

**Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting and Association
53rd Annual Meeting, Hybrid Setting
Sixth Month, 20-23, 2024**

Friday, June 21 (Session I)

53-01 Opening Worship

Friends met virtually and in person for the 53rd annual gathering of SAYMA, beginning with an extended period of worship.

53-02 Co-Clerks' Welcome to SAYMA Body, June 2024

Co-Clerks Daryl Bergquist (Birmingham) and Margaret Farmer (Asheville) welcomed Friends.

Friends were invited to sing a song from Co-Clerk Daryl Bergquist's participation in the FWCC World Gathering of Young Friends in 1985:

Building bridges between our divisions,
I reach out to you, will you reach out to me?
With all of our voices and all of our visions,
Friends, we could make such sweet harmony.

Co-Clerk Margaret Farmer welcomed Friends by sharing her experiences the previous day in visiting the bell hooks center on the Berea campus, a place that emanates the message, "You will be welcome." She shared her prayer that our meetings will become welcoming, that our Quaker selves will answer that of God in one another: "May we all bring our best selves, may God bless you all."

53-03 Roll Call ([Attachment A: Attendance Roster](#))

Meeting attendees were asked to raise their hand or stand as their meeting's name was called by the Co-Clerk. Fifteen of the 20 meetings and worship groups were represented.

53-04 Introductions of Visitors

The Co-Clerks invited visitors to be recognized. Visitors present were:

- Wayne Finegar, Executive Director, Quaker House, Fayetteville, NC
- Mwandeyi Kamwendo, Friends Committee on National Legislation
- Renzo Carranza, Earlham College School of Religion

Associate Friends were also recognized:

- Chris Berg

53-05 Agenda Review and Review of Guidelines ([Attachment B: Agenda](#))

The agenda was reviewed and adjusted as needed, with a first-session focus on establishment of needed committees, first readings of the nominating slate and the proposed budget, and announcements and reports with direct relevance to Friends' discernment on the budget. The agenda was accepted. A list of the agenda items for each day is included in the attachments.

Co-Clerk Margaret Farmer shared the following guidelines for participants in Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business, also available within the final program for yearly sessions. These guidelines were developed for these annual sessions by the Co-Clerks in response to a request from Chattanooga Friends Meeting to plan carefully to address potential conflict and harm:

- We will look for and affirm that of God in ourselves and others.
- We will listen in a spirit of continuing revelation.
- We will seek guidance from Spirit before we speak.
- We will wait to be recognized by the clerk before speaking.
- We will speak to the question at hand and be concise.
- We will speak only once to an issue unless we have new information to offer or need clarity.
- We will speak to the meeting as a whole, not to individuals.
- We will hold the meeting in worship, and refrain from side conversations.
- We will listen for truth and refrain from put-downs of ourselves or others. It's OK to disagree respectfully, recognizing that of God in one another.
- We will stop and hold silence and space for a moment if something hurtful is said, or someone loses their temper. Please refrain from outbursts.
- We will not take ourselves too seriously and we will have fun.

Sources used by the Co-Clerks in developing these guidelines include *Quaker Process for Friends on the Benches* by Mathilda Navias; *Vocal Ministry* by Barry Crossno and J. Brent Bill; and the Meeting for Worship for Business document of Atlanta Friends Meeting.

The Co-Clerks also shared process for reducing harm occurring during sessions:

- We may intervene if a Friend lays blame or otherwise hurts another.

- We may reserve a designated time to address hurt as soon as possible, even in the moment, if a Friend needs support.
- We may ask a Friend to take slow deep breaths to self-regulate and ground in Spirit after an angry outburst.
- In the event of an angry outburst or occurrence of harm:
- Do ask for help if you are feeling a loss of self control. In all matters, taking care of self is important.
- Be open to assistance if someone notices that you are derailing the discernment process.
- Be open to assisting if you notice someone derailing the discernment process.
- Please write down what happened if it doesn't get addressed at that moment, so you will have a record of your concern. Do deliver the written concern to the Co-Clerks and the restorative practices support person.

A Friend asked for clarification regarding the guidelines, specifically whether a conflict should be addressed in the moment and what needed to be discerned afterwards. This Friend asked Friends of Color if a potential delay was acceptable to Friends of Color. Star Smith (Paul Cuffee), as clerk of Uplifting Racial Justice (URJ), noted that URJ had been part of the development of the guidelines. She noted that the Co-Clerks would be discerning whether potential situations needed immediate response. She encouraged the Co-Clerks to be mindful of the racial power dynamics and to consult with the harmed Friend of Color in any emerging situation.

53-06 Announcement of Naming Committee

The Naming Committee has been formed by the Co-Clerks to bring forth proposed members of the Nominating Committee for consideration. The following are serving on the Naming Committee during YM 2024 - 53: Chris Berg (associate), Alison Mawle (Atlanta), and Star Smith (Paul Cuffee). Chris Berg is serving as clerk. He worships regularly with the Hendersonville Worship Group, which is unaffiliated. He also worships a few times per year with Greenville Friends Meeting.

53-07 Appointment of Epistle Committee

The Epistle Committee meets two or three times during the yearly meeting sessions to capture the essence of what happens throughout our time together.

53-07-01 Friends approved Joan Barnette (West Knoxville), Barbara Esther (Asheville), and Rob Collins (Birmingham) to serve on the Epistle Committee during yearly meeting sessions 2024 - 53.

53-08 Nominating Committee - First Reading of the Slate ([Attachment C: Nominating Committee Report](#))

Nominating Committee member Pat Gailey (Berea) presented the Nominating Committee's report. Friends were asked to sit with the names being brought forth by the Nominating Committee, with that slate to be revisited at a later session. **The report was accepted.**

From the floor, the following additional nomination was received:

URJ nominates Sharon "Star" Smith, for the third time, as SAYMA REPRESENTATIVE to FWCC, specifically to represent SAYMA Friends of Color.

The Co-Clerks clarified that the FWCC Representative term is three years. Service involves participation in other regional meetings of FWCC Section of the Americas and reporting back to SAYMA on those meetings. Participating as an FWCC Delegate is a one-time opportunity to attend the FWCC world gathering plenary that occurs every three years, with no required reporting back to SAYMA. Jackson Napier (Berea), Alison Mawle (Atlanta), and Star Smith (Paul Cuffee) plan to participate as delegates at the upcoming world gathering plenary in South Africa.

Members of the Nominating Committee present at yearly sessions are Pat Gailey (Berea), the committee's co-clerk Kendall Ivie (West Knoxville), and Chuck Jones (Chattanooga). Questions or concerns about the proposed slate may be directed to them in preparation for the second reading (additionally, questions or concerns may be directed to nominating@sayma.org). Questions or concerns about the nomination from URJ should be directed to the clerk of URJ, Star Smith (Paul Cuffee).

Friends asked for clarification regarding planned attendance at the FWCC world gathering plenary. Adrian Mehr (Memphis) had planned to attend as an in-person delegate and as a SAYMA Representative to FWCC. However, he no longer plans to attend. He is submitting his resignation from all SAYMA roles effective at the end of the 2024 - 53 yearly sessions. SAYMA has three FWCC Representative slots.

Key open positions include the Yearly Meeting Planning Committee Clerk and the Treasurer, which is a role legally mandatory for SAYMA's existence. A part-time bookkeeper position has recently been filled and will lighten the weight of the Treasurer's responsibilities. Additionally, several Wider Quaker Organization (WQO) representative positions are open, and additional WQOs do not have a SAYMA Representative. Friends are encouraged to speak with the Nominating Committee as led. The Nominating Committee will ensure that all monthly meetings receive a full list of all open opportunities, with the spreadsheet also to be posted on sayma.org.

Co-clerk Daryl Bergquist thanked Friends for their problem-solving spirit, noting “Communication leads to clarification, clarification leads to connection.”

53-09 Finance Committee - First Reading of the Proposed Budget ([Attachment D: Finance Committee Report and Proposed Budget](#))

Finance Committee clerk Karen Morris (Atlanta) presented the Finance clerk’s report. The narrative portion of the clerk’s report was read, including the proposed minute, which was approved as noted below.

53-09-01 Friends approved a budget amendment for fiscal year 2024 to the Personnel line (54) in the amount of \$3,000 to cover the increased expense for the 2 months that new Administrative assistant, Rob Collins, is working with Susan Phelan and also for 3 months of pay for a bookkeeper through the end of the fiscal year 2024. **Friends approved.**

The clerk’s report also included the proposed budget for the upcoming year beginning October 1, 2024, with that budget to be considered for approval at a later session. Friends were encouraged to join the lunch-hour hybrid discussion on the budget. The Zoom link for this discussion had been distributed via email to all registered attendees (those experiencing difficulty accessing the link may contact saymaoffice@sayma.org). **The report was accepted.**

53-10 Ad-Hoc Assessment Committee ([Attachment E: Ad-Hoc Assessment Committee Report](#))

Committee member Diane McCluskey (Chattanooga) presented the ad-hoc committee’s report. Committee members have identified two potential options as recommendations, whichever generates the higher amount for a particular meeting:

- 1) An amount of 12.5% of the Monthly Meeting (MM) previous year contributions income
Or
- 2) Paying \$85/member-attender in 2025 using the current counting method. This rate would rise to \$93/person in 2026, then \$100/person in 2027, followed by an annual increase based on a measurement such as Consumer Price Index (CPI).

The first option has worked well for Chattanooga Friends Meeting, which has found it easier to calculate and comparable to the traditional census calculation approach in terms of assessment amount; however, it is not well suited for all monthly meetings.

A Friend asked if meetings’ census numbers have rebounded since the pandemic shutdown period. The Ad-Hoc Assessment Committee does not have full census information. However, the

committee anticipates that an increase to \$85/member-attender will bring in \$5,000 additional income. The Treasurer Kendall Ivie (West Knoxville) shared the following insights:

- IN FY 2020, payroll accounted for 55% of meeting assessments. In FY 2025, payroll will account for 91% of anticipated meeting assessments. For FY 2025, payroll will include costs for the Administrative Assistant, the Bookkeeper, and the SAYF Program Coordinator.
- In FY 2020, \$49,173 in assessments were received. In FY 2025, \$42,995 in assessments are anticipated using the current assessment rate. The two monthly meetings that have left SAYMA historically contributed approximately \$5,000 per year. But assessment income at the current rate is expected to decrease by approximately \$6,000 in FY 2025, compared to FY 2020.
- Junior Yearly Meeting (JYM) has been moved to the main budget within the last two years. In combination with payroll expenses, JYM and payroll together account for 108% of anticipated assessment income for FY 2025.
- A policy clarifying SAYMA's current assessment process is available on the SAYMA web site (https://www.sayma.org/online_documents/Yearly_Meeting_Assessments.pdf).

Other members of the Ad-Hoc Assessment Committee are the clerk, Connie Hill (Birmingham), and Paul Manglesdorf (Atlanta).

The report was accepted.

53-11 Yearly Meeting Planning Committee ([Attachment F: Yearly Meeting Planning Committee Report #1](#))

Committee clerk Jennifer Dickie (Atlanta) presented the committee's report #1, which includes a request for survey feedback regarding site selection (<https://tinyurl.com/SAYMASurvey2024>).

The report was accepted.

Announcements included dorm and dining room updates and other activity announcements.

53-12 Review of the Narrative Minutes for Session I

Friends able to remain beyond the allotted time helped review the minutes for later approval at the beginning of Saturday's sessions.

The session ended.

Saturday, June 22 (Session II)

53-13 Opening Worship

Friends gathered virtually and in person for an extended period of worship.

53-14 Welcoming and Acknowledging Visitors

The Co-Clerks welcomed Friends, with Co-Clerk Daryl Bergquist (Birmingham) reflecting on brokenness and how often our gifts come from our brokenness. He reflected on his experience as Co-Clerk where he has seen conflict as an opportunity for personal growth. He thanked Friends for this opportunity.

The Co-Clerks acknowledged visitors who had not been recorded as present in Session I:

- Miriam Mulsow, Friends General Conference
- Stuart Greene, Patapsco Friends Meeting
- Ukumbwa Sauti, SAYMA Consultant

Additionally, associate Diana Masso was welcomed.

Guthrie Armstrong (Atlanta) and Melissa Preast (West Knoxville) were welcomed as additional members of the clerking table, with Guthrie expressing interest in the Recording Clerk role and Melissa assisting with screen shares of reports.

53-15 Agenda Review ([Attachment B: Agenda](#))

The agenda was reviewed and adjusted as needed, with a second-session focus on revisiting the FY 2025 budget and nominating slate, and a goal of also receiving reports from Ministry and Nurture Committee and the URJ Committee, considering a proposed minute of social concern from Young Adult Friends, and receiving a report from the Earth Justice Committee. The agenda was accepted. A list of the agenda items for each day is included in the attachments.

53-16 Approval of the Narrative Minutes for Session I

53-16-01 Friends approved the narrative minutes as read in the face of the meeting.
Friends approved.

53-17 Finance Committee - Second Reading of the Proposed Budget ([Attachment G: Approved Budget for 2025](#))

Finance Committee clerk Karen Morris (Atlanta) provided an update on the previous day's lunchtime meeting to respond to questions about the proposed budget for FY 2025, with many questions asked and no concerns raised.

A Friend of Color noted that racial wounding happened within the Finance Committee during this lunchtime meeting, as reported by the Friend of Color member of that committee. The Co-Clerks noted that they will meet with the harmed committee member and the Finance Committee clerk to seek a path forward.

53-17-01 Friends approved the budget as proposed for FY 2025. **Friends approved.**

53-18 Ad-Hoc Assessment Committee - Second Reading and Testing of the Recommendation ([Attachment E: Ad-Hoc Assessment Committee Report](#))

Friends then tested unity on the proposed increase in assessments, beginning in FY 2025. A Friend expressed that approval of this proposed assessment guidance may exacerbate tensions within some monthly meetings, where some Friends are critical of SAYMA. Friends noted the importance of increasing resources for SAYMA. The Finance Committee clerk asked for ongoing discernment by the Ad-Hoc Assessment Committee about "a measurement such as CPI." A Friend commended Chattanooga Friends Meeting for following their own leadings to determine their assessment level and approach and invited other monthly meetings to also follow their leadings. Co-Clerk Daryl Bergquist noted that monthly meetings are autonomous entities.

53-18-01 Friends approved, with one Friend standing aside, the updating of SAYMA's assessment guidance for monthly meetings through the recommendation of the following, with meetings encouraged to select whichever generates the higher amount:

- 1) An amount of 12.5% of the MM previous year contributions income
Or
- 2) Paying \$85/member-attender in 2025 using the current counting method. This rate would rise to \$93/person in 2026, then \$100/person in 2027, followed by an annual increase based on a measurement such as CPI. **Friends approved.**

It was noted by a Friend of Color that SAYMA has a policy of not charging for attendance at yearly sessions for Friends of Color. URJ has a policy that Friends of Color do not have to participate in the assessment. Another Friend of Color noted that he plans to participate in the SAYMA assessment through his monthly meeting. Friends look forward to further discernment within the Ad-hoc Assessment Committee regarding this matter.

53-19 Yearly Meeting Planning Committee - Update ([Attachment H: Yearly Meeting Planning Committee Report #2](#))

Planning Committee clerk Jennifer Dickie (Atlanta) presented results of the survey to which 40 people had responded at the time of the presentation. A strong preference had been expressed for a 4-day event in Summer 2025 and a return to Berea College in Summer 2025. No other strong trends in responses were discerned. Her recommendation is that because of Friends' preference for proximity, an alternation between Berea College and Warren Wilson College be followed beginning after YM 2025 - 54.

53-20 Nominating Committee - New Nominations and Second Reading of the Slate ([Attachment C: Nominating Committee Report](#))

Nominating Committee member Pat Gailey (Berea) brought forth two new nominations for a first reading:

- Daryl Bergquist (Birmingham), as Treasurer of Yearly Meeting, 2024-2026. He is a math major and business owner who serves as treasurer for the land trust on which he lives.
- Charles Wilton (Berea), continuing as web manager, 2024-2026

The committee's slate of nominees was presented for a second reading. Friends reviewed on second reading the following positions:

- Carol Nickle (West Knoxville), continuing on the Handbook Committee, 2024-2026
- Wood Bouldin (Quaker associate), continuing on the Ministry & Nurture Committee, 2024-2026
- Wood Bouldin (Quaker associate), continuing on the Handbook Committee, 2024-2026
- Laura Lane (Asheville) continuing as Junior Yearly Meeting clerk, 2024-2026
- Melissa Preast (West Knoxville) continuing as a member of the Ministry and Nurture Committee, 2024-2026
- Jennifer Dickie (Atlanta), as clerk of Yearly Meeting, 2024-2026. Jennifer has many years of clerking experience and brings a rich knowledge of Quaker practice, antiracism work, and energetic engagement in our yearly meeting.
- Steve Livingston (Asheville), continuing as a member of the Yearly Meeting Planning Committee, 2024-2026
- Hank Fay (Berea), continuing as a member of the Yearly Meeting Planning Committee, 2024-2026
- Karen Morris (Atlanta), continuing as the clerk of the Finance Committee, 2024-2025
- Blake Burr (Memphis), continuing as the Yearly Meeting recording clerk, 2024-2025

53-20-01. Friends approved the nominating slate as recorded in the narrative minutes of the yearly meeting sessions. **Friends approved.**

53-21 Nomination from the Floor - Second Reading

Additionally, Friends reviewed on second reading the nomination made from the floor during Session I. Star Smith (Paul Cuffee) read from the URJ Committee's report as the clerk of URJ:

URJ nominates Sharon "Star" Smith, for the third time, as SAYMA REPRESENTATIVE to FWCC, specifically to represent SAYMA Friends of color. Due to her record of service to SAYMA Friends of color as clerk of Uplifting Racial Justice (URJ), her expertise as an anti-racism analyst, as the primary organizer of the SAYMA racial conflict transformation program and process, as well as her level of insight and awareness regarding the themes of the FWCC World Gathering. SAYMA Friends of color agree that Star Smith is best equipped to represent us.

