutes

Peace & Social Concerns

**50-30 The meeting ended with a period of worship**

Session III narrative approved at RM 147.

### **Saturday, June 12 (Session IV)**

#### **50-31 Opening Worship**

While the clerk was temporarily absent due to technology, Barbara Esther, Asheville MM, SAYMA Assistant Clerk, stepped in and opened the meeting with a period of worship.

#### **50-32 Welcome & Introductions of Visitors [Attachment V: Travelling Minute from Patapsco MM re: Stuart Green]**

The Assistant Clerk welcomed everyone and asked visitors to introduce themselves. Visitors present: Stuart Greene, Patapsco MM, Baltimore YM, Lisbon, Maryland felt led to attend as part of his traveling ministry. Jennifer Dickie read the traveling minute from his meeting. Francis O'Hara from New England Yearly Meeting and Avis McClinton, Abington Monthly Meeting, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting continued attendance as visitors.

#### **50-33 Junior Yearly Meeting - Laura Lane, Asheville MM [Attachment W: Junior Yearly Meeting Report]**

Laura Lane explained how the grant received from FWCC in 2020 was used to plan and carry out alternative Junior Yearly Meeting programming virtually. Nineteen children ages 3-12 were registered for the Yearly Meeting. Friends applauded the work done to make this a successful experience for the children. A Friend suggested submitting an article to Friends Journal.

Friends accepted the report with great thanks.

#### **50-34 SAYF Steering - Jennifer Dickie, Atlanta MM [Attachment X: SAYF Steering Committee Report]**

Jennifer Dickie provided the report. She noted that Friends expressed gratitude for this work. A Friend suggested requesting SAYF to provide oversight within other committees namely Peace & Social Concerns and Outreach; both for the enrichment of SAYMA adults and SAYF participants. A Friend requested that outreach be more proactive among potential future Young Adult Friends.

Friends accepted the report with great thanks.

#### **50-35 Clerk Remarks**

Robert McGahey resumed the responsibilities as SAYMA clerk. He opened with an apology for paternalistic behavior earlier in the sessions and valued raising awareness as a step to change.

The clerk clarified that narrative minutes will be approved at the Fall Representative Meeting. Action Minutes will be approved in the face of the meeting.

### **50-36 Ministry and Nurture State of SAYMA – Diana Masso, Charleston MM**

#### **[Attachment Y: State of SAYMA]**

Diana Masso read the State of the Yearly Meeting Report. The SAYMA clerk expressed gratitude for the work of the committee and appreciated how the State of the Monthly Meetings along with the condition of our yearly meeting was captured through a holistic process. Friends accepted the report.

### **50- 37 Website manager report Charlie Wilton, Berea MM [Attachment Z: Web Manager's Report]**

Charlie Wilton talked about the attached report and summarized his concerns about future plans for the website. A challenging discussion occurred with Friends expressing concerns about the process in discerning the future of the website and responsibilities of those involved in the website. A Friend noted the job descriptions in the handbook are inadequate. The SAYMA Clerk clarified that the Yearly Meeting is not ready to move forward with a new website and apologized for omitting the Website Manager from the discernment process.

Friends thanked Charlie for his work on the website and his report.  
Friends accepted the written report.

### **50-38 Epistle Committee Nominations**

The clerk asked for individuals to participate on the epistle committee. Two Friends, Sharon Smith and Wood Bouldin, self-nominated and will make up the epistle committee.  
Friends approve the Epistle Committee

### **50-39 Discussion of Cookeville Minute, May 2021 - Annie Black, Cookeville MM**

#### **[Attachment AA: Cookeville Monthly Meeting Minute]**

Annie Black presented the Cookeville Minute which asks that whether or not the Paul Cuffee Worship Group (PCWG) wants to become associated with SAYMA, we should offer this association to them in order to be consistent with our principles and traditions.

The clerk asked Friends to consider putting aside the procedural requirement to be under the care of another meeting since there are no meetings that mirror their makeup. The PCWG is multicultural; all its members and regular attenders are black and/or indigenous. The clerk asked for discussion about the proposal that PCWG be invited to join SAYMA as an associated worship group.

Friends discussed whether this was aligned with our Faith & Practice. Some Friends expressed the importance of being under the care of a meeting while other Friends asked for us to respect the desire of the Worship Group to associate with those they have built a trusting relationship with. Some Friends noted that the PCWG has the support of Friends from the Friends Center for Racial Justice and has an amicable relationship with Friends from Berea and Cookeville within

SAYMA. Concerns from other Friends over forcing hierarchical relationships where the power authorities are all white were expressed.

Several Friends asked why the PCWG wanted to associate with SAYMA. A Friend from PCWG answered: because SAYMA is in the southern Appalachian region which is their homeland, PCWG engages in activism which SAYMA should support, and PCWG could support more through their attachment with SAYMA. Additionally, PCWG is a project of SAYMA URJ and therefore it is already a part of SAYMA. This final point was affirmed by other Friends.

Assistant clerk Barbara Esther held the meeting as Bob McGahey stepped aside as clerk to express his concern on the history of Star's conflict with Friends of Color. This began a forceful, passionate discourse between a Friend of Color, who was not from this Yearly Meeting, speaking in protest against Star personally and as the Clerk of URJ. The discussion expanded with many Friends offering opinions that were personal in nature. Some friends asked if we were discussing an invitation to the PCWG or concerns about an individual Friend?

The clerk stepped back into his role and a proposed minute to extend an invitation was reviewed, discussed, and wordsmithed in an attempt to reach consensus.

Unity was not found to invite PCWG into SAYMA. Some Friends encouraged Monthly Meetings and Worship Groups to reach out to the PCWG as they felt led, to establish a trusting relationship.

A Friend felt the discussion ended abruptly without all voices being heard. As a person of color she is discouraged because SAYMA can't even agree to a minute admitting a worship group.

Several Friends expressed gratitude to the Cookeville Monthly Meeting for making the case for the Paul Cuffee Worship Group to be offered association with SAYMA.

The clerk expressed gratitude for Friends who participated in the discussion and to those who held the meeting in the Light. Although we did not find unity at this time concerning inviting the Paul Cuffee Worship Group to be in association with SAYMA, we intend to revisit this request in the future.

#### **50-40 Unfinished Agenda Items**

Website Revival Committee - Hank Fay (update)

Wider Quaker Organizations allocations; Outreach Committee - Wood Bouldin

#### **50-41 The meeting ended with a period of worship**

## **Sunday, June 13 (Session V)**

### **50-42 Opening Worship**

The meeting began with a period of worship.

### **50-43 Announcements**

The clerk announced that the updated E-18 query for the Faith and Practice is available for review in the documents section of the website.

### **50-44 Recording Registrar's report, Susan Phelan, Administrative Assistant, SAYMA**

The registrar reported the following data extracted from the registration records. The co-registrar is Deni Elliot.

168 registered through Eventbrite, the electronic registration platform.

Adults 141

Junior Yearly Meeting (JYM) 19

Southern Appalachian Young Friends (SAYF) 8

The registrar expressed gratitude to the 46 Friends who contributed at higher levels to support other Friends' participation and cost of the virtual event.

Friends were asked to self-identify as Friends of Color and include the ability to self-identify on future registration forms.

### **50-45 Nominating Committee: approval of remaining slate and discussion on URJ clerk position, Wood Bouldin, GBWG, [Attachment BB, CC]**

**The second reading of the positions and nominations were brought before the meeting for consideration. [Attachment BB: Nominating Supplement]: (note all terms are 2021-2023 unless otherwise stated)**

Finance, member – Karen Morris, Atlanta approved

Ministry and Nurture, Co-Clerk – Diana Masso, Charleston approved

Ministry and Nurture, Co-Clerk – Adrian Mehr, Memphis (continuing, one year term 2021-2022) approved (with concerns about availability)

Personnel, member – Barbara Esther, Asheville, approved

SAYF Steering, member – Robert Sears, Berea, approved

SAYF Steering, member – Laura Kelley, Atlanta, approved

SAYF Steering, member – Ian Saderholm, Berea, approved

SAYF Steering, member – Grace Beavin, Berea, approved

JYM, clerk – Laura Lane, Asheville, approved

FWCC representative – Beth Myers, Berea, 2021-2024 approved (with concerns about providing reports)



QEW representative – Deni Elliot, Greenbrier Valley WG, CFM, 2021-2024 approved

**Return to reading of positions not approved from first nominating slate:**

WQO Jim Cavener - Friend Star Smith stands in the way, with support from other Friends. After much discussion, Star indicated “I am willing to reconsider IF Jim is willing to answer to an accountability partner from the ad hoc Racial Justice Working group.” The [acting] nominating clerk withdrew the nomination.

FWCC - Geeta McGahey (nomination clerked by Barbara Esther, assistant clerk). Friend Star Smith stands in the way. The nomination was not approved, however Geeta will continue in other roles with FWCC.

**Note to SAYMA from [Acting] Nominating Clerk [Attachment CC]**

The [acting] nominating clerk presented a letter from the committee on the status of the Uplifting Racial Justice clerk position. The term of office 2019-2021 has ended. The nominating committee awaits minuted instructions in the spirit of discernment on the way forward in filling this position.

The meeting fell into disorder and the focus of the discussion moved to the relationship of SAYMA to URJ and vice versa.

The Clerk announced that the term of URJ clerk is done and there is no clerk or there will be an interim clerk until sufficient discernment on the relationship between SAYMA and URJ. Friends expressed concern that we are not following our process of leaving things as they are if unity is not reached. Some Friends provided an interpretation of Faith and Practice saying since we did not unite on a minute for Nominating, no decision should be made and the URJ clerk would remain until the question from nominating is resolved. \*

\*A sense of the meeting was not reached on the status of URJ or whether the clerk of URJ continued in an acting role, despite being discussed in YM50, RM147a and RM 147b. Friends did not agree on what “leaving things as they are” meant.

**50-46 Finance Committee recommendation if no unity on URJ funding**

While the Meeting was still in disorder, the Finance Committee clerk made the following recommendation: if there is no unity on funding the Uplifting Racial Justice Committee, SAYMA should seek Conflict Resolution/Transformation with the Friends Committee on Racial Justice.

In response to a statement from the SAYMA Clerk that no donor restricted funds can be spent by URJ, a Friend made the statement if “Friends Peace Teams can help with such complex matters as genocide in Rwanda to find common ground between perpetrators and victims, I’m wondering if that group might engage with us to find whatever ways we can go forward as a Yearly Meeting.” Friends debated the process of withholding funding, changing the clerk of URJ, and the role of the ad hoc Racial Justice Working Group.

The disruption continued to focus on the relationship between URJ and SAYMA. A Friend recommended we close Meeting before we split apart. A Friend asked about the status of the racial justice working group.

The clerk brought the meeting back to order with a proposal to ask Angela Hopkins of Friends Center for Racial Justice to clerk a called session; and there will be no full engagement of SAYMA, i.e., a Representative Meeting, until after the called session.

The Clerk clarified that the Ad Hoc SAYMA-URJ Support Committee, stood up by the Clerk at YM49, referred to as the Racial Justice Working Group, was not laid down and is hard at work. There has not been a report presented because they ceded their time to URJ at the Spring Representative Meeting due to time constraints.

Clerk asked for a sense of the meeting on a Called Meeting to discern the relationship between SAYMA and URJ clerked by Angela Hopkins from Friends Center for Racial Justice. Discussions included whether this should be a clearness committee, threshing session, or a workshop. Friends found unity in the following minute.

**50-46-01: Friends approved Friends Center for Racial Justice to lead a called meeting for the purpose of understanding conflicts and building relationships of trust between SAYMA and the Uplifting Racial Justice Committee.**

#### **50-47 Faith and Practice Revision Committee**

The ad hoc Committee to Revise the Guide to our Faith and Practice asked the Uplifting Racial Justice Committee to revise the one query (E-18) that did not achieve unity at Yearly Meeting Business Session II. Our committee approved the revised version as it was submitted to us.

We ask that the YM Business Session approve the following query:

Query E-18:

How do we acknowledge Indigenous peoples whose ancestors were brutally murdered or enslaved for us to live on their stolen ancestral lands? How do we atone for the sins of our ancestors to their surviving descendants, those most impacted by our ongoing and relentless racial violence, genocide, land theft, and slavery?

Friends thanked the ad hoc committee for their hard work and agreed to the committee being laid down. A separate ad hoc committee will be appointed by the clerk to bring the remaining revised query, E18, to the fall Representative Meeting.

#### **50-48 Closing Moment of Worship**

Due to the extension of the business meeting, Friends closed Session V with a moment of worship with the intention of completing a few items at the start of the Final Worship Session for Yearly Meeting.

## **50-49 Minutes of Thanks**

**50-49-01 Friends are grateful for the hard work of the Yearly Meeting Planning Committee, who ended up being the hosts for yearly meeting in a virtual environment. They engaged many individuals and put together a team responsible for using technology to build a container for us to operate and receive nourishment.**

**50-49-02 Friends thank Barbara Esther, assistant clerk, who at short notice assumed the clerk role for the beginning of Session IV when the clerk did not have the ability to electronically join the meeting.**

## **50-50 The Epistles [Attachment DD-EE]**

**The Epistle for SAYMA, Star Smith, PCWG, URJ Clerk and Wood Bouldin, GBWG [Attachment DD: SAYMA Epistle]**

The Epistle was read by Wood Bouldin. Friends accepted the epistle.

**The Epistle for SAYMA Junior Yearly Meeting, Laura Lane, Asheville [Attachment EE SAYMA Junior Yearly Meeting Epistle]**

The Epistle Junior Yearly Meeting was read by Laura Lane, Friends accepted the epistle.

**50-50-01 Friends acknowledge and send thanks for the grant from Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC) provided to assist with putting on the enriching virtual meeting for our children**

## **50-51 Yearly Meeting Closing Worship**

Closing worship included expressions of gratitude, reconciliation, and encouragement for the work we accomplished and acknowledgment that more work is needed to unite us. Friends asked Spirit to guide us as a Yearly Meeting.

## **50-52 Items not covered during Business Sessions**

**Naming Committee:** The clerk appointed Folami Adams, Atlanta, and Patti Hughes, Asheville to the naming committee and requested they proceed with its work. These appointees will be brought before the Fall Rep Meeting.

**Faith and Practice Revision Committee:** The clerk will appoint the retiring Faith and Practice Revision Clerk as the SAYMA Friend responsible for the process of getting the approved Revised Queries into the Newest Guide dated 2021 and let Friends know when the F&P is ready to purchase.

**Proposed change of Fall Representative Meeting** to fit SAYMA fiscal year (possible dates Oct 16; Nov 6) and suggestion to have a hybrid fall Representative Meeting, in-person /Zoom. Perhaps Atlanta?

**Reports not covered:**

Peace and Social Concerns, Outreach, and WQO Allocations

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Robert McGahey, Clerk  
(archive copies signed)

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Melissa Preast, Recording Clerk  
(archive copies signed)

## **Attachments**

- A. Attendance (printed copies only)
- B. Clerk's Letter I
- C. Agenda
- D. URJ report from Rep Meeting, March 2021
- E. Friends Committee for National Legislation (FCNL) Report 2020
- F. Treasurer Report
- G. Finance Report with Proposed Budget v1
- H. Nominating Committee Report
- I. Clerk's Letter II
- J. Faith and Practice Revision for Queries Committee Report
- K. Uplifting Racial Justice Committee Report June 2021
- L. Friends World Committee for Consultation Report
- M. Friends Committee for National Legislation
- N. Swannanoa Valley Monthly Meeting Minute
- O. Charleston Monthly Meeting Minute
- P. Nominating Committee Open Positions
- Q. Friends General Conference Report
- R. Quaker Earthcare Witness Report
- S. Earth Justice Committee Report
- T. Finance Budget vs Actual Expenditure Spreadsheet
- U. Finance Committee Operational Budget v2
- V. Traveling Minute, Stuart Green
- W. Junior Yearly Meeting Report
- X. SAYF Steering Committee Report
- Y. State of SAYMA
- Z. Web Manager's Report
- AA. Cookeville Monthly Meeting Minute
- BB. Nominees Supplement
- CC. Nominating Clerk Note to SAYMA
- DD. SAYMA Epistle
- EE. SAYMA Junior Yearly Meeting Epistle

Attachment A. Attendance

In printed copies only.

## Attachment B. Clerk's Letter I

### Clerk's Letter to SAYMA Body, June 2021

I envision SAYMA's yearly sessions as an occasion for renewal of the spirit. It is a gathering of monthly meetings of all sizes, and provides a place for isolated Friends and small worship groups to have a larger Friends community, a place to experience spirit-based hospitality.

My first SAYMA yearly gathering was at Warren Wilson in 1971, the second annual sessions. We were not yet a yearly meeting, but an association for fellowship in the manner of liberal Friends. This was a group of Appalachian folk of European descent, where the greatest diversity I experienced was through a young Baptist woman in our worship group who washed our feet. What a blessing! In the years since, our diversity has increased somewhat, and four years ago we accepted the challenge to make our meetings more welcoming to Friends of Color. We need to renew the graciousness of spirit and place of deep retreat of those early years, without retreating into 1970's naivete about unraveling racism.

Since last summer, my clerk's letter has emphasized our spiritual focus as a religious body. The ongoing example is the distinction between critical race theory and its powerful sociological analysis of our disordered white supremacist society, and the practice of Friends, a tradition established by a group of white lower-middle class Englishfolk, not unlike our rural Appalachian context, who set out to emulate the behavior of the early Church, based on loving one another while befriending truth. This has always included challenging one another as well, but in a spirit of patience, forbearance, and deep listening. As Friends, we do not sit in judgment of each other, but wait for the Spirit to move in each of our hearts before acting as a body.

Unfortunately, as we approach SAYMA yearly sessions, there are those among us who would enforce their deeply held convictions through pressuring, judging, and threatening behavior. One plenary speaker and two workshops have been challenged and threatened with disruption. One of those workshops has been cancelled, and the leader of the second feels genuinely threatened by escalating attacks, asking for protection. As an open religious society, our protection comes from the divine, which resides deep within each of us, acting from within the body, not from a hierarchy of leaders. But if we do not trust one another, invoking deep listening in a spirit of worship when we experience differences, then we are profoundly vulnerable.

So we meet in a place of vulnerability, some in fear, others in a place of anger and judgment, sorely needing to listen to each other and build trust in our fundamental tenet as Friends, that *there is that of God in each of us*. Whatever transpires in our time together over the next week, let us accept that vulnerability as a place of instruction, while vowing to hold each other in loving safety as we continue to work out our differences.

Robert McGahey

SAYMA Presiding Clerk

50<sup>th</sup> Annual Sessions, June 2021

Attachment C. Agenda

SAYMA 2021 business sessions agenda (50<sup>th</sup> annual gathering)

I Sat June 5 1-3:30

Clerk's opening remarks

Roll call

Approve agenda

Does any monthly meeting have any changes or additions to Faith and Practice?

Appoint epistle committee

Accept URJ report of March Rep, accept FCNL report from March 2020

Nominating first Reading -Wood Bouldin

Treasurer's report - Kendall Ivie

Finance Report and first reading of 2021-22 budget Geeta McGahey

II Sun June 6 1-3:30

Introductions: Robin Mohr of FWCC

F AND P REVISION COMMITTEE – Thais Carr

URJ (appended)

Peace and Social Concerns - Hank Fay

FWCC – Robin Mohr

FCNL rep report - Charlie Wilton

Meeting minutes re URJ: Swannanoa Valley, Charleston revision and addition

Nominating: begin approving slate



## AGENDA FOR BUSINESS SESSIONS III-V

### III FRIDAY June 11 4-6

Introductions: David Etheridge, FGC and Shelley Tannenbaum QEW

Business meeting protocol; approval of minutes

Nominating: begin approving slate

FGC and Representative reports - David Etheridge/ Kit Potter

Finance Committee: Second reading of budget

Quaker Earthcare Witness – Shelley Tannenbaum

Earth Justice Committee– Roy Taylor?

### IV SATURDAY June 12 9:30-12

Paul Cuffee worship group minute (Cookeville)

JYM - Laura Maynard

SAYF Steering -Jennfier Dickie

Break

Ministry and Nurture State of SAYMA – Diana Masso?

Website manager report Charlie Wilton

Website Revival Committee - Hank Fay (update)

WQO allocations; Outreach Committee - Wood Bouldin

### V SUNDAY June 13, 10-12

Registrar report

Review where we are with URJ minutes:

- Paul Cuffee

- Finance Committee recommendation if no unity on URJ funding

- Recommendation for Conflict Resolution/Transformation

Proposed change of fall rep meeting to fit SAYMA fiscal year (Oct 16; Oct 9) and venue choice

## **SAYMA-Uplifting Racial Justice (URJ) Report—March 2021**

SAYMA-URJ, was led to identify and address manifestations of white supremacy/racism, which Friends of color have experienced within SAYMA. To that end, URJ offers the following assessment, in the Spirit of integrity and truth, and asks that the yearly meeting sit with the following queries as you read it:

1. What can we CHANGE to make SAYMA a Friendly and welcoming place for diverse peoples of color—not just the Friends of color we chose, but those who have been led to live in the manner of Friends?
2. How can Friends adapt/modify Quaker Practice and processes to be inclusive and welcoming of diverse cultural expressions of faith, as opposed to expecting culturally diverse peoples to conform to white/Eurocentric colonizer cultural norms and practices?

To be clear, an assessment is not meant as a condemnation or indictment; but it is constructive criticism of SAYMA. It is a constructive critique based on the observations of knowledgeable Friends of color regarding the yearly meeting's progress toward becoming a multicultural anti-racist faith community--which is an absolutely appropriate role for SAYMA-URJ.

First, SAYMA-URJ wants the YM to understand and acknowledge that we are at the beginning of a process to dismantle white supremacy/European colonialism within the SAYMA Meeting community, that we are nowhere near completion, and we offer this assessment as evidence thereof. The assessment tool we have used is based on the "Continuum on Becoming an Anti-Racist Multicultural Institution" as detailed in "Understanding and Dismantling Racism: The Twenty-First Century Challenge to White America" by Joseph Barnt. (Rev. Barndt is one of the founders of Crossroads and the People's Institute--which some SAYMA members have been willing to pay exorbitant amounts of money for training, instead of funding URJ.)

According to URJ's observations, SAYMA has yet to get beyond stage two (2) of the six (6) stage continuum, in the last 3 or 4 years, since URJ was approved as a standing committee of SAYMA. Stage two is described as:

- Publicly obeys the laws of desegregation; removes signs of intentional exclusion.
- Is tolerant of a limited number of people of color with 'proper' perspective and credentials.

BUT...

- [The] White constituency is still exclusive and paternalistic in its attitudes and actions, and often declares, "We don't have a problem."
- Continues [its] self-understanding in [of the] organizational structure and mission as a white institution serving a predominantly white constituency.

- Continues to maintain White power and privilege through its de facto policies and practices, teachings and decision making on all levels of institutional life.
- May still secretly limit or exclude people of color in contradiction to public policies.

We think SAYMA wants to progress to stage three but it was clear to us you are not there yet, all things considered. We encourage you to read the book and consider why we decided y'all have been stuck in stage two for so long.

The following describes just a few racist patterns of behavior URJ members have seen and been subjected to, which coincide with stage two of the continuum. Please remember that we are discussing the yearly meeting as an institution, not any particular individuals who control the levers of white power and control within it.

**Scapegoating: Blaming the messenger**--Any Friend of color who points out white supremacist colonizer behavior occurring within SAYMA Meetings is either dismissed as wrong, irrelevant or hostile. This speaks to Friends in positions of authority who still refuse to acknowledge or accept SAYMA-URJ's construction as a Friends of color only committee, which they have no control over. These Friends continually try to undermine the committee's work because they are uncomfortable with not having control of who URJ's members are and how they are chosen. They especially don't like not having control of URJ's spiritual discernment process concerning how URJ interprets and fulfills its mission and goals. Since they cannot control URJ, they seek to undermine its work by nefarious means.

URJ members have been accused of conflicts of interest, fraud, theft, misappropriation of funds, of abuse, bullying and name-calling. Some of us have even had our ancestral lineage called into question. All for simply acting in accordance with URJ's SAYMA approved mission and goals, outside of their oversight. Seriously. URJ members were accused of "conflicts of interests" even though SAYMA has never had a conflict of interest policy before. URJ members were falsely accused of financial malfeasance, for spending our own set aside funds in absolute compliance with the committee's mission and goals. Then, even though the matter was investigated by Finance--and no wrongdoing was found--the accusations have persisted, and URJ's funding has been affected.

So-called weighty white Friends have constantly inserted themselves into conflicts between Friends of color, where they should have known not to. They have taken advantage of minor, often petty and personal conflicts to pit Friends of color against one other, simply to undermine URJ members and URJ's ability to fulfill its mission. SAYMA-URJ could easily have resolved any conflict between Friends of color, if we were trusted to do so. But instead, a few angry white Friends have been allowed to weaponize their white crocodile tears, in order to prompt a few misguided and already traumatized Friends of color to speak out against URJ and its members, against their own interests. That just two Black men, were encouraged—more like they were set up--to falsely claim they spoke for all Black Friends—not all Friends of color, mind you--

Attachment D. URJ report from Representative Meeting 146, March 2021

when they spoke out in the September Representative Meeting, calling for URJ to be laid down and defunded, said they did not want to participate in the racial conflict transformation process, which URJ had been requesting for many months. That they did so, without bringing their concerns to URJ first, is a perfect example of how racism works within every predominantly white institution, by tokenizing a few people of color to act as gatekeepers, upholding white supremacy.

So, we ask, what kind of Friendship is that? When has a Meeting or Quaker organization ever canceled an activity or program, just because two Friends chose not to participate--for any reason? This behavior alone exposes, that the entire goal of these so-called weighty Friends in positions of authority, who have emotionally manipulated a few SAYMA Friends of color to act against their own interests, was a racist strategy to destabilize and destroy URJ's ability to fulfill its mission--simply because URJ will not allow them to control us. This is a textbook example of how white supremacy is maintained among Friends.

**Tone Policing:** White Friends harass, try to intimidate, belittle, patronize, and demean Friends of color engaged in Anti-racism work until those Friends of Color react with anger, as is natural. Then we are told we must be polite and Friendly to people who clearly mean us harm. You make no allowance for Friends of Color to express themselves in their own culturally relevant styles of expression if it makes racist white Friends uncomfortable or nervous, going so far as to equate expressions you don't like as "evil." Yet, y'all commit constant micro-aggressions and micro-assaults against Friends of color, shrug it off as harmless, then get angry and say you are being victimized when Friends of Color get offended, defend themselves and/or point out your racist behavior to you. That's not OK—and its racist.

Then you say you are committed to making our Meeting a safe and comfortable place for people of color. Do you see the problem here?

**Dismissal of Authority:** You "disagree" with anyone who names the racism/white supremacy all around us, even when those observations are made by persons trained to identify and disrupt white supremacy, especially if the expert is a Friend of Color. You dismiss and disparage such observations, and categorically deny the possibility that you are in fact, racist. YET, that is exactly what "Racism Denial" is.

You have even dared to employ racist colonial metrics to challenge the legitimacy and cultural authority of Friends of color who identify as Indigenous, in order to avoid accountability.

Then you say you are committed to making our Meeting a safe and comfortable place for people of color. Do you see what the problem is?

**Imposition of Power:** Entirely new practices and processes have been created which are completely outside of good Quaker order, solely for the purpose of oppressing Friends of Color.

Several so-called weighty White Friends have been engaged in covert organizing activities against SAYMA Friends of color they don't like, just because they want to control how we approach the anti-racism work we feel SAYMA needs to do and that Friends of color need to do. In addition, the vast majority of conflict-averse white Friends never stand in opposition to these obvious violations of proper order. Nor do they attempt to support and/or defend Friends of color when they/we are literally experiencing racist attacks, leaving them/us to fend for ourselves. And then, the extreme few who do try to stand up to the Quaker racists in SAYMA Meetings, come under attack themselves.

News Flash: This is NOT the way to dismantle white supremacy/colonialism, which simply cannot be done without discomfort, challenge or conflict. Do you see the problem?

Y'all insist on maintaining Quaker traditions, on doing things as they have always been done, instead of being open to continuing revelation, or new anti-racist insights and leadings from Friends of color, despite the fact that becoming an anti-racist multicultural faith community requires CHANGE. Worse than that, you want to control the change to suit your white comfort and convenience. You still refuse to let go of your white supremacist addiction to control the narratives, processes and resources regarding, even the anti-racism work of SAYMA. And, you consistently undermine and attack those Friends of color who have been spirit led to labor with you and your racism, to provide the necessary knowledgeable leadership in the work of dismantling white supremacy/colonialism among Friends. Even as you are learning that you should follow the leadership of knowledgeable people of color, you still think you are qualified to decide who those leaders should be, whether they are willing or led to do this work, or not.

News Flash: The reason you have such difficulty finding Friends of color to fill those roles is entirely due to your controlling white supremacist behavior toward the few, who are willing to confront you on your racism. You need to understand, that it is much easier for Friends of color who do not wish to serve on your committees or on URJ, to blame URJ and its clerk for their reluctance than it is for them to stand up to your racism, themselves.

Then you say you are committed to making our Meeting a safe and comfortable place for people of color.

**Judgmentalism:** You really think you can decide which Friends of Color are not Quakers, without engaging those Friends in any kind of clearness process. You have judged the spiritual discernment process of URJ (Friends of color) to be inadequate, when you have no idea how URJ manages its internal decision making process. If we attempt to change or even question your white supremacist meeting structure, you refuse to accept, or cooperate with, URJ's spirit led discernment and choices for creating safety, comfort and welcome, for potential Friends of color--which is absolutely in alignment with URJ's mission. This is what is behind SAYMA's

insistence that the Paul Cuffee Worship Group cannot be part of SAYMA because we chose not to be under the care, or oversight, of a predominantly white SAYMA meeting. This is also what was behind the complaints of some, that SAYMA-URJ members must be members of recognized SAYMA Monthly Meetings and nominated by an all-white nominating committee. That's just plain old racist, by definition.

Then you say you are committed to making our Meeting a safe and comfortable place for people of color.

We should never forget, that white supremacy is maintained by controlling the narratives, processes and resources, and by well-meaning good people who obey unjust laws, policies, practices, procedures and social conventions.

A quick perusal of SAYMA faith ad practice proves URJ's assessment is accurate:

**From SAYMA Faith and Practice:**

The Religious Society of Friends recognizes that all are called to minister in obedience to the living Spirit, whether through service, preaching, teaching, hospitality or administration. All ministries are seen as important for the well-ordered functioning of the spiritual body. All Friends have particular gifts and qualities to bring, and all are called to find their place of service.

Friends believe in the power of love to evoke the inherent worth of others. We are called to accept and love all persons in spite of transgressions, confrontations, or apparent differences. ... Friends aim toward the transformation of a flawed world into one that would make possible equality, justice and peace for all peoples. (p.15)

Under Monthly Meeting Committees:

**Ministry and Counsel** is responsible for the quality of the Meeting for Worship, for the religious development of members and attendees. ... They also encourage those whose ministry frequently speaks to the spiritual needs of themselves and fellow worshippers...

**Material need.** This committee, or one especially appointed for the purpose, will try to provide for those in need of financial assistance. Meetings are advised to exercise tactful and watchful care in ascertaining and meeting these needs. (Pages 21-23)

**Functions of the Yearly Meeting—Ministry and Nurture Committee**

...involvement in sensitive situations... (Ministry and Nurture has totally failed in this. To date, URJ has had NO support whatsoever from SAYMA M&N.)

Facilitating clearness and accountability for Friends seeking endorsement by the yearly meeting for ministry to which they are called; (M&N has utterly failed to hold anyone accountable for the racist harms Friends of color have suffered, or to endorse the ministries of Friends of color.)

Providing a clearness process and holding accountable released Friends who receive financial assistance from SAYMA's Released Friend Fund.

Administering the disbursement and accounting of the Spiritual Development Fund. (p.27)

**Membership:** Membership in the Religious Society of Friends identifies a person who seeks, in worship after the manner of Friends, the living reality, discipline, and guidance of the spirit of God. No prescribed or set formula of words and phrases distinguishes a member from a non-member; the lives of Friends express their faith in accordance with their experiences with Truth and with the meeting community. (P. 33)

### **Advice from SAYMA 2016, which SAYMA has yet to follow**

**Statement of intention for the SAYMA 2016 theme:** We come together with the theme of "Unraveling Racism" to communicate "heart to heart" in an effort to live up to our testimonies of equality, community, and integrity, make SAYMA a more welcoming spiritual home for all, and seek justice while healing our communities.

#### **DO:**

**Listen** to the lived experience of Friends of color!

**Be mindful** that Friends of color have to live with the impact of white supremacy in their daily lives.

**Be open to diverse manners of expression.** For example, Friends of various cultural backgrounds may raise their voices while speaking passionately about a topic with no intention of offending anyone.

**Process your feelings with other White Friends** by holding each other accountable to educate yourselves, change behavior, and take more action against racism.

#### **Don't:**

Make Friends of color spokespeople for everyone of their race.

Ask Friends of color to relieve your feelings of guilt.

Ask Friends of color to affirm your good intentions.

**Credit for Statement of Purpose for SAYMA theme:** by Susan Firestone, and Sharon Smith, approved by SAYMA Yearly Meeting Planning Committee.

**Credit for Advice for European American Friends:** adapted for SAYMA by Susan Firestone, Folami Adams and Sharon Smith from “Advice for European Americans” handout from the interest group for European Americans Working on Racism at FGC 2015 Gathering.

## **Actionable Items: URJ Requests**

### **1. Funding Request—SAYMA URJ has had no funding since 2018!**

A. URJ Requests \$10,000 of set-aside funds for fiscal year 2021.

B. In addition, URJ is requesting a line item in SAYMA’s annual budget of \$10,000 each year, or unless URJ requests a different amount.

C. As per recommendations from the FGC Institutional Assessment of Systemic Racism, to create an endowment to provide funding for People of color engaged in social change, anti-racism and/or counter-colonial work, URJ is soliciting donor restricted funds from individual Friends and Monthly Meetings for its **Uplifting Racial Justice Fund**. The Racial Justice Fund will enable URJ to provide support for Friends of Color to participate in SAYMA and FGC sponsored events, including sponsoring their own events and projects in support of people of color who are engaged in anti-racism work and/or most impacted by systemic white supremacy and settler colonialism.

D. White supremacy is maintained by controlling the NARRATIVE, the PROCESSES and all RESOURCES. Therefore, SAYMA can only become an anti-racist faith community by giving Friends of color the budget URJ requested and the freedom to allocate those resources in accordance with URJ’s mission and goals.

E. During the time of the pandemic, we know that BIPOC are disproportionately impacted both economically and medically. Therefore, URJ also requests that Friends donate the money they might have spent to attend the Yearly Meeting, Pendle Hill retreats and/or FGC Gathering to the Uplifting Racial Justice Fund. URJ has requested this before, with little success, therefore URJ asks that the clerks and representatives assist URJ with fundraising by encouraging SAYMA Friends to donate their unused travel funds to the Uplifting Racial Justice Fund.

2. URJ asks SAYMA to return to the racial conflict transformation process, facilitated by the Friends Center for Racial Justice. Just because two Friends of color decided not to participate is no excuse for it not to continue. When have you ever seen the yearly meeting cancel an activity or process, just because a couple of white Friends chose not to participate? Using Friends of color against one another in this manner is not acceptable. It is not only abusive, but also a function of white supremacy/racism, and not OK, by any measure.

3. Officially recognize the Paul Cuffee Worship group as part of SAYMA.



Approved by SAYMA-URJ and submitted on February 26<sup>th</sup> by Sharon “Star” Smith, clerk of URJ

Attachment E. FCNL Report 2020

Friends Committee on National Legislation  
Report to SAYMA Rep Meeting 144  
March 14, 2020

In November 2019, all four of SAYMA's representatives to FCNL attended and participated in the annual meeting and Quaker Public Policy Institute. As your representatives to FCNL, we serve on the General Committee which acts as the principal decision-making body of the organization. We will be delivering a full report to SAYMA's annual gathering in June, but wanted to let meetings know about some important news.

At our business meeting, we approved a revision *The World We Seek: Statement of Legislative Policy*, using input from monthly meetings and Quaker organizations around the nation. The revised document can be found here: <https://www.fcnl.org/updates/the-world-we-seek-25>

FCNL is asking Friends from across the U.S. to help set legislative priorities for the 117th Congress (2021 – 2022). A distinctive feature of the Friends Committee on National Legislation is the practice of asking Quakers around the country to help focus the work of the organization. This input forms the foundation for the lobbying priorities that the General Committee will approve at its Annual Meeting in November of 2020. **Input from monthly meetings is due to FCNL by April 10, 2020.** Materials have been sent out to meeting clerks and contacts and are also available online at: <https://www.fcnl.org/updates/setting-legislative-priorities-2482>

We look forward to seeing you all in June.

Respectfully submitted,

Deni Elliott, Lewisburg, WV  
Jane Hiles, Birmingham, AL  
Bill Reynolds, Chattanooga, TN  
Charlie Wilton, Berea, KY

**Treasurer's Report to Yearly Meeting  
June 2021**

SAYMA's fiscal year is October – September, so the attached reports as of May 31, 2021 represent about 2/3 of the year.

General items of note for this fiscal year.

- I was appointed as Acting Treasurer in December 2020 after the previous Treasurer resigned.
- Assessments of \$26,512.12 are running at 59% of budget yet we are at 67% of the year. Three Monthly Meeting that have paid assessments in the past have not made any assessments this fiscal year. This is down from six in the previous report. Some make payments once a year. I expect by the end of the fiscal year we will be near the budgeted amount of \$44,894.
- All contributions to Wider Quaker Organizations have been made.
- The Donor Restricted SAYMA-URJ Fund has received \$916.20 and expenses of \$46.90.
- \$1800 was transferred into FWCC 3rd World Delegate Fund and FWCC SAYMA Intl Delegates Fund.
- In the March report I said \$150 came from Donor Restricted FWCC SAYMA Intl Delegates Fund for registration fee to FWCC Section of the Americas meeting. I was informed this should have come from WQO Del Travel and has been corrected.

Balance Sheet YTD Comparison

The comparative balance sheet shows SAYMA's assets, liabilities, and equity for the following dates: 5/31/21, 9/30/20, 5/31/20, and 9/30/19.

Report item of note:

- I have highlighted Reserves and Undesignated Equity. I expect that by 9/30/21 the Undesignated Equity to be about \$31,000.

Income and Expense Report

This report shows income and expenses for last fiscal year and this fiscal year to date.

Fund Income and Expense Report

This report only shows set-aside funds that have had activity this fiscal year.

Kendall Ivie, Acting Treasurer

**SAYMA**  
**Balance Sheet Comparison**  
As of May 31, 2021

	<u>May 31, 21</u>	<u>Sep 30, 20</u>	<u>May 31, 20</u>	<u>Sep 30, 19</u>
<b>ASSETS</b>				
Current Assets				
Total Checking/Savings	<u>84,378.62</u>	<u>83,298.43</u>	<u>77,851.87</u>	<u>83,228.26</u>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<u><u>84,378.62</u></u>	<u><u>83,298.43</u></u>	<u><u>77,851.87</u></u>	<u><u>83,228.26</u></u>
<b>LIABILITIES &amp; EQUITY</b>				
Liabilities				
Current Liabilities				
Total Payroll taxes payable	<u>879.89</u>	<u>1,347.71</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>
Total Liabilities	<u>879.89</u>	<u>1,347.71</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>
Equity				
Donor-Restricted Funds				
Pandemic Grant	943.42	1,000.00	0.00	0.00
FWCC 3rd World Delegates	1,150.00	1,150.00	1,150.00	0.00
FWCC SAYMA Intl Delegates	1,100.00	1,100.00	1,100.00	0.00
URJ Fund	<u>869.30</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>50.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>
Total Donor-Restricted Funds	<u>4,062.72</u>	<u>3,250.00</u>	<u>2,300.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>
Funds Designated by SAYMA				
Reserves	<u>18,208.00</u>	<u>18,208.00</u>	<u>18,208.00</u>	<u>18,806.00</u>
Set-Aside Funds				
Fund - Boone MM in Trust	2,677.00	2,677.00	2,677.00	2,677.00
Fund - FWCC 3rd World Delegates	3,600.00	1,800.00	1,800.00	0.00
Fund - FWCC SAYMA Intl Delegate	3,600.00	1,800.00	1,800.00	0.00
Fund - Released Friend	10,165.00	10,165.00	10,165.00	10,165.00
Fund - SAYF	5,646.85	5,866.63	4,990.14	5,920.46
Fund - Spiritual Development	2,746.80	2,746.80	2,646.80	246.80
Fund - Uplifting Racial Justice	622.22	622.22	2,222.76	11,240.81
Fund - YAF Scholarship	1,364.75	1,364.75	1,364.75	1,364.75
Fund - Youth Enrichment	<u>2,696.00</u>	<u>2,696.00</u>	<u>2,696.00</u>	<u>2,696.00</u>
Total Set-Aside Funds	<u>33,118.62</u>	<u>29,738.40</u>	<u>30,362.45</u>	<u>34,310.82</u>
Total Funds Designated by SAYMA	<u>51,326.62</u>	<u>47,946.40</u>	<u>48,570.45</u>	<u>53,116.82</u>
Undesignated Equity	<u>28,109.39</u>	<u>30,754.32</u>	<u>26,981.42</u>	<u>30,111.44</u>
Total Equity	<u>83,498.73</u>	<u>81,950.72</u>	<u>77,851.87</u>	<u>83,228.26</u>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES &amp; EQUITY</b>	<u><u>84,378.62</u></u>	<u><u>83,298.43</u></u>	<u><u>77,851.87</u></u>	<u><u>83,228.26</u></u>

**SAYMA**  
**Income and Expenses**

	Oct '19 - Sep 20	Oct '20 - May 21
Ordinary Income/Expense		
Income		
Contributions to SAYMA		
Contribu General Fund	1,500.00	1,000.00
Total Contributions to SAYMA	1,500.00	1,000.00
Total Assessments	49,172.73	26,512.12
Interest - Bank	1.14	0.29
Interest - Money Mkt	320.97	21.07
Publication Sales		
Pub Sales - F&P	64.80	0.00
Total Publication Sales	64.80	0.00
Yearly Meeting Income		
YM Registration Receipts		60.00
YM Scholarship Contributions		100.00
Total Yearly Meeting Income		160.00
Total Income	51,059.64	27,693.48
Expense		
SAYMA Operations		
Banking Costs	20.50	
Liability Insurance	816.00	728.10
Office Admin		
Office - Duplication	0.00	0.00
Office - Officer Expense	22.00	0.00
Office - Phone Zoom	584.93	548.02
Office - Postage	59.65	0.00
Office - Supplies, Equip, Misc	642.08	204.24
Office - Volunteer Bkgrnd Chks	247.50	77.00
Travel - Office Staff	252.51	0.00
Office Admin - Other	0.00	0.00
Total Office Admin	1,808.67	829.26
Personnel		
Payroll Service Expenses	627.84	418.56
Payroll Taxes - SAYMA share	3,086.37	1,209.84
Salaries - gross	22,975.08	15,822.18
Total Personnel	26,689.29	17,450.58
Publication Expenses		
Pub Exp - Faith & Practice	0.00	
Pub Exp - Web & Hosting Svcs	341.62	
Total Publication Expenses	341.62	0.00
SAYMA Committees		

	Oct '19 - Sep 20	Oct '20 - May 21
Cmte Exp - Finance	2,500.00	
Total SAYMA Committees	2,500.00	
Transfer to SAYF	750.00	
Travel Reimbursements		
Travel - WQO Delegates	4,118.50	150.00
Total Travel Reimbursements	4,118.50	150.00
Total SAYMA Operations	37,044.58	19,157.94
Set-aside Fund Annl Allotments		
FWCC 3rd World Delegate Allot	1,800.00	1,800.00
FWCC SAYMA Intl Delegates Allot	1,800.00	1,800.00
Spiritual Devt Annl Allotment	3,000.00	
Total Set-aside Fund Annl Allotments	6,600.00	3,600.00
Transfer to Reserve	-598.00	
WQO Annual Contributions		
WQOs - Membership		
WQO - FGC	1,250.00	1,250.00
WQO - FWCC	1,250.00	1,250.00
Total WQOs - Membership	2,500.00	2,500.00
Total WQOs - Other	4,603.00	4,653.00
Total WQO Annual Contributions	7,103.00	7,153.00
Yearly Meeting Expenses		
Facilities & Services Exp		
YM Services		703.83
Total Facilities & Services Exp		703.83
Junior Yearly Mtg Exp		
JYM Staff		
JYM Coordinator	250.00	
Total JYM Staff	250.00	
Total Junior Yearly Mtg Exp	250.00	
Total Yearly Meeting Expenses	250.00	703.83
Total Expense	50,399.58	30,614.77
Net Ordinary Income	660.06	-2,921.29
Net Income	660.06	-2,921.29

**SAYMA**  
**Fund Report**  
 October 2020 through May 2021

	Pandemic Grant (DR)	URJ (DR)	FWCC 3rd World Deleg (Set-Aside)	FWCC SAYMA Intl Del (Set-Aside)
Ordinary Income/Expense				
Income				
Transfers in from General Fund	0.00	0.00	1,800.00	1,800.00
Contributions to SAYMA				
Contrib DR URJ	0.00	916.20	0.00	0.00
Total Contributions to SAYMA	<u>0.00</u>	<u>916.20</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>
Total Income	<u>0.00</u>	<u>916.20</u>	<u>1,800.00</u>	<u>1,800.00</u>
Expense				
SAYMA Operations				
Office Admin				
Office - Phone ISP	41.59	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total Office Admin	41.59	0.00	0.00	0.00
SAYMA Committees				
Cmte Exp - Upl Racial Justice	0.00	46.90	0.00	0.00
Total SAYMA Committees	<u>0.00</u>	<u>46.90</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>
Total SAYMA Operations	<u>41.59</u>	<u>46.90</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>
Total Expense	<u>41.59</u>	<u>46.90</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>
Net Ordinary Income	<u>-41.59</u>	<u>869.30</u>	<u>1,800.00</u>	<u>1,800.00</u>
Net Income	<u><u>-41.59</u></u>	<u><u>869.30</u></u>	<u><u>1,800.00</u></u>	<u><u>1,800.00</u></u>

**SAYMA Finance Committee Report for YM Sessions, 6th Month, 2021**

Greetings, Friends,

The members of the Finance Committee are Geeta McGahey, Finance Clerk; Members: Karen Morris, Katie Clark, and Kendall Ivey. Kendall is also acting as treasurer. The Finance committee is presenting the proposed 2022 budget for a first read-through on 6/5, followed by an opportunity for discernment with the committee on 6/9 at 8 PM, and then a second read-through with proposed changes and a request for approval on 6/12. The budget is presented in two parts - first the operational budget and then the set-aside budget. The total budget is a deficit one, following the decision in both 2019 and 2020 when making the 2020 and 2020 budget to spend down our unrestricted equity funds which were higher than needed because we keep 40% of our annual budget in a reserve fund.

Operational budget. The income numbers were created by polling Monthly Meeting treasurers and when we received no response, by relying on previous MM donation amounts. Expenses were created by inquiries to and responses from the committee clerks, FGC and FWCC and the administrative assistant. We have budgeted funds for the Ad hoc website committee to help the committee's planning and ability to act.

Set aside Budget. FWCC reps request \$3000 for the third world delegates fund for expenses to attend the world meeting in Durban, South Africa summer of 2024 and \$1800 for our representative; SAYF requests \$2000 for its programming. Uplifting Racial Justice Requests \$10,000.

We request consideration for approval that YM change the Fall Representative meeting to at least 2 weeks after the end of the fiscal year, (the 16th or 23rd of October, 2021), in order to present the year-end report in the fall instead of 6 months later. If approved, this request would be applicable for each successive year.

This has been a hard year for the committee. In addition to the stress from the pandemic and these uncertain times, our beloved emeritus assistant treasurer, whose career was in non-profit finance suddenly developed a terminal illness, our treasurer resigned, Kendall has been struggling to quickly get up to speed as acting treasurer, another committee member suddenly died, and we didn't have the opportunity to meet face to face when controversial issues arrived. We hope to present the previously circulated Conflict of Interest policy, a Grants policy, and Financial Operations Continuity Policy for discernment at Fall rep meeting. The variety of minutes presented by monthly meetings show that while there has not been a conflict between the finance committee or treasurer and URJ there is great conflict within SAYMA about whether the URJ committee's expenses are moving toward the mission, vision, and goals approved by SAYMA and are in good order. We recommend conflict resolution if unity cannot be reached on the URJ set-aside request.

Re: Charleston MM minute: The Finance Committee reported on the use of the URJ Funds of \$16,000. The original documents setting up financial transactions of URJ said that we would accept their judgement and follow accounts payable policies. In several cases there were grants given and no receipts. This poses controversy within SAYMA. The following parts from the URJ financial arrangements and the accounts payable process are interpreted differently by different Friends. "Disbursements will follow the accounts payable process as explained in the SAYMA handbook." pg 27 "The authorized individual submits an invoice to the treasurer, along with a brief explanation of the purpose of the purchase and the budgeted item to which the cost should be charged" page 31 "The accounts payable policy does not give the treasurer or the finance committee authority to deny or delay payment due to questions of judgment about the advisability of an expense that has proper authorization and for which funds are budgeted and available."pg 27.

Respectfully submitted,  
Geeta McGahey, Clerk



		FY19 Actual	FY20 Approved 6/16/19	FY20 Actual	FY21 Budget Approved 9/2020	FY21 YTD 5/31/2021	FY22 Budget Proposed 1.0
1	<b>SAYMA FY 2022 Budget Proposed 1.0 Main</b>						
2							
3	Income	\$104,239	\$105,575	\$51,059	\$91,944	\$27,693	\$98,042
4	Adjustments to Income						
5	Assessments	\$58,884	\$50,425	\$49,173	\$44,894	\$26,512	\$50,992
26	Contributions – General	\$2,727	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$1,000	\$1,500
27	Interest - CD	\$0	\$0				
28	Interest - Money Mkt	\$545	\$700	\$321	\$100	\$21	\$100
29	Publication Sales	\$296	\$50	\$65	\$100	\$0	\$100
32	YM Income	\$41,787	\$52,900	\$0	\$45,350	\$160	\$45,350
33	YM Adjustments to Income	\$0	\$0				
34	YM Bookstore Inc	\$1,019	\$1,300		1,300		1,300
35	YM Receipts	\$39,176	\$49,400		42,850	60	42,850
36	YM Scholarship Contrib	\$1,593	\$2,200		1,200	100	1,200
37	Expenses	\$92,332	\$112,170	\$50,999	\$91,728	\$30,615	\$115,780
38	Adjustments to Expenses	\$0	\$0				
39	SAYMA Operations	\$37,307	\$43,520	\$36,295	\$34,878	\$19,158	\$45,380
40	Liability Insurance	\$677	\$850	\$816	\$850	\$728	\$900
41	Office Admin	\$4,775	\$5,295	\$1,829	\$3,110	\$829	\$3,980
42	Banking Fees	\$0	\$0	\$21		\$0	
43	Office - Duplication	\$74	\$225	\$0	\$250	\$0	\$250
44	Office - Guilford Archiving	\$150	\$150	\$0	\$150	\$0	\$150
45	Office - Supplies, Equip, Misc	\$1,583	\$2,000	\$642	\$400	\$204	\$400
46	Office - Officer Exp	\$0	\$150	\$22	\$150	\$0	\$150
47	Office - Phone, Zoom	\$1,273	\$600	\$585	\$600	\$548	\$820
48	Office - Postage	\$93	\$170	\$60	\$160	\$0	\$160
49	Office - Volunteer Bkgrd Chks	\$79	\$200	\$248	\$200	\$77	\$250
50	Travel - Office Staff	\$1,523	\$1,800	\$253	\$1,200	\$0	\$1,800
51	Personnel	\$24,185	\$25,705	\$26,689	\$26,098	\$17,451	\$28,000
52	Payroll Costs	\$659	\$625	\$628		\$419	
53	Salaries Exp	\$18,211	\$23,300	\$22,975		\$15,822	
54	Tax Payments	\$5,316	\$1,780	\$3,086		\$1,210	
55	Publications Expenses	\$427	\$270	\$342	\$220	\$0	\$2,700
56	Pub Exp - Directory	\$18					
57	Pub Exp - Faith & Practice	\$409			\$100		\$100
58	Pub Exp - Newsletter	\$0					
59	Pub Exp - Web & Hosting Srvc	\$0	\$270	\$342	\$120	\$0	\$2,600
60	SAYMA Committees	\$211	\$3,800	\$2,500	\$0	\$0	\$2,700
61	Cmte Exp – Contingency Pool	\$0	\$500				\$500
62	Cmte Exp - Faith & Practice Rvsn	\$0	\$100				\$0
63	Cmte Exp - Finance	\$69	\$2,500	\$2,500			\$0
64	Cmte Exp - Ministry & Nurture	\$90	\$500				
66	Cmte Exp - Outreach	\$0	\$0				\$2,000
71	Cmte Exp - Yearly Meeting Planning	\$52	\$200				\$200
72	Travel Reimbursements	\$5,032	\$7,600	\$4,119	\$3,850	\$150	\$5,100
73	Travel - Rep Meetings	\$32	\$100		\$100		\$100
74	Travel - WQO Delegates	\$4,999	\$7,500	\$4,119	\$3,750	\$150	\$5,000
85	Yearly Meeting	\$43,848	\$52,900	\$250	\$45,350	\$704	\$45,850
86	Facilities & Services Exp	\$35,035	\$44,150	\$0	\$35,800	\$704	\$36,300
92	Junior Yearly Meeting Exp	\$6,172	\$5,700	\$250	\$6,500	\$0	\$6,500
93	JYM Asst Coordinator	\$2,400	\$1,600		\$2,400		\$2,400
94	JYM Coordinator	\$3,600	\$3,600	\$250	\$3,600	\$0	\$3,600
95	JYM Supplies, Sitters, Misc	\$172	\$500		\$500		\$500
96	YM Bookstore Exp	\$1,107	\$1,300		\$1,300		\$1,300
97	YM Print Post Phone & Misc	\$1,535	\$1,750		\$1,750		\$1,750
98	Quaker Membership Orgs Annual Contrib	\$1,500	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500
99	WQO - FGC	\$750	\$1,250	\$1,250	\$1,250	\$1,250	\$1,250
100	WQO - FWCC - Direct Contrbn	\$750	\$1,250	\$1,250	\$1,250	\$1,250	\$1,250
101	Other WQO Annual Contribns	\$4,500	\$4,650	\$4,604	\$4,650	\$4,653	\$5,250
113							
114	Net(Surplus/Deficit) before Reserve Change:	\$11,907	-\$6,595	\$60	\$216	-\$2,922	-\$17,738
115	Yearly Gathering Net:	-\$2,061	\$0	-\$250	\$0	-\$544	-\$500
116							
117	Reserve Change:	857	-\$540	-\$598			
118	Net(Surplus/Deficit) with Reserve Change	\$11,050	-\$6,055	\$658	\$216	-\$2,922	-\$17,738
	Net(Surplus/Deficit) w RC no Set-aside						-\$938
	Reserve			\$18,208	\$18,208	\$18,208	\$18,208
	Undesignated Funds			\$30,754	\$30,754	\$27,860	\$13,017
	Undesignated Funds without Set-aside Budget						\$29,817
	<b>File: FY22 Budget Proposed 1.0 Main</b>						

1	SAYMA FY 2022 Budget Set-aside Proposed 1.0	FY19 Actual	FY20 Approved 6/16/19	FY20 Actual	FY21 Budget Approved 9/2020	FY21 YTD 5/31/2021	FY22 Budget Proposed 1.0
2							
75	Set-aside Fund Annual Allotments	\$5,177	\$8,600	\$7,350	\$4,350	\$3,600	\$16,800
76	Boone MM In Trust	\$2,677					
77	FWCC 3rd World Delg Annl Exp	\$0	\$1,800	\$1,800	\$1,800	\$1,800	\$3,000
78	FWCC Conference Annl Exp	\$0	\$1,800	\$1,800	\$1,800	\$1,800	\$1,800
79	Released Friend Annl Exp	\$0					
80	SAYF Annl Exp (formerly "SAYF Operational Tr	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$750	\$750	\$0	\$2,000
81	Spiritual Development Annl Exp	\$500	\$3,000	\$3,000			
82	Uplifting Racial Justice Annl Exp	\$0			\$0		\$10,000
83	YAF Scholarships Annl Exp	\$0					
84	Youth Enrichment Fund Annl Exp	\$0					
113							
114	Net(Surplus/Deficit) before Reserve Change:	\$11,907	<del>-\$6,595</del>	\$60	\$216	<del>-\$2,922</del>	<del>-\$17,738</del>
115	Yearly Gathering Net:	<del>-\$2,061</del>	\$0	<del>-\$250</del>	\$0	<del>-\$544</del>	<del>-\$500</del>
116							
117	Reserve Change:	857	<del>-\$540</del>	<del>-\$598</del>			
118	Net(Surplus/Deficit) with Reserve Change	\$11,050	<del>-\$6,055</del>	\$658	\$216	<del>-\$2,922</del>	<del>-\$17,738</del>
	Net(Surplus/Deficit) w RC no Set-aside						<del>-\$938</del>
	Reserve			\$18,208	\$18,208	\$18,208	\$18,208
	Undesignated Funds			\$30,754	\$30,754	\$27,860	\$13,017
	Undesignated Funds without Set-aside Budget						\$29,817
	<i>File: FY22 Budget Proposed 1.0 Set-aside</i>						

**SAYMA Nominating Committee Report to YM 50, June 2021**

Since RM 146 the Nominating Committee has continued to meet on Zoom and also tried move ahead with plans to establish better and regular communication with SAYMA MMs and engage them more closely in SAYMA business and the search for nominees to SAYMA positions. Since we have sadly to report that we have still no one to bring forward for asst. clerk or treasurer and have several other important posts yet to fill, we clearly have more work to do on improving our outreach and search techniques. We do ask everyone with experience as an MM clerk or treasurer to search their consciences for any nudging of Spirit's presence leading them to apply their skills for SAYMA.