A Friend of Color spoke against this recommendation. He said that Friends of Color had never been consulted in an open meeting. During the later review of the narrative minutes for approval, other Friends of Color said they had been consulted regarding the recommendation.

Unity was not sensed. After a clerk's table consultation, the Co-Clerks asked the Friend opposed to the recommendation and Star if they would meet with S Bowland, the consultant working with SAYMA regarding racial harm, with potential re-introduction of the nomination during Session III.

The Co-Clerks asked for Friends to re-center into worship for the conduct of business.

53-22 Naming Committee - First Reading

Chris Berg (associate), as clerk of the Ad-Hoc Naming Committee, reiterated a spirit of welcome and announced that Kevin Moran (Atlanta) has been named as a willing nominee for the Nominating Committee. Further clarity of the length of his service will be brought forward during Session III. Two Young Adult Friends (YAFs) have also been approached to serve on the Nominating Committee. Additional prospective Nominating Committee members are still being sought.

53-23 Approval of the Narrative Minutes

53-23-01 Friends approved the narrative minutes as read in the face of the meeting.
Friends approved.

53-24 Ministry and Nurture Committee ([Attachment I: Ministry and Nurture Committee Report on Request from RM 149](#))

Lissa Place (Atlanta), the Ministry and Nurture Committee's incoming clerk, presented the committee's report, including the following two items recommended for testing by the body:

- SAYMA Uplifting Racial Justice Committee is operating as a self-selecting standing committee because that is the choice of Friends of Color active in the committee. We recommend SAYMA approves this process. We take this to mean the Nominating Committee is neither choosing its clerk and members nor deciding their term limits.
- We recommend SAYMA recognize and welcome the Paul Cuffee Worship Group as affiliated with SAYMA without its being under the care of a SAYMA Monthly Meeting.

The report was accepted.

53-25 Uplifting Racial Justice Committee ([Attachment J: Uplifting Racial Justice Committee Report](#))

URJ Consultant Ukumbwa Sauti presented the committee's report.

A Friend identified in the history portion of the report expressed pain but also expressed support for the work of URJ and the content of the report. Another Friend expressed support for the URJ report and spoke of having seen f/Friends of Color and family members of Color experience pain for decades in predominantly white Quaker spaces. This Friend welcomed the URJ process for addressing harm. The Co-Clerks encouraged Friends to reach out to clerk@sayma.org for support in seeking reconciliation.

The report was accepted.

53-26 Young Adult Friends ([Attachment K: YAF Minute on Palestine](#))

Jackson Napier (Berea) and Laura Kelly (Atlanta, currently living in Louisville, KY) reported that at the previous night's YAF business meeting a minute on Palestine had been approved. YAF will publish its minute on its web site and the FCNL web site soon and would welcome co-publishing it with SAYMA if SAYMA approves the minute as well. Additional avenues for publication, for example through monthly meetings, are also welcome.

The report was accepted. A typographical error was noted and corrected in the full name of SAYMA (Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting and Association). A Friend asked if YAF would consider an addition of a sentence regarding Hamas. YAF is clear on the minute as is.

53-26-01 Friends approved SAYMA's co-signing of the YAF Minute on Palestine.
Friends approved.

Friends asked that publication of the minute fully credit the minute as the labor of YAF.

53-27 Approval of the Narrative Minutes of Session II

53-27-01 Friends approved the narrative minutes for Session II as read in the face of the meeting. **Friends approved.**

The session ended with a few moments of silence.

Sunday, June 24 (Session III)

53-28 Opening Worship

Friends gathered virtually and in person for a short period of worship.

53-29 Welcoming and Acknowledging Visitors

Co-Clerk Margaret Farmer (Asheville) welcomed Friends with the following passage from Quaker Isaac Penington (1661), received from Chris Berg, January 6, 2023:

Give over thine own willing, give over thy own running, give over thine own desiring to know or be anything and sink down to the seed which God sows in the heart, and let that grow in thee and be in thee and breathe in thee and act in thee; and thou shalt find by sweet experience that the Lord knows that and loves and owns that, and will lead it to the inheritance of Life, which is its portion.

Margaret shared that the previous night the outgoing Co-Clerks and monthly meeting clerks had received a letter of resignation from Adrian Mehr (Memphis). As a follow-up to the letter, the Co-Clerks had spoken with Adrian by phone that night and provided him updates on the racial conflict resolution work underway during the current sessions. Adrian had asked that his letter be read within the business meeting; however, the Co-Clerks had emphasized to him that the business meeting on its final day could not provide a proper container for that letter. The letter will appear in the attachments for these sessions.

The outgoing Co-Clerks will follow up with Adrian, with the incoming Clerk providing further guidance after the rise of yearly sessions.

53-30 Agenda Review ([Attachment B: Agenda](#))

The agenda was reviewed and adjusted as needed, with a third-session focus on planning for the coming year, including consideration of unfinished business regarding naming and nominations as well as the Earth Justice Committee and Ministry and Nurture Committee reports. The agenda was accepted. A list of the agenda items for each day is included in the attachments.

53-31 Naming Committee - Second Reading

Chris Berg (associate), as clerk of the Ad-Hoc Naming Committee, brought for a second reading the name of Kevin Moran (Atlanta) as a nominee for the Nominating Committee. Chris clarified that Kevin's length of service would be 2024-26.

Additionally, Big Softy, also known as Ian (Atlanta), 2024-25, and Wes Morris (Nashville), 2024-25, were named as nominees for the Nominating Committee.

53-31-01 Friends approved Kevin Moran (Atlanta) as a member of the Nominating Committee, 2024-26. **Friends approved.**

53-32-02 Friends approved Big Softy, also known as Ian (Atlanta), 2024-25, and Wes Morris (Nashville), 2024-25, as members of the Nominating Committee. **Friends approved.**

Current members of the Nominating Committee clarified that the committee's meetings are open and those with a pending nomination to the committee are welcome to participate. The Naming Committee will continue to serve until all five SAYMA-approved Nominating Committee positions are filled. Additionally, at least one monthly meeting currently has a monthly meeting representative on the Nominating Committee, and more monthly meeting representatives are encouraged and will be welcomed.

53-32 Nominating Committee - Second Reading of New Nominees

Pat Gailey (Berea), as a member of Nominating Committee, brought forward the following nominations for a second reading:

- Daryl Bergquist (Birmingham), as Treasurer of Yearly Meeting, 2024-2026. He is a math major and business owner who serves as treasurer for the land trust on which he lives.
- Charles Wilton (Berea), continuing as web manager, 2024-2026

53-32-01 Friends approved additions to the nominating slate as recorded in the narrative minutes of the yearly meeting sessions. **Friends approved.**

53-33 Nomination from the Floor, Part 2

Friends returned to the topic of the Session II second reading of the nomination of Sharon “Star” Smith (Paul Cuffee) as FWCC Representative, 2024-2027. A white Friend re-nominated from the floor Star Smith as FWCC Representative because of the opportunities presented by FWCC to expand SAYMA’s understanding and toolkit regarding racial conflict transformation.

This nomination was tested, with three Friends standing against the nomination. One of these Friends stated the perspective that Star does not represent all of SAYMA. A Friend shared that all Friends contain unique experiences that impact their points of view. Co-Clerk Margaret Farmer (Asheville) called for silent worship, with the many Friends seeking to speak asked to speak from Spirit: “We are stronger as a yearly meeting when we are together.”

Messages shared including ongoing confusion about the short-term role of delegate to the upcoming FWCC world gathering plenary in South Africa and the three-year role of SAYMA Representative to FWCC. SAYMA has three open FWCC Representative positions.

Other messages focused on the heaviness of the current lack of unity. One Friend evoked the theme of the meeting, asking “What does the breath of the Spirit blowing in me mean?”

Spirit of God in the clear running water,
Blowing to greatness the trees on the hill.
Spirit of God, In the finger of morning...

Fill the earth bring it to birth,
and blow, where you will.
Blow, blow, blow till I be,

The breath of the Spirit,
blowing in me.

* by Miriam Therese Winter, 1976

A Friend offered a prayer, “If we seek God’s will together, we will find it.” In response to a comment shared by a Friend, Daryl clarified that individual Friends, outside of SAYMA’s finance structure, have been the ones to pay for Star’s travel and registration costs as an FWCC plenary delegate. Friends expressed support for all Friends’ serving in multiple SAYMA roles as led, as is the case for Star.

A Friend spoke of the missed opportunity that will occur in South Africa if no SAYMA Representative is present in a Representative capacity, to allow follow-through with contacts from world-wide Quaker communities participating in the plenary. At the rise of yearly meeting sessions, SAYMA will not have an FWCC Representative if Star is not approved.

A Friend of Color, tom kunesh (Nashville), spoke: “If you listen to Friends of Color in SAYMA, then listen larger than to just URJ.” He shared that four months prior to yearly sessions he made a report of racial wounding to SAYMA involving Star. The report centered on Turtle Island Indigenous history. tom expressed a deeper hurt that SAYMA had not been responsive to his report of racial wounding. The Co-Clerks apologized to tom that he had not received a response. Barbara Esther (Asheville), as Clerk of Ministry & Nurture, also apologized.

The Co-Clerks reminded Friends that over the eight-plus years of the unhealed racial conflict within SAYMA, a racial wounding healing process has not been in place. A reconciliation process has begun during YM 2024 sessions.

Star responded to tom, noting that the Friend of Color Affinity Group had offered to be a container for healing the racial wound to which he referred. During the yearly sessions, a process meeting had also been offered - to be facilitated by S Bowland (Atlanta). Way is still opening for a process that fully meets tom’s and Star’s needs.

S, as the consultant facilitating healing during sessions, asked if the outgoing and incoming Clerks could agree to meet with S, tom, and Star within the next 60 days to see what healing can be achieved.

A Friend asked why we are not in unity, positing it is because sometimes Star speaks in anger. He urged us to “Let it go” and let way open for SAYMA to have representation at FWCC. A Friend rose to speak, “Our children are watching. Please, let us lead by example.”

A Friend of Color who is a member of URJ emphasized that URJ and Star are not synonymous and are two separate entities. Star’s nomination as FWCC Representative came forth from URJ. She asked Friends to query whether there are truly legitimate reasons for lack of unity.

Daryl called for a test of unity, with one Friend standing against.

A Friend spoke of all the pressures outside the doors of this business meeting that will present challenges to our children: “Breath going out is taken in by someone else.” Another Friend emphasized that multiple FWCC Representative positions exist.

The incoming Clerk, Jennifer Dickie (Atlanta), acknowledged that unity had not been reached: “This is a semi-colon.”

53-34 Presentation of Epistles ([Attachment L: Excerpt from JYM Epistle](#); [Attachment M: YAF Epistle](#); [Attachment N: SAYMA Epistle](#))

Southern Appalachian Young Friends (SAYF) presented the SAYF epistle, describing SAYF’s themes of the past year - including metamorphosis, inclusion, connectivity, civil resistance, nurturing, reconnecting with nature, and wealth inequality. Attendance is up, with one SAYF nurturer graduating. During yearly sessions, SAYF led intergenerational games and helped lead a plenary. **The SAYF epistle was accepted.** No written version of the epistle is available; however, many details of SAYF’s year-long activities are available in the [SAYF Report to SAYMA](#).

Junior Yearly Meeting (JYM) presented the JYM epistle. The children, aged 4.5 to 11.5, sang a call-and-response version of *Make New Friends*. They then gave a spirited skit summarizing highlights of their experience of yearly sessions, culminating with advice that “If you can get three hairs from a lion, you can solve your problems” (the moral of a story that had been told by Star Smith and had been acted out with the help of the children) and to take care of self, nature, and others. **The JYM epistle was accepted.**

Prior to the epistle of Young Adult Friends, a YAF participant shared his reflections about unity in the prior conversation about FWCC representation. He urged Friends to consider whether unity has already been achieved, with one or two Friends being willing to stand aside.

The YAF epistle was then presented, reflecting input from the 21 YAF participants this year. Over the past year, five Friends have served on the rotating YAF clerk team, and YAF participants are increasingly active in SAYMA committee work. YAF is deeply appreciative of the Kenworthy resources that have enabled in-person attendance of YAF participants and engagement with not only SAYMA business but also Junior Yearly Meeting and SAYF. **The YAF epistle was accepted.**

The SAYMA epistle was presented, summarizing YM 2024 - 53 under a beautiful full strawberry moon and moderate temperatures. **The SAYMA epistle was accepted.**

54-35 Earth Justice Committee ([Attachment O: Earth Justice Committee Report](#))

Steve Livingston (Asheville), clerk of the Earth Justice Committee, stood when asked to present the committee's report. He spoke from the heart in response to the YAF report, noting that we have work to do in the world that we cannot get to because we must attend to our own unfinished work. He offered to defer the report to the Fall Representative Meeting. The committee's report was read, ending with the query, "What canst thou say?" **The report was accepted.**

A Friend recommended the book *Not the End of the World* by Hannah Ritchie. Another Friend provided a reminder that SAYMA's work on earth justice had been a decisive factor in FCNL's addition of a priority on earth justice to its scope of priorities in 1997.

53-36 Ministry and Nurture Committee, Part 2 ([Attachment P: State of the Monthly Meetings Report](#); [Attachment Q: State of the Yearly Meeting Report](#); [Attachments R-1 through R-5: M&N Minutes of Appreciation](#))

Barbara Esther (Asheville), clerk of Ministry and Nurture, read the State of the Monthly Meetings Report and the State of the Yearly Meeting Report. **Both reports were accepted and are included in the attachments.** The State of the Monthly Meetings Report reflects State of the Meeting Reports received from [Asheville](#), [Athens](#), [Atlanta](#), [Berea](#), [Celo](#), [Chattanooga](#), [Columbia](#), [Cookeville](#), [Greenville](#), [Huntsville](#), [Macon](#), [Memphis](#), [Nashville](#), and [West Knoxville](#), with those reports also included in the attachments.

Minutes of appreciation approved by the Ministry and Nurture Committee for [Kendall Ivie \(West Knoxville\)](#), [Ron McDonald \(Memphis\)](#), [Adrian Mehr \(Memphis\)](#), [Diana Masso \(Associate\)](#), and [Susan Phelan \(Huntsville\)](#) were read in the face of the meeting.

Minute of Appreciation for Kendall Ivie

Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting and Association is thankful for the time and care Kendall Ivie has given to this community over the years. He attended and kept useful records for the Nominating Committee, bringing close attention to detail and institutional knowledge of our past practices. A thoughtful and diligent treasurer in the past, he stepped in once more when our acting treasurer had to give up the position. Kendall has persevered with humor and grace, despite personal health challenges for him and his wife, but is unable to continue the duties of Treasurer. The Nominating Committee has been urgently seeking a person to take over this vital job.

As a community, SAYMA is deeply grateful for all Kendall has done for us.

MFM Minute of Appreciation for Ron McDonald

As we look back through many years of SAYMA retreats and sessions we can find Ron McDonald present in many of the activities we associate with times of fun and caring for each other.

Ron played music and led evening singing for generations of Friends attending yearly meeting. He brought activities as varied as playing with Mississippi mud and rope bridge building to Junior Yearly Meeting. Many of us remember the grace of Ron waltzing with Susan Penn in the talent shows.

We express gratitude for Ron's service as a former clerk of the Ministry and Nurture Committee. Clerking this committee comes with challenges that Ron met with all his humanity. Many thanks to Ron McDonald for the years of generous service to the yearly meeting and its participants from the youngest to the eldest of our f/Friends.

Minute of Appreciation for Adrian Mehr

The SAYMA Ministry and Nurture Committee holds up Adrian Mehr for his service to us as a committee. Friend Adrian has served on various committees and been a vital part of our yearly meeting, giving of his gifts despite challenging circumstances.

Adrian brings thoughtfulness, compassion, and spiritual presence to the roles he accepts along with a sense of humor and his understanding of Quaker practice. We deeply appreciate how he grounded us in Spirit.

Adrian has served in various capacities within SAYMA Ministry and Nurture as a representative of Memphis, as assistant clerk, as interim clerk, as co-clerk, and technology clerk.

Adrian began the practice of Ministry and Nurture Committee entering each year in retreat. This experience brought us into a consistent practice of worship sharing, transforming us into a community engaged in the work of Spirit. His contributions strengthened our community, guiding us toward a more spiritually connected and supportive fellowship.

Thank you, Adrian, for your ministry to us and the many meetings you visited.

MFM Minute of Appreciation for Diana Masso

Diana Masso served as a caring and faithful clerk of the Ministry and Nurture Committee. The yearly meeting benefited from her dedication and hard work while SAYMA was in turmoil. In

tandem with her co-clerks, a foundation was laid for a Spirit-based and nurturing environment within the committee. Her leadership and focus on listening for guidance from the Spirit shepherded us on the path toward healing. Her attention to detail led us to reexamine the purpose of the committee. Despite serious challenges, she continued to do everything possible to fulfill the clerk's duties. Diana remained faithful to her leading, encouraging the Ministry and Nurture Committee to complete its work as a caring body. Thank you, Diana, for your heartfelt, Spirit-led work.

Minute of Appreciation for Susan Phelan

This minute is to acknowledge and honor the dedicated service Susan Phelan has given to the Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting and Association (SAYMA) as the Administrative Assistant over the past six years. Her quick and effective responses to the numerous requests from clerks have been invaluable. All SAYMA benefited from her unfailing kindness.