**Nominees**

Archivist – Missy Ivie, WKFM (continuing)

Finance, Clerk – Geeta McGahey, Celo (continuing, interim)

WQO Allocations, member – Jim Cavener, Asheville (continuing)

Personnel, Clerk – Barbara Esther, Asheville (continuing, interim)

Personnel, member – Melissa Preast, WKFM (continuing)

SAYF Support, member – Kathleen Mavournin, WKFM (continuing)

SAYF Support, member – Jennifer Dickie, Atlanta (continuing as SAYF Steering Rep to SAYF Support)

SAYF Support, member – Aaron Ruscetta, Atlanta (one year term)

YMPC Member for Bookstore – Judy Geary, affiliation? (continuing)

Outreach, clerk – Wood Bouldin, CFM, GVWG (continuing)

Outreach, member – Hank Fay, Berea (continuing)

Handbook, clerk – Kendall Ivie, WKFM (continuing)

Handbook, member – Roy Taylor, Atlanta (continuing)

AFSC representative – Boni Isaacs, CFM, GVWG (continuing)

FCNL representative – Deni Elliott, CFM, GVWG (previously “extra”)

FGC representative -Margaret Farmer, Asheville

FWCC representative – Geeta McGahey, Celo (continuing)

RSWR representative – Boni Issacs, CFM, GVWG (continuing)

Submitted by

Wood Bouldin, Clerk

## Attachment I. Clerk's Letter II

Dear SAYMA Friends,

My recent clerk's letter was composed in a time of a developing crisis. I was in protective mode, which was folded into the position I've take with respect to our tradition of worship and process. I need to acknowledge that I was being paternalistic, and at the same time inadvertently protecting the yearly meeting's place of privilege in a colonialist polity built on all the arrogant assumptions implicit in the old term, Manifest Destiny.

I would like to move from the more general terms I have consistently used to some specific examples. However, the more specific I become, the more I expose individuals and meetings who need to speak for themselves. Each situation is complex and nuanced, and whereas generalities cannot express these complex truths, specific examples can harm people. So I proceed with caution.

Let it suffice to say that white people often cause unintended harm, due to their inability to see that they are acting from a position of power within a system that privileges them. As one of you said during the initial part of these sessions, we are like fish swimming in a sea that we cannot see. And when we are surprised, hurt and defensive when shown this, we are demonstrating what has been duly named "white fragility."

In our first plenary, Hal Weaver repeatedly emphasized the importance of centering the narratives of people of color. We need a much more inclusive set of narratives as a basis for our empathy, so that we do not just respond routinely like fish in the White Sea. A few years ago, we were blessed with one of these narratives by a Friend of Color who gave a plenary talk about his dual heritage, African-American and Native American, against the backdrop of structural racism and systemic brutality. There are other such narratives within SAYMA that we badly need to hear, and some are emerging right now.

Not long ago, I attended a small gathering where a white woman shared a story of continuing brutality towards Black people. She was trying to reach out from a place of deep empathy to a Black woman in the group, and broke into tears as she shared the story. Attending those tears, I did not speak, though I was uncomfortable, for I noticed that the Black woman quietly left the circle. Afterwards, I reached out to her, admitting that I had joined the inadvertent white centering (those tears!) and apologized. The response from the Friend of Color was that we inevitably make mistakes as we try to disentangle our racist heritage, and that we have to accept our mistakes and move on. She closed with, "*the LOVE behind our intentions will win out.*" This is a crucial point, out of line with critical race theory, which points to the importance of actions, not intentions. But it is firmly within our Friends tradition, growing out of the ministry of Jesus.

There are many more stories large and small, and they need to be told by the people themselves, not second-hand. But it is imperative as we move towards our goal of becoming an anti-racist community, that we do not allow one Friend of Color to abrogate the right of other Friends of Color to tell their stories and have their own points of view. As Friends, we are an inclusive community, and each person in the Meeting is honored, because underneath our diversity we are a unity. If we weren't, we couldn't search for a sense of the meeting. As Paul of Tarsus said, we are all parts of the body of Christ, each with a gift that makes up the whole. Even as universalists, I think we each understand this essential truth.

Racism and our responses to it make for a complex tapestry, with a pattern that is difficult to discern, especially when we only study one or two of the threads in the pattern. We need to acknowledge this complexity, recognizing our brokenness. It is important to recognize that childhood and generational trauma exist among white and black, but because the majority has been part of the colonialist and supremacist American culture, we have a particular moral responsibility to look beyond our moments of

feeling wronged by those who would point out our complicity, moving ever more deeply into self-criticism over that complicity. But there needs to be forbearance as well on the side of those, white and black, who are wielding the tools of justice.

A visiting Friend, who was part of a deep period of prayer in one of our workshops, said to me afterwards, "Your yearly meeting still prays, whatever the context of your struggles may be." The ability to center down and pray, which I have witnessed frequently this week, is a treasure we must remember and relay upon, especially in the most vexed moments. But it must not be a retreat into the comfort of the dominant party in a society that thrives on control of resources, material and human. Think of those good Quaker slavers, some of whom met in a sense of unity long into John Woolman's campaign to open their eyes and hearts. For others, one by one, a seed was laid to mend their ways. But this took time, and of course Woolman's work is unfinished. We must pray together in a place of deep listening while leaving the conflict in the room, asking for healing of the Society, those of us who are in conflict, and of ourselves.

Friends, we need to accept the pain of being confronted with our structural complicity and often, of new racist sins in the moment, sometimes of being falsely accused. But we cannot tolerate abusive behavior. If you take these two statements together, you have the crux of our painful dilemma. Some of us are so wounded that reopening those wounds is too much to bear. Others need to toughen their skins, look inward, and get on with the work.

Friends, SAYMA needs a new beginning. We need to genuinely forgive one another for past misunderstandings, slights, and outright abuse. It will not be easy, but if we approach our struggle with an attitude of mutual respect, with forbearance, and speak and act from a place of deep reflection, we may yet open the door where Spirit waits to lead us .

Robert McGahey

June 10, 2021

ad hoc Committee to Revise the Guide to our Faith and Practice  
Report to the YM Business Session V  
June 10, 2021

The ad hoc Committee to Revise the Guide to our Faith and Practice asked the Uplifting Racial Justice Committee to revise the one query (E-18) that did not achieve unity at Yearly Meeting Business Session II. Our committee approved the revised version as it was submitted to us.

We ask that the YM Business Session approve the following query:

Query E-18:

How do we acknowledge Indigenous peoples whose ancestors were brutally murdered or enslaved for us to live on their stolen ancestral lands? How do we atone for the sins of our ancestors to their surviving descendants, those most impacted by our ongoing and relentless racial violence, genocide, land theft, and slavery?

***Free Solomon Polazzo***, Clerk

for the Ad Hoc Committee to Revise the SAYMA Guide to our Faith & Practice

The ad hoc Committee to revise the Guide to our Faith and Practice (Guide) is happy to submit our final draft version of our recommended revisions to the Queries Section of the 2012 Guide. The queries we were asked to revise were first approved in 1990 and then partially revised in the 2000 Reprint Edition. Our committee started its work in 2014 and has been in contact with many of SAYMA's Committees and Monthly Meetings. Each had Light that we determined was needed. All responded. Eventually! Each response was seen as a gift we happily received. We appreciated hearing from SAYMA Friends that their meetings and/or committees had become clearer about their spiritual path because our queries revision process allowed each to work at their own pace.

The Guide, on page 5, has an Explanatory Note that states; "The Guide reflects our understanding of the spiritual basis for our practice as Quakers." This understanding includes the Queries Section which can assist readers to focus on a specific practice or testimony and also introduce topics which, while important, have not (yet) found its way to be included in the Guide's other sections.

The revision committee has labored long and hard and joyfully to include as many of these topics as possible. We ask that Friends be tender when encountering such queries. Consider that there are Friends to whom the query you may not care for would still be helpful to SAYMA Friends whose spiritual paths diverge from yours. SAYMA's spiritual diversity can be seen in the wide range of topics that dwell in our queries section.

We remind Friends that our work is to describe what SAYMA Meetings are asking as well as what they might want to say to the world about SAYMA's condition. This committee recognized and shared its leading with SAYMA's monthly meetings that a complete revision of the queries section was necessary as the majority of the "Queries" we found in the 1990 reprint were actually "Advices" (See the Guide's glossary for clarification). We were happy to hear from all of SAYMA's Monthly Meetings that responded that they agreed with our leading.

Note that there are a several "queries" that the committee determined advices (often as part of a query) would be more useful due to its importance to many, though not all, of SAYMA meetings. These include queries A7, A 21, A31, B1, B6, B10, C7, E 20. Note that Sub-Section H was retitled to actually say "Queries & Advices". Our committee recognized that this sub section would be used as a checklist to help a SAYMA Sponsoring Meeting discern whether its Preparative Meeting was ready to be recognized as SAYMA Monthly Meeting. We have also asked the Handbook Committee to consider including this sub-section in the SAYMA Handbook.

SAYMA's Monthly Meetings are each unique and represent communities that can differ greatly from each other. If we failed to include a Query that speaks to your condition, remember that any Monthly Meeting may send a Minute to the clerk of the YM asking for change(s) to the Guide. We refer you to page 5 of the current Guide (2012) for more details on how that works.

We ask SAYMA Friends that as you review the Draft of the Revised Queries you recognize that the query that does not speak to you can be an important one for SAYMA Friends who may be on a separate spiritual journey from yours. The beauty of Friends' Faith & Practice is how it weaves together the diverse spiritual journeys of so many Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting and Association members. The ad hoc Committee to Revise the Queries Section of the Guide, asks for your approval of these queries.

*Queries are understood to have three distinct values: the personal value, as we find the answers in ourselves; the interpretive value, by which the progressive application of our religious principles to life is disclosed; and the corporate value, by which the state or the Society can be appraised. At the reading of them, let us search our own hearts in the Light of the Holy Spirit and carefully ponder these questions for our personal answer.”*

Faith and Practice, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting (1935)

### **Introduction to the Queries Section:**

*Friends' queries are spiritual. Because we believe in continuing revelation, any answers to these queries may change as we grow in spiritual awareness. They are designed to be thought-provoking and to inspire prayerful consideration. Friends are urged to keep in mind that rather than following rules, we are following our leading to hold all things in the Light. Queries help us consider whether current practice gives all witness to faith.*

*Queries may be read at meetings for worship or business, used in worship sharing, included in newsletters and studied by individuals. Allow a period of silence after reading a query.*

### **A: Queries for Monthly and Yearly Meetings**

**A 1:** During a meeting for worship, how do I seek guidance from the Light? In our meeting for worship, are we open to various forms of vocal ministry as coming from the Spirit?

**A 2:** How does our meeting create an environment that helps worshipers center down into deep worship no matter what distractions occur?

**A 3:** How does our meeting remain in a spirit of worship when conducting business? In meeting for business, how can we be open to search for a sense of the meeting and to be guided toward resolution in the Light.

**A 4:** How does our meeting encourage all members and attenders to participate in a meeting for business?

**A 5:** How can we each use our individual gifts in the work of maintaining our meeting? In what ways can we honor the wide range of Friends' contributions to the meeting? How do we help Friends recognize their own gifts?



**A 6:** How do we support those who serve our meeting?

**A 7:** Do we individually assume our rightful share of responsibility for the work and the financial support of the monthly meeting?

**A 8:** How do we seek peace and unity in our meeting? How do we address discord and conflict in our meeting?

**A 9:** What is my understanding of eldering? How do Friends in our meeting use the practice of eldering to encourage others to share their gifts as well as to provide guidance? Before eldering someone, do I confer with other members of the meeting?

**A 10:** How are we strengthened as we struggle together using Quaker process? How can we Friends make better use of tools such as clearness committees, care committees, support committees, and threshing meetings to help in personal and/or corporate discernment?

**A 11:** Am I open to insights from other Friends in the meeting? When do I know to seek guidance from others?

**A 12:** How do I discern whether to pursue a leading that is not supported by my meeting?

**A 13:** How do we show that we value older Friends among us?

**A 14:** What binds us together as Friends? What weakens or strengthens us on our path toward a stronger community?

**A 15:** How do we build a more inclusive community through fellowship, service, and learning in monthly and yearly meetings.

**A 16:** What can our monthly and yearly meetings do to foster a more inclusive environment?

**A 17:** How does our meeting reach out to the broader community? How does our meeting create a welcoming environment and spiritual home for everyone including newcomers?

**A 18:** How do we minister to each other in times of need? How does our meeting take responsibility for the vulnerable in our meeting community instead of relying solely on our “care and nurture committee” (or equivalent)?

**A 19:** How does our meeting identify and reach out to Friends, especially those who may be difficult, unlikeable, and/or challenging? How do we support and learn from absent Friends who may have left the meeting under painful circumstances?

**A 20:** How do we interact with those who have been hurt by the meeting community? How does our meeting respond when someone ceases to attend?

**A 21:** Are we sensitive to the spiritual and physical needs of those making up the meeting community? How do we and our meeting lovingly respond to the needs of homebound, distant, or lonely members?

**A 22:** How does our meeting make it possible for an elderly Friend or for caregivers of the very young or disabled to participate fully in the life of the meeting community?

**A 23:** How does our meeting support and provide resources for those with special needs? How does the meeting recognize, in a timely way, when these resources are needed?

**A 24:** How do we support Friends who require extra care? How do we support those giving the extra care?

**A 25:** How can I speak so that Friends can hear messages more clearly? How can the Meeting improve the spiritual experience for Friends who have difficulty hearing?

**A 26:** How does our meeting assist those who are coping with addiction, mental illness, or trauma? In what ways does our meeting address the systemic causes of these challenges?

**A 27:** How does our meeting provide for continuing religious education in the manner of Friends? How do we ensure that materials avoid stereotypes, draw from a broad range of cultural backgrounds, and present realistic positive views of marginalized people?

**A 28:** How does our appropriate use of electronic devices and other technology enhance, detract, or distract from the spiritual life of the meeting?

**A 29:** How is information about the work and the life of the meeting communicated?

**A 30:** In what ways is our meeting creating and maintaining outreach materials in print, on its website, and on social media that conveys a lively welcoming presence? How do we ensure that our outreach materials appeal to a diverse range of cultures, backgrounds, and abilities?

**A 31:** Has your meeting formed alliances with faith communities, social justice groups, and/or other community groups which are composed primarily of people of color? What processes contributed to the formation of those alliances?

**A 32:** How do I and my meeting interact with other cultural/racial groups in my own community and in the wider community?

### **B: Queries for Personal Discernment**

**B 1:** Do I make time daily for meditation, prayer, or worship? Do I seek spiritual guidance in making decisions, especially in difficult times? If so, where do I seek it?

**B 2:** How do I make use of the Bible, the writings of Friends, and other inspirational literature? Am I open to new Light, whatever its source? How do I seek to understand and appreciate those of other faiths?

**B 3:** How has continuing revelation informed my spiritual journey?

**B 4:** How do I discern the distractions that keep me from the right ordering of my life? How do I address them?

**B 5:** How do I minimize distracting others during Meeting for Worship? How can I minimize my reaction to distractions during Meeting?

**B 6:** Do I hold in the Light the responsibility to share my views even though I perceive I may be a minority of one? How do I discern when to stand in the way or when to stand aside?

**B 7:** How do I discern what yearly or monthly meeting responsibilities are mine to do? How do I discern which are not mine?

**B 8:** What does it mean to me to look for that of God in every person?

**B 9:** When I see Friends engage in actions or words that seem inconsistent with the testimonies of the Religious Society of Friends, how do I season my reaction to be sure it does not come from lack of understanding or unrecognized prejudice? How do I respond?

**B 10:** Do I recognize, empathize with, and try to understand the discomfort in a person or group that often accompanies the experience of being perceived as different or “other”?

**B 11:** How have my unexamined assumptions about individuals and groups of people caused them pain? How has this awareness led me to eliminate biases and change my behavior? What concrete steps am I taking to eliminate my biases such as ones related to race, ethnicity, gender, class, sexual orientation, and/or religion?

**B 12:** How does the history of over 300 years of slavery in our country affect my thinking and my behavior? How do I address racism in myself and in my community in light of this history?

**B 13:** How has growing up as part of a society with a history of institutionalized persecution and expropriation of indigenous peoples affected my attitudes and behavior?

**B 14:** What activities do I participate in that are restorative? How do I develop my physical, emotional, and intellectual abilities? How do I care for my body as a gift from the Spirit?

**B 15:** How is fun a part of my life? Where do I find joy in my life?

**B 16:** How does my expression of sexuality reflect love and respect for myself and for my partner?

### **C: Queries Concerning Friends' Testimonies**

**C 1:** How do I distinguish between needs and wants? How do I decide how much is enough? How important is it that I consider the way that my consumption affects others?

**C 2:** How do I or we address conflict? How am I led to work toward unity and harmony in my personal life and in my meeting? What kind of risks am I willing to take to resolve conflict?

**C 3:** How does the way I live my life help eliminate the causes for all wars?

**C 4:** How do I practice Friends' testimonies against any participation in war, including military preparations?

**C 5:** How do I bring nonviolent practices to all my relationships?

**C 6:** Where there is hatred, division, and conflict, in what ways do I seek to be an agent of reconciliation?

**C 7:** Do all aspects of my life bear the same witness? How do I center my life in the awareness of the presence of God or Spirit so that all things take their rightful place? How might I address those aspects of my life that do not bear the same witness?

**C 8:** Under what circumstances is it difficult for me to act with integrity? Do I attempt to tell the truth at all times? How do I discern whether it is better not to say anything?

**C 9:** How do I discern right action when the truth is unclear?

**C 10:** How do I show respect for all people, including those I perceive as different or “other”?

**C 11:** How do I address inequality in its many forms? What am I doing to bring about equal opportunities for those who suffer discrimination?

**C 12:** How do I recognize and celebrate the diversity that exists in my meeting?

**C 13:** In what ways do I search for that of God within all persons regardless of how similar or different they are from myself?

**C 14:** In what ways do Friends’ beliefs and testimonies influence my life choices? What are my priorities with respect to how I use my time and treasure?

**C 15:** How do my Quaker values inform my choice of work? How do I conduct my business and financial affairs so they are consistent with Friends’ testimonies?

## **D: Queries for Families**

**D 1:** How do I define “family” in all its various configurations?

**D 2:** How do I recognize marriage/joining as a loving and sacred relationship requiring mutual consideration and continuing adjustments?

**D 3:** How do I support those whose marriage/joining is under the care of the meeting?

**D 4:** How do I practice the art of listening in my family, even beyond words? How do I show respect and understanding for all family members? How do I plan activities that will give my family time to grow together? How do I share my deepest beliefs and skills with all members of my family?

**D 5:** How do I grow in love and understanding with my children and young people? In what ways am I an example for them? How do I seek out and learn from their insights and concerns?

**D 6:** How does my family use Quaker testimonies to build community and grow in the Spirit? How does my family address difficult topics in ways that encourages honest and respectful communication?

**D 7:** How do I prepare my children to be responsible and to live with integrity in an ever-changing world?

**D 8:** How do I balance the need for privacy and intimacy in my family life with my desire to make my home a center of hospitality?

**D 9:** How do I make the presence of the Light felt in my home for those who live here as well as those who do not?

**D 10:** How does the Meeting care for those going through divorce?

**E: Queries for Living in the Wider Community:**

**E 1:** How does the meeting offer young people opportunities for fellowship and service? In what ways do I help them assume responsibilities in the home, the meeting, and the larger community? How do I grow in love and understanding of young people?

**E 2:** How am I involved in the schools, service, and governmental organizations in my community? How do I support and foster practices that extend Friends' values in those groups?

**E 3:** How does my meeting address the systemic causes of addiction, mental illness, and trauma in both my community and in the wider community?

**E 4:** How does my meeting maintain its integrity while participate in the wider community?

**E 5:** In what ways does my understanding of current issues inform my participation the wider community?

**E 6:** In what ways do I attempt to influence governmental actions?

**E 7:** How does being known as a Friend help me on my spiritual journey?

**E 8:** When individual Friends are led to participate in civil disobedience, are they encouraged by their meeting to seek clearness about their action? How does the meeting decide whether and in what ways to support that action?

**E 9:** In what ways do I discern that my actions result from leadings of the Spirit?

**E 10:** How can I be more aware of the subtle as well as obvious injustices which may exist in my social, spiritual, and economic life? How do I address these injustices?

**E 11:** How do I and my meeting interact with other cultural/racial groups in my own community and in the wider community?

**E 12:** How can I seek to further understand and remove systemic causes of misery and suffering? How do I offer refuge and support to those who are oppressed and/or harmed by those systems, and yet seek that of God in their oppressors and those responsible for doing harm?

**E 13:** In what ways do I and my meeting support young people faced with the possibility of being recruited and/or registered for military service? How does this support extend to those people who are still active or are former members of the armed forces?

**E 14:** How does awareness of the living conditions of people in my local and global communities affect my purchasing choices? In turn, how do these choices affect the well-being of others?

**E 15:** How do I support fair and equitable use of resources?

**E 16:** How can we model right use of electronic devices so that both our personal lives and the life of the meeting are enhanced?

**E 17:** How do electronic devices contribute to or interfere with my relationships with others and with my participation in the face to face activities of my community?

**E 18:** How do we acknowledge and honor the Indigenous People whose land we occupy? How do we connect with and learn from Indigenous People whom we have impacted? How do we promote the healing of those impacted?

**E 19:** How do I recognize and address problems that marginalized communities may have with systems such as criminal justice, education, healthcare, and immigration?

**E 20:** How do you affirm the leadership of people of color within Friends organizations and in other groups?

**E 21:** If you are a person of European descent, have you been part of a group which consists primarily people of color? What did you learn by being the “other” in the group?

### **Section F: Queries for Care of the Earth**

**F 1:** How do I express my gratitude for Creation? How do I seek to preserve and protect the physical world?

**F 2:** How do I honor all living things, including myself? Do I seek God in the whole world?

**F 3:** How mindful am I that actions for peace and justice are interwoven with the right sharing of Earth’s resources? How much is enough?

**F 4:** How do I hold in the Light the impact of climate change on the “least of these,” the vulnerable members of the human, animal, and plant communities?

**F 5:** How do I seek to reduce my use of fossil fuels? How does my meeting seek to reduce its use of fossil fuels?

**F 6:** As I integrate care for the Earth into my life, how can I share the values of ecological concerns with my Meeting and others?

### **Section G: Queries for and by Young Friends**

**G 1:** How do you stand firmly against inequality? How do you peacefully challenge discriminatory social institutional practices?

**G 2:** How do you create and nurture community?



**G 3:** How do you practice good social action while nurturing your well-being? What avenues exist between those?

**G 4:** What do you do that harms/affects the environment? How can you lessen your impact?

**G 5:** In what ways do you use your voice and express your views? When do you reevaluate your perspective?

**G 6:** How can we be supportive of each other's identity and growth?

**G 7:** How do you remain grounded while living and/or working in a materialistic society?

**G 8:** How do you reconcile simplicity and self-expression?

**G 9:** How do you apply Quaker values to your social media presence?

**G 10:** How does your energy change as you enter adulthood?

**G 11:** What is the Light? Where do you find that in your life?

**G 12:** How do you identify as Quaker, and how do you explain that to your peers?

**G 13:** To whom do you extend your compassion?

## **Section H: Queries & Advices for a Preparative Monthly Meeting and its Sponsoring Meeting**

**H 1:** Does the preparative meeting have an understanding of Quaker practice and history? How does this understanding contribute to the life the meeting?

**H 2:** Does the preparative meeting study “SAYMA’s Guide to our Faith and Practice” and Quaker history?

**H 3:** Is the preparative meeting able to carry out usual organizational functions such as appointing a clerk, maintaining a treasury, and recording business meetings? Does the preparative meeting seek and listen to Spirit–led guidance in making decisions?

**H 4:** How does the preparative meeting face its challenges, seeking assistance from Spirit, the sponsoring meeting, and yearly meeting?

**H 5:** Are religious education programs available for people of all ages?

**H 6:** How does the preparative meeting build community in activities outside of Meeting for Worship?

**H 7:** Does the preparative meeting follow Friends’ practice of service through faithfulness to the Spirit?

**H 8:** How does the preparative meeting welcome visitors?

**H 9:** Does the preparative meeting support the yearly meeting through financial contributions and attendance at yearly and representatives’ meetings? Does the preparative meeting interact with Wider Quaker Organizations (WQO) such as Friends General Conference (FGC), American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL), and Quaker Earthcare Witness (QEW)?

**H 10:** Are there enough Friends and attenders to support a preparative monthly meeting? If two or three of these were to stop attending, what would happen to the preparative meeting? Is there ongoing outreach for new attenders?

**H 11:** Is the preparative meeting receiving adequate spiritual and practical support from the sponsoring meeting?

## **SAYMA-Uplifting Racial Justice (URJ) Report—June 2021\***

SAYMA-URJ, was led to identify and address manifestations of white supremacy/racism, which Friends of color have experienced within SAYMA. To that end, URJ offers the following assessment, in the Spirit of integrity and truth, and asks that the yearly meeting sit with the following queries as you read it:

1. What can we CHANGE to make SAYMA a Friendly and welcoming place for diverse peoples of color—not just the tiny minority of Friends of color white people are comfortable with, but all people of color who are led to live in the manner of Friends?
2. How can Friends adapt/modify Quaker Practice and processes to be inclusive and welcoming of diverse cultural expressions of faith, as opposed to expecting culturally diverse peoples to conform to white/Eurocentric colonizer cultural norms and practices?

To be clear, an assessment is not meant as a condemnation or indictment; but it is constructive criticism of SAYMA. It is a constructive critique based on the observations of knowledgeable Friends of color regarding the yearly meeting's progress toward becoming a multicultural anti-racist faith community--which is an absolutely appropriate role for SAYMA-URJ.

First, SAYMA-URJ wants the YM to understand and acknowledge that we are at the beginning of a process to dismantle white supremacy/European colonialism within the SAYMA Meeting community, and that we are nowhere near completion. We offer this assessment as evidence thereof. The assessment tool we have used is based on the "Continuum on Becoming an Anti-Racist Multicultural Institution" as detailed in "Understanding and Dismantling Racism: The Twenty-First Century Challenge to White America" by Joseph Barnt. (Rev. Barndt is one of the founders of Crossroads and the People's Institute.)

According to URJ's observations, SAYMA has yet to get beyond stage two (2) of the six (6) stage continuum, in the last five (5) years, since URJ was approved as a standing committee of SAYMA. Stage two is described as:

- Publicly obeys the laws of desegregation; removes signs of intentional exclusion.
- Is tolerant of a limited number of people of color with 'proper' perspective and credentials.  
BUT...
- [The] White constituency is still exclusive and paternalistic in its attitudes and actions, and often declares, "We don't have a problem."
- Continues [its] self-understanding in [of the] organizational structure and mission as a white institution serving a predominantly white constituency.

- Continues to maintain White power and privilege through its de facto policies and practices, teachings and decision making on all levels of institutional life.
- May still secretly limit or exclude people of color in contradiction to public policies.

We think SAYMA wants to progress to stage three but it was clear to us you are not there yet. We encourage you to read the book and consider why we decided y'all have been stuck in stage two for so long.

The following describes just a few racist patterns of behavior URJ members have seen and been subjected to, which coincide with stage two of the continuum. Please remember that we are discussing the yearly meeting as an institution, not any particular individuals who control the levers of white power and control within it.

**Scapegoating: Blaming the Messenger**--Any Friend of color who points out white supremacist colonizer behavior occurring within SAYMA Meetings is either dismissed as wrong, irrelevant or hostile. This speaks to Friends in positions of authority who still refuse to acknowledge or accept SAYMA-URJ's construction as a Friends of color only committee, over which they have no oversight. These Friends continually try to undermine the committee's work because they are uncomfortable with not having control of who URJ's members are and how they are chosen. They especially don't like not having control of URJ's spiritual discernment process concerning how URJ interprets and fulfills its mission and goals. Since they cannot control URJ, they seek to undermine its work by nefarious means. This is exactly how white supremacy works, systemically.

URJ members have been accused of conflicts of interest, fraud, theft, misappropriation of funds, of abuse, bullying and name-calling. Some of us have even had our ancestral lineage called into question. All for simply acting in accordance with URJ's SAYMA approved mission and goals, outside of their oversight. Seriously. URJ members were accused of "conflicts of interests" even though SAYMA never had, nor needed a conflict of interest policy before. URJ members were falsely accused of financial malfeasance, for spending our own set aside funds in absolute compliance with the committee's mission and goals. Then, even though the matter was investigated by Finance--and no wrongdoing was found--the accusations have persisted, and URJ's funding has been affected, as a direct result.

So-called weighty white Friends have constantly inserted themselves into conflicts between Friends of color, where they should have known not to. They have taken advantage of minor, often petty and personal conflicts to pit Friends of color against one other, simply to undermine URJ members and URJ's ability to fulfill its mission. SAYMA-URJ could easily have resolved any conflict between Friends of color, if we were trusted to do so. But instead, a few angry white Friends have been allowed to weaponize their white crocodile tears, in order to prompt a few misguided and already traumatized Friends of color to speak out against URJ and its members, against their own interests. That just two Black men, were encouraged—more like they were set up--to falsely claim they spoke for all Black Friends—not even all Friends of color, mind you.

They spoke out in the September Representative Meeting, calling for URJ to be laid down and defunded, and said they did not want to participate in the racial conflict transformation process, which URJ had been requesting for many months. That they did so, without bringing their concerns to URJ first, is a perfect example of how racism works within every predominantly white institution, by tokenizing a few people of color to act as gatekeepers, upholding white supremacy.

So, we ask, what kind of Friendship is that? When has a Meeting or Quaker organization ever canceled an activity or program, just because two Friends chose not to participate--for any reason? This behavior alone exposes, that the entire goal of these so-called weighty Friends in positions of authority, who emotionally manipulated a few SAYMA Friends of color to act against their own interests, was a racist strategy to destabilize and destroy URJ's ability to fulfill its mission--simply because URJ will not allow them to control us. This is a textbook example of how white supremacy is maintained among Friends.

**Tone Policing:** White Friends harass, try to intimidate, belittle, patronize, and demean Friends of color engaged in Anti-racism work until those Friends of Color react with anger, as is natural. Then we are told we must be polite and Friendly to people who clearly mean us harm. You make no allowance for Friends of Color to express themselves in their own culturally relevant styles of expression if it makes racist white Friends uncomfortable or nervous, going so far as to equate expressions you don't like as "evil." Yet, y'all commit constant micro-aggressions and micro-assaults against Friends of color, shrug it off as harmless, then get angry and say you are being victimized when Friends of Color defend themselves and/or point out your racist behavior to you. That's not OK—and it is racist.

Then you say you are committed to making our Meeting a safe and welcoming place for people of color. Do you see the problem here?

**Dismissal of Authority:** You "disagree" with anyone who names the racism/white supremacy all around us, even when those observations are made by persons trained to identify and disrupt white supremacy, especially if the expert is a Friend of Color. You dismiss and disparage such observations, and categorically deny the possibility that you are in fact, racist. YET, that is exactly what "Racism Denial" is.

You have even dared to employ racist colonial metrics to challenge the legitimacy and cultural authority of Friends of color who identify as Indigenous, in order to avoid accountability.

Then you say you are committed to making our Meeting a safe and welcoming place for people of color. Do you see what the problem is?

**Imposition of Power:** Entirely new practices and processes have been created which are completely outside of good Quaker order, solely for the purpose of oppressing Friends of Color. Several so-called weighty White Friends have been engaged in covert organizing activities

against SAYMA Friends of color they don't like, just because they want control over URJ's approach to the anti-racism work we feel SAYMA needs to do. In addition, the vast majority of conflict-averse white Friends never stand in opposition to these obvious violations of proper order. Nor do they attempt to support and/or defend Friends of color when they/we are literally experiencing racist attacks, leaving them/us to fend for ourselves. Then, the extreme few white Friends, brave enough try to stand up to Quaker racists in SAYMA Meetings, come under attack themselves.

News Flash: This is NOT the way to dismantle white supremacy/colonialism, which simply cannot be done without discomfort, challenge or conflict. Do you see the problem?

Y'all insist on maintaining Quaker traditions, on doing things as they have always been done, instead of being open to **continuing revelation**, or new anti-racist insights and leadings from Friends of color, despite the fact that becoming an anti-racist multicultural faith community requires CHANGE. Worse than that, you want to control the change to suit your white comfort and convenience. You still refuse to let go of your internalized white supremacist addiction to control the narratives, processes and resources regarding, even the anti-racism work of SAYMA. And, you consistently undermine and attack those Friends of color who have been spirit led to labor with you and your racism, to provide the necessary knowledgeable leadership in the work of dismantling white supremacy/colonialism among Friends. Even as you are learning that you should follow the leadership of knowledgeable people of color, you still think you are qualified to decide who those leaders should be, whether they are willing, or led to do this work, or not.

News Flash: The reason you have such difficulty finding Friends of color to fill those roles is entirely due to your controlling white supremacist behavior toward the few, who are willing to confront you on your racism. You need to understand, that it is much easier for Friends of color who do not wish to serve on your committees or on URJ, to blame URJ and its clerk for their reluctance than it is for them to stand up to your racism, themselves. We're pretty sure they will I tell you whatever they think you want hear, just to avoid participating in your white-led anti-racism process.

Then you say you are committed to making our Meeting a safe and welcoming place for people of color.

**Judgmentalism:** You really think you can decide which Friends of Color are not Quakers, without engaging those Friends in any kind of clearness process. You have judged the spiritual discernment process of URJ (Friends of color) to be inadequate, when you have no idea how URJ manages its internal decision making process. If we attempt to change or even question your white supremacist meeting structure, you refuse to accept, or cooperate with URJ's spirit led discernment and choices for creating safety, comfort and welcome, for potential Friends of color--which is absolutely in alignment with URJ's mission. This is what is behind SAYMA's insistence that the Paul Cuffee Worship Group cannot be part of SAYMA because we chose not

to be under the care, or oversight, of a predominantly white SAYMA Meeting. This is also what is behind the complaints of some, that SAYMA-URJ members must be members of recognized SAYMA Monthly Meetings and nominated by an all-white nominating committee. That's just plain old racist, by definition.

Then you say you are committed to making our Meeting a safe and welcoming place for people of color.

Lastly, We should never forget, that white supremacy is maintained by controlling the narratives, processes and resources, and by well-meaning good people who obey unjust laws, policies, practices, procedures and social conventions.

A quick perusal of SAYMA faith ad practice proves URJ's assessment is accurate:

**From SAYMA Faith and Practice:**

The Religious Society of Friends recognizes that all are called to minister in obedience to the living Spirit, whether through service, preaching, teaching, hospitality or administration. All ministries are seen as important for the well-ordered functioning of the spiritual body. All Friends have particular gifts and qualities to bring, and all are called to find their place of service.

Friends believe in the power of love to evoke the inherent worth of others. We are called to accept and love all persons in spite of transgressions, confrontations, or apparent differences. ... Friends aim toward the transformation of a flawed world into one that would make possible equality, justice and peace for all peoples. (p.15)

Under Monthly Meeting Committees:

**Ministry and Counsel** is responsible for the quality of the Meeting for Worship, for the religious development of members and attendees. ... They also encourage those whose ministry frequently speaks to the spiritual needs of themselves and fellow worshippers...

**Material need.** This committee, or one especially appointed for the purpose, will try to provide for those in need of financial assistance. Meetings are advised to exercise tactful and watchful care in ascertaining and meeting these needs. (Pages 21-23)

**Functions of the Yearly Meeting—Ministry and Nurture Committee**

...involvement in sensitive situations... (Ministry and Nurture has totally failed in this, though that is slowly beginning to change—emphasis on slowly-- with new blood on SAYMA Ministry and Nurture.)

Facilitating clearness and accountability for Friends seeking endorsement by the yearly meeting for ministry to which they are called; (M&N has utterly failed to hold anyone accountable for the racist harms Friends of color have suffered, or to endorse the ministries of Friends of color.)

Providing a clearness process and holding accountable released Friends who receive financial assistance from SAYMA's Released Friend Fund.

Administering the disbursement and accounting of the Spiritual Development Fund. (p.27)

**Membership:** Membership in the Religious Society of Friends identifies a person who seeks, in worship after the manner of Friends, the living reality, discipline, and guidance of the spirit of God. No prescribed or set formula of words and phrases distinguishes a member from a non-member; the lives of Friends express their faith in accordance with their experiences with Truth and with the meeting community. (P. 33)

### **Advice from SAYMA 2016, which SAYMA has yet to follow**

**Statement of intention for the SAYMA 2016 theme:** We come together with the theme of "Unraveling Racism" to communicate "heart to heart" in an effort to live up to our testimonies of equality, community, and integrity, make SAYMA a more welcoming spiritual home for all, and seek justice while healing our communities.

#### **DO:**

**Listen** to the lived experience of Friends of color!

**Be mindful** that Friends of color have to live with the impact of white supremacy in their daily lives.

**Be open to diverse manners of expression.** For example, Friends of various cultural backgrounds may raise their voices while speaking passionately about a topic with no intention of offending anyone.

**Process your feelings with other White Friends** by holding each other accountable to educate yourselves, change behavior, and take more action against racism.

#### **Don't:**

Make Friends of color spokespeople for everyone of their race.

Ask Friends of color to relieve your feelings of guilt.

Ask Friends of color to affirm your good intentions.

**Credit for Statement of Purpose for SAYMA theme:** by Susan Firestone, and Sharon Smith, approved by SAYMA Yearly Meeting Planning Committee.

**Credit for Advice for European American Friends:** adapted for SAYMA by Susan Firestone, Folami Adams and Sharon Smith from "Advice for European Americans" handout from the interest group for European Americans Working on Racism at FGC 2015 Gathering.

### **Actionable Items: URJ Requests**



**#1. Funding Request—SAYMA URJ has had no funding since 2018!**

A. URJ Requests \$10,000 of set-aside funds for fiscal year 2022.

B. In addition, URJ is requesting a line item in SAYMA's annual budget of \$10,000 each year, or unless URJ requests a different amount.

C. As per recommendations from the FGC Institutional Assessment of Systemic Racism, to create an endowment to provide funding for People of color engaged in social change, anti-racism and/or counter-colonial work, URJ is soliciting donor restricted funds from individual Friends and Monthly Meetings for its **Uplifting Racial Justice Fund**. The Racial Justice Fund will enable URJ to provide support for Friends of Color to participate in SAYMA and FGC sponsored events, including sponsoring their own events and projects in support of people of color who are engaged in anti-racism work and/or most impacted by systemic white supremacy and settler colonialism.

D. White supremacy is maintained by controlling the NARRATIVE, the PROCESSES and all RESOURCES. Therefore, SAYMA can only become an anti-racist faith community by giving Friends of color the budget URJ requested and the freedom to allocate those resources in accordance with URJ's mission and goals.

E. During the time of the pandemic, we know that BIPOC are disproportionately impacted both economically and medically. Therefore, URJ also requests that Friends donate the money they might have spent to attend the Yearly Meeting, Pendle Hill retreats and/or FGC Gathering to the Uplifting Racial Justice Fund. URJ has requested this before, with little success, therefore URJ asks that the clerks and representatives assist URJ with fundraising by encouraging SAYMA Friends to donate their unused travel funds to the Uplifting Racial Justice Fund.

**#2.** URJ asks SAYMA to return to the racial conflict transformation process, facilitated by the Friends Center for Racial Justice. Just because two Friends of color decided not to participate is no excuse for it not to continue. When have you ever seen the yearly meeting cancel an activity or process, just because a couple of white Friends chose not to participate? Using Friends of color against one another in this manner is not acceptable. It is not only abusive, but also a function of white supremacy/racism, and not OK, by any measure.

**#3.** Officially recognize the Paul Cuffee Worship group as part of SAYMA.

Approved by SAYMA-URJ and submitted on February 26<sup>th</sup> by Sharon "Star" Smith, clerk of URJ

\* Edited and resubmitted for the June SAYMA 2021 Virtual Gathering, because no parts of URJ's report were addressed at the March Representative Meeting.

Sharon "Star" Smith, clerk of URJ

## **FWCC REPRESENTATIVE Report 6th Month, 2021**

Geeta Jyothi McGahey, SAYMA FWCC rep

**Mission of FWCC:** Answering God's call to universal love, FWCC brings Friends of varying traditions and cultural experiences together in worship, communications and consultation, to express our common heritage and our Quaker message to the world.

Thank-you for allowing me to be your representative to FWCC. I just finished a term on Finance Committee, am starting a term on the Development Working Group, and am clerk of the investment sub-committee, which recently had helped Friends Fiduciary to make the decision to divest from fossil fuels in addition to other screens. FWCC is embarked on a training program to have us as representatives be better prepared to bring to SAYMA and its monthly meetings the richness that FWCC has to offer. Contact the reps if you want to access materials for First Day School or adult programs. Let's look to create opportunities to get to know Quakers different from us, appreciating the challenges faced by Quakers in Latin America. WE aim to be the bridge. We pray that through the generosity of Friends that many Latin Americans, a group including women and youth will be able to partake in the World Meeting in Durban, South Africa in summer 2024.

The bi-annual meeting was held by Zoom in March and 327 F/friends attended. You, too, can experience the gathering. Presentations are available electronically. If you go to the FWCCAmericas website and click on 2021 Section Meeting, you can learn more.. I strongly recommend the Bible studies led by Manual Guzman, an academic from Mexico City, and the devotional messages brought by Mey Hasbrook. The most meaningful part of the meeting for me was the home group. I was privileged and challenged to be a co-leader of the jitsi group consisting of Cuban representatives and other friends. Rachel Weir from Celo was one of our translators. A Bolivian friend was in contact with the group via jitsi and he then patched it through on What's App. Internet service was spotty. It was challenging and we were held in the Light.

Here are some queries posed to the group by a Cuban representative that I hope will inform our work today.

🌀 What should I change in my life to feel all the power, all the happiness and all the fullness that should exist in the experience of the Shalom of God ?.

🌀 How can I center my conscious life in the presence of God in such a way that all things take their right place?

🌀 Am I committed to the difficult work of forgiving and affirming God's love in such a way that it brings peace?

🌀 What should I remove from my life that does not allow me to harmonize with my community and that of God that we all have?

Please ask your meetings to participate in World Quaker Day on Sunday, October 3rd. The theme is "Growing in Resiliency and Hope: How Do We Draw Strength from Our Quaker Faith".  
Resources will be available later this summer

### What FWCC can do for us

What do we do that matters?	How does our work impact Friends where they live?
Bring Friends together ( <i>enable</i> dialogue)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Allows Friends to go on a faith journey to deliberately encounter and learn about and from the “other”</li> <li>- Those Friends bring home their experience and open a window for their meeting or church into that “other” community</li> </ul>
<i>Foster</i> dialogue among Friends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reps &amp; designate/volunteers deliberately stay in contact/dialogue with the wider Quaker community</li> <li>- Deepens &amp; broadens faith of those involved</li> <li>- Strengthens bonds both locally and internationally</li> <li>- Invites and encourages traveling ministry /representative visitation</li> </ul>
<i>Strengthen</i> Friends to engage in dialogue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reps and volunteers learn skills for hospitality and dialogue, and gain practice worshipping and listening as one in the presence of religious, cultural, and linguistic diversity.</li> <li>- They bring this skill &amp; training back to their home meetings and churches which strengthens their community</li> </ul>
<i>Envision</i> / Actualize Friends as a world-wide faith body	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Call Friends to worldwide concerns like ecojustice</li> <li>- QUNO, etc. can act on behalf of Friends concerns</li> <li>- Inspires Friends to see themselves as part of bigger – “a church larger than my monthly meeting” - Benigno Sanchez-Eppler</li> </ul>

## Report from your Reps to FCNL

1 June 2021

FCNL held a virtual annual meeting in November of 2020, and your SAYMA Reps to FCNL attended remotely. Attendance at Annual Meeting grew from around 400 in 2019 to over 800 in 2020, including attendees from Advocacy Corps and Advocacy Teams. (1,500 people in more than 120 teams across the country are now working with Advocacy Teams.) Lobbying was conducted via Zoom, and we had a record number of lobby visits.

SAYMA Reps to FCNL participated in discernment around revisions to the Policy Statement and By-Laws (<https://www.fcnl.org/about/world-we-seek/world-we-seek-statement-legislative-policy>) as well as other business. They also lobbied their legislators, attended issues-oriented workshops conducted by staff experts, participated in or led worship-sharing groups, attended talks by legislators honored by FCNL (former Rep. Deb Haaland, now Secretary of the Interior, and Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand). Attendees participated in diversity training conducted by Freedom Road, an organization that facilitates faith-led approaches to issues of diversity, equity and inclusion. Some helped with the technical needs of the virtual format.

Responses to the virtual format were, overall, positive, although many Friends missed the fellowship of gathering in person. Other friends praised the virtual platform for reducing the Annual Meeting's impact on the environment and for allowing more diversity around physical ability to travel, work conflicts, childcare needs and the expense of travel. A surprising number of attendees said they would attend the following year *only* if a virtual option were provided. Consequently, Friends can look forward to the continuation of the virtual attendance option going forward, even once we resume meeting in person.

**Action requested!** Despite the pandemic, FCNL's peace and social justice work on Capitol Hill continues vigorously. At this writing, staff especially **request that we contact our Senators in support** of bills that have passed the House and are being debated in the Senate:

- Please ask your Senators to **support S.J. Res. 10**, Sens. Tim Kaine (VA) and Todd Young's (IN) bill to repeal the 1991 and 2002 Iraq Authorizations for the Use of Military Force. These authorizations allow the President to engage in acts of war with no consultation with Congress. They are outdated by 30 and 19 years, respectively; the reasons for their passage no longer obtain; and they remain a temptation to unilateral military strikes as long as they remain in effect.
- Please ask your Senators to **support a strong version of the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act**, which is now being negotiated by a bipartisan group of Senators. FCNL's experts believe it is essential that the legislation contain the following provisions
  1. A ban on chokeholds and no-knock warrants,
  2. Limitations on the transfer of military grade equipment to state and local law enforcement departments,
  3. Raising the use of force standard,
  4. Reforming qualified immunity.

Two notable developments are underway now at FCNL. First, Diane Randall, FCNL's General Secretary announced her intention to retire at the end of this year. The search process for the next General Secretary is well underway.

The other development is a September 2, 2019 agreement under which the FCNL Education Fund assumed responsibility for the ownership and management of William Penn House. Renovations of the 102-year-old structure are underway, with completion anticipated this fall. Educational programs on civic engagement for youth are being considered along with programs for adult groups. The 2020 Report to Yearly Meetings calls the facility “a venue for education and advocacy training” for “Friends and friends.”

As always, please feel free to contact your FCNL Reps with questions or concerns.

Respectfully submitted,

Deni Elliott, Lewisburg, WV

Jane Hiles, Birmingham, AL

Bill Reynolds, Chattanooga, TN

Charlie Wilton, Berea, KY

## 2021 Report to Yearly Meetings

Dear Friends,

Our Quaker faith and practice call us to work for the peaceful, just, equitable, and sustainable world we seek. Since 1943, the Friends Committee on National Legislation has carried on this witness of the Spirit through action on Capitol Hill. Here are just some of the highlights of this year's work, made possible by your advocacy, engagement, and financial support. Learn more about the legislative impact of FCNL's work at [www.fcnl.org/impact](http://www.fcnl.org/impact).

### Advancing the World We Seek, in a Year Shaped by Crises

The **COVID-19 pandemic** shifted both how FCNL works and the urgency of our advocacy to heed God's call to care for people who are vulnerable. Thanks in part to our efforts, COVID-19 relief legislation will cut child poverty in half this year and increase food assistance.

The need to adapt in a pandemic also led to **new opportunities**. A record 700 people joined in our Annual Meeting, nearly half attending for the first time. At that gathering, General Committee members approved legislative priorities for the 117th Congress, a budget that builds on FCNL's strong financial footing, and revised bylaws to allow Friends to be considered for General Committee service regardless of immigration status. Meanwhile, online gathering gave FCNL valuable opportunities to be in community with Friends and offer a new level of trainings and support to Quaker meetings, churches, and gatherings across the country.

This year also brought a **crisis for U.S. democracy and faith in our government**. FCNL is nonpartisan, but we are not neutral about the harm caused when our government pursues racist, nationalist, and militaristic ideologies and practices. The January 2021 attack on the U.S. Capitol was only one manifestation of the challenges to our democratic system. FCNL continues to pursue accountability, truth-seeking, and deep listening as we work for change.

The murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and so many other Black Americans by police gave new urgency to FCNL's work on **racial justice**. Between two major FCNL lobby events, more than 1,000 people advocated to end police violence. FCNL advocacy helped restore access to Pell grants for incarcerated people and launch new initiatives to address the crisis of missing and murdered Native women. Internally, we began an intensive focus with staff and governors to address systemic racism and white supremacy as it manifests in our organization.

FCNL also helped move forward **efforts to end support for violent conflict and to make peacebuilding a priority**. President Biden's decision to end support for the Saudi-led war in Yemen is the culmination of years of tireless advocacy by FCNL and our allies. An extension of the New START agreement with Russia continues limits on the number of deployed nuclear weapons in each country, building on FCNL's lobbying to build bipartisan support for the agreement.



**A Tumultuous January.** Military presence, barricades, and tension were long-lasting reminders of the January 6 insurrection at the U.S. Capitol, leading up to and beyond the inauguration. Photo by Stephen Donahoe/FCNL.

And efforts to repeal the 2002 Authorization for the Use of Military Force moved forward, thanks in large part to the work of more than 1,500 people on FCNL Advocacy Teams around the country who use their power as constituents to make change in Washington.

FCNL continues its decade-long work to press for **bipartisan action on climate change**. We are heartened by executive actions that led the United States to rejoin the Paris Climate Agreement and advance environmental justice initiatives.

We will build on this progress toward a sustainable, low-carbon economy as we bring on a new class of young adult Advocacy Corps organizers this summer, who will focus on building bipartisan support for a price on carbon. They will need your partnership, support, and accompaniment in this work.

## Our Strong Community

**Advocacy Teams** members are just some of the many people who enrich FCNL's work with their time and commitment. We are grateful for the nearly 200 Friends, representing 32 Yearly Meetings and Friends organizations, who govern FCNL as **General Committee** members.

We look forward to welcoming Friends to take part in the **Friend in Washington program** when travel is again safe; we benefit immensely from the seasoned Friends who volunteer on a short-term basis on specific projects and contribute to the spiritual richness of FCNL.

We also recognize the dedication of the people taking part in our **Young Adult programs**—as Young Fellows, Advocacy Corps organizers, interns, and Spring Lobby Weekend participants.

Learn more about young adult program opportunities at [www.fcnl.org/youngadult](http://www.fcnl.org/youngadult).

Attachment M. FCNL Report June 2021

## Reopening Friends Place on Capitol Hill

The FCNL Education Fund assumed responsibility for ownership and operations of the William Penn House, a guest house on Capitol Hill, in September 2019. (The House continues to be a separate 501(c)(3) charitable organization with its own budget and governance.) We anticipate reopening the space and launching educational programming and advocacy trainings in the coming year.

Recognizing William Penn's history as an enslaver, the William Penn House board approved changing the venue's name to Friends Place on Capitol Hill. With this change, the board affirmed the need to continue reckoning with Quakers' complicity in slavery and racism and to use the facility in service of challenging and dismantling the foundations of white supremacy.