She was the stabilizer through clerk changes, nurturing and caring for each outgoing and incoming clerk. She resiliently adapted our processes during the pandemic, redefined nearly all the administrative practices, and was instrumental in our ability to have virtual Annual Sessions in 2021.

Though her presence was often behind the scenes, we consistently felt and greatly appreciated her quiet support. Thank you, Susan, for your steadfast dedication and unwavering support.

Minutes of appreciation were accepted.

53-37 Acceptance of Other Reports ([Attachment S: AFSC Representative Report](#); [Attachment T: FCNL Representative Report](#); [Attachment U: FWCC Representative Report](#); [Attachment V: JYM Support Committee Report](#); [Attachment W: SAYF Report to SAYMA](#); [Attachment X: SAYF Support Committee Report](#); [Attachment Y: Report of the Web Manager](#); [Attachment Z: Released Friend Report](#))

Time did not permit the presentation of all submitted reports. **However, all submitted reports were accepted for inclusion in the attachments.**

53-38 Registrar's Report ([Attachment AA: Registrar's Report](#))

Friends attended YM 2024 - 53 both in-person and virtually, with 100 adult Friends, 21 YAF participants, 18 Friends of Color (including children), 17 JYM participants, and 19 SAYFers. **The registrar's report was accepted and a finalized report will be included in the attachments.**

53-39 Representative Meeting Announcement

The incoming Clerk, Jennifer Dickie (Atlanta), announced the following upcoming date for the Fall Representative Meeting:

- Saturday October 5, 9-4 EDT (virtual only)

53-40 Closing Thoughts

Jennifer Dickie (Atlanta) spoke of three noticings she is holding as incoming SAYMA Clerk: her observation that Spirit was continuing to move us even with little time remaining to resolve the matter of FWCC representation during these yearly sessions; the need for increased care to include Friends of Color in the design and execution of resolutions for racial harm at an individual level that may stem from problems at an institutional or systemic level; and a need for improved communication across SAYMA. She encouraged SAYMA Friends to nudge her as needed as she moves into her new role.

A Friend asked that as we return to our home meetings we hold SAYMA with softness and tenderness. A Friend also reminded Friends of the opportunity to join Zoom early each Wednesday for silent worship. An online Friend praised the tech team for providing a rich experience for Zoom participants, which was a collaborative effort of Aaron Ruscetta (Atlanta), Lorin Dent, and the microphone ministry shepherds. In-person Friends enthusiastically echoed this praise.

53-41 Approval of the Narrative Minutes for Section III

53-41-01 Friends approved the narrative minutes for Section III as read in the face of the meeting.

53-42 Closing worship

Friends closed our time together in worship.

Margaret Farmer and Daryl Bergquist
Co-Clerks
(archive copies signed)

Blake Burr
Recording Clerk
(archive copies signed)

Attachments

- A. [Attendance Roster](#)
- B. [Agenda](#)
- C. [Nominating Committee Report](#)
- D. [Finance Committee Clerk's Report and Proposed Budget](#)
- E. [Ad-Hoc Assessment Committee Report](#)
- F. [Yearly Meeting Planning Committee Report #1](#)
- G. [Approved Budget](#)
- H. [Yearly Meeting Planning Committee Report #2](#)
- I. [Ministry and Nurture Committee Report on Request from RM 149](#)
- J. [Uplifting Racial Justice Committee Report](#)
- K. [Young Adult Friends Minute on Palestine](#)
- L. [Excerpt from JYM Epistle](#)
- M. [Young Adult Friends Epistle](#)
- N. [SAYMA Epistle](#)
- O. [Earth Justice Committee Report](#)
- P. [State of the Monthly Meetings Report](#)
 - 1. [Asheville](#)
 - 2. [Athens](#)
 - 3. [Atlanta](#)
 - 4. [Berea](#)
 - 5. [Celo](#)
 - 6. [Chattanooga](#)
 - 7. [Columbia](#)
 - 8. [Cookeville](#)
 - 9. [Greenville](#)
 - 10. [Huntsville](#)
 - 11. [Macon](#)
 - 12. [Memphis](#)
 - 13. [Nashville](#)
 - 14. [West Knoxville](#)
- Q. [State of the Yearly Meeting Report](#)
- R. M&N Minutes of Appreciation
 - 1. [Kendall Ivie](#)
 - 2. [Ron McDonald](#)
 - 3. [Adrian Mehr](#)
 - 4. [Diana Masso](#)
 - 5. [Susan Phelan](#)
- S. [AFSC Representative Report](#)

- T. [FCNL Representative Report](#)
- U. [FWCC Representative Report](#)
- V. [Junior Yearly Meeting Support Committee Report](#)
- W. [SAYF Report to SAYMA](#)
- X. [SAYF Support Committee Report](#)
- Y. [Web Manager Report](#)
- Z. [Released Friend Report](#)
- AA. [Registrar's Report](#)

Attachment A: Attendance Roster

[\(Return to the Minutes\)](#)

The attendance roster is included only on the archived printed copy.

Attachment B: Agenda

[\(Return to the Minutes\)](#)

Friday, June 21, 2024, 8:30 - 10:30

Greetings and Co-Clerks' Remarks, Introductions, Roll Call, and Announcements

Agenda Review

Naming and Epistle Committee Announcements

Nominating Committee (First Reading)

Finance Committee (Administrative Assistant and Bookkeeper Proposed Revision and First Reading)

Ad-hoc Assessment Committee

Yearly Meeting Planning Committee (Survey and Announcements)

Ministry and Nurture Committee *[moved to Saturday, June 22]*

Approval of the Narrative Minutes *[edited in the face of the meeting, with approval deferred to Saturday, June 22]*

Saturday, June 22, 2024, 8:30 - 10:30

Greetings and Co-Clerks' Remarks, Introductions, and Announcements

Agenda Review

Approval of the Narrative Minutes for Session I

Finance Committee (Second Reading and Budget Approval)

Ad-Hoc Assessment Committee (Second Reading and Testing of the Recommendation)

Nominating Committee (2nd Reading, 1st Reading of New Nominees)

Nomination from the Floor (2nd Reading)

Naming Committee Report (1st Reading of Nominees for the Nominating Committee)

Approval of the Narrative Minutes for Session II

Ministry and Nurture Committee, Part I (Report in Response to Request from RM 149)

Uplifting Racial Justice Committee

Young Adult Friends (YAF Minute on Palestine)

Earth Justice Committee *[moved to Sunday, June 23]*

Approval of the Narrative Minutes for Session II

Sunday, June 23, 2024, 8:30 - 10:30

Greetings and Co-Clerks' Remarks and Announcements

Agenda Review

Naming Committee Report (2nd Reading)
Nominating Committee Report (2nd Reading of New Nominees)
Nomination from the Floor (FWCC Representative Nomination)
Earth Justice Committee Report
Presentation of Epistles (SAYF, JYM, YAF, and SAYMA)
Ministry and Nurture Committee, Part 2 (State of the Yearly Meeting, State of the Monthly Meetings, and Minutes of Appreciation)
Acceptance of All Reports
Registrar's Report
Representative Meeting Announcement (date)
Approval of the Narrative Minutes for Session III
Announcements *[re-imagined as Closing Thoughts and placed before Approval of the Narrative Minutes]*

Nominating Committee report June 2024

Since our last report we have been busy with the work that we have been tasked to do, meeting every two weeks regularly online. We have had a few clerks of SAYMA Monthly Meetings join us to hear about our work and to listen to the descriptions of the positions of responsibility still open and needing volunteers. We very much appreciate the time those individuals shared with us, and we invite anyone interested to please feel free to join us in future meetings. We would also like to invite Monthly Meetings that do not currently have representation on the committee to discern if there is someone in their respective meetings who would like to do this work. We are still seeking to fill several key positions of responsibility including the clerk of the Yearly Meeting Planning committee and Treasurer. SAYMA cannot operate for long without a treasurer. Kendall will be stepping down at the rise of yearly meeting sessions. Our annual sessions cannot take place without a clerk of the Yearly Meeting Planning Committee, except possibly virtually. Please contact any one of us if you are interested or know someone else who might be. We would be especially excited if any young adult friends would like to join the committee work or speak to us about any of the open positions of responsibility.

Below is the current slate of nominees we are bringing forward:

Carol Nickle (West Knoxville MM), continuing on the Handbook Committee 2024-2026.

Wood Bouldin (Quaker associate), continuing on the Ministry & Nurture Committee, 2024-2026.

Wood Bouldin (Quaker associate). continuing on the Handbook Committee, 2024-2026.

Laura Lane (Asheville MM) continuing as Junior Yearly Meeting clerk, 2024-2026.

Melissa Priest (West Knoxville MM) continuing as a member of the Ministry and Nurture committee 2024-2026.

Jennifer Dickie (Atlanta MM), as clerk of Yearly Meeting 2024-2026. Jennifer has many years of clerking experience and brings a rich knowledge of Quaker practice, anti-racism work, and energetic engagement in our yearly meeting.

Steve Livingston (Asheville MM), continuing as a member of the Yearly Meeting Planning Committee, 2024-2026.

Hank Fay (Berea MM), continuing as a member of the Yearly Meeting Planning Committee, 2024-2026.

Karen Morris (Atlanta MM), continuing as the clerk of the Finance Committee, 2024-2025.

Blake Burr (Memphis MM), continuing as the Yearly Meeting recording clerk, 2024-2025.

Kendall Ivie, West Knoxville MM

Annie Black, Cookeville MM

Pat Gailey, Berea MM

Mark Gooch, Birmingham MM

Julie Ewen, Atlanta MM

Adrian Mehr, Memphis MM

Chuck Jones, Chattanooga MM

Morgan Murray, Asheville MM

**SAYMA Finance Committee Report and Action Request for SAYMA Sessions
June 20-23, 2024**

Greetings!

This report is a summary of the last year.

The committee is pleased that the Ad Hoc Assessment committee was formed as requested at last year's session to evaluate the assessment formulation for monthly meetings. We look forward to hearing more about their work at annual Sessions.

In January, the committee received a grant of \$1,000 from the Jonathan E. Rhoades Trust providing scholarship assistance for the Racial Conflict Transformation program. It is a one-time award. We are very grateful. We are also waiting for news from 4 Yearly Meetings about the grant requests written by the grant subcommittee for funding for the Racial Conflict Transformation program. These were signed by the SAYMA co-clerks and mailed by Adm. Assistant, Susan Phelan, in January to Baltimore YM, Philadelphia YM, New York YM, and New England YM. We had questions from two YMs - Baltimore and New England -, and the co-clerks have responded.

The finance budget subcommittee worked to prepare the FY 2025 budget, a deficit budget. The full committee accepted the draft budget and following our protocol, requested Susan Phelan to send the draft budget SAYMA positions of responsibility, Monthly Meeting clerks and treasurers for questions.

The Ministry and Nurture committee asked us to consider a plan for restoring two of their funds: Released Friends fund and Spiritual Development fund. Finance considered the request and affirmed that the amounts in the FY 2024 budget are as much as SAYMA can afford this year.

The Treasurer and I, along with the Personnel committee, have begun interviewing potential candidates for the new Bookkeeper position. We have made a hire - Brianna Kempe. She will begin in July.

The Finance committee welcomes contributions by check, credit card (through SQUARE), Zelle, and by stock, as we now have an account with the Quaker-led organization, Friends Fiduciary. We chose Friends Fiduciary because of their strong commitment to "investing with values: rigorously screened investments in unity with Friends beliefs in peace, social justice, and the environment." (You can read about this company online, [friendsfiduciary.org](https://www.friendsfiduciary.org).) Donation information is on the SAYMA website. Contact the Treasurer (saymatreasurer@gmail.com) if you wish to use Zelle or you have stock to contribute.

We have two items of business to bring to you today.

1. The Finance committee brings forward a budget amendment for FY 2024 for an additional \$3,000 to the Payroll line (54) to cover the increased expense of two months

of training for the incoming administrative assistant, Rob Collins, and the expected hire of a bookkeeper before the end of the 2024 FY.

A proposed minute is:

On the recommendation of the SAYMA Treasurer, the Finance committee requests a budget amendment for fiscal year 2024 to the Personnel line (54) in the amount of \$3,000 to cover the increased expense for the 2 months that new Administrative assistant, Rob Collins, is working with Susan Phelan and also for 3 months of pay for a bookkeeper through the end of the fiscal year 2024.

2. The finance committee brings forward the first reading of the proposed budget for the next year, FY2025, which will begin October 1, 2024.

Before going over the details, I want to invite you to attend an open meeting of the finance committee to ask your questions or share your concerns about the proposed budget. This open meeting will occur today, at lunch, in the side room, Hutchins, which can be a large room for people to bring in their lunches for eating while meeting.

The second reading of the budget will be at the Saturday (tomorrow) Meeting for Business, with the intention of asking for approval.

I have deep appreciation for the finance committee members and the treasurer, and their willingness to volunteer their time for the benefit of the Yearly Meeting. I am also grateful for the support of all of you and the monthly meetings and worship groups.