## A Bittersweet Transition

FCNL General Secretary Diane Randall has announced she will leave FCNL at the end of 2021. For the past ten years, Diane has fostered FCNL's growth and strength among Friends and on Capitol Hill. When she became the first woman to lead the organization, Diane told us that FCNL "must be bold, strategic, and relentless." Today, we are that and far more.

FCNL has begun a search process to select the next General Secretary. We hope to bring a candidate to the General Committee for approval at Annual Meeting in November 2021.

FCNL's work in the year ahead will be full of challenges and opportunities, both politically and organizationally. We are grateful to have a strong foundation on which to build. Thank you for your prayers, participation, and support, and—above all—for your faithfulness.



Ron Ferguson  
Winchester (IN) Friends Church  
Clerk, FCNL General Committee

## Attachment N. Swannanoa Valley Monthly Meeting Minute

The Swannanoa Valley Friends Monthly Meeting, in their January 3, 2021 meeting for worship with attention to business approved the following minute:

Swannanoa Valley Friends Monthly Meeting requests SAYMA

1. to cease serving as a financial pass-through entity for funding the Uplifting Racial Justice Committee;
2. to discontinue tolerating abusive behavior toward individuals, monthly meetings, and the yearly meeting by the clerk of the URJ committee;
3. and to cease allowing the URJ clerk to speak representing SAYMA



**Charleston Friends Meeting response to Swannanoa Valley Friends Minute regarding SAYMA URJ**

On February 10, 2020 members of Charleston Friends Meeting and Greenbrier Valley Worship Group held a discussion on the minute from the Swannanoa Valley Friends Monthly Meeting from January 3, 2021. We thank them for their discernment and sharing of concerns.

From our own process and experiences over the past few years, we believe it is important to acknowledge and season minutes as they are raised in the yearly meeting. Each of us has a measure of Light, and therefore glimpses of the Truth. Only by holding, listening, and putting these pieces together will we even get near the full Truth of how we are being called and led. As our Quaker forebears understood it, perfection is a process not a destination. With that in mind, here is our contribution.

Our group has mixed feelings on the intent and wording of the minute, but feels we can lift up these thoughts:

- **First**, we recognize that this minute raises serious issues that SAYMA must address through consistent general policies and procedures. We have already urged SAYMA to do this in response to a request from the Ministry and Nurture Committee (Minute, January 26, 2020).
- **Second**, as we understand it, SAYMA is not a financial pass-through for URJ. SAYMA's policy dealing with earmarked contributions does not permit pass-through contributions. URJ funds are only to be spent in accordance with the document regarding URJ funding, which requires that they meet the mission and vision of SAYMA URJ. It does not authorize a mere pass-through. In addition, as a Yearly Meeting, we do need to be mindful of obeying the law with our finances.
- **Third**, SAYMA should not tolerate abuse in any form. However, focusing accusations of abuse onto one person does not feel helpful. We may disagree with how a person behaves, and still find value and community in what they bring to us. We encourage further exploration of how to address conflict in our yearly meeting.
- **Fourth**, we agree that no committee clerk or other individual, as such, can or should try to speak on behalf of SAYMA.

As noted above, we again see this as an opportunity to review our policies to bring clarity and integrity to our procedures moving forward. Like many North American Friends meetings, we are made up of white members and attenders. Our perspectives and experiences vary in terms of anti-racism work. We hope that in our own ways and as a meeting we are doing our best to grow, and support equality and equity for Friends of color. This is not a perfect process. We all will make mistakes. We ask for grace and clarity as we learn, just as we will do our best to offer grace to others.

*Approved at Meeting for Business March 7, 2021*

**Open Positions for SAYMA 2021-2022**

**(as of 6/9/2021)**

**Treasurer** 2020-2022

**Assistant Treasurer** 2021-2022

**Ministry and Nurture**

Member 2020-2022

Member 2021-2023

**Finance**

Member 2020-2022

**WQO Allocations**

Member 2020-2022

Member 2020-2022

**Personnel**

Member 2020-2022

**SAYF Steering**

Clerk 2020-2022

Member

Member

**Junior Yearly Meeting**

Member

Member 2021-2023

Member 2020-2022

Member 2020-2022

**Yearly Meeting Planning**

Adult Programs 2020-2022

Workshops

Co-Registrar 2021-2023

Asst. Bookstore 2020-2022

YAF Representative 2020-2022

Worship Coordinator 2021-2023

Layout Editor 2020-2022

**Peace and Social Concerns**

Member

Member

Member

**Earth Justice**

Member 2019-2021

Member

**Outreach**

Member 2019-2021

Member 2020-22

YAF Member 2020-2022

**Operational Handbook**

Clerk 2021-2023

Member 2021-2023

**Representatives to Wider Quaker Organizations**

AFSC 2021-2024

FCNL 2020-2023

FGC 2020-2023

Friends Peace Teams 2020-2023

Q Earthcare Witness 2020-2023

Q Earthcare Witness 2020-2023

RSWR 2020-2023

# FGC Programs and Services for Friends and Meetings, 2021

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Friends General Conference provides services and resources for individual Friends, meetings, and people interested in the Quaker way. FGC is an association of regional Quaker communities in the U.S. and Canada working together to nurture a vital Quaker faith. *Together we nurture the spiritual vitality of Friends.*

## **The Gathering**

The Gathering is a week of Quaker worship, workshops, and community for all ages. Friends come together from across the US and Canada (and sometimes further) to deepen our connection to one another and the Spirit. In 2021, FGC will host a virtual Gathering from June 27 - July 3, with the theme of *Way Will Open*. The 2022 Gathering will be held in-person at Radford University in Virginia.

<https://www.fgcquaker.org/connect/gathering>

## **Ministry on Racism**

Through the Ministry on Racism, FGC empowers individual Friends and Quaker meetings to confront and heal the wounds of white supremacy, challenge racism, and help Friends co-create communities that are more accessible and equitable. Specific projects include the Pre-Gathering Retreat for People of Color and their Families, organizing Friends to attend the annual White Privilege Conference (WPC), and regional gatherings for Friends of Color and their Families.

<https://www.fgcquaker.org/services/help-your-meeting-challenge-racism>

## **Online Worship Opportunities**

FGC has supported Friends, Quaker newcomers, and spiritual seekers who want to worship online with Friends during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond, with worship groups for People of Color, Friends of European Descent Confronting Racism, and other community-building opportunities.

<https://www.fgcquaker.org/resources/online-worship-opportunities>

## **Spiritual Deepening Library and Online Opportunities**

The Spiritual Deepening Library offers a FREE collection of experiential activities and exercises for small groups of Quakers and newcomers of all ages to explore together, with the goal of building connections with Quaker roots, growing as a spiritual community, and listening deeply to the Light within.

Spiritual Deepening Online Offerings build spiritual community through 4-week book discussions, worship sharing groups, or eRetreats on topics such as *Silence and Light for Quaker Newcomers*; *Living into Wholeness*; *Aging, Death, and Dying*; *Weaving a Wider Welcome*; and *Understanding and Healing White Supremacy*.

<https://www.fgcquaker.org/deepen/enrichment/spiritualdeepening>

### **Year-Round Youth Programming**

FGC is offering several year-round virtual programs for youth so we can stay in community, including gatherings for children and parents and online youth retreats for Friends across North America.

<https://www.fgcquaker.org/connect/gathering/programs-and-events/year-round-youth-programs>

### **QuakerBooks**

FGC operates an online bookstore that provides key resources for local meetings, yearly meetings, and individuals with the goal of strengthening the Religious Society of Friends. QuakerBooks operates a pop-up bookstore at in-person FGC Gatherings and provides consignments to yearly meeting sessions and other events. We depend on Friends' patronage to provide this important service.

[www.quakerbooks.org](http://www.quakerbooks.org)

### **Institutional Assessment Implementation**

In 2017, Central Committee (FGC's governing body) united around the need to undertake an institutional assessment to uncover structural racism within our organization. After two years of work, the Institutional Assessment Task Force's report and recommendations are now available at [www.fgcquaker.org/report](http://www.fgcquaker.org/report)

As a result of the Task Force's report and recommendations, Central Committee approved the creation of an Implementation Group to guide the transformation of FGC into an anti-racist organization. FGC has committed to confront and heal white supremacy within our organization and among FGC Friends, and to model anti-racism as we support the work of the Implementation Group.

<https://www.fgcquaker.org/deepen/help-your-meeting-challenge-racism/becoming-anti-racist-faith-community>

### **Quaker Cloud**

The Quaker Cloud offers a user-friendly platform for a monthly or yearly meeting to have a public presence online. The service has undergone a number of technical improvements and uses professional technical support as we seek to provide meetings with an easy to maintain, low cost, and feature-rich website that includes a minute

manager and member directory. Approximately 150 meetings/Quaker organizations are now using the Quaker Cloud.

<https://www.fgcquaker.org/services/quaker-cloud>

### **QuakerFinder.org**

The QuakerFinder website offers a searchable list of Quaker meetings and churches whose Yearly Meetings are located primarily in the United States and Canada. There were 70,380 visitors to QuakerFinder.org in 2020.

[www.quakerfinder.org](http://www.quakerfinder.org)

### **Quaker Press**

FGC publishes new books and pamphlets in service to the spiritual needs of Friends guided by FGC's major goals and programs. Look for new titles in the coming year.

<https://www.fgcquaker.org/serve/publishing/quakerpress-fgc>

### **Christian and Interfaith Relations Committee**

Through CIRC, FGC brings Quaker perspectives to ecumenical and interfaith events. It also connects us with faith-based conversations about truth, justice, and reconciliation.

<https://www.fgcquaker.org/deepen/outreach/christian-interfaith-relations-committee-circ>

### **Friends Meeting House Fund**

The Friends Meeting House Fund supports Quaker meetings by guiding meetings through the process of securing a loan or grant to buy, renovate, or add onto a meeting house (or other structures on meeting house property); or to increase the energy efficiency their meeting houses.

<https://www.fgcquaker.org/friends-meeting-house-fund>

*These programs and projects are only possible due to the efforts of hundreds of volunteers and donors across the United States and Canada. We are grateful for this support.*

Attachment R. Quaker Earthcare Witness Report

The Quaker Earthcare Witness quarterly newsletter, BeFriending Creation, can be found online at the link below:

<https://quakerearthcare.org/category/befriending-creation/>

## Attachment S. Earth Just Committee Report

### Earth Justice Report June 2021

Earth Justice is the committee formerly known as the SAYMA Earth Action Network, which was formerly known as the Ecological Concerns Network.

We have been meeting since January.

We have adopted a revised mission:

*We are at a moment of ecological crisis which merits the full engagement of Friends. The response to this crisis will encompass our traditional testimonies of peace, simplicity, equality, and integrity.*

*We therefore seek to:*

*a. act as a catalyst for action on healing the environment in a just and equitable manner, and to encourage Friends to understand and undertake this work as a spiritual leading;*

*b. raise awareness of the unjust, disproportionate effect that environmental degradation has on those who are the most vulnerable: low income, Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color;*

*c. serve as the hub of a network connecting SAYMA Friends, providing educational programs, forums, workshops, and other resources to individuals, monthly meetings, and Yearly Meeting;*

*d. collaborate with other organizations working on environmental justice; and*

*e. serve as a source of spiritual and moral support for Friends engaged in healing the Earth.*

**We seek like-minded people to join us in our work**, including a Friend willing to also serve as SAYMA Rep to Quaker Earthcare Witness.

We are striving to identify Earth Justice work that has relevance across the SAYMA region. Here are three we have discussed:

Objective #1: Assist households, meetings, and communities to develop and adopt a plan for a fossil-fuel-free future.



Objective #2: Encouraging tree planting, re-forestation, and re-wilding of lawns and other areas. Encourage native plants and food plants.

Objective #3: Identify coal ash ponds in our regions and determine whether they are leaking toxins into groundwater and rivers, and identify affected communities, to understand what would be necessary to mitigate harms.

We invite input from Friends on other work to be done.

Visit our committee web page: [https://www.sayma.org/earth\\_justice.htm](https://www.sayma.org/earth_justice.htm)

Join our FB group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/saymaearthjustice>

Meetings are currently held on Zoom on second Wednesdays at 7 pm. All interested Friends are welcome to join us.

Deni Elliot (Charleston)  
Rylin Hansen (Asheville)  
Roy Taylor (Atlanta)  
Charlie Wilton (Berea)

	B	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	Y	Z	AA
		FY 2012 Budget	FY 2012 Actual	FY13 Budget	FY13 Actl	FY14 Budget	FY14 Actl	FY15 Budget	FY15 Actl	FY16 Budget	FY16 Actl	FY17 Budget	FY17 Actl	FY18 Budget	FY18 Actual	FY19 Budget	FY19 Actual	FY20 Approved 6/16/19	FY20 Actual	FY21 Budget Approved 9/2020	FY21 YTD 5/31/2021	FY22 Budget Proposed 1.1
1	SAYMA FY 2022 Budget																					
2	Looking at changes in Undesignated Funds																					
3	Income	\$73,800	\$78,616	\$76,475	\$86,216	\$76,950	\$81,754	\$80,200	\$82,102	\$81,100	\$86,321	82,700	\$94,924	\$94,830	\$95,583	\$110,740	\$104,239	\$105,575	\$51,059	\$91,944	\$27,693	\$98,042
38	Expenses	\$77,800	\$73,716	\$81,888	\$85,958	\$84,525	\$84,894	\$89,067	\$87,797	\$86,872	\$80,285	\$89,557	\$88,295	\$43,339	\$113,342	\$111,653	\$92,332	\$112,170	\$50,999	\$91,728	\$30,615	\$115,780
119																						
120	Net(Surplus/Deficit) before Reserve Change:	-\$4,000	\$4,900	-\$5,413	\$257	-\$7,575	-\$3,140	-\$8,867	-\$5,695	-\$5,772	\$6,035	-\$6,857	\$6,629	-\$5,589	-\$17,759	-\$914	\$11,907	-\$6,595	\$60	\$216	-\$2,922	-\$17,738
121	Yearly Gathering Net:	\$0	\$2,685	\$0	\$422	\$0	\$1,476	\$0	-\$740	\$0	\$3,962	\$0	-\$1,222	\$0	\$487	-\$361	-\$2,061	\$0	-\$250	\$0	-\$544	-\$500
122																						
123	Reserve Change:																					
124	Net(Surplus/Deficit) with Reserve Change	-\$4,000	\$4,900	-\$5,413	\$257	-\$7,575	-\$3,140	-\$8,867	-\$5,695	-\$5,772	\$6,035	-\$6,857	\$2,576	-\$5,589	-\$18,193	-\$914	\$12,764	-\$7,135	-\$538	\$216	-\$2,922	-\$17,738
125	Net(Surplus/Deficit) w RC no Set-aside																					-\$938
126	Budget vs Actual Change		\$8,900		\$5,670		\$4,435		\$3,172		\$11,807		\$9,433	-\$12,603		\$13,678		\$6,597				
127																						
128	Reserve	Could not find breakout for FY 2010-2015									\$22,436	\$18,383	\$17,494	\$18,806	\$18,208	\$18,208	\$18,208	\$18,208	\$18,208	\$18,208	\$18,208	
129	Undesignated Funds										\$21,391	\$28,093	\$17,062	\$30,111	\$30,111	\$30,754	\$30,754	\$30,754	\$27,860	\$27,860	\$13,017	\$13,017
130	Reserve plus Undesignated Fund		\$46,102		\$46,736		\$43,503		\$37,097		\$43,827	\$46,476	\$34,556	\$48,917	\$48,917	\$48,962	\$48,962	\$48,962	\$46,068	\$46,068	\$31,225	\$31,225
131																						
132	File: FY22 Budget v1-1 view of budget v actual																					
133																						
134	This information is put together from multiple																					
135	sources. Not all were formatted the same and																					
136	over time the way to calculate items has changed.																					
137	The data may not be completely accurate but																					
138	should be close enough to draw conclusions.																					

Attachment T. Finance Budget vs Actual Expenditure Spreadsheet

Attachment U. Finance Committee Operational Budget v2

		FY20	FY20	FY21	FY21 YTD	FY22	
1	SAYMA FY 2022 Budget	Approved	Actual	Budget	5/31/202	Budget	
2	Proposed 1.0 Main	6/16/19		Approved	1	Proposed	
3		FY19 Actual		9/2020		1.0	
3	Income	\$104,239	\$105,575	\$51,059	\$91,944	\$27,693	\$98,042
4	Adjustments to Income						
5	Assessments	\$58,884	\$50,425	\$49,173	\$44,894	\$26,512	\$50,992
26	Contributions – General	\$2,727	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$1,000	\$1,500
27	Interest - CD	\$0	\$0				
28	Interest - Money Mkt	\$545	\$700	\$321	\$100	\$21	\$100
29	Publication Sales	\$296	\$50	\$65	\$100	\$0	\$100
32	YM Income	\$41,787	\$52,900	\$0	\$45,350	\$160	\$45,350
33	YM Adjustments to Income	\$0	\$0				
34	YM Bookstore Inc	\$1,019	\$1,300		1,300		1,300
35	YM Receipts	\$39,176	\$49,400		42,850	60	42,850
36	YM Scholarship Contrib	\$1,593	\$2,200		1,200	100	1,200
37	Expenses	\$92,332	\$112,170	\$50,999	\$91,728	\$30,615	\$98,980
38	Adjustments to Expenses	\$0	\$0				
39	SAYMA Operations	\$37,307	\$43,520	\$36,295	\$34,878	\$19,158	\$45,380
40	Liability Insurance	\$677	\$850	\$816	\$850	\$728	\$900
41	Office Admin	\$4,775	\$5,295	\$1,829	\$3,110	\$829	\$3,980
42	Banking Fees	\$0		\$21		\$0	
43	Office - Duplication	\$74	\$225	\$0	\$250	\$0	\$250
44	Office - Guilford Archiving	\$150	\$150	\$0	\$150	\$0	\$150
45	Office - Supplies, Equip, Misc	\$1,583	\$2,000	\$642	\$400	\$204	\$400
46	Office - Officer Exp	\$0	\$150	\$22	\$150	\$0	\$150
47	Office - Phone, Zoom	\$1,273	\$600	\$585	\$600	\$548	\$820
48	Office - Postage	\$93	\$170	\$60	\$160	\$0	\$160
49	Office - Volunteer Bkgrd Chks	\$79	\$200	\$248	\$200	\$77	\$250
50	Travel - Office Staff	\$1,523	\$1,800	\$253	\$1,200	\$0	\$1,800
51	Personnel	\$24,185	\$25,705	\$26,689	\$26,098	\$17,451	\$28,000
52	Payroll Costs	\$659	\$625	\$628		\$419	
53	Salaries Exp	\$18,211	\$23,300	\$22,975		\$15,822	
54	Tax Payments	\$5,316	\$1,780	\$3,086		\$1,210	
55	Publications Expenses	\$427	\$270	\$342	\$220	\$0	\$2,700
56	Pub Exp - Directory	\$18					
57	Pub Exp - Faith & Practice	\$409			\$100		\$100
58	Pub Exp - Newsletter	\$0					
59	Pub Exp - Web & Hosting Srvc	\$0	\$270	\$342	\$120	\$0	\$2,600
60	SAYMA Committees	\$211	\$3,800	\$2,500	\$0	\$0	\$2,700
61	Cmte Exp – Contingency Pool	\$0	\$500				\$500
62	Cmte Exp - Faith & Practice Rvsn	\$0	\$100				\$0
63	Cmte Exp - Finance	\$69	\$2,500	\$2,500			\$0
64	Cmte Exp - Ministry & Nurture	\$90	\$500				
66	Cmte Exp - Outreach	\$0	\$0				\$2,000
71	Cmte Exp - Yearly Meeting Planning	\$52	\$200				\$200
72	Travel Reimbursements	\$5,032	\$7,600	\$4,119	\$3,850	\$150	\$5,100
73	Travel - Rep Meetings	\$32	\$100		\$100		\$100
74	Travel - WQO Delegates	\$4,999	\$7,500	\$4,119	\$3,750	\$150	\$5,000
85	Yearly Meeting	\$43,848	\$52,900	\$250	\$45,350	\$704	\$45,850
86	Facilities & Services Exp	\$35,035	\$44,150	\$0	\$35,800	\$704	\$36,300
92	Junior Yearly Meeting Exp	\$6,172	\$5,700	\$250	\$6,500	\$0	\$6,500
93	JYM Asst Coordinator	\$2,400	\$1,600		\$2,400		\$2,400
94	JYM Coordinator	\$3,600	\$3,600	\$250	\$3,600	\$0	\$3,600
95	JYM Supplies, Sitters, Misc	\$172	\$500		\$500		\$500
96	YM Bookstore Exp	\$1,107	\$1,300		\$1,300		\$1,300
97	YM Print Post Phone & Misc	\$1,535	\$1,750		\$1,750		\$1,750
98	Quaker Membership Orgs Annual Contribn	\$1,500	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500
99	WQO - FGC	\$750	\$1,250	\$1,250	\$1,250	\$1,250	\$1,250
###	WQO - FWCC - Direct Contrbn	\$750	\$1,250	\$1,250	\$1,250	\$1,250	\$1,250
###	Other WQO Annual Contribns	\$4,500	\$4,650	\$4,604	\$4,650	\$4,653	\$5,250
###	Net(Surplus/Deficit) before Reserve Change:	\$11,907	-\$6,595	\$60	\$216	-\$2,922	-\$938
###	Yearly Gathering Net:	-\$2,061	\$0	-\$250	\$0	-\$544	-\$500
###	Reserve Change:	857	-\$540	-\$598			\$0
###	Net(Surplus/Deficit) with Reserve Change	\$11,050	-\$6,055	\$658	\$216	-\$2,922	-\$938
	Reserve			\$18,208	\$18,208	\$18,208	\$18,208
	Undesigned Funds			\$30,754	\$30,754	\$27,860	\$29,817
	22 Operational Budget V3						

✓

**Patapsco Friends Meeting  
2031 Calvin Circle  
Ellicott City, Maryland 21042**

July 5, 2015

Dear Friends,

Over the years, Stuart Greene of Patapsco Friends Meeting has blessed us with his presence and his inner mission to "hold sacred the space" and "calm the rhetoric". His spirit of openness, his deep and loving listening during Meeting for Worship, Meeting for Business, or working on committees or Quaker projects resonates with us as we go about building and sustaining a loving community. Stuart has a leading to travel to other Meetings to listen to them, learn, and support them.

Patapsco Friends Meeting supports Stuart in his leading. We ask you to welcome him among you and trust you will find your time with him fruitful and enriching.

With light and gratitude,

*Karen Ownbey*

Karen Ownbey  
Clerk, Patapsco Friends Meeting

*Betty McCormick  
Clerk, Hopewell Centre Meeting  
We have enjoyed talking with  
Stuart and getting to know him.*

*We appreciated having Stuart  
with us today.  
Carol Ann Dwyer, Clerk of Meeting  
Frederick Friends Meeting, 8-14-16*

## Attachment W. Junior Yearly Meeting Report

### Junior Yearly Meeting Committee Report June 2021

In August of 2020 JYM received a \$1000 grant from FWCC to plan and carry out alternative Junior Yearly Meeting programming virtually. We spent the winter planning this programming. In the Spring of 2021 we held three sessions (in March, April, and May). The theme of our sessions was Crossing Bridges to Build Connections, and our main goal was to connect young Friends from across the region to build community and explore Quaker principles.

Laura MacNorlin and Kelsey McNicholas were the paid facilitators of these sessions. We had 16 children register, ages 2.5-12. The attendance was consistent at the 3 sessions, with 13-15 children attending each time. Part of each session was spent together, and then the older children moved into a breakout room for more age appropriate content. We were also joined by a guest presenter, Mari Ohta from the Celo Community.

For SAYMA we had 19 children register, ages 3-12. A packet of materials was mailed or dropped off to each family ahead of the sessions, if families were registered by May 30th. We planned 8 sessions, daily from 6/5 until 6/12. We tried to plan sessions at times that would not conflict with other SAYMA activities to allow families the bandwidth and devices to attend sessions. The content of the sessions was based on the theme of SAYMA-- Do Justice, Love Compassion, and Walk Humbly on the Earth. Laura MacNorlin and Darci Jaret were the co-facilitators for the SAYMA sessions.

This winter and spring we have met (almost) weekly over Zoom to plan for the Spring and Summer sessions.

While we are so happy that we have been able to maintain the community for the children of SAYMA, we look forward to a time when they can meet in person to play, laugh, think, talk, converse, worship, and eat ice cream together in person.

Laura Lane (Asheville), clerk  
Kelie Divis (Macon)  
Kim Saderholm (Berea)  
Laura MacNorlin (Atlanta)

## Attachment X. SAYF Steering Committee Report

### **SAYF Steering Committee Report to SAYMA 6/12/21**

This year has been both challenging and rewarding for the SAYF steering committee. We have found new ways to connect with each other more regularly with monthly meetings via Zoom that we will continue to use even as we return to in person gatherings. We have accomplish some tasks, with the help of the SAYF support committee, that had been languishing for many years, for example we completed a section of the SAYF handbook on the adult volunteer application process, and we developed and implemented a series of training modules for Friendly Adult Nurturers. We established a finance committee to support our program coordinator with budgeting and fundraising. We designed new ways of submitting forms, payment, and epistles virtually that we will likely maintain as we return to in person retreats.

This year we were able to include Young Adult Friends whose more transient and busy lifestyles could not easily be accommodated with our former model of in person only work. These Friends brought lived SAYF experience to bear as we worked and kept us grounded in our mission to serve Young Friends in building their SAYF community. We hope to continue to include Young Adults Friends in our committee by maintaining a degree of virtual connectivity for steering committee work.

Our seven monthly retreats in 2020-2021 attracted between 5 and 15 young Friends each time with many repeat attenders and a few first time attendees. We were able to foster new leadership in SAYF nurturers as the bulk of the planning for retreats fell to the nurturing community rather than being spread among young Friends at many monthly meetings as would have been the case in the past.

Retreats included worship and queries, games, including one that has become a tradition - the Nevin game, where each person turns off their camera and renames themselves "Nevin" (shout out to Nevin Myers of Berea Friends Meeting). Participants then respond to a prompt [Such as "Who would you want with you in the zombie apocalypse and what would your theme song be?"] adding their answer to the chat. We then turn on cameras and try to guess who's answer belongs to whom. We twice invited storyteller Kathleen Mavournin, of the SAYF support committee to tell stories, and we had one fishbowl event where Young Adult Friends from Guildford College involved in the Quaker Leader Scholar program joined us for discussion about college and Quaker young adulthood.

We were challenged by scheduling with young Friends who spent up to 8 hours on a screen in school and who were reasonably sometimes reluctant to join in the evenings for planning retreats. This meant that our retreat planning, while initiated by Young Friends, required more administration from the adults than was typical in the "before times." We do not expect to maintain this practice as we move back into the physical world of SAYF retreats.

As our 2020-2021 SAYF year rounded out we saw a new excitement in young Friends, many of whom had been vaccinated and could begin to imagine the return of in person SAYF events on the horizon, even if the distance to that horizon was still unknown. With that in mind the steering committee has tentatively reserved space in two Meetinghouses for September and October.

We intend to take a break for June and July 2021 and begin our planning for the 21-22 SAYF year in August with a virtual joint SAYF Steering/Support/Nurturers retreat. At that time we will assess the state of the world - considering the needs and requirements of SAYMA Monthly Meetings, the school systems our SAYFers attend, and the state of the vaccine for young people, as we plan for our future.