In peace, Karen terHorst Morris, clerk, Finance

| | B | C | D | G | I | J | D | T | W | X | Y | Z | AA | AB |
|----|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------|--|--------------------------|---|--|---------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------|
| | | FY20 Budget Approved 6/16/19 | FY20 Actual 9/30/20 | FY21 Budget Approved 9/20/20 | FY21 Actual 9/30/21 | FY22 Budget 1.1 Approved | FY22 Actual 9/30/22 | FY23 Budget 1.5 Approved 10/29/22 | FY23 Actual 9/30/2023 | FY24 Budget 1.0 Approved 6/25/23 | FY24 Budget 1.1 Proposed Update | FY24 YTD Estimate 3/31/24 | FY25 Budget V0.4 | Notes |
| 1 | SAYMA FY 2025 Budget V0.4 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2 | Income | \$105,575 | \$51,059 | \$91,944 | \$48,916 | \$98,042 | \$91,879 | \$92,200 | \$83,257 | \$81,842 | \$83,842 | \$11,926 | \$84,655 | Totals are in Black |
| 3 | Adjustments to Income | | | | | | | | | | | | | Individual Items are in Blue |
| 4 | Assessments | \$50,425 | \$49,173 | \$44,894 | \$43,498 | \$50,992 | \$54,107 | \$51,000 | \$40,913 | \$42,142 | \$42,142 | \$17,426 | \$42,955 | |
| 5 | Asheville | \$3,575 | \$3,575 | 3,575 | \$2,513 | 5,025 | \$6,563 | \$5,025 | 4,125.00 | \$4,050 | \$4,050 | | \$4,050 | |
| 6 | Athens | \$400 | | 200 | \$1,800 | | | | \$600 | \$600 | \$600 | | \$600 | |
| 7 | Atlanta | \$13,875 | \$14,156 | 14,250 | \$14,250 | 14,250 | \$14,250 | \$14,250 | \$14,250 | \$14,250 | \$14,250 | | \$14,250 | |
| 8 | Berea | \$3,300 | \$1,375 | 3,450 | \$2,644 | 3,450 | \$4,519 | \$3,450 | \$1,703 | \$1,700 | \$2,700 | | \$2,700 | |
| 9 | Birmingham | \$1,800 | \$2,100 | 2,100 | \$2,100 | 2,100 | \$1,575 | \$2,100 | \$2,625 | \$2,100 | \$2,100 | | \$2,100 | |
| 10 | Brevard | \$300 | | - | | 300 | | \$300 | | | | | | |
| 11 | Celo | \$3,500 | \$3,500 | 2,640 | \$3,300 | 3,300 | \$2,475 | \$3,300 | \$2,325 | \$2,925 | \$2,925 | | \$3,225 | |
| 12 | Charleston | \$3,425 | \$1,013 | 1,000 | \$1,125 | 1,000 | \$788 | \$1,000 | \$563 | | | | | |
| 13 | Chattanooga | \$1,800 | \$1,999 | 1,960 | \$1,865 | 1,960 | \$1,983 | \$1,980 | \$1,887 | \$1,960 | \$1,960 | | \$1,960 | |
| 14 | Columbia | \$2,800 | \$3,000 | 3,000 | | 3,000 | \$4,800 | \$3,000 | \$1,800 | \$1,800 | \$1,800 | | \$1,800 | |
| 15 | Cookeville | \$821 | \$900 | 900 | \$790 | 900 | \$875 | \$900 | \$575 | \$500 | \$500 | | \$500 | |
| 16 | Crossville | \$500 | | \$25 | \$1,125 | \$25 | | | | | | | | |
| 17 | Fairfax | \$100 | | - | | - | | \$0 | | \$0 | \$0 | | \$0 | |
| 18 | Greenville | \$650 | \$900 | 750 | \$450 | 750 | \$863 | \$750 | \$825 | \$825 | \$825 | | \$825 | |
| 19 | Huntsville | \$1,125 | \$1,120 | 1,120 | \$1,120 | 1,120 | \$1,120 | \$1,120 | \$1,120 | \$1,120 | \$1,120 | | \$1,120 | |
| 20 | Memphis | \$3,000 | \$3,750 | 3,000 | \$2,150 | 3,000 | \$3,750 | \$3,000 | \$3,000 | \$3,000 | \$3,000 | | \$3,000 | |
| 21 | Nashville | \$3,750 | \$2,963 | 3,375 | \$2,669 | 3,375 | \$3,313 | \$3,375 | \$2,813 | \$3,375 | \$3,375 | | \$3,375 | |
| 22 | Oxford | \$200 | | 200 | \$200 | 200 | | \$200 | | \$200 | \$200 | | \$0 | |
| 23 | Swannanoa Valley | \$4,200 | \$1,825 | 5,100 | \$2,891 | 4,000 | \$2,729 | | | | | | | |
| 24 | West Knoxville | \$3,300 | \$2,737 | 2,737 | \$2,447 | 2,737 | \$4,906 | \$2,737 | \$2,644 | \$2,737 | \$2,737 | | \$3,450 | |
| 25 | Contributions - General | \$1,500 | \$1,500 | \$1,500 | \$1,000 | \$1,500 | \$3,483 | \$3,000 | \$3,287 | \$3,000 | \$3,000 | \$14,000 | \$3,000 | |
| 26 | Interest - CD | \$0 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 27 | Interest - Money Mkt | \$700 | \$321 | \$100 | \$14 | \$100 | \$124 | \$100 | \$945 | \$600 | \$600 | \$500 | \$600 | |
| 28 | Publication Sales | \$50 | \$65 | \$100 | \$0 | \$100 | \$316 | \$0 | \$56 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | |
| 29 | YM Income | \$52,900 | \$0 | \$45,350 | \$4,404 | \$45,350 | \$33,849 | \$38,100 | \$38,056 | \$38,100 | \$38,100 | \$0 | \$38,100 | |
| 30 | YM Adjustments to Income (Kenworthy) | \$0 | | | | | \$4,040 | \$4,500 | \$4,570 | \$4,500 | \$4,500 | | \$4,500 | |
| 31 | YM Bookstore Inc | \$1,300 | | 1,300 | | 1,300 | 679 | 1,300 | \$30 | 1,300 | 1,300 | | 1,300 | |
| 32 | YM Receipts | \$89,400 | \$2,850 | \$4,274 | \$2,850 | \$4,279 | \$1,100 | \$1,977 | \$1,100 | \$1,100 | \$1,100 | | \$1,100 | |
| 33 | YM Scholarship Contrib | \$2,300 | | 1,300 | \$130 | 1,300 | 651 | 1,300 | - | 1,300 | 1,300 | | 1,300 | |
| 34 | Expenses | \$110,170 | \$50,149 | \$90,978 | \$43,143 | \$97,480 | \$85,151 | \$111,810 | \$103,587 | \$97,977 | \$100,977 | \$26,969 | \$100,424 | |
| 35 | Adjustments to Expenses | \$0 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 36 | SAYMA Operations | \$43,520 | \$36,295 | \$34,878 | \$28,233 | \$43,880 | \$31,107 | \$53,910 | \$49,684 | \$46,977 | \$49,977 | \$26,969 | \$49,274 | |
| 37 | SAYF Operational Transfers | \$2,000 | \$750 | \$750 | \$500 | \$0 | | \$3,000 | \$3,000 | \$1,500 | \$1,500 | \$1,500 | \$1,500 | |
| 38 | Bookkeeping Costs - QuickBooks Online | | | | | | | \$0 | \$118 | \$960 | \$960 | \$960 | \$960 | |
| 39 | Liability Insurance | \$850 | \$816 | \$850 | \$728 | \$900 | \$872 | \$900 | \$895 | \$925 | \$925 | \$830 | \$925 | |
| 40 | Office Admin | \$5,295 | \$1,829 | \$3,110 | \$1,104 | \$3,980 | \$1,552 | \$2,750 | \$2,303 | \$3,150 | \$3,150 | \$1,000 | \$3,150 | |
| 41 | Banking Fees | | \$21 | | \$90 | | \$90 | | \$0 | | | | | |
| 42 | Office - Duplication | \$225 | \$0 | \$250 | \$0 | \$250 | | \$50 | | \$50 | \$50 | \$0 | \$50 | |
| 43 | Office - Gulford Archiving | \$150 | \$0 | \$150 | \$0 | \$150 | \$150 | \$150 | \$150 | \$150 | \$150 | \$0 | \$150 | |
| 44 | Office - Supplies, Equip, Misc | \$2,000 | \$642 | \$400 | \$89 | \$400 | | \$50 | | \$50 | \$50 | \$50 | \$50 | |
| 45 | Office - Officer Exp | \$150 | \$22 | \$150 | \$0 | \$150 | | \$150 | | \$150 | \$150 | \$0 | \$150 | |
| 46 | Office - Phone, Zoom | \$600 | \$585 | \$600 | \$848 | \$820 | \$1,059 | \$1,200 | \$1,074 | \$1,500 | \$1,500 | \$750 | \$1,500 | |
| 47 | Office - Postage | \$170 | \$60 | \$160 | \$0 | \$160 | | \$50 | | \$50 | \$50 | \$0 | \$50 | |
| 48 | Office - Volunteer Bkgrd Chks | \$200 | \$248 | \$200 | \$77 | \$250 | \$254 | \$300 | \$407 | \$400 | \$400 | \$200 | \$400 | |
| 49 | Travel - Office Staff | \$1,800 | \$253 | \$1,200 | \$0 | \$1,800 | | \$800 | \$472 | \$800 | \$800 | \$400 | \$800 | |
| 50 | Payroll Costs | \$25,705 | \$26,689 | \$26,098 | \$26,176 | \$28,000 | \$28,067 | \$31,360 | \$30,873 | \$33,242 | \$36,242 | \$16,621 | \$39,039 | Includes \$3600 for Bookkeeper |
| 51 | Salaries Exp | \$23,300 | \$22,975 | | \$23,733 | | \$25,404 | | \$27,825 | | | | | |

| | B | C | D | G | I | J | D | T | W | X | Y | Z | AA | AB |
|-----|---|----------|---------|----------|---------|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|---------|-----------|--------------------------------|
| 57 | Tax Payments | \$3,780 | \$3,088 | | \$1,815 | | \$1,943 | | \$2,129 | | | | | |
| 58 | Publications Expenses | \$270 | \$342 | \$220 | \$0 | \$2,700 | \$315 | \$500 | \$490 | \$500 | \$500 | \$0 | \$500 | |
| 59 | Pub Exp - Directory | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 60 | Pub Exp - Faith & Practice | | | \$300 | | \$100 | \$230 | \$0 | \$51 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | |
| 61 | Pub Exp - Newsletter | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 62 | Pub Exp - Web & Hosting Svc | \$270 | \$342 | \$120 | \$0 | \$2,000 | \$85 | \$500 | \$439 | \$500 | \$500 | \$0 | \$500 | |
| 63 | SAYMA Committees | \$3,800 | \$2,500 | \$0 | \$0 | \$1,200 | \$900 | \$8,600 | \$7,778 | \$4,200 | \$4,200 | \$3,619 | \$700 | |
| 64 | Cmte Exp - Contingency Pool | \$500 | | | | \$1,000 | \$300 | \$8,000 | \$7,630 | \$300 | \$300 | \$0 | \$300 | |
| 65 | Cmte Exp - Faith & Practice Rsn | \$100 | | | | \$0 | | \$0 | | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | |
| 66 | Cmte Exp - Finance | \$2,500 | \$2,500 | | | \$0 | | \$0 | | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | |
| 67 | Cmte Exp - Ministry & Nurture | \$500 | | | | | | \$200 | | \$200 | \$200 | \$0 | \$200 | |
| 68 | Cmte Exp - Outreach | \$0 | | | | \$2,000 | | \$0 | | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | |
| 69 | Cmte Exp - Peace & Social Concerns | | | | | \$0 | | \$0 | | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | |
| 70 | Cmte Exp - SAYMA Earth Justice | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 71 | Cmte Exp - Uplifting Racial Justice | | | | \$0 | | | \$0 | | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | |
| 72 | Cmte Exp - WQO Allotments | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 73 | Cmte Exp - Operational Handbook | | | | | \$0 | | \$0 | | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | |
| 74 | Cmte Exp - JYM Support | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 75 | Cmte Exp - Personnel | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 76 | Cmte Exp - SASF Support | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 77 | Ad Hoc Exp - URI Support | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 78 | Cmte Exp - Yearly Meeting Planning | \$200 | | | | \$200 | | \$200 | \$139 | \$200 | \$200 | \$139 | \$200 | |
| 79 | Ad Hoc Exp - Racial Conflict Training | | | | | | | | | \$150 | \$150 | \$3,500 | | Donations should cover FY25 |
| 80 | Travel Reimbursements | \$7,600 | \$4,119 | \$3,850 | \$125 | \$5,100 | \$0 | \$7,000 | \$4,218 | \$2,500 | \$2,500 | \$2,500 | \$2,500 | |
| 81 | Travel - Reg Meetings | \$100 | | \$100 | | \$100 | | \$0 | | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | |
| 82 | Travel - WQO Delegates | \$7,500 | \$4,119 | \$3,750 | \$125 | \$5,000 | | \$7,000 | \$4,218 | \$2,500 | \$2,500 | \$2,500 | \$2,500 | |
| 83 | Set-aside Fund Annual Allotments | \$6,600 | \$6,600 | \$3,600 | \$3,600 | \$0 | \$0 | \$4,800 | \$4,800 | \$5,150 | \$5,150 | \$0 | \$4,800 | |
| 84 | Boone MM in Trust | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 85 | FWCC 3rd World Delg Annl Exp | \$1,800 | \$1,800 | \$1,800 | \$1,800 | \$0 | | \$3,000 | \$3,000 | \$750 | \$750 | | \$400 | Hold until Near EOY |
| 86 | FWCC Conference Annl Exp | \$1,800 | \$1,800 | \$1,800 | \$1,800 | \$0 | | \$1,800 | \$1,800 | \$400 | \$400 | | \$400 | Hold until Near EOY |
| 87 | Released Friend Annl Exp | | | | | | | | | \$2,000 | \$2,000 | | \$2,000 | Hold until Near EOY |
| 88 | Spiritual Development Annl Exp | \$3,000 | \$3,000 | | | | | | | \$500 | \$500 | | \$500 | Hold until Near EOY |
| 89 | Uplifting Racial Justice Annl Exp | | | \$0 | | \$0 | | \$0 | | \$1,500 | \$1,500 | | \$1,500 | Hold until Near EOY |
| 90 | YAF Scholarships Annl Exp | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 91 | Youth Enrichment Fund Annl Exp | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 92 | Yearly Meeting Gathering | \$52,900 | \$250 | \$45,350 | \$4,257 | \$45,850 | \$46,294 | \$38,100 | \$35,062 | \$38,100 | \$38,100 | \$0 | \$38,100 | JYM no longer sums here |
| 93 | Facilities & Services Exp | \$44,150 | \$0 | \$35,800 | \$2,796 | \$36,300 | \$42,676 | \$35,800 | \$34,017 | \$35,800 | \$35,800 | \$0 | \$35,800 | |
| 94 | YM Accommodations & Meals | \$43,750 | | \$34,200 | | \$34,200 | \$36,913 | \$34,200 | \$38,094 | \$34,200 | \$34,200 | | \$34,200 | |
| 95 | Financial Services Fees (Eventbrite) | | | \$0 | | \$0 | \$1,859 | \$0 | \$2,223 | \$0 | \$0 | | \$0 | |
| 96 | YM Honoraria and Speaker Travel | \$500 | | \$0 | | \$500 | \$3,031 | \$500 | \$935 | \$500 | \$500 | | \$500 | |
| 97 | YM Services | \$1,500 | | \$1,200 | \$2,796 | \$1,200 | \$540 | \$700 | \$2,678 | \$700 | \$700 | | \$700 | |
| 98 | YM Supplies | \$400 | | \$400 | | \$400 | \$333 | \$400 | \$87 | \$400 | \$400 | | \$400 | |
| 99 | YM Bookstore Exp | \$1,300 | | \$1,300 | | \$1,300 | \$625 | \$1,300 | \$981 | \$1,300 | \$1,300 | | \$1,300 | |
| 100 | YM Print Post Phone & Misc | \$1,750 | | \$1,750 | | \$1,750 | \$319 | \$1,000 | \$64 | \$1,000 | \$1,000 | | \$1,000 | |
| 101 | Junior Yearly Meeting Exp | \$5,700 | \$250 | \$6,500 | \$1,461 | \$6,500 | \$2,674 | \$6,500 | \$5,541 | \$6,500 | \$6,500 | \$0 | \$7,000 | |
| 102 | JYM Asst Coordinator(s) | \$1,600 | | \$2,400 | \$875 | \$2,400 | \$800 | | \$1,314 | | | | \$0 | |
| 103 | JYM Coordinator(s) | \$3,600 | \$250 | \$3,600 | \$400 | \$3,600 | \$1,800 | | \$4,040 | | | | \$0 | |
| 104 | JYM Supplies, Sitters, Misc | \$500 | | \$500 | \$186 | \$500 | \$74 | | \$167 | | | | \$0 | |
| 105 | Quaker Membership Orgs Annual Contribns | \$2,500 | \$2,500 | \$2,500 | \$2,500 | \$2,500 | \$2,500 | \$2,500 | \$2,500 | \$1,250 | \$1,250 | \$0 | \$1,250 | |
| 106 | WQO - FGC | \$1,250 | \$1,250 | \$1,250 | \$1,250 | \$1,250 | \$1,250 | \$1,250 | \$1,250 | \$625 | \$625 | \$0 | \$625 | Restore if funds are available |
| 107 | WQO - FWCC - Direct Contribn | \$1,250 | \$1,250 | \$1,250 | \$1,250 | \$1,250 | \$1,250 | \$1,250 | \$1,250 | \$625 | \$625 | \$0 | \$625 | Restore if funds are available |
| 108 | WQO - FWCC - Capital Campaign | | | | | | | | | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | Restore if funds are available |
| 109 | Other WQO Annual Contribns | \$4,650 | \$4,604 | \$4,650 | \$4,653 | \$5,250 | \$5,250 | \$6,000 | \$6,000 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | Restore if funds are available |
| 110 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 111 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 112 | Net(Surplus/Deficit) before Reserve Change: | -\$4,595 | \$810 | \$966 | \$5,873 | \$562 | \$6,727 | -\$29,610 | -\$20,330 | -\$14,134 | -\$17,134 | \$4,957 | -\$15,769 | |
| 113 | Yearly Gathering Net: | \$0 | -\$790 | \$0 | \$147 | -\$500 | -\$12,446 | \$0 | \$2,994 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | |
| 114 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 115 | Reserve Change: | -\$540 | -\$598 | | | | | \$4,000 | \$4,000 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | |

| | B | C | D | G | I | J | D | T | W | X | Y | Z | AA | AB |
|-----|--|---------------------|----------|-------|----------|----------|----------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------|----------------------|------------------------|
| 127 | Net(Surplus/Deficit) with Reserve Change | -\$8,135 | \$212 | \$965 | \$5,673 | \$562 | \$6,727 | -\$23,820 | -\$24,330 | -\$14,134 | -\$17,134 | \$4,957 | -\$13,769 | |
| 132 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 131 | Reserve | | \$18,208 | | \$18,208 | \$18,208 | \$18,208 | \$22,208 | \$22,208 | \$21,208 | \$22,208 | \$22,208 | \$22,208 | |
| 133 | Undesignated Funds | | \$30,754 | | \$35,932 | \$31,327 | \$42,028 | \$19,018 | \$18,297 | \$4,883 | \$1,883 | \$23,254 | -\$769 | \$15,000 Plus Line 127 |
| 134 | est EOY Undesignated fund | | | | | | | | | | | \$15,000 | | |
| 135 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 136 | Plan FY25 Budget - V0.4 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Attachment E: Ad-hoc Assessment Committee Report

[\(Return to the Minutes\)](#)

On April 26, a meeting of the Ad Hoc Assessment Committee appointed by SAYMA coclerks Daryl Berquist and Margaret Farmer to review the SAYMA assessment process was held via Zoom. The committee consists of Connie Hill from the Birmingham Meeting, Diane McCluskey from the Chattanooga Meeting and Paul Mangelsdorf from the Atlanta Meeting.

The committee has been tasked with the following:

Evaluate the process that MM's currently use to determine their annual assessment, consider whether this process adequately addresses SAYMA finances and annual expenses, and propose a continuation or new practice, preferably by YM 2024.

Background Information

The last assessment increase was approved in 2017 increasing from \$60 to \$65 in 2017 to \$70 in 2018 and \$75 in 2019. The prior assessment rate was in place at least since 2006. The impetus for the 2017 change was the same as the impetus for this evaluation, a significant shortfall in SAYMA's operating revenue relative to operating expense. Since the effective date of the last increase of the assessment to \$75, there has been approximately a 24% increase in the Chained-CPI (U-CPI-U). That would imply that a current assessment rate of \$93 would be required to have kept pace with inflation.

Our Discussions

We first discussed what the elements of a good assessment system would be. These are:

- Transparency – The Methodology must be clear about what is expected and that all meetings are treated in the same manner.
- Simplicity – The assessment methodology must be easy to understand and to calculate
- Contains a mechanism for adjusting for inflation – To eliminate our prior pattern of holding steady over long periods of time until we reach significant financial difficulties and then having to significantly increase the assessment. The assessment methodology should either include a direct adjustment for inflation or be self-adjusting for inflation.

We discussed using the current assessment methodology and simply adjusting it for inflation each year based on the prior year's inflation. We were concerned that this would continue the existing method of calculating the number of active members and attenders at each meeting, which we believe is neither as simple as it sounds, nor is it transparent.

We discussed how Chattanooga meeting simply gives 10% of their prior year's contribution income to SAYMA each year. We reviewed what that would do to Atlanta and Birmingham's assessment to SAYMA and it would increase the amount of money going to SAYMA.

The advantage of a system based on a percentage of the previous year's contribution revenue is that it would be simple and transparent. Everyone would know what the SAYMA percentage is, and each meeting would simply inform SAYMA of their contribution income at the end of their fiscal year. Although this assessment would not be directly adjusted for inflation, we believe that in general contribution income would rise with inflation over time.

We discussed that, for the purposes of the percentage-based assessment, we should only consider general contribution income excluding all special-purpose donations, capital campaigns, and bequests.