As the clerk of SAYF through this year I have been truly grateful for the dedication of adults and young people in the SAYF community who were able to pivot from what had always been to what we never imagined could be. We never once considered laying down this work even when we knew it would be challenging. We accepted that it would be different and we were willing to open our hearts and minds to that possibility. In this I believe we can see the future of the SAYF program.

Submitted:

Jennifer Dickie, Clerk, SAYF Steering Committee

Attachment X. SAYF Steering Committee Report

## THE STATE OF SAYMA REPORT 2020

The word that best describes the state of SAYMA in 2020 is resilience.

While the world reeled from the global pandemic, so did our Monthly Meetings. SAYMA Monthly Meetings met the challenges of 2020 in the Spirit of Divine Light. Thirteen reports from the 23 Monthly Meetings and Worship Groups within SAYMA, are the foundation for this report.

Kintsugi is a Japanese method of repairing broken pottery by using a mixture of gold or other precious metal mixed with lacquer as glue. The repaired pottery is considered even more beautiful and treasured in its remaking. Our Monthly Meetings practiced kintsugi as we picked up the fragments left by COVID-19 and put them together in creative new ways.

While some Monthly Meetings saw declines in attendance as they moved from in-person worship to virtual worship, others saw increases. Most Monthly Meetings had some Friends who could not find connection through virtual Meeting for Worship. Even those Meetings that saw declines were heartened when Friends, due to distance or health, who previously had not been able to attend, attended worship. Also, virtual meetings appealed to some newcomers who graced our Meetings with their presence.

A sampler of Quaker experiences from 2020 follow:

- "We have struggled, and we have soared, but in the end, we have done the best we could to carry on in 2020."
- "One message spoke of this time as a unique Sabbath."
- Expressions of gratitude for the slower way of life.
- "Another message spoke of the brokenness many of us feel as places for the Light to shine in."
- Reminders to come as we are and to show up no matter how we are, bringing our whole selves, not our best selves, and with willingness to bear/bare our vulnerabilities.
- Creativity in learning how to work in new ways.
- Hopefulness we will continue to learn more new ways of doing things to keep connected with our young adults.
- Missing the comfort of in-person touch.
- Grieving our losses without the physical presence of our communities.
- Zoom-generated memories for some, depending upon one's age, of the Brady Bunch or the Hollywood Squares.
- Increased attendance at Representative Meetings for some Monthly Meetings, and even for SAYMA Ministry and Nurture Committee.
- Themes of food: production/growing food on Meeting House property, online potlucks, sponsoring of urban victory gardens, all without even being able to break bread together in person/community.



- Ways Meetings have reduced their carbon footprint.
- Anti-racist work which brought an increased perception of "unnoticed shadows in my life and heritage."
- Spiritual hospitality in the forms of new partnering with other churches to complete one's regular outreach, growing gardens, sharing food, providing grocery shopping, and rides to doctors, either beginning new connections with other faith communities or deepening them, strengthening our Meeting community in the process, within our own Meetings as well as out in the larger communities.

Many Monthly Meetings are considering continuing to offer some form of virtual Meeting for Worship even when we can get back to our Meeting Houses to allow those at a distance, those with health issues, and those with a concern for the environment to continue to gather for Meeting for Worship.

One of the biggest struggles for most Monthly Meetings during 2020 was how to continue to engage with families with young children. Some mourned the loss of their young Friends. Some found creative ways to include them:

- Nature walks
- Bike trips
- Christmas caroling (CDC approved precautions taken)
- Gardening work days
- Bonfires
- Virtual First Day School
- Online intergenerational activities, such as making valentines and Christmas ornaments, with prepared packets including the materials needed delivered beforehand; performing a Christmas play online; singing Christmas carols; and reading books aloud.

Monthly Meetings looked for the gifts in virtual Meeting. Some of these were reducing our carbon footprint with less travel, and the ease of attending committee meetings; as previously mentioned, allowing F/friends from a distance to worship with us, along with the infirm and seekers; being in each other's homes; worshiping with other Monthly Meetings and Worship Groups without the travel; and the allowance for participation in wider Quaker meetings that would not otherwise have been possible, such as Friends General Conference's Gathering, Friends World Committee on Consultation, and Friends Committee on National Legislation. However, some Monthly Meetings found ways to meet together in-person, outside for safe, physically distanced worship. Front yard visits are now a form of visitation among Friends.

Outside of the global pandemic and its impact, mentioned by all Monthly Meetings which had provided their State of the Monthly Meeting Reports, commitment to and or involvement in anti-racism work was noted by almost all. 2020 generated a depth of introspection and level of communication and reaching out to others, particularly within the anti-racism work of both individuals and Monthly Meetings. Most Monthly Meetings have continued to engage with what it means to be a predominately white faith community, one noting their increased sensitivity to racism prompted them to be more intensely involved in anti-racism work.

Internally, within SAYMA, our struggle to understand our participation in racism and white supremacy continues to meet us at every turn.

The painful conflict within SAYMA regarding Uplifting Racial Justice and or its Clerk was identified by only a few Monthly Meetings, although it was evident during SAYMA Representative Meetings. One meeting noted, Friends struggled in knowing how to help the Yearly Meeting with their relationship with people of color. However, the meeting noted they are a constant supporter of URJ. Other Monthly Meetings noted the conflict with URJ helped them decide, with Spirit guidance, where to use their monies, and chose their local communities and broader initiatives, both within and outside the Quaker world, instead of within SAYMA. This pattern of action, i.e., where to use monies and engage in actions, noted below in more detail, was provided by many other Monthly Meetings which did not mention the conflict within SAYMA itself.

Local and national action was increased within and by some Friends Meetings as they continue to engage in anti-racism work. Last year many were called to stand with Black Lives Matter in the streets, attending public meetings, and lobbying for laws to change policing practices. They also continued to read and discuss books, holding forums during adult education, looking at themselves and their meetings. They also began to use indigenous peoples' place names, erecting a Land Acknowledgement sign on held property, publicly identifying Land Acknowledgement prior to start of Monthly Meeting events, pursuing right relationships with indigenous peoples, and offering outreach to immigrants and the Latinx community. It is clear we have a desire to do social justice work.

No matter how imperfect we are, "our Monthly Meetings continue to strive to be a welcoming, spiritual home for those who choose to worship in the manner of Friends."

Ministry & Nurture Committee  
Submitted by Diana Masso  
6/12/2021

## Aiken Worship Group

### 2020 State of the Meeting Report

1. In what ways is your meeting answering the call to become an anti-racist faith community?

We believe we are a non-racist meeting, but that is neutral. Anti-racist is a positive effort to combat racism in the culture. We cannot truthfully say that we have been proactive in countering racism in the Aiken-Augusta area beyond participation by some individuals in Black Lives Matter events.

2. What are ways you and your meeting responded to the environmental impact of COVID?

We have responded indirectly by meeting virtually since March 2020. We plan to continue to meet virtually for the foreseeable future.

3. How have we comforted one another during times of grief, loss, and isolation; and checked in on the emotional and financial health of Friends?

Comfort and support have been given primarily one-to-one in the form of small but heart-driven gestures such as gifts of food and occasional distanced (front yard) visits.

4. How has your meeting approached the sense of grief, loss, and the emotional health of the children, including the lack of regular physical interaction?

Our one family with children moved to North Carolina in 2020.

5. What growth has happened in your meeting in response to the stresses of this year?

We have come to a deeper appreciation of the value and benefits of face-to-face fellowship and look forward to returning to in-person meetings when it is safe to do so. We have found, however, that virtual meetings have facilitated attendance by former members, interested seekers and the infirm who could not have made it to meeting otherwise. For this reason, we will be investigating the feasibility of maintaining a virtual option after in-person meetings have resumed.

Respectfully submitted,

Aiken Worship Group

## State of the Meeting 2020 Asheville Friends Meeting

The year 2020 was a year of unforeseen challenges that would test our meeting throughout the year. The pandemic, the endless misinformation, the economic downturn, the killing of George Floyd, the endless election cycle, just to name a few. In our shock and grief we have struggled individually and as a Meeting to fashion an appropriate and Spirit-informed response to these stresses. Our Meeting members and attenders have supported one another and responded to these many challenges with appropriate seriousness and caution. As we look back on 2020, we are grateful for the efforts of so many Friends that have helped bring our Meeting and our community through this most difficult year.

Sensing the enormity of the toll that the approaching pandemic was going to take on the world, for many of us this became a more prayerful time. One of the first efforts we took was to encourage folks to join together in Spirit at 7pm daily and hold healthcare and other essential workers in the Light for ten minutes. Being cautious and in light of what we were learning about best practices toward the pandemic, we stopped meeting in person in March. Thanks to the dedication of the tech-savvy members of Meeting, we began holding weekly Meeting for Worship and monthly business meetings on Zoom. Our Ministry and Counsel Committee began the process of maintaining connection by using our directory to create email and phone lists. This gave us the tools we needed to keep in touch with folks regularly. By dividing the phone list up and finding volunteers to make calls regularly we strengthened our individual connections. Members sent cards and visited folks, masked and at safe distance, who were most isolated or having health concerns. On a handful of joyous occasions when the weather was nice, we met for socially distanced and masked worship on the lawn.

Several in Meeting provided needed transportation for groceries and medical appointments. Boxes of food were delivered to several isolated individuals and families. Families sent cards and visited folks who were most isolated or having some health concerns. It was shared in the Digest for publication the name of a mourning group which was bringing people together to share their grief around losses due to COVID. Inspired by a desire of Asheville Friends to do something for the community, a fundraiser was planned and carried out with great success. The proceeds went to local organizations working with homelessness and food insecurity.

The COVID pandemic has caused some unanticipated consequences to the environment, some of them positive. The decrease in air travel has lowered carbon emissions. Once we realized that we could not meet at the Meetinghouse, our House and Grounds committee did what they could to shut it down; setting the thermostat at 55 degrees and turning off the refrigerator.

Attachment Y. State of SAYMA

Several folks in Meeting made cloth masks to help with supply, which also reduced our use of disposable masks. Individuals in Meeting concerned with the abundance of take-out containers being used, have approached local restaurants. They have been encouraging the use of compostable containers rather than plastic and styrofoam that cannot be recycled.

Inspired by the work of our Racial Justice Committee we are building on the work begun in the past with the book Becoming An Anti-Racist Church, by reading and discussing through the year Robin DiAngelo's White Fragility and Resmaa Menaken's My Grandmother's Hands, an amazing work on racialized trauma. These readings and discussions helped us to grow our understanding of systemic racism, the language of white supremacist culture and ways of mending within ourselves, our meeting and the community around us. Having a safe place to share deeply and emotionally, practice language and make mistakes has opened us up to a deeper level of connection. Participation in these discussions has increased through the year. Over time more and more individuals in our meeting are finding ways to work in the community at large toward a more racially equitable culture.

While we were horrified by the very visible murder of George Floyd, we realized that this is one of so many unjust deaths in our society. In response to racial injustice in our own community, we began talking about reparations and other actions that we can undertake by supporting on-going work in our Black and Brown communities. We have chosen to prioritize contracting needed work with businesses owned by People of Color.

We have learned more this year about the history of Quaker boarding schools and their cruel methods of making Native American children give up their culture and native language and learn English. We acknowledge the great harm that has been done to the Cherokee and other indigenous people. Unfortunately it continues today as we see the high incidence of COVID in the indigenous populations during the pandemic.

The quality of the virtual Meeting for Business has been maintained, allowing lengthy discussion which allowed all who wanted to share to give their opinion. Our business meetings have been almost as well attended as before quarantine. In some cases committees have met via conference call to accommodate individual needs. Committees have cooperated, allowing outreach to be maintained. Our one week fundraiser made it possible to contribute \$6,600 to the homeless and food insecure. The weekly email Digest has helped folks to be aware of business being conducted. We feel it is important to continue paying the workers in our Meeting, whether or not they are working during the pandemic. We have supported organizations that are helping the homeless and food insecure, many of them people of color, who are residing in our community. We also organized a food collection to go to MANNA food bank which is distributed to people with food insecurity.

We were grateful for the caution and leadership of many of our leaders, especially our governor. At the same time, the toll that the pandemic was taking on the emotional health of our children was on the minds of many in our meeting. Our Religious Education Committee set up and hosted weekly First Day meetings. All of the children were invited each week to a virtual check-in on First Days, allowing children to stay in touch with each other. Individual families did outside visits with each other. This became a real joy for many of us. They also arranged a socially distanced picnic at the Meetinghouse to follow one of the First Days that we met on the lawn for worship.

Maintaining traditions has proven to be important, perhaps especially for our youth. We were able to continue our annual Simple Christmas by making up and delivering kits to those wanting to participate and scheduling Zoom meeting time to work together on the projects. We were also able to have our Nativity Play on Zoom. We enjoyed singing together during this, mostly with us all on mute. In this way we were able to continue providing the long-lasting connection between the adults and children in Meeting that has developed over the years. As the holidays approached the younger families put together stockings and packages for those in Meeting who would be alone at this special time. They were delivered with some carol singing at a safe distance.

Our members have lost parents, other family members and friends due to COVID. We have been cautious. Our Meeting for Worship has been virtual since March but has about 20 attendees who meet weekly. Friendships have been maintained and the depth of our friendships has been revealed. With time on our hands relationships have been developed and maintained, but some opportunities have been missed. Some of us have felt overwhelmed to varying degrees. Through understanding, caring, and kindness we have grown stronger. We have learned some ways to work through some of our differences and challenges. Our worship has grown deeper as we have come together to help each other through this very scary and trying time.

## STATE OF THE MEETING REPORT FOR 2020

Atlanta Friends Meeting

Lissa Place, Clerk

approved at Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business on March 21, 2021

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Atlanta Friends Meeting continues to be a supportive spiritual community in the midst of a global pandemic and renewed calls for racial justice. We have struggled and we have soared, but in the end we have done the best we could to carry on in 2020. We are working with the challenges of present conditions to care for our members and attenders, finding new ways to support Friends, to pull together as a community, and to continue our mission to be a welcoming spiritual home for all.

Our work to forward Quaker ideals looked different under these circumstances. We could not have casual conversations during coffee hour, and that has affected the ways that many committees function. Our office coordinator worked with committees to help them get information to the community, using the announcement sheet and newsletter, website and Facebook group, and our Meeting's Listserv and emails to communicate. We improved in our ability to use technology as a Meeting, which will benefit us beyond COVID, and created an environment where the whole Meeting worked in unity while we were all dealing with similar challenges created by COVID. For this reason, this report will be more about general work in the Meeting, and less about what each committee is doing.

There are ways in which our spiritual depth brought new meaning during these trying times. We have seen each other through a mass movement for racial justice, an election and its troubling aftermath, Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays, and endless ups and downs that we have all experienced during this pandemic. Messages in Meeting became an important source of support. One message spoke of this time as a "unique Sabbath." Another message spoke of the brokenness many of us feel as a place for the light to shine in. There were messages of environmental rejuvenation, and gratitude for a slower way of life, along with others of anger, frustration, isolation, and fear. We were reminded to come to Meeting however we are. This has truly been a time that we have relied on each other for our very substance, and we have been there.

We began our Sunday Meeting for Worship via Zoom on March 22. Although there are some Friends for whom technology is a deterrent, we have had an average attendance of 80 for Sunday worship. Meeting online allows us to accommodate people who are unable to attend Meeting for health reasons or distance and also provided the opportunity to worship with Friends who have moved across the globe. We cherish the opportunities that virtual worship has provided us, and we hope to find a way to permanently welcome these Friends to our worship. While marriages are on hold, we welcomed two new members, two transfers in, and four transfers of members to new spiritual homes this year. We held a hybrid (in-person and virtual) memorial Meeting for Worship celebrating the life of Woody Woodall in October, and a second virtual memorial meeting in December celebrating the life of Beth Garrettson. Sadly, due to the pandemic, we have not yet been able to hold memorial services for several other people who died during 2020: David Jarvis (d. February 12, 2020), Peter Sederberg (d. August 3, 2020), Priscilla Padron (d. September 26, 2020), and Tom Kenworthy (d. December 28, 2020). We held a forum in November to help us deal with our many and varied forms of grief. Ministry and Worship continues to work to find ways to support the community while we

meet virtually, including weekly messages that welcome newcomers to what could be perceived as a new and unusual form of worship, and offers instructions that help to deepen the quality of worship for all. They continue to hold both monthly spiritual journeys of members and attenders and Adult First Day school virtually.

To meet the spiritual needs of our young Friends, Religious Education has hosted 3-4 families meeting with elementary age students online in the 1/2 hour before worship to enjoy check in, songs, and read aloud books. The children continue their Godly Play curriculum and enjoy the opportunity to virtually "invite each other in" to their homes. Teens and young adult friends met weekly for a much appreciated discussion and fellowship. Over the year, they met with 35 youth in person, and 20 on Zoom calls. They continue to reach out to national Quaker organizations to problem solve teaching during the pandemic.

In order to deal with the volume and intensity of changes required to use the Meetinghouse safely during COVID, a new committee called the Working Group on the Use of the Meetinghouse was formed during Business Meeting in May. On the committee are two Centers for Disease Control and Prevention representatives from our Meeting, as well as the Clerks of many committees in Meeting. They have wrestled with the technicalities of what it means to be safe in a COVID world, wanting to provide opportunities for connection when people want it, while keeping ourselves and those that enter our building safe. They worked on how to handle renters as well as ways that the Meeting would use the space. Following a survey, they determined interest in having two in person midweek worship services which started in July and September.

Approximately 5-10 people have been attending each service, and found it meaningful. For worship services as well as for renters, they have determined guidelines that include sanitizing, social distancing, closing the kitchen, signing in to allow for contact tracing if needed, and wearing masks. Right now, our renters have showed little interest in returning to the Meetinghouse, but we have hosted a few small groups. The committee has come up with a protocol for what to do if someone who has been in the Meetinghouse has a positive Coronavirus test. In addition, to making the building safer, they have worked with the Administration Committee to upgrade all HVAC filters in the building to improve air quality. This committee is basically in charge of how the building is used until the time that the committee is no longer needed.

While we are having Meeting for Worship via Zoom, a new ministry at the Meetinghouse has arisen among us. Although we are not using the Meetinghouse for typical uses, it is not closed, and in some ways is carrying out our vision for peace and social justice. Anton Flores-Maisonet, our Friend in Residence, has started to use the Meetinghouse for radical hospitality for immigrants seeking asylum. He and his spouse, Charlotte Flores, have partnered with other organizations, attenders of Meeting, and even neighborhood residents to help immigrants and asylum seekers find their way from detention centers to their final destinations. In the Meetinghouse, hospitality is being offered in the form of overnight accommodations, meals, clothing, and other items necessary for travel to our guests' final destination, usually in the United States. In 2020, this ministry provided a place to stay for nearly 60 guests from 20 countries. Typically our guests need just one night's accommodations before catching a bus or plane to their home. This has been a heart-filling ministry under the guidance of Anton and Charlotte that has involved over twenty households



of the Meeting. There is so much that we are unable to do at this time that it is uplifting to hear about what is being done. We are grateful to the Floreses and all involved for this ministry.

In this critical year for racial justice, Atlanta Friends Meeting has recommitted to uprooting systemic racism and white supremacy both externally, in our communities and nation, and internally, in ourselves, and our Meeting. We have seen wider participation of AFM Friends in anti-racism work at the Meeting, committee, and individual levels. Early in the year, the Committee on Undoing Racism in Atlanta Friends Meeting (CURAFM) and Quakers for Racial Equality (QRE) co-sponsored a well-attended workshop on “Addressing Racism Among Friends.” Then they offered support to various committees for dismantling systemic racism to forward our goal of becoming a more welcoming anti-racist Meeting. This effort later led to the formation of an Ad Hoc Anti-Racist Policies and Procedure Group with representatives from several different committees to address institutional racism in AFM.

Recognizing the disproportionate impact of the pandemic on People of Color, Quakers for Racial Equality reached out to Friends of Color, helped expand and publicize the Assistance Fund, donated funds to a Black church providing direct assistance to unhoused people, and supported another local group, Beacon Hill Black Alliance for Human Rights. Social Concerns Committee submitted a Minute approved by Business Meeting that encouraged legislators to focus on access to healthcare, the disparate effects of COVID on Black, Latinx, and People of Color, and the goal of a global ceasefire. In addition, the Social Concerns budget was largely used for local relief of those suffering during the pandemic.

In the wake of racist killings of Black people by police and white vigilantes, Quakers for Racial Equality, the Atlanta Friends of Color group, and the Committee on Undoing Racism in Atlanta Friends Meeting coordinated to draft a statement supporting Black Lives Matter for the AFM website and a draft AFM Anti-Racism Minute. Both were approved by Meeting For Business. CURAFM made Black Lives Matter signs available, and a great many Atlanta Friends participated in a wide range of racial justice activities with others from Meeting, as individuals, or with other groups. Within Meeting, CURAFM also started a new online opportunity to talk about race in a brave space. “Let’s Talk About Race,” met weekly from July-September, and monthly since then. Quakers for Racial Equality continued their ongoing work virtually, offering the “Listening Ear for Concerns about Racism” by phone, and a “virtual literature table” that was available through the weekly announcement sheet. QRE held monthly online meetings on a wide range of topics, such as Juneteenth and Gullah Geechee culture, Reparations, and Right Relations with Indigenous Peoples. QRE also collaborated with Social Concerns committee to celebrate the 100 th anniversary of Votes for Women with a program on African American women suffragists and civil rights workers. The Friends of Color group supported each other virtually and collaborated with various committees on anti-racism work. An AFM book group reading books by and about People of Color read 10 books during the year. Beyond our own Meeting, AFM Friends participated in online opportunities such as the Me & White Supremacy book study group organized through SAYMA, and the “Listening 4 Justice” program, which is led by AFM member Folami Prescott Adams and includes a number of AFM Friends among its participants.

Social Concerns Committee was actively involved outside the Meeting with Get Out The Vote, making and donating banners to non-partisan groups working in Black and Latinx communities where voting has historically been suppressed.

Our Meeting has continued to care for each other using virtual and socially distanced ways, primarily through the Care & Counsel committee. During March and April, Care & Counsel reached out to everyone in our directory by phone or email to offer support. They created online forms to allow Friends to volunteer with tasks such as grocery shopping as well as to request assistance. To help Friends in financial difficulty, the committee updated guidelines for the Assistance Fund and advertised how to apply for assistance in the weekly announcement sheet. As part of discerning their role in anti-racist work, they approved updated guidelines for welcoming diverse newcomers.

Administration Committee remained very active this year. They have nurtured and supported the Friend in Residence, many of the technical needs of Meeting, and have been in charge of cleaning and upgrading our building inside and out. The Administration Committee upgraded all HVAC filters in the building to improve air quality, and explored installing solar panels as well as a new roof.

The Suchitoto Fund Committee's work has come to a close this year, as planned. This Committee has been meeting since September 2016 to encourage the development of a non-profit organization of former and current scholarship recipients from the work of Frank and Carol Cummings, according to a bequest in Frank's will. The name of this organization is "Asociación de Becarios Actuales y Graduados de Educación Superior para el Desarrollo Integral de la Juventud de Suchitoto" or ABESUCHI." An international non-profit organization that works in El Salvador (IDEAS) was engaged to facilitate this work. ABESUCHI now has full legal status and is functioning as an independent organization that is now administering a funded project. The AFM Finance Committee will carry on some additional annual transfers from Frank's bequest and will monitor financial reporting from ABESUCHI now that the Suchitoto Fund Committee has been laid down.

Nominating Committee has continued to fill the spaces as they came available during this year. They were greatly affected by not seeing people in person at Meeting. They are working on creating a system that works virtually, which includes making announcements about open positions and asking for volunteers more than usual.

Our lobbying group for Friends Committee on National Legislation has learned to do virtual lobby visits. They are using this time to learn social media, and are already tweeting and posting on Facebook! They, with all of us, grieve the loss of Representative John Lewis, but look forward to meeting his successor as well as two new senators.

We had our 9th year of AFM serving as host meeting for Quaker Voluntary Service. Due to the generosity of the local Mennonite Community, the fellows are enjoying a new home in Atlanta. There were many changes in staff as well as in the Local Support Committee during 2020, but they are ending the year with solid leadership on both fronts. The support committee is striving to take up issues related to equity more intentionally and explicitly, including examining race, class, and gender. They are looking at this so that they can best be supportive of the Fellows.

Macon Worship Group, which is under our care, has been quite active during the pandemic. They have switched to virtual meetings which allowed them to give up their rental space. They have moved their worship to Thursdays to allow people to attend AFM Meetings on the weekends, and they have begun meeting weekly for a shorter period of time with the flexibility that is offered by Zoom. They are also holding monthly public education topics as well as business meetings.

Some other important events and activities for 2020 include:

- Landscape Committee: They have done a massive removal of kudzu from the property and replaced it with plants that support wildlife.
- Approving Facebook Guidelines for our Facebook Page: In October's Business Meeting, we approved guidelines to help monitor how people use the Facebook Page. In an Ad Hoc committee initiated by our office coordinator, they came up with much needed guidelines. This seemed particularly important during this time because many people are finding us online and see the Facebook Page as a representation of who we are. The moderator positions are being added to the list of Meeting positions to be filled by Nominating Committee.
- Using tools in Business Meeting: We have used colors in Business Meeting to to make it easier to see the general opinion of the group since it is harder to get a "sense of the Meeting" virtually. We have used green, red, white or black objects to reflect agreement, concern, or a question/answer to a specific question. After the daunting task of setting up virtual Business Meetings, we mastered the technology and were able to keep the work of the Meeting moving forward.
- Increased use of our cabin on Lake Burton: The Ferguson Cabin was willed to the Meeting by Dwight and Irene Ferguson many years ago. There has always been a committed group of people who have loved and cared for the cabin, but they have struggled to have new people discover it. This year, a record number of people visited the cabin (even with restrictions on only having one group visit at a time), with 17 people who had never been there before. They are working on making information about how to rent the cabin even more accessible to all.

Despite the many challenges of 2020, we have persevered. We have found creative solutions for our current circumstances, and we have been there for one another. Now, more than ever we have relied on the depth of our faith to carry on. The year 2020 was like no other, but we are grateful to be on the other side of it, and hope that we will be stronger for it.

## **Berea Friends Meeting 2020 State of the Meeting Report**

This report has been composed in unprecedented times, with regular in-person Meeting for Worship being suspended due to the Covid-19 pandemic social distancing measures. Despite the challenges that this presents to our meeting community, and the prevalence of our current reality overshadowing all else, there is much to share about the 11 months leading up to where we are now.

Berea Friends Meeting continues to be a spiritually healthy and dynamic community of seekers. We regularly welcome three to six children, ten to twelve teens, and between twenty to thirty adults at Meeting for Worship. Visitors often join us. We have frequent First Hour discussion sessions which provide fertile soil in preparation for Worship. Our Meetings for Business in the Spirit of Worship are normally attended by at least ten people. This year we welcomed one Friend into formal membership in the Meeting.

This year has seen a great deal of activity at Berea Friends Meeting, with broad participation in committee work, incredible commitment of time, energy and emotional support to each other as individuals, and attention being given to efforts in the wider community and the world. We also have broad participation in work for SAYMA, and collaborating with Friends in other Kentucky meetings.

Our teens continue to be nourished by participation in the Southern Appalachian Young Friends (SAYF) program. We have a relatively large group of teens at present, and the children's program continues to flourish; the entire meeting benefits from the energy and enthusiasms of our young Friends. We continue to discern the ways in which attenders of all ages may be encouraged to interact, learn, support and be supported with regular intergenerational activities and projects, for instance our regular community service project of roadside trash pick-up twice per year.