As a next step we will need to obtain the general contribution income amounts from each of the individual meetings (preferably at least the three most recent years). Then the SAYMA Finance Committee would determine if 10% was sufficient to balance SAYMA's operating budget. Based on our back-of-the-envelope assessment, it may be sufficient or it may require a marginally higher rate. Once that rate is approved, the meetings simply need to inform SAYMA of their general contribution level at the end of their respective fiscal year's and then pay the required percent of that contribution level as their assessment in their new fiscal year.

We discussed that the percentage to be set would be at a level which balances SAYMA's operating budget. We do not envision the assessment to be for replenishing the reserves that have recently been used. We believe that there should either be a special assessment to replenish reserves or preferably, a fund-raising appeal to individuals and SAYMA monthly meetings with the specific goal of raising sufficient funds to replenish the reserves.

On June 12, Diane and Connie met again to review the information provided by Monthly Meetings. Using reports given to Diane by the treasurers of Monthly Meetings, we determined that the proposal of 10% would not increase the revenue for SAYMA. Some Meeting assessments are higher than this percentage, particularly those without facilities to maintain.

Given this finding, we return to the practice of using the Meeting census to determine the assessment amount. We were unable to obtain accurate census information from each of the Monthly Meetings. Without census data, we are unable to calculate the revenue that our proposal will produce.

We recognize that a move to the \$93 per person mentioned in our previous meeting would be difficult to do in one year. Instead, we propose a gradual increase of the assessment over the next four years. This would be an increase of \$7 the first year and \$6 each year for the following three years. At the end of four years, the assessment would be \$100 per person.

We are not proposing a recommendation for a methodology to increase the assessment after that but would like SAYMA to consider an annual inflation adjustment after the four-year period ends.

On June 17, Diane and Paul communicated via email messages and agreed on further refinement of the two options, that is – not an either/or method but using both methods depending on the situation of the monthly meeting.

We recommend an assessment that results in the greatest contribution to SAYMA:

- 1) An amount of 12.5% of the MM previous year contributions income
Or
- 2) Paying \$85/member-attender in 2025 using the current counting method. This rate would rise to \$93/person in 2026, then \$100/person in 2027, followed by an annual increase based on a measurement such as CPI.

While this additional income to SAYMA would not resolve the need to replenish special funds, it would help close the gap in annual budgets.

Diane will be at the annual sessions this week, Connie and Paul will not be attending.

Attachment F: Yearly Meeting Planning Committee Report #1

[\(Return to the Minutes\)](#)

Dear Friends,

It has been a wonderful year in planning this event. At this point the Yearly Meeting Planning Committee is a well oiled machine and it brings me great joy to meet with this vibrant group of Friends who all wish the best for this yearly meeting and who hold SAYMA in the Light through our worship, discernment, and action.

Four years ago, I couldn't have said that. Four years ago we were still in a pandemic and had canceled the 2020 annual session. In 2021 with a tiny YMPC and we started the wheels spinning to imagine and execute a virtual event. In 2022 we moved to a hybrid event, but the committee was still small - too small for what we pulled off. . . but the dedication of the few led to an amazing first attempt at a hybrid event. Then we moved to berea in 2023 because WWC shut its doors to summer groups and we had to scramble! We were not much bigger then and we once again managed the incredible in a short amount of time. This year for the first time the committee is overflowing - every position is full and there are even people on the committee who made up their own job or join in holding the space we needed for discernment and worship together. We moved from surviving to thriving!

What I know is that in order to survive the YM must have a clerk. We can survive with only virtual rep meetings and we can even forego a year of our in person-retreat. We know this because we have done it. But it won't be as much fun for you or for me. And in order to thrive I believe we must have an in-person retreat and we can't do that without a YMPC clerk.

I am looking forward to supporting a new clerk or co-clerks of YMPC in the coming year and hope that somebody or bodies will step up to the task.

With eternal optimism, I am asking you to fill out a survey of preferences for location, date, and length of a 2025 in person/hybrid event. Please fill it out today. The link will be sent directly to your email.

Submitted with gratitude and hope,
Jennifer Dickie
YMPC, Clerk

Survey link: <https://tinyurl.com/SAYMAsurvey2024>

Attachment G: Approved Budget for FY 2025

[\(Return to the Minutes\)](#)

| | B | W | X | Y | Z | AA | AB |
|----|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|---|---|-----------------------------------|---|------------------------------|
| | SAYMA FY 2025 Budget V1.0 | FY23 Actual 9/30/2023 | FY24 Budget 1.0 Approved 6/25/2023 | FY24 Budget 1.1 Approved 6/21/2024 | FY24 YTD Estimate 3/31/2024 | FY25 Budget 1.0 Approved 6/22/2024 | Notes |
| 1 | | | | | | | |
| 2 | | | | | | | |
| 3 | Income | \$83,257 | \$83,842 | \$83,842 | \$31,926 | \$84,655 | Totals are in Black |
| 4 | Adjustments to Income | | | | | | Individual Items are in Blue |
| 5 | Assessments | \$40,913 | \$42,142 | \$42,142 | \$17,426 | \$42,955 | |
| 6 | Asheville | 4,125.00 | \$4,050 | \$4,050 | | \$4,050 | |
| 7 | Athens | \$600 | \$600 | \$600 | | \$600 | |
| 8 | Atlanta | \$14,250 | \$14,250 | \$14,250 | | \$14,250 | |
| 9 | Berea | \$1,763 | \$2,700 | \$2,700 | | \$2,700 | |
| 10 | Birmingham | \$2,625 | \$2,100 | \$2,100 | | \$2,100 | |
| 11 | Brevard | | | | | | |
| 12 | Celo | \$2,325 | \$2,925 | \$2,925 | | \$3,225 | |
| 13 | Charleston | \$563 | | | | | |
| 14 | Chattanooga | \$1,887 | \$1,960 | \$1,960 | | \$1,960 | |
| 15 | Columbia | \$1,800 | \$1,800 | \$1,800 | | \$1,800 | |
| 16 | Cookeville | \$575 | \$500 | \$500 | | \$500 | |
| 17 | Crossville | | | | | | |
| 18 | Foxfire | | \$0 | \$0 | | \$0 | |
| 19 | Greenville | \$825 | \$825 | \$825 | | \$825 | |
| 20 | Huntsville | \$1,120 | \$1,120 | \$1,120 | | \$1,120 | |
| 21 | Memphis | \$3,000 | \$3,000 | \$3,000 | | \$3,000 | |
| 22 | Nashville | \$2,813 | \$3,375 | \$3,375 | | \$3,375 | |
| 23 | Oxford | | \$200 | \$200 | | \$0 | |
| 24 | Swannanoa Valley | | | | | | |
| 25 | West Knoxville | \$2,644 | \$2,737 | \$2,737 | | \$3,450 | |
| 26 | Contributions – General | \$3,287 | \$3,000 | \$3,000 | \$14,000 | \$3,000 | |
| 27 | Interest - CD | | | | | | |
| 28 | Interest - Money Mkt | \$945 | \$600 | \$600 | \$500 | \$600 | |
| 29 | Publication Sales | \$56 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | |
| 32 | YM Income | \$38,056 | \$38,100 | \$38,100 | \$0 | \$38,100 | |
| 33 | YM Adjustments to Income (Kenworthy) | \$4,570 | \$4,500 | \$4,500 | | \$4,500 | |
| 34 | YM Bookstore Inc | \$10 | 1,300 | 1,300 | | 1,300 | |

| | B | W | X | Y | Z | AA | AB |
|----|---------------------------------------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|-----------------------------|
| 35 | YM Receipts | 32,977 | 31,100 | 31,100 | | 31,100 | |
| 36 | YM Scholarship Contrib | - | 1,200 | 1,200 | | 1,200 | |
| 37 | | | | | | | |
| 38 | Expenses | \$103,587 | \$97,977 | \$100,977 | \$26,969 | \$100,424 | |
| 39 | Adjustments to Expenses | | | | | | |
| 40 | SAYMA Operations | \$49,684 | \$46,977 | \$49,977 | \$26,969 | \$49,274 | |
| 41 | SAYF Operational Transfers | \$3,000 | \$1,500 | \$1,500 | \$1,500 | \$1,500 | |
| 42 | Bookkeeping Costs - QuickBooks Online | \$318 | \$960 | \$960 | \$480 | \$960 | |
| 43 | Liability Insurance | \$895 | \$925 | \$925 | \$830 | \$925 | |
| 44 | Office Admin | \$2,103 | \$3,150 | \$3,150 | \$1,400 | \$3,150 | |
| 45 | Banking Fees | \$0 | | | | | |
| 46 | Office - Duplication | | \$50 | \$50 | \$0 | \$50 | |
| 47 | Office - Guilford Archiving | \$150 | \$150 | \$150 | \$0 | \$150 | |
| 48 | Office - Supplies, Equip, Misc | | \$50 | \$50 | \$50 | \$50 | |
| 49 | Office - Officer Exp | | \$150 | \$150 | \$0 | \$150 | |
| 50 | Office - Phone, Zoom | \$1,074 | \$1,500 | \$1,500 | \$750 | \$1,500 | |
| 51 | Office - Postage | | \$50 | \$50 | \$0 | \$50 | |
| 52 | Office - Volunteer Bkgrd Chks | \$407 | \$400 | \$400 | \$200 | \$400 | |
| 53 | Travel - Office Staff | \$472 | \$800 | \$800 | \$400 | \$800 | |
| 54 | | \$30,873 | \$33,242 | \$36,242 | \$16,621 | \$39,039 | Includes \$3600 for Bookkee |
| 55 | Payroll Costs | \$919 | | | | | |
| 56 | Salaries Exp | \$27,825 | | | | | |
| 57 | Tax Payments | \$2,129 | | | | | |
| 58 | Publications Expenses | \$490 | \$500 | \$500 | \$0 | \$500 | |
| 59 | Pub Exp - Directory | | | | | | |
| 60 | Pub Exp - Faith & Practice | \$51 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | |
| 61 | Pub Exp - Newsletter | | | | | | |
| 62 | Pub Exp - Web & Hosting Srvc | \$439 | \$500 | \$500 | \$0 | \$500 | |
| 63 | SAYMA Committees | \$7,778 | \$4,200 | \$4,200 | \$3,639 | \$700 | |
| 64 | Cmte Exp - Contingency Pool | \$7,639 | \$300 | \$300 | \$0 | \$300 | |
| 65 | Cmte Exp - Faith & Practice Rvsn | | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | |
| 66 | Cmte Exp - Finance | | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | |
| 67 | Cmte Exp - Ministry & Nurture | | \$200 | \$200 | \$0 | \$200 | |
| 69 | Cmte Exp - Outreach | | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | |
| 70 | Cmte Exp - Peace & Social Concerns | | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | |
| 71 | Cmte Exp - SAYMA Earth Justice | | | | | | |

| | B | W | X | Y | Z | AA | AB |
|-----|---|----------|----------|----------|---------|----------|--------------------------------|
| 72 | Cmte Exp - Uplifting Racial Justice | | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | |
| 73 | Cmte Exp - WQO Allotments | | | | | | |
| 74 | Cmte Exp - Operational Handbook | | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | |
| 75 | Cmte Exp - JYM Support | | | | | | |
| 76 | Cmte Exp - Personnel | | | | | | |
| 77 | Cmte Exp - SAYF Support | | | | | | |
| 78 | Ad Hoc Exp - URJ Support | | | | | | |
| 79 | Cmte Exp - Yearly Meeting Planning | \$139 | \$200 | \$200 | \$139 | \$200 | |
| 80 | Ad Hoc Exp - Racial Conflict Training | | \$3,500 | \$3,500 | \$3,500 | | Donations should cover FY25 |
| 81 | Travel Reimbursements | \$4,228 | \$2,500 | \$2,500 | \$2,500 | \$2,500 | |
| 82 | Travel - Rep Meetings | | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | |
| 83 | Travel - WQO Delegates | \$4,228 | \$2,500 | \$2,500 | \$2,500 | \$2,500 | |
| 84 | Set-aside Fund Annual Allotments | \$4,800 | \$5,150 | \$5,150 | \$0 | \$4,800 | |
| 85 | Boone MM In Trust | | | | | | |
| 86 | FWCC 3rd World Delg Annl Exp | \$3,000 | \$750 | \$750 | | \$400 | Hold until Near EOY |
| 87 | FWCC Conference Annl Exp | \$1,800 | \$400 | \$400 | | \$400 | Hold until Near EOY |
| 88 | Released Friend Annl Exp | | \$2,000 | \$2,000 | | \$2,000 | Hold until Near EOY |
| 89 | Spiritual Development Annl Exp | | \$500 | \$500 | | \$500 | Hold until Near EOY |
| 90 | Uplifting Racial Justice Annl Exp | | \$1,500 | \$1,500 | | \$1,500 | Hold until Near EOY |
| 91 | YAF Scholarships Annl Exp | | | | | | |
| 92 | Youth Enrichment Fund Annl Exp | | | | | | |
| 93 | Yearly Meeting Gathering | \$35,062 | \$38,100 | \$38,100 | \$0 | \$38,100 | JYM no longer sums here |
| 94 | Facilities & Services Exp | \$34,017 | \$35,800 | \$35,800 | \$0 | \$35,800 | |
| 95 | YM Accommodations & Meals | \$28,094 | \$34,200 | \$34,200 | | \$34,200 | |
| 96 | Financial Services Fees (Eventbrite) | \$2,223 | \$0 | \$0 | | \$0 | |
| 97 | YM Honoraria and Speaker Travel | \$935 | \$500 | \$500 | | \$500 | |
| 98 | YM Services | \$2,678 | \$700 | \$700 | | \$700 | |
| 99 | YM Supplies | \$87 | \$400 | \$400 | | \$400 | |
| 100 | YM Bookstore Exp | \$981 | \$1,300 | \$1,300 | | \$1,300 | |
| 101 | YM Print Post Phone & Misc | \$64 | \$1,000 | \$1,000 | | \$1,000 | |
| 102 | Junior Yearly Meeting Exp | \$5,541 | \$6,500 | \$6,500 | \$0 | \$7,000 | |
| 103 | JYM Asst Coordinator(s) | \$1,334 | | | \$0 | | |
| 104 | JYM Coordinator(s) | \$4,040 | | | \$0 | | |
| 105 | JYM Supplies, Sitters, Misc | \$167 | | | \$0 | | |
| 106 | Quaker Membership Orgs Annual Contribns | \$2,500 | \$1,250 | \$1,250 | \$0 | \$1,250 | |
| 107 | WQO - FGC | \$1,250 | \$625 | \$625 | \$0 | \$625 | Restore if funds are available |

| | B | W | X | Y | Z | AA | AB |
|-----|---|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|-----------|--------------------------------|
| 108 | WQO - FWCC - Direct Contrbn | \$1,250 | \$625 | \$625 | \$0 | \$625 | Restore if funds are available |
| 109 | WQO - FWCC - Capital Campaign | | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | Restore if funds are available |
| 110 | Other WQO Annual Contribns | \$6,000 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | Restore if funds are available |
| 122 | | | | | | | |
| 123 | Net(Surplus/Deficit) before Reserve Change: | -\$20,330 | -\$14,134 | -\$17,134 | \$4,957 | -\$15,769 | |
| 124 | Yearly Gathering Net: | \$2,994 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | |
| 125 | | | | | | | |
| 126 | Reserve Change: | \$4,000 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | |
| 127 | Net(Surplus/Deficit) with Reserve Change | -\$24,330 | -\$14,134 | -\$17,134 | \$4,957 | -\$15,769 | |
| 130 | | | | | | | |
| 131 | Reserve | \$22,208 | \$22,208 | \$22,208 | \$22,208 | \$22,208 | |
| 132 | Undesignated Funds | \$18,297 | \$4,883 | \$1,883 | \$23,254 | -\$769 | \$15,000 Plus Line 127 |
| 134 | est EOY Undesignated fund | | | | \$15,000 | | |
| 135 | | | | | | | |
| 136 | File: FY25 Budget - V1.0 | | | | | | |

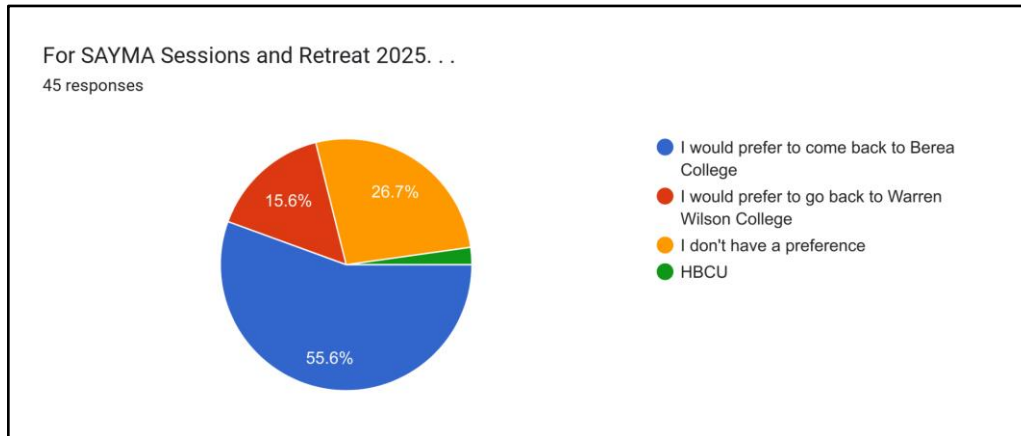
Attachment H: Yearly Meeting Planning Committee Report #2

[\(Return to the Minutes\)](#)

Thank you to those who took time to complete the survey about the location, length and dates for SAYMA 2025.

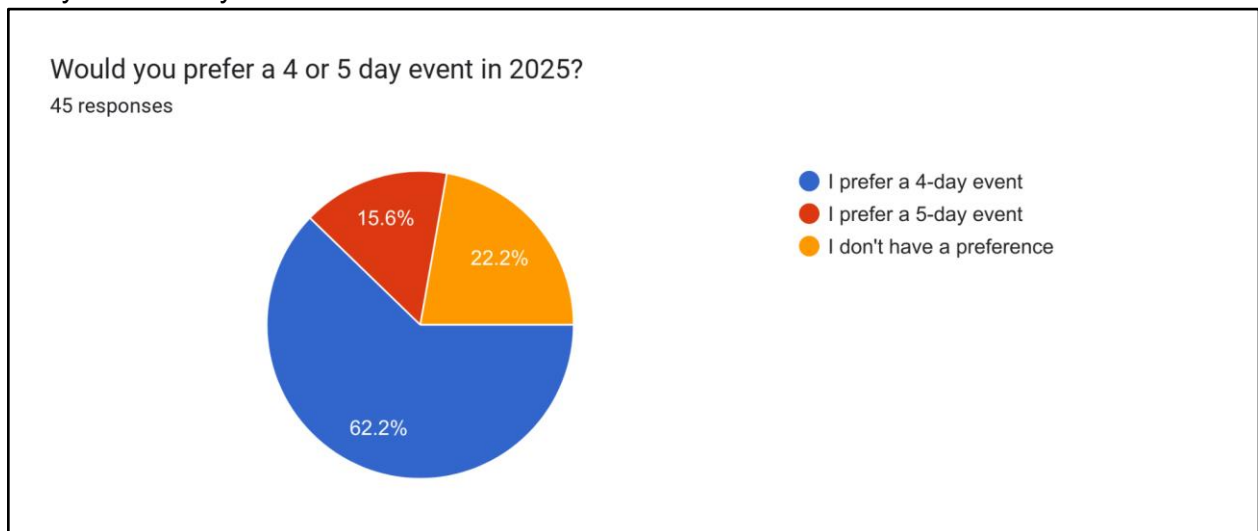
39/100 Adult Friends responded to the survey. [40/100 at the time of the oral report]

The results show that of the respondents who had a preference 53.8% would like to return to Berea College for the 2025 sessions and retreat. While 15.4% preferred Warren Wilson and 28.2% didn't have a preference.

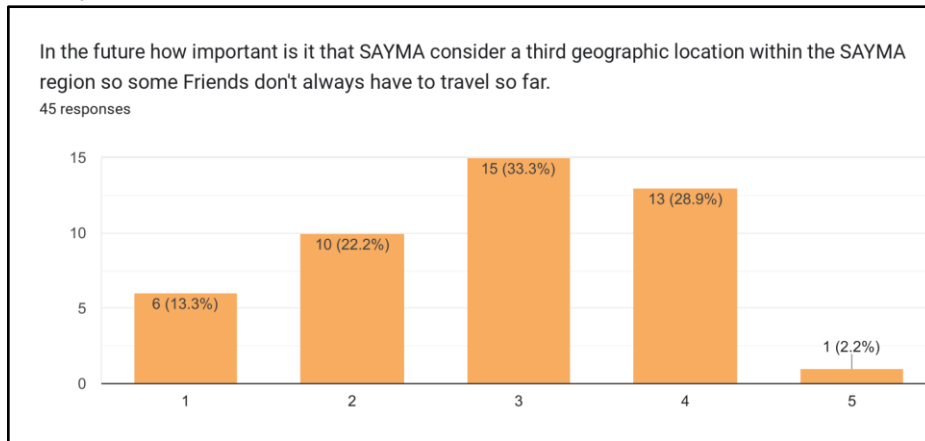


About half of the respondents shared their reason for their preference and of those 60% indicated proximity to their home or to loved ones was the reason for their choice. Other reasons included the food, facilities and walkability listed as reasons to attend both campuses.

Friends who responded strongly preferred a 4-day retreat which is consistent with the results of last year's survey.



The results of the question about seeking a 3rd venue option in another geographic location within the SAYMA leaned slightly toward *not very important* for those who responded to the survey.

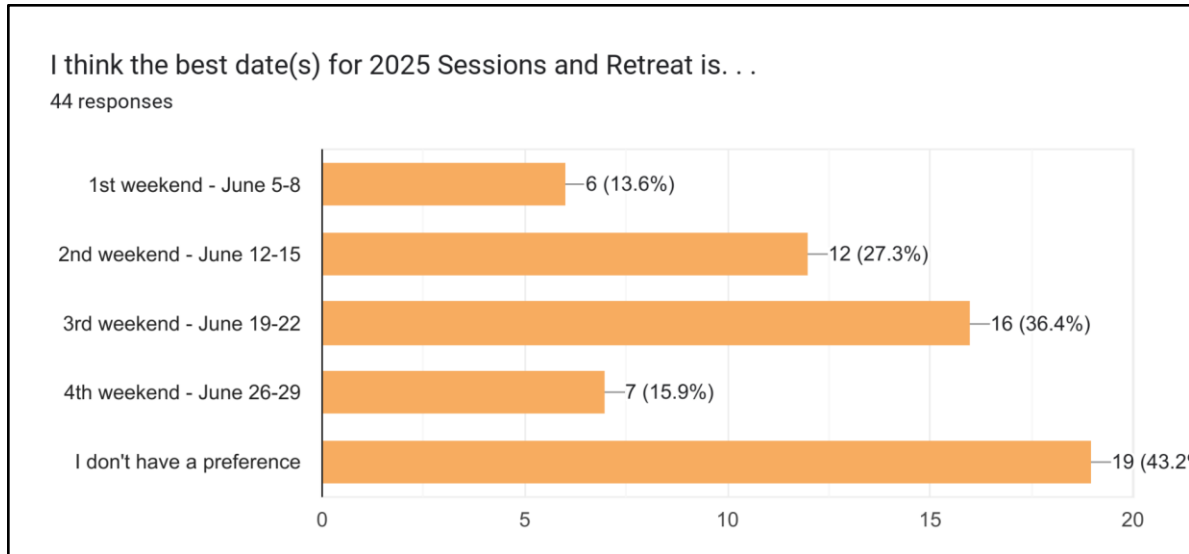


1=*not very important*, 5=*very important*

Based on the survey results I recommend the following for 2025:

1. SAYMA continues with a **4-day** Sessions & Retreat at **Berea College** during the **2nd or 3rd weekend**, depending on Berea College availability.
2. Data suggest that Friends prefer a location based on its proximity to their home. I suggest that the YMPC consider a 3-year rotation between our current two venues, moving back to Warren Wilson College in 2026 if it is available during the dates we need in mid-June.
3. These data do not suggest a strong need for an ad hoc committee to select a 3rd location at this time. However, the YMPC may decide to request a site selection ad hoc committee, in which case I will share the names of the 8 people who volunteered to participate in this ad hoc committee to the incoming clerk of SAYMA and you may be contacted.

The date preference was unsurprising with respondents preferring the middle of June to the beginning or end for reasons related to school schedules including some that are still in session in the first week of June, and the timing of Friends General Conference which traditionally falls in the first week of July. Based on Berea's schedule, it is likely next year's retreat will fall June 12-15 due to the bell hooks conference that takes place the third weekend of June.



**SAYMA Ministry and Nurture Committee
Report on Request from Representative Meeting 149**

The Ministry and Nurture Committee was asked by the Co-Clerks of Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting and Association (SAYMA) at Representative Meeting 149 (Fall 2022) to address four proposed minutes on the relationship between SAYMA and the Uplifting Racial Justice Committee (URJ), and on building right relationships with Friends of Color. The original proposed minutes are included at the end of this report. In addition to our committee meetings, we held two listening sessions at the 2023 Yearly Meeting Retreat and Sessions to gain wider feedback.

While the committee members have a strong desire to undo systemic institutional racism, the committee is trying to find ways that are both honest and useful to share with the body of SAYMA. The difficulties experienced in SAYMA were present within the Ministry & Nurture Committee. We found ourselves word-smithing when we should have been looking for the root causes of the issues and sometimes got bogged down in seeking perfectionism. Through perseverance, a sense of the committee was found in some areas, and opportunities for growth and reflection in other areas.

Firstly, the Ministry and Nurture Committee brings before SAYMA the following recommendations to be tested at a SAYMA business session.

Addressing Proposed Minute 1.

SAYMA Uplifting Racial Justice Committee is operating as a self-selecting standing committee because that is the choice of Friends of Color active in the committee.

We recommend SAYMA approves this process. We take this to mean the Nominating Committee is neither choosing its clerk and members nor deciding their term limits.

Addressing Proposed Minute 2.

We recommend SAYMA recognize and welcome the Paul Cuffee Worship Group as affiliated with SAYMA without its being under the care of a SAYMA Monthly Meeting.

Our committee achieved a sense of the committee that these recommendations should come before SAYMA for discernment and hopes the SAYMA body will come to a sense of the Meeting on these issues in a timely manner, preferably at Yearly Sessions 2024.

Secondly, the Ministry and Nurture Committee acknowledges its limitations in reaching a sense of the committee. Many of the patterns and blockages that hampered the committee's work exist throughout SAYMA and wider society. These patterns harm our Yearly Meeting, particularly Friends of Color, and impede the work of undoing racist practices.

This committee is not unique within SAYMA. We are a reflection of the SAYMA community. Our conversations are filled with Spirit. We remain committed to uplifting racial justice although our pace is slower than we like. We find unity in some things and other areas where we are still searching for a sense of the committee. Having developed a set of agreements for the committee, we continue to work toward being vulnerable and evolving, no easy or quick task, but a necessary one.

Regarding minute 149-13-03, the committee did not reach unity. We ask SAYMA to release the Ministry and Nurture Committee from making a recommendation. The Finance Committee offered a minute in 2022, the minutes of RM149-13 pg 9 reflect this, and an apology by the Finance Committee Clerk was delivered at Yearly Meeting sessions in 2023, upholding that URJ did not mismanage their finances.

In regard to proposed minute 140-13-04 relating to guiding White Friends in acknowledging harms done to Friends of Color. Although the work we have before us is challenging and slow, there is a way forward. Spirituality and anti-racism work are not polar opposites. They can be woven together and our Quaker testimonies point to the way forward. Integrity focuses on seeking truth, no matter how difficult that path may seem. Community is about building and restoring caring relationships. It involves being faithful and willing to humbly admit our shortcomings and repair damage done. Stewardship is about sharing the responsibility of addressing racism and supporting Friends of Color. To foster peace is to promote an atmosphere of nonviolence and reconciliation in all interactions, actively working to dismantle the systems of oppression that create discord within our community. Equity leads us toward living into the reality of loving one another as we love ourselves.

The Ministry and Nurture Committee recognizes that the unusual scrutiny placed on SAYMA URJ's affairs in comparison to other groups shows that SAYMA does not have a community that is loving and supportive to all. We hope Friends will accept the presented recommendations as the minimum commitment of trust and intention towards building a multicultural anti-racist, inclusive organization. We ask Friends to further contribute feedback, discernment, and their own leading in helping us dismantle racism in SAYMA. We offer our deepest gratitude to all

Friends already working on this issue, especially those willing to engage the committee in difficult conversations and hold us accountable.

Sincerely,

The members of the Ministry and Nurture Committee

Joan Barnette, West Knoxville FM

Brenda Barrington, Columbia FM

Daryl Bergquist, SAYMA co-clerk, Birmingham FM

Annie Black, Cookeville FM

Wood Bouldin, Charleston FM Greenbrier WG

Rob Collins, Birmingham FM

Maggie Davies, Birmingham FM

Barbara Esther, clerk M&N, Asheville FM

Margaret Farmer, SAYMA co-clerk, Asheville FM

Diana Masso, Charleston FM

Adrian Mehr, Memphis FM

Lissa Place, Atlanta FM

Melissa Preast, West Knoxville FM

Footnote:

Original Proposed Minutes from Representatives Meeting 149:

149-13-01: We acknowledge SAYMA-URJ's right to exist as a self-selecting standing committee of SAYMA – which means the Nominating Committee will not choose its members or decide their term limits.

149-13-02: We acknowledge that the Paul Cuffee Worship Group has a right to exist as a program of SAYMA-URJ without being under the care of a SAYMA Monthly Meeting.

149-13-03: We acknowledge that SAYMA-URJ has never engaged in any kind of financial mismanagement and that every dollar of URJ's budget has been spent in accordance with URJ's mission and goals.

149-13-04: This body charges Ministry and Nurture with guiding white Friends in acknowledging their part and the part of their predecessors in racial harms to Friends of Color so that we may take responsibility and enter into right relationship with Friends of Color.

SAYMA.Uplifting Racial Justice (URJ) Report

June 2024

Vision: SAYMA-URJ envisions a Yearly Meeting community where every Friend of color feels welcome. We see a SAYMA community where the divine Light within every Friend of color is affirmed, their unique history, spiritual journey and lived Truth is honored, where our messages and concerns are heard and respected with due consideration. We see a SAYMA community where Friends of color are empowered to build close spiritual Friendships, appreciation, love and support for the weighty responsibilities we carry as people of color, embodying Quaker Testimonies. Within and outside of the Religious Society of Friends.

Mission: To help SAYMA become a welcoming place for Friends of color. The committee will do this by providing safe space for Friends of color to bring issues and concerns regarding racism within their Monthly Meetings and SAYMA, to find support and advocacy. The committee will also work to raise awareness about White Supremacy aka racism within SAYMA, by compiling and disseminating educational resources.

Reality Check: We live in a rogue white supremacist colonial settler state, founded on genocide, theft, slavery and rape, maintained by ongoing and relentless racial violence. ALL people classified as white benefit from white supremacy/racism while ALL people classified as non-white experience racial oppression. Period. These irrefutable facts dictate the terms of our existence in this reality, personally and collectively.

The racial power dynamics in white supremacist frameworks, such as SAYMA and the Religious Society of Friends, always operate to advantage white people at the expense of non-white people. Therefore, it is imperative that white individuals and organizations that choose to do the work of becoming anti-racist, provide some type of structure to mitigate the inevitable traumatizing impacts of white people grappling with their racism on the very non-white people you say you wish to build an antiracist multicultural beloved community with.

Now, think of all the Quakers you know who believe racism has nothing to do with them, are tired of talking about white supremacy/racism, and become hostile whenever their racism, intentional or not, is called into question. Yes, change is hard for everyone, both those who benefit from systems of oppression and those who are oppressed by them. Even though the process of transitioning white people from white supremacist

colonizers to decolonized antiracists may be uncomfortable and even painful for white people, sometimes, your transformation process will be much more challenging for the people of color in your sphere than it will ever be for you, due to longstanding racial power dynamics. This was the thinking behind SAYMA URJ's mission, to provide support and advocacy for Friends of color experiencing racism.

Looking back to the origins of SAYMA's racial conflict, we see that it was allowed to escalate and fester into the current seemingly intractable crisis, because there is no system or process in place to hold anyone accountable for the harms they cause. Yet, in spite of all that has happened since the formation of URJ, we are proud to report that we are fulfilling our mission, regardless of a persistent pattern and practice of individual and systemic racial prejudice, "wounding", and organized hostility to our work by a few weighty individuals in our yearly meeting, monthly meetings, and committees.

Growing Edges

Planning Committee took the first baby steps, after Jennifer Dickie became clerk, by instituting a practice of consulting with URJ before finalizing plans for SAYMA's annual gathering. Planning Committee also waived registration, room and board fees for FOC, enabling us to attend the gathering FREE. Thus eliminating two major obstacles to welcoming more people of color to full participation and representation in yearly meeting activities. Now the only barriers for FOC to full participation are the cost of transportation to and from SAYMA activities, and Quaker racism.

Finance: Much of SAYMA's longstanding racial conflict began with the Finance Committee. From 2017 to 2019 the leadership of that committee was just plain hostile to the notion of Friends of color having access and control of URJ's own funds without white approval. In other words, they did not see us as adults, capable of managing our own money appropriately.

Charles Schade (Charleston WV) clerk of finance in 2019, committed multiple counts of racial wounding against members of URJ for spending URJ committee funds in absolute compliance with our mission. He basically criminalized us, falsely accused URJ of financial malfeasance, and conflicts of interest. When we sent an official complaint to the SAYMA clerk, Barbara Esther (Asheville), she told us, "apologies need to be mutual." When URJ asked for a conflict transformation process we were ignored. But, Charles Schade, who had quit as finance committee clerk rather than take responsibility, demanded that the Finance committee hire a non-profit lawyer to investigate the matter. To make a long story short, the lawyer found no financial malfeasance and no conflicts of interest. Yet, even after the audit was done and no financial improprieties or conflicts of interest were found, members of URJ continued to be slandered all over the Quaker universe, a number of SAYMA Friends stood in the

way of URJ funding, for FIVE years in a row, and the conflict transformation process URJ had asked for never materialized. Finally, at SAYMA's annual retreat in 2023, the finance committee publicly apologized to the URJ members who had been criminalized and slandered, by Charles Schade, and his enablers and co-conspirators.

Ministry & Nurture: There is no kinder, gentler way to say that SAYMA Ministry & Nurture has been a major contributor to the long-standing racial contention afflicting SAYMA. Whereas M&N should have the capacity to mediate conflicts between Friends, they have been utterly incompetent to address incidents of racial conflict and/or wounding, so far. In fact, ever since the earliest ad hoc formation stages of URJ, members of SAYMA Ministry and Nurture have conspired with others to commit racist acts of aggression against SAYMA Friends of color, with impunity. It has been abundantly clear for some time that new leadership is desperately needed on that committee IF SAYMA actually intends to become a welcoming antiracist, faith community. There is not enough time or space to outline the details here, yet fortunately, our fervent prayers have been answered. There will be a new clerk of Ministry and Nurture at the rise of SAYMA YM2024. Bless you, Lissa Place (Atlanta), for taking this on! URJ looks forward to working with you.