The spiritual life of the meeting is rich, with deep discernment on the intersections of individual promptings and spirit-led action by the meeting as a corporate body. Bi-annually our Ministry and Nurture committee guides us through a membership review process. This year it provided fertile ground for deeper reflection about the spiritual life of our meeting. We struggle and strive to strike a healthy balance between the inward spiritual life and its outward manifestations in the world. True to our Quaker heritage, we encourage each other to attend to our inner promptings, to speak what is in our hearts, and to actively listen as we discern our spiritual path. Where conflict has arisen, we have relied on our Quaker process, and our goodwill, to guide us through the turbulence.

This year we have been led to be particularly active locally. Our Peace and Social Concerns and Outreach Committees again co-sponsored information tables at a series of live music events that take place in Berea over the summer. We again committed to the winter season of Berea's Room in the Inn efforts, with members and attenders serving in many capacities including: volunteering at the check-in location, preparing, sharing and hosting meals, donating materials, providing extra meetinghouse cleaning, and serving as "Innkeepers" once per week over the winter months to provide a shelter option for our local homeless population.

Racism has been, and continues to be, a major focus of our attention. As a meeting we engaged in a shared reading and discussion of the book "White Fragility". It was a valuable endeavor providing openings on how we, as a meeting and as individuals, can improve how we think about racism and white supremacy. We continue to open the use of our meeting space to a local group called "First Thursday Club" which meets monthly and aims to create conversation and share learning on racial justice issues and dismantling white supremacy; many from our meeting are also attenders with this group. As individuals and as a meeting body, we continue to grapple with understanding our own complicity in racist systems and institutions, and many of us are actively leaning into challenging conversations about what dismantling white supremacy looks like in our monthly and yearly

meetings.

We actively nurture a meeting culture that provides gentle correction and guidance, and we continue to value many long-cherished aspects of our Meeting — the opportunity to worship in a space where mind and body can be still, a home in which we can experience our Quaker identity, and a safe and welcoming spiritual community committed to listening, discerning, and seeking unity. We walk together on a path illuminated by The Light, supporting and nurturing each other on our journey. We strive to share the value of spiritual listening among ourselves, and with the wider community, and to serve as examples by living what we believe.

Attachment Y. State of SAYMA

**State of the Meeting Report**  
**Birmingham Friends Meeting**  
**2020**

Like the rest of the world, Birmingham Friends Meeting was greatly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. As we reflected on how the Spirit moved among us over the past year, we saw the obvious challenges but also the gifts of the past year.

The year began with our usual activities. Second Hours focused on the Twelve Step program, Climate Change, and FCNL priorities. Adding a new family in 2019 brought three young boys to join our one girl in First Day School. This energized our children's programming and excited us for the future. The Meeting also hosted Burdock Book Collective at the Meetinghouse. This group brought new faces to the Meetinghouse and raised awareness about Quakers.

In late February, we grew concerned for one of our members now living in Italy. While he reported that he was safe, his community was shut down because of the virus. By early March, we were concerned about spread in our region. Friends raised the issue of discontinuing holding hands at rise of Meeting. On March 13<sup>th</sup>, we made the difficult decision not to hold Meeting for Worship on the 15<sup>th</sup>. Soon after, we began our year of Zoom.

Zoom was a response to our need to stay connected. For some of us, it was an important connection to the rest of the world. For others, the new format did not work and we have lost some regular attenders. Zoom is particularly difficult for our families with children and we have found no good way to hold First Day School. However, one of the interesting outcomes of the shift to virtual meetings has been the reconnection with Friends who cannot normally attend our Meetings in person. Their presence has added a great deal to our Meeting for Worship and 2<sup>nd</sup> Hour. One such attender joined the Meeting this year.

While we miss the fellowship of our in person worship, one friend put it best "half a loaf of bread is better than no loaf at all." Friends reflected on the ability to see everyone at once and hold people in the Light as they enter the Meeting. Friends also expressed their gratitude for the structure of a weekly Meeting for Worship.

Our 2<sup>nd</sup> Hour topics continue to attract members and attenders. We are particularly excited about a new member's presentations on climate change topics that have informed us and given us ways of addressing this issue. This Friend also led a workshop on the topic at FGC.

Friends continued to be involved in anti-racism, many of us attending local rallies and working to address our own bias along with systemic bias. Friends participated in a Social Justice Book Club facilitated by a member of the Meeting. This was in conjunction with the Jefferson County Memorial Project to document lynching in each Alabama county. The book club met at the Meetinghouse until the pandemic, continuing virtually after the pandemic

Attachment Y. State of SAYMA

Between Meeting for Worship and 2<sup>nd</sup> Hour, we have a virtual social time which allows us to catch up on each other's lives. Like many people, our conversations in 2020 often turned to politics. Many Friends were engaged in campaigns in 2020. For some attenders, conversations at Meeting brought a feeling of comfort and community. For others, it was overload from an already political year.

We celebrate the transfer of one membership to our Meeting and another new member. As the new year begins, another long-time member is moving to NC to be near family. We hope that NC Friends will welcome him and we look forward to seeing him virtually. Friends recognize the challenge of continuing to engage our remote attenders when we return to in person worship. As we contemplate the return to our Meetinghouse, we are grateful for the strong leadership of 2020 which kept us connected during a difficult time.

In Peace,

Birmingham Friends Meeting

## State of Meeting

The pandemic has played havoc with our meeting - we have been meeting outdoors for six months - our usual attendance is 4 we haven't seen many of our attendees for 1 year - we keep in touch by telephone

Our 3 snow birds have been stuck in Fla due to health issues - we keep in touch by e-mail.

and so we wear our masks and stayger on hoping for an early end to the pandemic

F. Zeman



Celo Friends Meeting State of the Meeting Report for 2020  
Approved by CFM Meeting for Business and shared with SAYMA, March 2021

Celo Friends Meeting has continued to search for ways to provide a spiritual home for our members and attenders during this year dominated by the pandemic and isolation. The reality of the situation came to us over a matter of weeks in March and April. At first it seemed like it would be enough to forgo the pre-meeting hugs and closing handshake. We quickly realized that this was not being cautious enough and suspended gathering in person. We cancelled meeting for business in March and encouraged Friends to worship in place at home on First Day. As it became clear that this was going to be a long-term reality, we began to experiment with the video conference platform Zoom. In April we held our first meeting for business via Zoom and started offering a Zoom link for First Day worship. This met the needs of some, but many Friends were not comfortable relying on technology for our worship and continued to observe an hour of worship in isolation.

As time went on the need was felt for more human interaction. Recognizing this need we helped to organize small, in person, worship groups outside at people's homes during the warm months. One group began meeting on the foundation of our old meetinghouse, taking steps to remain a small group that could maintain a safe distance. We continued to offer Zoom worship also. After several months we began to feel fragmented as a Meeting. We were all worshipping but we were missing being together. After addressing this concern at meeting for business we decided to establish one First Day each month where we would all endeavor to join the Zoom worship. This has remained our practice as we go into a new year. We also have adopted the practice of including unstructured social time on Zoom before and after the worship hour to meet the needs of Friends for fellowship.

One benefit of the Zoom worship has been the participation of Friends from afar. We have several members/attenders who live at a great distance who have been able to join us regularly. Several Celo Friends supported one of these long-distance attenders with planting a victory garden on a vacant lot in an African American neighborhood near Philadelphia. Another response to our feeling of fragmentation was to re-start our monthly newsletter, after a seven-month hiatus. This has provided another means for helping us feel more connected. Our out-of-state readers have shared their appreciation for this link to CFM.

Although our meetinghouse remains open, it has only had the occasional solitary visitor. Our caretaker faithfully keeps it clean. Other uses of our buildings have been suspended, including the Children's Garden Preschool which has switched to an all-outdoor program.

The lack of in person gathering has been especially hard on families with children. Our Zoom worship and small gatherings are not easy for children to participate in. The year started out with First Day School meeting in our usual 2 groups - childcare and elementary/middle school-aged children. Each group would average between 2-7 children. Our themes focused on Quaker SPICES and virtues. We started the practice of having the children return to the gathered Meeting at the end of worship so that we could end our time together as a

Attachment Y. State of SAYMA

community. Our paid childcare helpers were coordinating with the adult childcare volunteers. All this changed when in-person gatherings were suspended. First Day School committee reached out to families to see how we could help, and/or how we could gather. With the stress of the pandemic, we were able to gather only twice - for Peace Day celebration in August and for outdoor Christmas tree decorating and a hike in December. Despite only meeting twice, they were meaningful gatherings focused on Peace and Community. As we enter the new year, we plan to offer more walks with the children as a way to provide some positive social interaction.

The onset of the pandemic coincided with us laboring over the issue of racial justice, and specifically how we recognize racism in ourselves and our meeting. After much prayerful consideration, we united on a minute to SAYMA with our concerns for the direction the Uplifting Racial Justice Committee had gone. We resolved to focus our energy and resources on looking at racial justice as a Meeting. An ad hoc Race Matters Committee formed and has met continuously weekly via Zoom since July. The committee used the book *White Supremacy & Me* as a resource. This committee's work was very challenging and enlightening to the members. In the new year the committee will continue their work by engaging more Celo Friends in understanding the role of racism and white supremacy both within the Society of Friends and in the wider world.

Our Adult Religious Education committee has remained active through the pandemic. The February, March, and April religious education sessions focused on the theme: How Does the Truth Prosper Among You? February's forum was on "How do we do Justice?" and March's on "How does Forgiveness prosper among you?" The April forum on humility was cancelled due to the pandemic. The committee convened a meeting with the co-clerks on March 25 to discuss support for members and attenders during this time of isolation. The result was formation of three Friendly 8s groups, which have met weekly or semi-weekly throughout the year, using a worship-sharing format, with queries developed by rotating facilitators. These groups have provided important support and community during this time of physical absence from one another.

After its usual summer hiatus, the committee reconvened in August to plan two fall programs by Zoom, focusing on the history of racial justice among NC Quakers, to give historical context for the work of the Meeting's Race Matters ad hoc Committee. The October program provided information on Quaker history of slave holding and emancipation in North Carolina. The November program presented a history of slavery in Western North Carolina including information about the graves of enslaved people in Celo Community, by Clark and Peggy Tibbits; the integration of Yancey County Schools through an NAACP lawsuit in 1960, with a chronology of Quaker and AFSC support, by Joyce Johnson; and a Gib Barrus interview about the history of Camp Celo and Arthur Morgan School around race relations and integration. Documents from this program were donated to the Oak Crest School project in Burnsville, which is archiving the history of integration in Yancey County. In the new year we will continue this theme with a panel discussion by the Race Matters committee, and other presentations to increase awareness of the prevalence of systemic racism in our society.

Nominating committee has continued its work this year by gathering, and bringing to meeting for business for approval, job and committee descriptions for all positions of responsibility within Celo Meeting. Many of these had never been formalized. Two new positions, record keeper and end-of-life liaison have been created. This work led the meeting to see the utility of having a website, which is being created by a member of the meeting. We also completed our biennial process for nominations. Most Friends were willing to continue in their current positions, but we used the Strawberry Creek process to find candidates for some jobs including co-clerk and recording clerk.

Lack of in person gatherings made our annual gathering to observe the Day of the Dead especially meaningful. Masked and keeping safe distance we cleaned up our peaceful cemetery and then spoke words to honor those no longer living, known and unknown.

Our Christmas Eve worship with carol singing was especially poignant. Since singing in unison on Zoom is not feasible, we took turns singing as family groups. Though we missed being together, it was sweet to see each other's faces and feel the intimacy of being in each other's homes.

In spite of our limitations on in person gatherings, Friends have continued to be generous with their financial support. Many Friends who don't participate regularly in worship still contribute to our general fund, the Feed-a-Child effort, and a special concerns fund that has helped out families with unexpected bills.

We are grateful for the Light that we continue to nurture, individually and corporately, as we head into another year of isolation. We look forward to being able to worship, sing, hug, laugh, and share meals together again before too long.

In the Light,

Gib Barrus Co-Clerk

## **Charleston Friends Meeting State of the Meeting Report 2020**

Charleston Friends Meeting has attempted to honor the spirit of this year's queries by condensing and rephrasing them so they better reflect our situation.

### 1. How does the Spirit fare amongst you?

2020 was a year we divide into before and after COVID. Before, Charleston Friends worshipped together physically in small quarters provided by a local service organization, as we had for many years. We continued our practice of offering a meal at a homeless shelter on Superbowl Sunday, worked with the Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) on repeal of authorizations for use of military force, and minuted concern about SAYMA's processes for appointing and maintaining committees in good order. We were blessed with a visit from Arthur Morgan School students, who joined us for worship after their educational activities in Charleston.

On March 15, we held our final in-person Meeting for Worship. Later that week, the Governor issued a "stay at home" order due to the COVID pandemic. For several weeks, the American Friends Service Committee West Virginia Economic Justice Project hosted First Day Meeting for Worship on its Zoom account; at our April Meeting for Business, we decided that we needed our own account for worship and other meeting activities, as we did not expect a prompt resumption of normal life.

The immediate consequence of the COVID order was that we stopped seeing and visiting one another personally, except in small groups, wearing facemasks, and separated by 6 feet or more. The enforced separation may have made us hunger for more time together, if only virtually. Attendance at Meeting for Worship increased, as we drew participation from Friends who were traveling, those in our affiliated Greenbrier Valley Worship Group, other nearby Friends, and children of our meeting.

The organization in whose space we met sold its building over the summer, leaving us officially homeless. Finding a place to gather physically will become more important as the pandemic eases. In the meantime, we adapted our Christmas meal at the women's shelter by asking a neighborhood church to cater it, and contributed to that church's established feeding ministry. The experience may create a longer term collaboration with that church. Charleston friends also adopted a family for Christmas, providing gifts for the children and parent.

We engaged in the FCNL priorities setting process. One Friend attended the Friends General Conference Virtual Gathering, which was very successful.

After several years of wrestling with the matter, Friends transferred 38 acres of riverfront property that was donated to us several years previously to the West Virginia Land Conservancy. They will develop the site into a canoe/kayak landing for paddlers on the Elk River, to be named Quaker Landing.

Attachment Y. State of SAYMA

Greenbrier Valley Friends organized a virtual West Virginia Fall gathering, with worship, fellowship, and workshops for regional Friends. One especially meaningful workshop described the joys and difficulties of a longstanding interracial friendship. Charleston participated fully in the COVID-constrained activities of SAYMA, with members at all four virtual Representative Meetings (except for portions of the Fall RM that conflicted with a memorable workshop during our simultaneous Fall Gathering). Several serve on SAYMA committees. We responded to inquiries from SAYMA with thoughtful minutes.

Spirit is faring well in a meeting when love and unity prevail among Friends engaged in a constant and consistent effort to discern and follow how the one Truth of the one Spirit would bind together in action the hearts of a group of diverse persons. Seen from this angle, the Spirit seems to fare middling well at CFM right now.

2. How has your meeting responded to the impact of structural racism on and within your meeting, in your community, or in the nation?

Not unexpectedly, all of our Meeting is of European descent as West Virginia is 92% identified as white. The impact of *structural* racism on the meeting itself has been slight because of the size of the meeting and its lack of significant institutional structure. We have no targeted outreach to POC or to any other identified group of people. But we constantly searching for outreach. We are now partnering with what is considered a black church for food preparation and donations to local shelters.

Members have worked as led with different racial and ethnic groups. Several members have shared readings and resources on racism in the US, making us more aware as we become more educated. Two attended a virtual workshop with Herbert Henderson Office of Minority Affairs, a WV government committee that deals specifically with local racism. Another undertook personal outreach to learn about the Paul Cuffee Abolitionist Center, and brought suggested readings on white supremacy to our meeting. Others in meeting are actively engaged with the Poor People's Campaign and supportive of Black Lives Matter, though in person participation has been limited by the COVID pandemic.

COVID has prevented us from holding worship in Booker T. Washington's church, though we have supported it as well as racial justice concerns through targeted contributions. We have missed the opportunity to worship in that sacred space, and look forward to returning when conditions permit.

One of the positive results of Charleston's profound disagreement with SAYMA over expenditure of funds by the clerk of the Uplifting Racial Justice (URJ) committee has been repurposing money withheld from SAYMA to local racial justice concerns.

Attachment Y. State of SAYMA

SAYMA racial justice concerns and controversies have frequently been topics of discussion in our Meetings for Business. We have minuted responses to SAYMA inquiries related to URJ twice this year, and prayerfully considered how SAYMA ought to restructure its racial justice work. One Friend noted that he has “spent innumerable hours reflecting on and working with other Friends to sort out the URJ entanglement and seeking for what is in the Spirit in responding to all that.” We regret that most of this thought appears to be considered an affirmation of white privilege and structural racism and dismissed by some individuals within SAYMA. We look forward to more conciliatory conversation in the coming year.

Speaking words many of us could echo, the same Friend said of personal racial justice work that “All I have done is engage in a certain amount of reflection involving explicit recognition of the persistent presence of racism as a pattern of almost always unnoticed shadows in my life and heritage. “

3. How has your meeting adapted to the COVID environment, particularly in taking care of each other and your children and grandchildren?

The meeting uses zoom pretty well to keep in touch with how folks are doing. Friends are able to share their feelings and situations in a fairly open way. In addition to facilitating occasional participation in Meeting by members of other monthly meetings and members not able to easily travel, Zoom and related internet platforms have enabled many of us to continue some quite wonderful contact with out of town relatives through the pandemic, for which we are grateful.

To our surprise, the quality of worship was changed but not diminished. In spite of the Hollywood Square images and occasional connection issues, we have had occasions of deep sharing and worship that many felt was truly gathered. Instead of sitting in a circle, we are arrayed on a screen, and behind each person is a view of that Friend’s space: sometimes an office, a living room, or an outdoor scene. We are invited into each others’ lives.

One Friend felt “proud of how Zoom has served to hold us together and even expanded our Meeting. We have had Friends from other Meetings in West Virginia join us for First Day Meeting, and some of our grown children have joined us. Friends from Greenbrier Worship Group have joined us regularly ... bringing us in closer communion, and Friends with health issues have benefited as well.”

Another added, “While zoom may not work for everyone, the ease of gathering and developing tenderness with each others’ ways and crochets has given those of us who are regulars with our Zoom meetings a new intimacy in the sharing of perspectives. The watch word here is that ‘respect’ we have mentioned several times. There is also the effect of insights into daily life and cares that Zoom has opened up.”

We changed, but went on with activities important to the life of the meeting. Bi-weekly Bible Study concluded the book of Ruth and began reading the “Quaker

Attachment Y. State of SAYMA

Gospel” of John. Second hour discussions, previously held after Meeting for Worship moved to alternate Wednesdays to avoid Zoom fatigue. Committees met over Zoom more frequently than in person. E-mail and telephone allowed us to organize support for Friends needing it.

Any sudden change brings gains and losses, problems and opportunities. On the whole the Meeting has not only stayed intact and continued to accomplish business as usual, but in many ways has become larger and more intimate. The Spirit can apparently work through the internet.

*Approved at Meeting for Business March 7, 2021*

## Chattanooga Friends Meeting, State of Society Report 2020

2020 was a difficult year around the world, in the United States, and at Chattanooga Friends. In March, the coronavirus pandemic mostly shut us down, like everyone else. Unlike some, we never completely shut our doors. From the beginning and throughout this we have kept a small in person presence at our Meeting House, masked and socially distanced. We did this for two reasons: 1) it meant that our lovely worship room, where we have faithfully worshipped together for nearly four decades, was always on our Zoom screen, keeping us grounded in its physical reality and 2) it allowed a few of our older members who are not comfortable in virtual reality to continue to worship with us. Mostly there were two to five people present there.

But we went from being a growing and thriving Meeting which was considering ways to expand our space and was working on creating the first First Day School program it had had in a decade to being a small group just struggling to keep its community alive and vital in the changed world. In 2019 we averaged 20-24 adults and four to eight children in attendance. After the pandemic really set in we had 12-14 adults present, mostly on the computer screen, and usually no children.

One of the greatest losses for us was that we lost touch with our children. We did try at times to reach out to parents and children, with limited success. Parents said that with children remote schooling, neither children nor parents were interested in more screen time for them. Perhaps we could and should have done more to stay in touch with parents and children and create more non-screen opportunities for them. We did do some, had a couple of bonfires at the Meeting House with s'mores. But it seems that we kept thinking the current state was temporary and we could just wait it out until normal came back. When things stopped in March, we had no idea that a year later we would just be starting to figure out how to rebuild.

Worship is our response to an awareness of God. We can worship alone, but when we join with others in expectant waiting, we may discover a deeper sense of God's presence. We had to learn how to believe in and trust that this can also happen when we are gathered on line. For some of our long-standing members, this did not seem possible and they did not worship with us at all, though some kept in touch with us in other ways. Others of us were able to feel a spiritual connection through our virtual reality and to feel this as meaningful and strengthening. We all agree that it is not the complete experience of group in person worship and look forward to being face to face again and actually shaking each other's hands. With fewer people there was less vocal ministry and rarer times when people felt they were given a message that they needed to or could share in virtual reality.

There are things we have done well through this and some growing edges and things we have not done so well. We have tried, especially through the efforts of a few people with gifts in this kind of ministry, to stay in touch and comfort each other and check on each other's well-being. Check ins and personal sharing became a larger and more important part of our weekly meetings. But the people who received the most connection and contact were not always the ones who



needed it the most. Some of our committees just disappeared. Other committees have worked hard and deeply and have been a large part of what held us together through this. Ministry & Oversight continued its work of trying to discern and meet the spiritual needs of individuals and the community. They planned a variety of in person events for the community like the bonfires and outdoor worship where we could be safely together in person and on-line events like virtual potlucks where we could still break bread together, even on our computer screens. Property Committee continued its oversight and maintenance of our house and grounds quietly in the background, making sure that our home stayed in good condition while we were not there very much. And we are grateful that our members and attenders continued their donations even when they were not physically present, so that the Meeting did not suffer financially.

Peace and Social Justice Committee and the Anti-Racism Working Group that arose out of it has been one area where our Meeting has continued to learn and grow. Through the work of P&SJ committee, the Meeting wrote a minute in response to the (May, 2020) shooting of George Floyd, Chattanooga Friends Meeting Statement on Racism and Violence in Policing, which we sent as a letter to the editor of our local newspaper and sent to SAYMA. In June, we also sent a letter to our City Council requesting that they make the needs of the African American community a priority in terms of policy and budget decisions. At that time, the Meeting undertook to commit itself to working towards being an anti-racist group. We started the Anti Racism Working Group, which began with a series of six weekly meetings and then continued to meet monthly. The mission of the group has been to work against racism both inwardly and outwardly, within ourselves and our Meeting and systemic racism in our society, through study and through action. Some specific actions we took: We reviewed our list of donations and focused it more on local and Black led organizations. We supported the work of the Community Control Now Coalition to get a proposal for a Civilian Oversight Board over the police department on the ballot and ultimately we decided to become a member congregation of the CCN Coalition. We read and discussed Ibrahim X Kendi's book "How to be an Anti Racist" together and talked about ways to implement it. We did worship sharing on a series of searching queries. The Library Committee and especially its Clerk strongly supported this work by providing the Meeting with a number of anti-racism books and resources.

We feel the Meeting has grown in its involvement in the Justice community and in its understanding of the meaning of anti-racism. The need for virtual meetings has been a problem to overcome, but also served to make us accessible in some new ways. Some people were able to attend with us virtually who would not have been with us otherwise. We have had new attenders who only came to us after the shut down. We need to get better about helping these people deepen their engagement with the Meeting. Maintaining ourselves as a spiritual community was a theme of the year. To do this we increased various forms of communication and study. We kept our email list and our FaceBook page more active. We sent out announcements each week of the Zoom and in person worship, with thoughtful queries to consider while preparing ourselves for worship. We hope that this has kept us as a positive spiritual force in people's lives and ready to move forward into a better 2021.

Columbia Friends Meeting  
State of the Meeting Report 2021

1. In what ways is your meeting answering the call to become an anti-racist faith community?

Second hour programs (e.g. UBI) and selected books to become more aware of the issues and conscious decisions on how we spend our money/impact on black business, also to the scope of the issue and how it affects the community. Interested in educational/intellectual tools to become an effective communicator, especially when the conversation has different perspectives. Perhaps there is more we can do? Our meetings efforts have been impacted by the pandemic. Early efforts to have a series of discussions on this issue and members that were interested in facilitating these discussions have been unable to be present in the virtual meeting environment. AVP involves a lot of people in the community and has conducted a virtual workshop. The meeting continues to support the program. The meeting continues to strive toward inclusion. The meeting works towards efforts to counter act voter suppression by putting up signs to support everyone's voice during the election season. What are ways you and your meeting responded to the environmental impact of COVID?

2. What are ways you and your meeting responded to the environmental impact of COVID?

The pandemic had an effect which led to the meeting to have less of a carbon footprint by not driving our cars to the meeting. Worshipping on zoom has had other serendipitous effects to include visiting other worship groups virtually, and also the meeting looking at ways to maintain a virtual presence by having a hybrid meeting. Are we going to be able to sacrifice some things such as physical presence for the good of the environment? The meeting's use of the land to create an opportunity to grow food for all to share during the pandemic has been a positive. We had two presenters from QEW and others from our local Sierra Club with concerns and activities supporting a healthy environment.

3. How have we comforted one another during times of grief, loss, and isolation; and checked in on the emotional and financial health of Friends?

An issue for our meeting has been the inability of some friends/Friends being unable to attend the virtual meetings. Friends try to reach out individually and in other ways. Friends have been supportive of one another, by delivering food, if needed during these difficult times. Are there ways we can approach this better? The garden has been a real resource for our meeting, as this has assisted friends/Friends being able to comfort one another.

4. How has your meeting approached the sense of grief, loss, and the emotional health of the children, including the lack of regular physical interaction?

Children were able to participate in another church's world religions class. The meeting continues to experiment with virtual intergenerational programs. Children have also been present during workday and to assist in the garden.

5. What growth has happened in your meeting in response to the stresses of this year?

Our meeting has been resilient and responded in novel ways to the many changes over the past year. For example, the idea to put together a Quaker cookbook even though we are unable to eat together anymore. We have had visitors to our meeting and some members who were at a distance were able to attend.

Need Cookeville SOTM

### **State of the Meeting from Macon Worship Group**

Macon Worship Group, under the care of Atlanta Friends Meeting, rented space from High Street Unitarian Universalist Church in Downtown Macon from spring of 2018 until spring of 2020 when the pandemic caused the group to let the lease expire and meet exclusively on Zoom through the present time (winter 2021). We shifted our meetings to weeknights to since AFM began offering virtual meetings on weekends, allowing Macon attendees the opportunity to participate with Atlanta. We also decided to decrease the duration of our meetings slightly but increase the frequency, and now we are meeting weekly on Fifth Days (Thursdays).

We have continued to hold monthly Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business as well as monthly public educational sessions on a wide variety of subjects featuring guest presenters. Attendance averages 5-8 for most regular meetings, and the clerk maintains a weekly email newsletter and Facebook presence.

Macon is pleased to be able to accept online donations now via an account set up through AFM. We have minimal expenses at the moment (i.e., Zoom and website fees), and all expenses are covered. As more people become vaccinated in 2021, we may consider options for meeting together outdoors as well as online.

Macon appreciates the continued support from the larger AFM community and SAYMA.