Nominating Committee: URJ chose to be a self selecting committee because, "In the history of the world, nothing good has ever come out of oppressors making decisions impacting those they oppress." Considering the racial conflict, hostility and controversy URJ has had to endure while simply trying to nominate a representative for FOC to FWCC through the usual nominating process, we are convinced that we made the right decision for SAMA Friends of color, in 2019.

Due the racist backlash of a few white Friends, blocking approval of URJ's pre-approved nominee at the last two Representative Meetings, our chosen nominee cannot access the travel funds set aside for FWCC representatives. Luckily, way opened anyway, because a few private individuals were able to raise enough money to cover the registration and travel costs, and the intended racial harm was averted. However, that is far from the end of it, as the racial harm has yet to be appropriately addressed.

Therefore, URJ nominates Sharon "Star" Smith, for the third time, as SAYMA REPRESENTATIVE to FWCC, specifically to represent SAYMA Friends of color. Due to her record of service to SAYMA Friends of color as clerk of Uplifting Racial Justice (URJ), her expertise as an anti-racism analyst, as the primary organizer of the SAYMA racial conflict transformation program and process, as well as her level of insight and awareness regarding the themes of the FWCC World Gathering. SAYMA Friends of color agree that Star Smith is best equipped to represent us.

Accomplishments:

With no existing racial conflict transformation process in place, things have quickly escalated to the breaking point. Racial contention completely polarized the yearly meeting. Friends have broken into factions over issues of race, and two monthly meetings have left SAYMA angrily. It was even suggested, two years ago, that yearly meeting functions be suspended for one or two years, “to give everyone a chance to heal”. Except there was still no system in place to address or resolve our racial conflict. And that is why URJ in collaboration with the Racial Justice Working Group of anti-racist white Friends, proposed a program of our own.

We agreed that dismantling racism is a process, not a one time event, which requires anti-racist Friends to BE and embrace change. We agreed that old structures and processes must be evaluated for their usefulness as new structures and processes are developed to replace them. We are collaboratively building the structures and processes to hold the change we seek.

Evolutionary/Revolutionary FOC led Racial Conflict Transformation Program and Process

On behalf of the SAYMA Racial Conflict Transformation Team, we are delighted to extend a heartfelt invitation for ALL FRIENDS, to participate in Cohort 3 of the SAYMA Racial Conflict Transformation program, **“Understanding Racism/White Supremacy: What it IS, How it WORKS, and What Friends Can DO About it.”**

This program is a unique opportunity to engage in meaningful conversations and transformative experiences aimed at expanding our capacity to hold space for uncomfortable conversations about race and racism in Quaker circles, and what it takes to resolve racial conflicts between Friends.

Program Details:

- 3-Module Systemic Racial Analysis Training Series: thoughtfully curated and led by the SAYMA Racial Conflict Transformation team, along with monthly facilitated worship/study Affinity groups.

Module #1 What IS Racism/White Supremacy?

(Dates for Cohort 3 TBD) 10AM to 2PM Eastern Time

Defining terms and concepts, historical analysis, power dynamics, socialization/racialization, and Internalized Oppression

Module #2 How to Do Your Own Anti-racism Audit

(Date TBD) 10 AM to 2 PM Eastern Time

We will use “Becoming An Anti-Racist Church: Journeying Toward Wholeness”, by Joseph Barndt--one of the founding members of the People’s Institute and Crossroads

Ministry--as a guide.

Module #3 Where Quaker Social Change Theory Meets Anti-Racist Praxis

(Date TBT) 10 AM to 2 PM Eastern Time

What IS Quaker Social Change Theory? Continuing revelations, Spiritual Leadings, calls to Ministry, Spirit-led activism, speaking truth to power, grassroots organizing, offering sanctuary, technical and financial assistance (when asked), passive resistance, civil disobedience, coalition building, living your convictions, letting your life speak, standing alone with integrity (when necessary) but preferably, with the endorsement and support of one's spiritual community.

What is anti-racist praxis?

In this segment, we look at how change happens, processes, and strategies, as developed by critical race theorists, anti-racism organizers, and trainers, from The People's Institute, Crossroads Ministry, Roots of Justice, Center for the Study of White American Culture (CSWAC); historical Quaker slavery Abolitionists, such as Benjamin Lay, Anthony Benezet, John Woolman, and contemporary Quaker social change organizers and activists such as, Parker Palmer, George Lakey, Bayard Rustin and Frances Crowe.

Structure & Process: The 3-module systemic racism training series curated and led by the SAYMA Racial Conflict Transformation Team: Star Smith (clerk of SAYMA Uplifting Racial Justice (URJ), Shannon Roberts Smith (Clerk of SAYMA Racial Justice Working Group), and Ukumbwa Sauti (Consultant) The training modules will include, lecture, assigned readings, video and other media, journaling, queries, and your facilitated worship/study focus groups.

- Small facilitated affinity/focus Group Meetings: Participants will be part of a small (8 to 10 Friends) facilitated anti-racism worship/study group that meets for two hours monthly, for a period of one year, starting in October. These gatherings serve as brave spaces to build deep connections with fellow Friends engaged in anti-racism work, network, explore ideas, share perspectives, and support one another.
- A dedicated Friends of Color worship/study group facilitated by consultant Ukumbwa Sauti. (At no cost to Friends of color who register)

The systemic racial analysis training sessions provide invaluable insights and practical tools for identifying, analyzing and addressing racial conflict in Quaker spaces, toward understanding and dismantling systemic racism as part of the process for developing an anti-racist faith community, competent to welcome diverse peoples of color and families.

Cost: \$300. total, for all three Understanding Racism Training Modules and participation in a monthly worship/study focus group—that’s much less than you would pay any comparable systemic racial analysis training organization such as the People’s Institute, Cross Roads, Center for the Study of White American Culture (CSWAC), or Roots of Justice. Plus, though SAYMA’s Racial Conflict Transformation Program covers the same systemic racial analysis training as other programs, ours was designed by Quakers for Quakers.

(Because this program is endorsed by SAYMA, Friends and should have no problems accessing spiritual enrichment funds from your Meetings, if necessary. And, there is NO COST whatsoever for Friends of Color.)

We have already observed dynamic outcomes from this program, developed by Quakers for Quakers. Though we are still laboring through SAYMA’s racial conflict, we are witnessing a loving and growing power of embodied anti-racist praxis expressed in our Meetings. Many participants from Cohort 1 and 2 have committed to continuing their worship/study group work as we transition into Cohort 3—at no additional cost.

What URJ needs: Your commitment to ongoing funding support for racial conflict transformation work, programming, and evolving processes. Why? Because Friends have 532 years worth of white supremacist settler colonial violence to address, skilled facilitation is expensive, and, “Consciousness + Commitment = Change.”

There are multiple ways to support this work posted on the SAYMA website at www.sayma.org, under Racial Justice.

Queries: (FWCC World Plenary 2024 Study Guide)

How do you demonstrate Friends’ testimony that all people are equal?

How do we “live in that Life and Power that takes away the occasion of all wars?”

What is your experience of harms caused by past and/or present injustice? What is your story in relation to this?

SOURCES: Past URJ Reports, the Epistle from SAYMA Friends of Color, and URJ’s Resource List, are posted on the SAYMA website at www.sayma.org, under Racial Justice. FWCC World Plenary 2024 Study Guide.

Approved by URJ: 6.19.24

Attachment K: YAF Minute of Palestine

[\(Return to the Minutes\)](#)

As Young Adult Friends within the Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting and Association, we call for an immediate cessation of any and all US support (military, financial, and otherwise) to the Israeli government. Many of the horrors of the past months, years, and decades have been accomplished through the use of American weapons, with (at times tacit and at times explicit) American support and encouragement. We bear the spiritual and ethical weight of our complicity as taxpayers, as voters, as US citizens, and wish to use our voice to inspire a call to conscience among our fellow citizens. As pacifists, we keenly perceive the difference between peace-keeping (which often obstructs true peace in favor of the maintenance of more implicit systems of violence) and peace-making (which centers justice, truth, mercy, and conflict reconciliation). We perceive that the language used by Friends must be clearer than "conflict" or even "war," when our practical and spiritual witness is that of Occupation and Genocide. We feel that the work to come in the aftermath of the attempted genocide of the Palestinian people must prioritize liberation, and center and lift up the voices of the oppressed.

We look at our Quaker histories of support for Palestinians. We hear our Jewish, Black, Queer, and Indigenous siblings who have articulated for many decades that collective liberation is a moral, political, spiritual, philosophical, and practical imperative. We uphold this call in America, in Palestine, and in every place that the light of humankind is burning.

For those who wish to support Palestinians, here are some resources in our community:

<https://afsc.org/news/6-ways-you-can-support-palestinians-gaza>

<https://www.rfs.edu.ps/en/page/make-a-gift>

<https://afsc.org/action/call-cease-fire-and-humanitarian-access-gaza-now>

Attachment L: Excerpt of JYM Epistle

[\(Return to the Minutes\)](#)

Make new friends, but keep the old, one is silver, and the other gold.

A circle's round, and has no end, that's how long I want to be your friend.

I have one hand, you have another, put them together and we have each other.

Across the world, in our communities, Friends of each other we will always be.

SAYMA YAF Epistle for YM2024

Sixth Month, 23, 2024

Beloved Friends,

Becoming Breath of Spirit. Young Adult Friends have sensed in this session emergent themes of seeds, soil, and Continuous Revelation.

Between 2013 and 2022, the Young Adult presence in SAYMA was felt, but lacked a unified body to sustain itself. Thanks to the efforts of past and present YAFs, we have established a solid foundation that has already helped us build success. Last annual session we had 27 YAFs in attendance, and this session we have at least 21. We now hold quarterly business meetings and have resolved to join each other in virtual worship sharing over the coming year.

Innovation to our organizational structure has helped us keep these commitments. We've adopted a system of rapidly rotating clerkship. This sharing of responsibilities and experience has been invigorating and fits the unique and unpredictable nature of young adulthood. Since last year, 5 Friends have participated in our clerking this year, and many more have contributed to building up our community.

In August, OH Jackson Napier will represent SAYMA YAFs at FWCC as a delegate for the World Plenary Meeting. Many YAFs are exploring how they can share their skills with the greater SAYMA body. We have been honored by the community's interest in having YAF membership in SAYMA committees and we are eager to offer our talents and fresh perspectives.

We owe this surge in YAF participation to the Kenworthy family. The reduced price of attendance was the only way we could reach this point. Many of us have expressed that without this support, the demands of daily life would make it impossible to be here.

We are excited by the role we play in the lives of all generations of Friends, from connecting with SAYFers to skipping rocks with JYM. We are also looking forward to the future that our Young Friends embody.

YAF conversation this year revolved around sustainability and our future as YAFs at SAYMA. It is imperative to us that this space continue to grow and to represent our shared testimonies. We appreciate the work that URJ has done and the expertise that S brought to us all this weekend. Through this work, it seems a path to reconciliation is opening.

We've all been envisioning what might lie ahead on that path. It is clear to us that the future we want to see is collaborative. We are united in common values and we believe that in order to remind ourselves of our Friendship we must practice these values together in direct action and

community service in order to realize our Comradery together in the world. To, as the kids say, “touch grass.”

Our vision for the future is to take concrete actions that strengthen our connections to each other, to the planet we belong to, and to the local communities that host us. We are excited to share this future with you.

Thank you.

— The Young Adult Friends of SAYMA.

Epistle from Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting and Association, SAYMA

Berea, Kentucky

June 20-23, 2024

To Friends Everywhere,

We met in Berea, Kentucky in the beautiful green Appalachian mountains under the theme *Becoming Breath of Spirit*. We met in the midst of a news-making heat wave across the eastern United States, but enjoyed tolerable weather under beautiful skies among the scenic hills of Berea. On Friday a full moon shone on the summer solstice. We were welcomed to Berea College, and nurtured and assisted by the college staff. The college archivist invited Friends to a presentation on the history of this college, founded in 1855, that is “abolitionist at its core.” Friends visited the college’s bell hooks center, where historically underrepresented students are affirmed and supported as social justice leaders.

We met under the guidance of S Bowland and Ukumbwa Sauti to explore paths to racial conflict transformation. Two virtual sessions were held prior to annual sessions, and three took place in hybrid format on campus during our first three days together. Friends interacted around sacred listening, brave dialogues, and new sacred steps. Days were full of worship, workshops, meetings for worship with attention to business, and conversations. The bookstore was stocked with many works, including one authored by SAYMA Friend Tribal Raine.

Young Adult Friends (YAFs) challenged us with a minute they had adopted to address the Gaza war and our Quaker response. Young Friends clerked a meeting for discernment on a minute to be proposed to the whole body of SAYMA. In a business session, Friends enthusiastically approved it for dissemination and further action.

These lines written by Bob Dylan seem to speak to our attitude of change.

*Your old road is rapidly agin’
Please get out of the new one if you can’t lend your hand
For the times they are a-changin’*

Our Thursday evening plenary featured Joyce Ajlouny, General Secretary of the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), who updated us on AFSC’s programs. The Friday plenary was presented by the “revisionaries” of the committee revising our book of Faith and Practice, and by Southern Appalachian Young Friends (SAYF), who invited us to reflect on our faith and practice with skits on eldery, sense of the meeting, and making decisions together. On the third evening Friends danced joyfully to the music of a live band. In the meeting for remembrance we celebrated the lives of Friends who have died since our last gathering. Such shared experiences across generations renew our sense of being a Friendly family.

As always, the Junior Yearly Meeting children provided liveliness and bright energy. Unfortunately, they, along with older Friends, were sorely disappointed when the ice cream machine in the college dining hall broke down and could not be repaired.

After eight years of conflict over racial issues and some very difficult meetings for business, our co-clerks introduced new guidelines and a process for addressing harm experienced by Friends during business meetings. Implementation of these resulted in a more productive and orderly Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business.

Although our numbers this year were smaller than in the past, our joy at being together was great. We renewed old F/friendships and developed new ones, enjoying each other's company.

Attachment O: Earth Justice Committee Report

[\(Return to the Minutes\)](#)

Earlier this year, the Earth Justice Committee distributed among SAYMA Meetings a proposed Minute on Climate Change, asking Friends to consider what was being said, to discern whether they could unite with it or in what ways they would seek to change it in order to express the sense of their Meeting. The proposed Minute was read into the account of the Spring 2024 Representative Meeting in Atlanta, along with the Committee's request. The Minute identified the Climate Crisis as existential, a crisis that called for a radical response. Approval of the Minute as proposed would have led to a public statement by the Yearly Meeting clerk(s) on behalf of SAYMA Friends, calling on the UN's 2024 Conference on Climate to advocate for an end to the use of fossil fuels by 2030, and to allocate funds to address the climate damage to the least developed nations caused by the most developed nations. The Minute also asked for Friends to make a personal commitment to take immediate and practical steps to reverse our dependence on fossil fuels.

In the course of the following months we received feedback from several SAYMA Meetings, ranging from simple approval of the Minute as proposed to rejection of the Minute entirely. But there was one current that flowed through all of the feedback that we heard, that carried the tension between making an outward statement that seemed rooted in temporal ethics and expressing our communal leadings, rooted in our spiritual foundations.

In proposing this Minute, it was the Committee's intention, and expectation, to open a space for discernment and conversation, the raising of concerns and expression of leadings, in regard to the injustices manifested in human-caused climate change. We did not hope that these conversations would be over once the body of Friends present approved a Minute. "Our lives begin to end," Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. pointed out, "when we stop talking about things that matter." The Committee is mindful of a tendency to relegate the approval of a Minute to the checking off of a box, providing the opportunity to set our concern aside and get on with our ordinary lives. But does this not run counter to our aspirations? Do we not aspire to live extraordinary lives? Living into our testimonies of integrity, of justice, of simplicity, of stewardship, calls us to be extraordinary people, to live extraordinary lives.

The Committee recognizes with gratitude that many Friends among us have been and continue to be led to encourage and participate in these conversations. The Committee also acknowledges and accepts the responsibilities embodied in the first directive of our mission statement as posted on the SAYMA website: "to 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." In that spirit we are led not to bring to you Friends today a Minute for your consideration, but to share what we felt moved to offer as a way to open space for discernment and conversation at the Yearly Meeting level, the raising of concerns and expression of leadings, and ask you Friends, "What canst thou say?"

Respectfully submitted,
Steve Livingston
clerk, Earth Justice Committee

Attachment P: State of the Monthly Meetings Report

[\(Return to the Minutes\)](#)

State of the Monthly Meetings

Report Prepared June 2024

The Meetings that make up Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting and Association carried many heavy burdens this past year. There are the continued concerns about upkeep of Meeting houses and property, conflicts and how we transform them or fail to do so, and worries about numbers and ages of attenders and other internal issues. Looming over these concerns are the conflicts around the world, especially in Gaza and Ukraine, the escalating climate catastrophe, and the seeking of racial healing in the US. Almost every meeting in our SAYMA community is holding these concerns in the Light and either already doing what they feel called to do or are discerning the way forward. As one Meeting put it, “principled engagement” keeps us responding, and sharing these burdens enables us all to cope. Worshiping together helps us to hold the center when it feels like the world is falling apart.

Continuing concern was expressed by some about the relationships of our monthly meetings to SAYMA as a whole. Some meetings have decided to take a step back from involvement with the yearly meeting.

We experienced the ebb and flow of either new growth in numbers, younger attenders, or the shrinking of numbers for various reasons. Some meetings felt a deeper renewal and enjoyed a return to potlucks and other community events that the pandemic made almost impossible. There are many different and varied ways that we are creating community together other than our first day meetings for worship. Taking retreats together, engaging with our younger members, inviting guests to speak to the meeting, and meetings for healing are just a few examples. A few meetings lost members due to death, and are still doing the extensive work of grieving those ongoing losses. The aging of members and how many roles we each take on in our meetings and communities was of concern to many.