## State of the Meeting Report 2020

### Memphis Friends Meeting

#### *How fares the spirit among us?*

Coming out on the other side of what one Friend aptly called a tumultuous year, the spirit among us is that of gratitude for our community's commitment to strengthen our bonds from the collective trauma we are experiencing in the COVID-19 pandemic.

Memphis Friends took COVID-19 seriously in March of last year and spent considerable time developing substantive protocols for meeting online and for using the meetinghouse when necessary. We worked hard on this to protect ourselves and each other for sure, but also out of respect and care for the well-being of our neighbors and our larger community.

We are grateful that technology has helped foster bonds of community and divine connection. Since March of 2020, we have been largely holding our Meeting for Worship and all other activities by Zoom, with some weekly worship in a socially distanced outdoor setting in warmer weather. A significant number of Friends have taken fairly easily to the new medium; it has reunited us with some physically distant former Meeting members; and has even made it possible for local Friends to participate more deeply in the life of the Meeting as committee members and officers. But, some Friends have not come online: some video-conference a lot at work or at school already, others do not find it conducive to worship, and others have shaky technology.

In the pandemic, we have had to face our vulnerability, experience isolation and loneliness, and feel the exhaustion from the unwanted changes to all our personal and social norms. This has made hearing the joys and concerns expressed before the rise of worship all the more important. They have not just been heard but have prompted Friends to find inventive ways to be fully present, like paying visits from the distance of lawns or porches of those among us who are ill or finding online or socially distanced events we could attend to help maintain our commitment to social action. We seek to sustain relationships and convey news with cards, emails, phone calls, small socially-distanced silent worship, small dog walking occasions, and other ways of holding each other in the Light.

We celebrated the life on the passing of attender Carolyn Murray in 2020, and we continued our remembrance of Glenn Althoff, a member of the Memphis Meeting who passed away in 2019, by remembering him in both Meeting for Learning and with gifts to the Library in his name.

Members continue to reflect on how online worship has affected our individual spiritual lives as well as our sense of the spirit among us. Because we each attend with our home environment visible around us, our worship is further seasoned through the lens of how other Friends settle differently into worship from within their own home space, sometimes using it to further seed their thoughts and testimonies.

Time has been remarkably profound. Some Friends discovered new opportunities to spend their time in meaningful ways, attending virtual events and reconnecting with people. The

isolation and distancing have further revealed openings to the testimony of Simplicity: the joy of eating meals more slowly, for example, or not rushing to meet a scheduled demand.

The spirit of committee work has been enhanced and amplified over the past year, and we have been moved by the intentions of small groups in their creative efforts to keep the community alive and connected. We have sustained or introduced groups like Faith Stories, group meditations, regular First Day School by Zoom for both kids and young-at-heart, a book club, a daily lunchtime Zoom Meeting for Worship, movie nights hosted by the Racial Justice Working Group, and participated in the city's in-car Pride Parade.

Lockdown and isolation have illuminated the testimony of Stewardship. For example, the sign-in sheet for the purpose of COVID-19 contact tracing has unwittingly introduced us to the joy of knowing who has stopped by the Meetinghouse, and also reminded us that some stewards still attend to common chores like picking up trash on the property or weeding the garden.

Because the FGC gathering and related events and workshops were online June 27th - July 4th, we were pleased that eight Memphis Friends found it possible to attend, the most we've ever had at a Gathering. They attended workshops on climate change, early Quaker theology, Quaker 101, John Calvi's *Abandon All Weariness*; as well as the small worship sharing group, the teen program, and the evening programs.

Even though the FWCC's Worldwide Conference on Sustainability occurred just before the onset of the pandemic and related restrictions, several from our Meeting attended because it also was online, showing us that Zoom really does work for encouraging higher attendance to remote worship and learning events.

Beyond these larger gatherings, two Memphis Friends have also provided sustained representation on regular meetings of SAYMA Ministry & Nurture, Nominations Committee, and Representative Meeting.

*Seasoned in Meeting for Learning January 24<sup>th</sup>, emailed to Friends February 9<sup>th</sup>, reviewed in business meeting on February 14<sup>th</sup>, second draft emailed for review on February 15<sup>th</sup>, approved in business meeting on March 14<sup>th</sup>. Notes prepared by Kali Kucera with input from Friends, and with additional editing provided by Laura Helper.*

## NASHVILLE FRIENDS MEETING STATE OF THE MEETING REPORT 2020

The year 2020 was, for Nashville Friends Meeting, marked by three related challenges. First, the Meeting, like the rest of the world, was forced to examine and, where necessary, change its practices to reflect the dangers and ongoing harms of the coronavirus pandemic. Second, the Meeting continued the difficult work of answering the calling to live the Quaker testimonies in a way that serves the causes of peace and social justice. Finally, Nashville Friends Meeting, like many worship communities, faced the ongoing task of finding a place for itself in a society and culture marked by spiritual uncertainty, in which religious attendance and membership have been steeply declining, particularly along generational lines. Although each of these challenges has caused some difficulty and hardship, each has also provided the Meeting with opportunities to strengthen its community and continue to grow in the Spirit.

We closed the Meeting House in early 2020, when it became apparent that ongoing face-to-face activities could not be safely continued. Very shortly thereafter, the Meeting began holding Meeting for Worship and other meetings and activities remotely over Zoom. Meeting electronically has provided an opportunity for the Meeting to explore and reconsider the relationship between geography and community. Some Friends who have left the Nashville area were able to continue worshiping with us and take part in committee work despite their remote locations. The possibility of long-distance worship also allowed us to agree with another Meeting for one of our members to begin a shared sojourning membership with that meeting, while remaining in our area and taking part in activities with Nashville Friends Meeting. Many of our Spiritual Deepening Groups also have continued meeting monthly.

Online Meetings for Worship have proven to be an inviting possibility for curious newcomers, particularly younger adults. We have received over 50 inquiries regarding attendance of our online Meeting for Worship and have seen many welcome new attenders join us. Sadly, a number of Friends find remote worship difficult or unfulfilling and have fallen out of regular attendance. We also lost two beloved members of our community in the last year: Dick Houghton and Clair Sayles Barry. Because of long term illnesses, they had not been able to participate in Meeting in 2020, but they leave holes in our lives and hearts. We welcomed two Friends to membership and had two Friends' memberships transferred to Meetings in other states. All of this considered, our regular Meeting attendance is only a little smaller than in 2019.

Remote meeting has also created opportunities for ongoing social contact without the necessity of time and fuel-consuming travel to the Meeting House. The Meeting has begun hosting weekly online Quaker Conversations sessions on Tuesday evenings that have fostered ongoing connection and a number of enriching discussions. Committees have also continued to meet electronically, including the Prayer Committee, which has taken on the substantial work of providing prayer for those who have needed it through this difficult, dangerous, and loss-filled time.

Although the tool of remote meeting has provided joys and comforts, it is also inescapably true that the physical distance imposed by the pandemic has sometimes proven difficult for the Meeting to bridge, and our efforts have, at times, been insufficient. Early during the pandemic, many Friends took part in a coordinated effort to engage in regular check-ins with members and attenders, including, in particular, those with whom we were not otherwise in regular contact since in-person meetings were suspended. This coordinated effort, however, did not continue, and we fear that the connections that the Meeting once had to some Friends may have been significantly strained or even lost. It has, thankfully, been easier to maintain connections with those Friends who attend Meeting for Worship, and we have continued a practice of weekly check-ins among all those who remain after silence is broken. Adult

education First Hours and a monthly virtual pot luck have also strengthened the community.

No development this year has been a greater cause for excitement of the Spirit in our Meeting than the establishment of a Peace and Justice Committee. We had sadly laid down our old Peace and Social Concerns Committee due to lack of volunteers. The newly formed Peace and Justice Committee drafted two Public Minutes on issues of pressing social concern, both of which were adopted by the Meeting:

- The first of the two minutes, the Meeting's **Social Justice Minute**, declared that the Meeting "stands with the Black Lives Matter movement and all others who seek to dismantle systemic racism in the United States." The Meeting sought to ground the minute, not only in secular principles of justice, but also in our divine principles and obligations as Quakers. Accordingly, the Meeting recognized, for example, that "[i]t is our commitment to nonviolence that challenges us to seek the abolition of the prison-industrial system, in all of its diverse manifestations, and to work towards systems of community justice that support the well-being, health, and safety of all community members." The minute concluded with a number of specific action items that the Meeting has committed to taking in order to honor our social, moral, and religious commitments. The work of executing those action items has begun and will continue in 2021.
- The second Public Minute proposed by the Peace and Justice Committee and adopted by the Meeting was the **Public Minute on Native Place Names**. In that Minute, the Meeting declared: "We believe that it is right and just to honor and respect the Yuchi and Muskogee people who once named all the areas around us, and that it is important to act on restoring Native American names to local places that are of significance to Native American history and culture. In keeping with our testimonies of integrity, equality and stewardship, we believe that we should work together to correct these wrongs and restore Native names to Native places."

Thanks to the leadership from this new Peace and Justice Committee, we have begun a deep, spirit-centered process to take actions based upon our public minutes, and are looking forward to more discernment in 2021. Friends also organized weekly street corner protests in support of the Black Lives Matter movement for a period of several months.

In addition to the work of our Peace and Justice Committee, we have pursued matters of social justice through our Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) advocacy team and through members' participation in the Alternatives to Violence Project ("AVP"). The FCNL advocacy team underwent training in 2020 and lobbied one of our U.S. Senators on the issue of racial justice and policing. It has also met with other FCNL advocacy teams in Tennessee to coordinate activities and share strategies. For the first time, the AVP team was privileged to begin work regarding trauma and nonviolence at the Debra K. Johnson Rehabilitation Center (formerly known as the Tennessee State Prison for Women) and to continue working in the local women's jail, until coronavirus made that in-person work impossible. Throughout the course of the shutdown, they have continued to support the incarcerated women in Tennessee facilities through letter writing and submission of letters of recommendation to the parole board. The pandemic also allowed facilitators to attend the National AVP conference, participate in International calls with AVP International and Friends Peace Teams and to help facilitate a Basic Community Workshop with AVP-SC. The AVP team has also continued and expanded on its work of providing training in school and community outreach settings, but these have been hampered by the limitations of the pandemic shutdown.

Other challenges remain. Even prior to the pandemic, this Meeting struggled to provide the support needed by Friends with young children. The necessity to meet remotely has only exacerbated that problem, and we do not have a current group of children taking active part in the Meeting. We have continued our work from the previous year in making the Meeting a more welcoming place for



individuals of all genders, but the work is not finished, and we will continue that effort in 2021 as well. Our financial contributions have declined, although this has, so far, been offset by our reduced costs while we have been meeting remotely. If the reduced giving continues, however, it could pose some financial difficulties for the Meeting in the future. Finally, we have been troubled by the conflict and disharmony that have characterized relations in the Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting and Association for the last year. We have sought to be active contributors to the life of the Yearly Meeting, but we are aware that much still remains to be done and that many wounds have been suffered that must be allowed to heal.

Swannanoa Valley Friends Meeting  
State of the Meeting  
April 4, 2020

2020 has been a year that has demanded a great deal from us. The COVID-19 pandemic, political changes, and the mainstream media attention paid to the Black Lives Matter Movement, to name a few have required active responses for which our Quaker faith and practice has been our source of strength and insight.

Shortly after the COVID-19 restriction went into effect, we began with First Day Worship on Zoom. However we had differing perspectives on the use of electronic media for worship, and some elected to continue worship in our yard. The latter group later met indoors within our state's guidelines when the weather got cold. Amidst the varying degrees of concern over where and how to meet, we found resolution through careful listening and respect for that of God in all of us, continuing both forms of worship while feeling spiritually connected.

While COVID-19 has decreased our in-person meetings, it has not dampened our commitment to stay involved in our community and address issues regarding Indigenous peoples, racial disparity, and our Latinx communities. Being led by the spirit, our hearts, and our commitment to love all, in 2020, we engaged in multiple platforms to provide support and make our voices heard.

A scheduled series of local workshops on *Toward Right Relationships with Native Peoples, (a program of Friends Peace Teams)*, was postponed due to COVID-19, but conversations continue within meeting, with local Cherokee elders and with other faith communities about rescheduling. The Meeting has placed a Land Acknowledgement sign on our property to honor the first peoples who inhabited our land, and work proceeds on a longer Land Acknowledgement statement to be read before SVFM events.

Witnessing the death of George Floyd and subsequent outrage, some Friends wrote letters to the editor as well as participated in postcard writing campaigns encouraging voter registration. We compiled an extensive list of resources for nonviolent civil resistance and strategy building.

We continue to support the Latinx community. Our members have helped immigrants in their quest to seek asylum, and we provided monetary donations. In addition, we assisted with Christmas gifts and English as a second language classes.

The continuing conflict in SAYMA regarding the Uplifting Racial Justice Committee has been painful for us and we continue to put careful attention into discerning an approach to upholding racial equity that combines Quaker practice and current thinking on racial dynamics in our country.

Attachment Y. State of SAYMA

The SVFM Women's Dinner group continues to hold monthly gatherings to share a meal, consider issues and thoughts raised by a presenter or a query, and learn about our rich experiences, leadings, readings, and reflections that arise from our Quaker faith and identity. This community has led to deep sharing, despite a hiatus during the start of the pandemic, and a move to virtual dinners starting in August. These gatherings continue to nurture our spirit, our community, and our leadings on how we engage with the wider world.

We established a Flood Research Committee in response to the high probability of our meetinghouse being overtaken by flood waters. This has led us to ask ourselves questions such as the following: Does ownership of a piece of property enhance or detract from our mission? What is our mission? How do we balance our financial obligations with our spiritual connection to this property? We have begun to question who we are as a community and expect to continue our soul-searching in the coming year.

SVFM members have engaged in the crisis at Guilford College over their finances and identity as a liberal arts and Quaker institution. We hope for Guilford's recovery and enhancing its identity, so much needed for its distinctive contributions in our nation to liberal arts and wholistic, self-transformative, justice-seeking, spiritually-based education.

In 2020 Swannanoa Valley Friends have witnessed the loss through death of several Friends and family members of Friends: Betsy Moreton, February 8; Paul Hultberg, February 9; LeeOra Haring, December 21. We are saddened to see anyone of our community leave us, and we will miss each of these valued and loved human beings. We hold them and their loved ones in the Light, along with their many contributions to our community and in the world.

## West Knoxville Friends State of the Meeting report 2020

West Knoxville Friends (WKFM) have considered the following queries to explore the state of our meeting. These reflections are from January 2020 through March 2021.

### *In what ways is your meeting answering the call to become an anti-racist faith community?*

WKFM has responded more intensely to issues of social justice this year and been sensitized to the reality of racism. We examined these issues in committee meetings, through second hours, worship sharing, book groups studying "Me and White Supremacy" and other titles, peaceful public demonstrations, letter writing campaigns, and funding groups which engage racial issues locally and across the Quaker world. In June we reached consensus on a Minute of Racial Justice which we widely shared and was published in local newspapers.

We asked our Religious Education Committee to address the question of reparations. They convened two worship sharings, a second hour, and continue to schedule gatherings to inform ourselves and map out strategies to address these issues. A new attender described the value of the Religious Education committee in its discussions and decision making as a good introduction to Quaker Process. The work of this committee is timely and vital as our nation continues to awaken to racism and racial violence.

### *What are ways you and your meeting responded to the environmental impact of COVID*

More Friends have attended virtually, which is something we hope to continue into the future. However some members are "zoomed out" and choose not to attend virtual meetings. As one member put it "We have felt safe and welcome and look forward to meeting in person."We have had a limited number of inperson meetings outside when weather permits.

### *How have we comforted one another during times of grief, loss, and isolation; and checked in on the emotional and financial health of Friends?*

We have missed seeing one another in person but have worked to stay connected. One member has taken care to acknowledge the birthdays of Friends and Attenders each month. We have stayed connected through phone calls, digital media and occasional outdoor visits and work days. A former member of WKFM, who now lives in Ohio led a book group on The Power of Now which would not have happened without zoom.

The Ministry and Nurture Committee continues to support members and is aware that Friends have taken initiative to reach out individually and to offer support to others.

Socializing in person before and after meeting had been a way to check in with one another, to understand the stresses we face and share little joys. This declined and has been entirely altered by virtual meetings. But zoom is still a way to share and check in on each other.

The Meeting grieved the loss of long-time member Lee Hoefer. Many remembrances were shared and recorded via email. The impact was doubled as we have not been able to meet in person to grieve and share memories of Lee. We hope to have an in-person celebration of Lee's life in May.

*How has your meeting approached the sense of grief, loss, and the emotional health of the children, including the lack of regular physical interaction?*

This has been one of the greatest challenges. Our children's group had been small but consistent before the plague. Children have not attended Meeting for Worship virtually for the most part, just popping in to say "Hello." We have not set up any virtual children's meeting or First Day School, parents have not requested this. Children have been enthusiastically welcomed during our in person outdoor workdays.

We so look forward to reconvening in our Meeting House, particularly to provide an opportunity for the children to join us.

*What growth has happened in your meeting in response to the stresses of this year?*

WKFM struggled to find ways to maintain and nurture our community. We went virtual early on for worship, book groups, and committee meetings. This has allowed us to reconnect with some friends who can't readily attend in person meetings in West Knoxville.

Some Friends have not been drawn to participate by Zoom. We have reached out to offer support, while respecting the sensibilities at play. We look forward to meeting in person when these folks will rejoin us. Setting up continued virtual meetings, in parallel with in person meetings, is being discussed and may be an opportunity for growth. The pandemic has allowed comfortable new avenues of participation for Friends more inclined to introversion.

The Exploring Quakerism course, led by a member of our Meeting, revisited the essence of Quakerism and Quaker process. We noted that digging deeply into the essence of our Quaker spirit could help us to reduce institutional racism.

Meeting has welcomed some new attenders, starting with mid-week meetings, as a means to explore Quaker traditions.

The Meeting was in unity on continuing employment for our Meeting House caretaker even though we are not using the meeting house regularly. And we have continued our participation in Family Promise reaching out with what resources we can share to bring some stability to these families.

Several Friends meet monthly as an FCNL letter writing group, developing ongoing relationships with our Congressional delegation and the media and bringing key policy concerns to their attention.

Friends held a weekly peaceful witness in the downtown Market Square for several months, with the banner: "Love Thy Neighbors, No Exceptions."

## Attachment Z. Web Manager's Report

Report of the Web Manager  
June 2021

In my report to RM 146, I responded to the allegations made at RM 145a regarding the state of the website and my conduct as web manager.

To date, the Ad Hoc Website Committee, which the clerk convened at RM 145a in order to “review the policies around the website, and the website itself,” has neither identified any issues nor asked me to make any changes. I look forward to the completion of their review.

In the spirit of accountability and transparency, I welcome any opportunity to speak with Friends about the website: problems, solutions, and future directions.

Respectfully submitted,

Charlie Wilton  
SAYMA web manager  
web@sayma.org

## Attachment AA Cookeville Monthly Meeting Minute

Dear SAYMA Friends/friends,

Cookeville Monthly Meeting is feeling led to speak out again after the recent Representative Meeting held on Zoom on March 13th.

As a group of almost all friends of European descent we have been educating ourselves about our cultural “norms” and blinders. This is akin to a fish swimming in water becoming aware that there is such a thing as water and that they are living in it. White supremacy and the centering of whiteness is our home. We are comfortable in it. We breathe it, and can’t conceive of any other way to be. We have a complete mindset to step back from. We have centuries of patterns to unravel and understand. As Quakers we hold fast to certain beliefs and ways of doing things. We do indeed have rituals and we give them weight and value.

But we have found that to insist on doing things the way we have always done them is not being open to continuing revelation. We know experientially that Spirit manifests in many ways and forms, different parts of the same whole, if we could only be still, listen, and open ourselves to change.

SAYMA URJ has been a strong impetus and influence to help us begin to be aware of what we are blindly participating in. We committed to this work as a covered Yearly Meeting in session together. This is not a comfortable process. In fact, it can be messy, painful, and downright ugly. We understand that there are many among SAYMA Meetings and Worship Groups who cannot support SAYMA URJ financially right now. We have felt and heard some of the pain on all “sides” of the current issues that are stirring up such turmoil in our midst. We strongly urge everyone, ourselves included, to listen deeply to what Spirit may be calling us to do, experience, and grow toward. We also hold fast to our experience that way will open with time and move us all forward together.

Cookeville Friends have maintained a relationship with Paul Cuffee Worship Group and we ask that SAYMA formally recognize Paul Cuffee Worship Group as a part of SAYMA. We feel that this is the least we can do to offer our support. The Society of Friends is not hierarchical. Yearly Meeting cannot dictate to Monthly Meetings what they should do. The last word in the acronym of SAYMA is Association for a reason. Historically we do not seek to exclude or deny anyone’s existence or experience. All who wish to associate with us have been welcomed. Whether or not Paul Cuffee Worship Group wants to become associated with SAYMA we should offer this association to them in order to be consistent with our principles and traditions.

Cookeville Monthly Meeting 4/16/2021



Attachment BB. Nominating Supplement

**YM 50 NC Supplement, 1<sup>st</sup> Reading 6.11.21**

**Nominees**

Finance, member – Karen Morris, Atlanta (continuing) 2021-2023

Ministry and Nurture, Co-Clerk – Diana Masso, Charleston, (new) 2021-2023

Ministry and Nurture, Co-Clerk – Adrian Mehr, Memphis (continuing, one year term) 2021-2022

Personnel, member – Barbara Esther, Asheville (new) 2021-2023

SAYF Steering, member – Robert Sears, Berea (new) 2021-2023

SAYF Steering, member – Laura Kelley, Atlanta (new) 2021 - 2023

SAYF Steering, member – Ian Saderholm, Berea (continuing) 2021-2223

SAYF Steering, member – Grace Beavin, (continuing) term 2021-2023

JYM, clerk – Laura Maynard, Asheville (continuing) 2021-2023

FWCC representative – Beth Myers, Celo (continuing) 2021-2024

QEW representative – Deni Elliot, Greenbrier Valley WG, CFM (new) 2021-2024

Attachment CC. Nominating Committee Note to SAYMA

NC Note to SAYMA

There has really been no apparent reason for SAYMA URJ to have appeared or to continue to appear on a list of positions for which the SAYMA Nominating Committee [hereafter NC] is seeking nominees. The NC is following its previous announced and applied policy of not nominating to URJ. Given the current diversity of opinion, for the NC to proceed according to Minute 140 – 17 – 01 and standing practice for nomination of clerks, which together define the only course of action the NC has authority to follow, would not be to act as a responsible agent of SAYMA but as agent for faction. Especially when one considers that the URJ group has firmly rejected the committee formation approach approved and minuted by SAYMA as well as selection of its clerk through the NC and, in addition, equally firmly insists on its institutional as well as operational autonomy, it is perfectly clear that an attempt by the NC to fulfill its obligations in this case would only fuel turmoil to the detriment of SAYMA. The NC respectfully awaits instructions determined and minuted by SAYMA that can be reasonably taken to represent the Spirit of discernment in SAYMA.

Attachment DD. SAYMA Epistle

SOUTH APPALACHIAN YEARLY MEETING and ASSOCIATION of FRIENDS  
GATHERED IN 2021 ANNUAL SESSIONS, TO FRIENDS EVERYWHERE:

GREETINGS FRIENDS,

We gathered in virtual annual sessions, from June 5 – 13, under the theme, “Do Justice, Love Compassion, and Walk Humbly on the Earth.”

Two weekends were devoted to meetings for business. Workshops were held on weekdays, Monday through Thursday, which translated into a great diversity of usually gentle and Quakerly turns on anti-racism, white supremacy culture and on seeking global equity as a core aspect of strategies for dealing with climate change. There were, several breaks and opportunities for socializing, until 10:30PM. Each day began and ended with an opportunity to worship with several regular meetings for silent worship.

We owe many thanks to the collaboration of an energetic community of Friends who pooled their diverse talents with great creativity, organizational and technical skill. Due to their efforts, all things technological ran smoothly, for the most part.

However, that is where the cooperative, harmonious and generous spirit ended. Our yearly meeting has spent five years laboring through deeply conflicting attitudes, understandings and behaviors concerning what white supremacy and colonialism are, how they show up in our meetings and what to do about it. We were deeply divided on these issues before this gathering, and we are deeply divided still.

The themes of love, compassion and Justice were consistently absent from our business sessions. Some Friends were not open to listening to one another’s truth and not open to new revelations. Some Friends even sought to dehumanize, criminalize and humiliate one Friend of color, for daring to name the racism happening in the Meeting, as a function of her position as clerk of URJ. Under the circumstances, we owe multiple workshop presenters much gratitude for quietly and forcefully affirming our theme for us.

No parts of SAYMA’s racial conflict were resolved, as they have yet to be honestly confronted. Consequently, there does not appear to be any new Light or a way forward emerging. One thing is abundantly clear, the way forward does not include encouraging Friends of color to bash one another for our entertainment, instead of sitting down together to resolve their differences, as we would do with white people in conflict. We cannot have one set of Quaker values for white Friends and another set for Friends of color, because that is exactly what racism is.

We caution Friends to seriously consider whether they are confusing their expectation of comfort with safety. Far too many of us, of every race and class, are conflict averse, so we have accused other Friends of being abusive, just for not agreeing with us. We have been the cause of conflict and division in SAYMA and then blamed one friend of color, we don’t like, for being divisive. That is what scapegoating is, and scapegoating one Friend of color for our racist behaviors only keeps white supremacy in place. It does not help us to achieve our oft stated goal of becoming an anti-racist, multicultural faith community that is welcoming to diverse peoples of color.

We must DO better!

## Attachment EE. SAYMA Junior Meeting Epistle

### 2021 SAYMA Playcare/Junior Yearly Meeting (JYM) Spring and SAYMA Sessions Epistle:

Junior Yearly Meeting and Playcare Young Friends greet you with our zoom screen waves and grins to the wider intergenerational SAYMA community. Laura MacNorlin and Kelsey McNicholas were the paid facilitators of the first ever Spring JYM sessions. Laura MacNorlin and Darci Jaret were the co-facilitators for the SAYMA sessions. The JYM Committee and teacher adults were also present as volunteers. This covid epidemic year we all spent a lot of time with our family pods, so it was very meaningful to have zoom visits as adults and youth with people who are not in our own families.

Our Spring theme, named Crossing Bridges to Build Connections, celebrated the ways God unites us. For SAYMA yearly meeting sessions, we used the themes Do Justice, Love Compassion, and Walk Humbly on the Earth as the focus for our workshops and Chat & Chew zoom calls. We used these themes as topics as we got to know each other and hold one another in Light and prayer.

We had great times together with stories, games, songs, drawings and creating crafts together. Those who participated will take memories of dancing, concerts and storytimes that were a blast. We joined in kite making, snacktime (cold treats!). We had deep conversations on Doing Justice, connecting with maps of where native peoples live and have lived on this land, Native Lives Matter. Friends did daily check-in exercises with photo collages and our own craft art creations. We enjoyed playing group games over zoom. We used the gifts of Quaker testimonies *Simplicity, Peace, Integrity, Community, Equality and Stewardship (SPICES)*, using the booklet *Quaker Meeting and Me* to enter our imaginary Quaker Land, a metaphor for our Meetings for Worship. We imagined ourselves as the characters solving problems, creating virtual bridges and making stone soup.

Young Friends received mailed packets of materials and special gifts to use during the sessions. The children will also get a follow-up Friendly summer mailing letter from JYM Friends to extend our connection. Playcare/JYM met our main goal to connect Young Friends from across the region. We built community and explored Quaker principles. We hope this time together on zoom will be a treasure of memories.