Despite the challenges of living in today’s world while continuing to witness to the Light, our meetings are staying true to the reality and heartbreak of being seekers of Truth. We are finding joy where we can and recognizing what is ours to do. Listening to the Light and being faithful allows us to be changed.

Sincerely,

The members of the Ministry and Nurture Committee

Joan Barnette, West Knoxville FM

Brenda Barrington, Columbia FM

Daryl Bergquist, SAYMA co-clerk, Birmingham FM

Annie Black, Cookeville FM

Wood Bouldin, Charleston FM Greenbrier WG

Rob Collins, Birmingham FM

Maggie Davies, Birmingham FM

Barbara Esther, clerk M&N, Asheville FM

Margaret Farmer, SAYMA co-clerk, Asheville FM

Diana Masso, Charleston FM

Adrian Mehr, Memphis FM

Lissa Place, Atlanta FM

Melissa Preast, West Knoxville FM

Asheville Friends Meeting 2023 State of the Meeting Report

We're grateful for this opportunity to consider and reflect on the year 2023 at Asheville Friends Meeting. It's exciting to be part of a vibrant community that strives to be generous and caring, to nourish our spirituality, and to deepen our connection to the Divine.

We'll begin with the query of What did we hold or carry this past year?

We continued to include a time to share joys and concerns at the end of each Meeting for Worship. This helped us to be aware of events that impacted attenders, and celebration and sorrow in the individual lives within our community. We provided care for community members with meals for the sick and assistance with memorial services. In two cases, the wife and partner were not involved in the life of the meeting except by proxy. But we responded, and that was the important part. Our care meant a lot to these families and gave us a way to be of service.

We carried the responsibility of being citizens of the United States. We continued to learn how we arm the world's wars. We carried distress over Congressional dysfunction and the erosion of peace-building efforts championed by FCNL. We learned about and shared our concern for environmental degradation and for the climate catastrophe.

We continued to hold great concern for the war in Ukraine. Early in 2023, we felt led to schedule a second worship-sharing session for us to labor with the tension between honoring our Peace Testimony and supporting Ukraine's sovereignty, the first having taken place in the Fall of 2022. There are no easy answers and we continue to struggle with this issue. We found solace in recognizing that others share the same response and tension with a situation that isn't black and white.

We held the Hamas attack and the Israeli War on Palestinians in our hearts. We approved a Minute calling for humanitarian aid to Gaza and a cease fire which we shared with our Congressional leaders and the *Asheville Citizen's Times* newspaper.

We held our efforts in building relations with people of the global majority in the Light. We carried a concern for Social Justice and sought to understand how we can get involved with reparations and what our role in reparations would look like. We traveled further toward racial justice by beginning a practice of reparations and by nurturing relationships with the local African American community. We carried hope for the continuing participation of some individual members with the SAYMA Racial Transformation affinity groups and training.

We gave attention to our responsibility for the stealing of Indigenous land by our ancestors. Each week at the rise of Meeting we hear our land acknowledgement read, It helped to keep us focused on reparations for indigenous peoples and on growing our relationship with the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians.

We held hope for our budding youth group to continue growing and made steps toward their success. We had two teens participating in Southern Appalachian Young Friends (SAYF). We continued working toward a new playground for our children so they will feel more at home while they play and build relationships with each other at Meeting. A concern about the Meeting's liability with the playground led us to seek advice from an attorney. We made plans to add a sign to our property with some guidelines for playground use. Concern about our process regarding playground liability helped us clarify how to provide a better outdoor space for the children.

During these discussions, we learned that one family didn't feel supported. We were also saddened to have a request from a couple who had been members for many years to be released from membership because they felt we were more liable without a fence around the playground. This couple carries tensions and pain from past unresolved issues that go back several years so we tried to discern all the underlying issues. We still have work to do to ensure everyone among us feels included.

Our Meeting heartily endorsed Scotty Utz's leading and active involvement in the gun violence prevention movement and we carried this work in our hearts. We co-sponsored a Gun Safe Surrender event with two other faith communities and got 19 guns dismantled and transformed into garden tools. Scotty founded a RAWtools chapter, RAWtools South, in Asheville and expanded his transforming work of forging guns into garden tools and art. Scotty and his partner Elizabeth Davis presented a program with the children using plastic guns. They took them apart and made new cool stuff. He talked about real guns, but they actually changed play guns into something else.

We grappled with these comments from one Friend:

"The meeting is a very comfortable place for members of the meeting. It's somewhat comfortable and somewhat uncomfortable for me. I hate when we use contrived language, NOT SIMPLE language. Examples include "1st day" rather than Sunday, quibbling over grammar and terms like Uncolonized or Decolonized, and in so doing, keep our hearts hidden from each other."

"Rules about the meeting house are unspoken and only written down on a clipboard, but when I ask to standardize and make duties clear, I am dismissed. I like to sing but when I sing the same songs from my Quaker

schools, I am told [that's not a Quaker hymn] and nobody is willing to learn a new song".

"People are attracted and intrigued by our silence and openness. We provide an easy avenue to the mystical connections between human livelihood and the soul. But our practice is confined and restricts any practice outside what has already been practiced. I think we need to welcome in the kind of radicals and strange folk that made up the first Friends, the ones who got locked up for speaking their minds and refusing to swear on the Bible, the kinds who were greasy and unwashed and had holes in their clothing. There are lots of people who need us, but our spiritual practice is not strong enough to meet them".

We continue to address his concerns and acknowledge that we don't do some things any more like dressing in gray, doffing or tipping hats, not doffing hats because they're no longer relevant. These statements remind us that our ways of doing things are based on reasons other than "that's the way Quakers do it."

How has our meeting embraced the Light and in so doing how have we been changed?

Our hybrid Meeting for Worship allowed those who attend virtually and those present in person to worship in silence together, despite distance or mobility challenges. In-person worshippers began sitting in a large circle around the room so everyone could see and hear the people on Zoom and they could hear and see those in the room. We asked those led to speak to step up to the microphone so those attending virtually could hear what was being said, and this seemed to help everyone in the Meeting feel closer. We began to have more people attending, both in person and on Zoom.

We embraced the Light by the work of our committees and by acting on our concerns. Some of our committees were challenged by a lack of members to attend meetings and fulfill the committees' charge. Some committees did not have clerks, which presented its own challenges. We were able to meet these challenges for the most part and nurture, proceed in, and testify to the life of the Spirit.

Our racial justice work in 2023 was deeply connected to our testimonies of integrity and equality/equity. and the Meeting's support of this work reflected positively on our testimony of community. These strong and positive connections to our testimonies were conducive to the deepening of our community's spiritual life. The Meeting as a whole became more aware of and in touch with different communities. Studying colonialism, white privilege and fragility made us more aware of the systemic nature of racism and led to our consideration of how we as individuals and as a Meeting need to respond. We continued our weekly racial justice discussion group that is

morphing into a year-long study of truth and reconciliation facilitated by Dr. Melchor Hall, as we prepare to write an apology statement to the Asheville Black community. Melchor offered ten queries about charity and justice that led to a good amount of deep, fruitful heart-work.

The focus of our Tuesday night discussions changed from study and sharing about anti-Black racism to support of Ms. Bettie Council's Zig Zag Zoom initiative, providing service and support at Black-focused community festivals. It uplifted and supported not only Ms. Bettie, but all of us in the Tuesday discussions. All of us who were on the ground interacting with vendors and attendees became more deeply connected with the Black community in a relational personal way.

A huge milestone for our Meeting was our agreement to disburse all but \$1,500.00 of our Reparations Fund to the Reparations Stakeholder Authority of Asheville (RSAA) each year. We had well-attended forums on the Reparations movement here in Asheville and on the RSAA, resulting in a firmer sense of support for Reparative Justice from the Meeting as a whole. Our unity in Meeting for Business reflects work we've been doing for almost a decade.

We had a lot of connections with Asheville's Racial Justice Coalition (RJC) as well. Some of us are Committee Watchers and report back to the Coalition with an equity lens on what happened. One Friend attended Buncombe County Health and Human Services Board Meetings, and so had access to the public health statement from the Board regarding reproductive health. We used this document in our response to FCNL's queries on reproductive healthcare, the relevancy of our Quaker values and testimonies to the issue of abortion, and the question of developing FCNL's Policy statement on abortion and reproductive health.

We as individuals and as a Meeting pledged our support for the "Reparations are Due" campaign meaning we supported and advocated for the recommendations coming from the Asheville-Buncombe Community Reparations Commission. The RJC sends out weekly recommended actions such as writing to the City Council and/or Buncombe County Commission and many of us strive to do what they ask. One Friend attends the Health and Wellness Impact Focus Areas of the Commission and reports back to the RJC.

We devoted a second hour to learning about language equity for indigenous and Latine people in our area from Indigenous Ma Hñakihu presenters, with a simultaneous English language interpreter, widening our awareness of other marginalized groups.

Our Meeting donated money and time to local and global support organizations. Peace & Earth facilitated the clarification and publication of the Meeting's positions on critical topics, such as the climate catastrophe. We continued our Fifth-Sunday postcard writing which included the following topics: ending transfers of cluster munitions; urging rejection of a bill to roll back foundational environmental laws and regulations; and supporting Palestinian sovereignty. To bring some clarity to the Palestinian crisis, we placed in our December Minutes the retirement letter of

Craig Mokhiber, the UN Director of the New York Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, a scathing indictment of Israel's assault on Gaza and Western complicity in Israel's 75-year-long occupation of Palestinian homeland and oppression of Palestinian people. The Committee devoted much time and energy in discerning how to distribute our General and Quaker outreach Funds.

A lot of organizations and groups now have a Land Acknowledgement, but if we just read a statement and don't do anything else, we're not real allies with our Native neighbors. Meeting approved a Minute of Support for indigenous peoples written by Peace & Earth members using Pendle Hill's model minute as a template. A Friend helped organize a daylong conference called *Beyond Land Acknowledgement: Towards Reparations and Healing*. In consultation with Cherokees, the conference brought six Cherokee speakers and three musicians to help us learn about Cherokee history, trauma, and healing. Eight other area Faith Groups, two UNCA Departments and the ACLU joined us in co-sponsoring this conference. In addition to substantial financial support, many of us at Meeting gave time and energy to attend this conference. It was very uplifting and built connections to form an ongoing Alliance rather than just a one-time event.

The tremendous amount of research about the role of Quakers in the Indian boarding schools led to greater humility as we increasingly recognized the connection between Quaker involvement in the boarding schools and Quaker participation in slavery. As we recognize, acknowledge, and embrace these truths to move toward reconciliation and healing, we are beginning to feel what Vanessa Julye referred to as "radical transformation."

While much of our activity centered around an emphasis on racial equity and justice, other commitments found expression in the activities and engagement of the children's programs, an active Junior Business Meeting, and Young Adult Friends. Our Meeting Library and our weekly email news digest helped keep us informed of activities and concerns. Spiritual enrichment programs and activities in the wider community brought us more into alignment with our priorities.

Our finance committee keeps us well informed of our financial health. Our Board meets once a year as required but a lot of communication can be accomplished by email. Our Assistant Treasurer, an accountant who had relocated to Brazil, continued his faithful work in putting out reader-friendly reports.

The Meeting worked on becoming welcoming to all, acknowledging that maintaining the status quo may seem easier but is not the best choice. When new people join us, even briefly, we are challenged to grow and change in response to them. We found FGC's *Weaving a Wider Welcome* a helpful resource as we explored how we can be more welcoming. Our meeting continued to open our hearts and minds to Spirit's leading in learning and understanding how to be more welcoming to people of the global majority. We felt enriched and more connected by this work.

We were blessed by an influx of young adults who quickly became involved in the life of the Meeting, and the insights and valuable perspectives of these new younger spiritually committed folks enriched it. Their presence brought an energy into our meeting room, and it's impressive that even though a lot of them are either in school or working they still gave so much to Meeting with what little free time they had. They get together frequently for shared meals and other activities, and are welcoming to new arrivals.

We also continued to have a strong group of children in the Meeting. While attendance did fluctuate from week to week, we had as many as 17 children attending First day school. They explored an expanded version of the Quaker testimonies: simplicity, peace, integrity, community, equality/equity, stewardship, justice and mercy also known as "SPICES and JAM."

Our Junior Business Meeting met quarterly and led the full Meeting in service projects and other community concerns. Children involved the adults in the Meeting as they organized things such as warming packs for people living on the streets. We were moved to experience our children embracing the Light and fully contributing to the life of the Meeting. If we adults were suddenly not there, we have faith that our children would do much the same.

We're in awe of the confidence that our children exhibit in their interactions with adults. Our children are learning that their voice is important thanks to the leadership of religious education workers and community members. We are blessed with amazing First Day School workers, and we adults benefit greatly from our work with the children. Our intergenerational events, such as Secret Pals, simple Christmas craft day, and our nativity play bring us together for fun and connection-building. We relished how sweetly the lessons with the children upstairs flowed beautifully with adult programs downstairs. Young Friends joined with adults for shared meals and during the interval between Meeting for Worship and Second Hour activities. It was always a joy-filled occasion.

What holds us together and helps us avoid becoming overwhelmed by the brokenness of the world.

We held to the basic beliefs that there is that of God in each of us and that by listening to the voice of that Spirit we are led to understand what is ours to do. We united in support of one another and stood up for and spoke out about the brokenness. Sharing our awareness of and concern for the brokenness of the world helped us feel less overwhelmed. Clarifying our positions on important issues helped us concentrate on key values. Our second hour programs led us to consider it vital to better understanding and to take needed actions. Taking time to listen brought solace and some understanding of situations in various parts of the world that were disturbing to all of us. We began each Ministry and Counsel meeting with silent worship where we held the Meeting in the Light. We touched base with those who had personal struggles.

We found good communication to be an important aspect of not becoming overwhelmed. Getting a high-speed internet connection stabilized our zoom connection, helping us see and hear each other better and keeping remote Friends more connected. Our weekly online Digest played an important role in keeping us connected by providing a forum for sharing of activities in our Meeting and our wider communities.

Our COVID masking policy was an important tool in maintaining our connection as the pandemic lingers. Through discussion and discernment, we set our criteria, and faithfully followed them. For the most part folks felt safe, however there were some who felt they needed to stay home when we were mask optional. We need to continuously revisit our masking policies to be sure we are responsive to the needs of our Meeting community.

We felt powerfully embraced by the Light when we worked with a member during his transition from this life. For weeks and weeks, we visited him at Hospice and sat with him and his partner at their home. One Friend played her hammered dulcimer for him in his last days. After his transition, we hosted his memorial which was held at our Meetinghouse. We were grateful to have been able to participate with his loved ones in such an intimate and spiritual way.

In worship, we were faithful to expectant waiting and shared our awareness of how Spirit worked in our lives. Our worship hour was consistently deep, often entirely silent, and when messages were shared they were grounded in spirit. When there were no messages spoken, we felt the Presence pervade our gathered silence. Some folks continued attending even after moving away because they wanted to maintain their connection to the compassion, interest, and love they felt in our community. Sometimes it's the quiet people in our Meeting who, when they did speak, said something really profound, not necessarily addressing a particular subject but conveying their overall sense of a problem in the wider world or within Meeting, often leaving us feeling uplifted and challenged.

We can't solve all the problems of the world, but we can follow our own leadings, support each other, help each other out when we need a helping hand occasionally, and discern what we need to do as a community. Working locally with some of the issues helped us see some progress, even when we couldn't see it in larger arenas. We lift up all the work that members of the Meeting community do, not just for committees, but everywhere.

As we've reflected on these queries, we're humbled and grateful for all the experiences that were part of our journey in 2023. We nourished our Spirituality by recognizing that every human being is interdependent with every other human being, and with the earth itself, that planting seeds of love can bring reconciliation to heal the world but not at anybody else's expense. Maybe that's another reason why we're called Friends.

Attachment P-2: SOTM Report - Athens Monthly Meeting

[\(Return to the Minutes\)](#)

Athens Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, held at Cherokee Corner Church in Arnoldsville, Georgia: State of the Meeting, Spring 2024

Athens Friends have been gathering weekly for worship, First Day School, and fellowship for one to two hours each Sunday. We conduct Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business once every two months.

Our weekly attendance averages around 10 people on a given Sunday. First Day School attendance has unfortunately been sparse this year. On some Sundays no children attend, other times one, and when we're lucky up to five will show up. To encourage intergenerational bonding, we had a well-attended and energetic spring field day. We also tie-dyed one First Day. We continue to enjoy our annual holiday traditions like candlelight worship on Christmas Eve and a spirited Easter Egg hunt.

In terms of our spiritual life, we have focused on having at least one Second Hour per month focused on various elements of the Quaker testimonies. Given that we have several new and consistent attenders, we decided to run a round of Quaker Basics (Quakerism 101), An Introductory Course in Quaker Faith & Practice. Held twice a month, these sessions have led to dynamic discussions and a deepening understanding of our history and traditions as Quakers.

Friends have expressed gratitude to the Nurture and Ministry committee for having rallied our group to provide meals and other needed support to several of our members and attenders in need this year.

Our relationship with the LLC group that owns our property remains functional and mutually beneficial. This year we worked with them to get some large trees removed that were getting in the way of power lines.

We continue to enjoy our relationship with the Comer Worship Group, a preparative meeting under our care. We visited each other back and forth several times in 2023 and look forward to more time together in 2024.

The meeting continues supporting groups that align with our values, such as Family Promise, a local organization which provides shelter for families experiencing homelessness, the Interfaith Clergy Partnership of Greater Athens, and Voices from the Border. First Day School also raised money and collected supplies for the Madison Oglethorpe Animal Shelter.

Love, unity, and mutual nurture abide among us. We give thanks for our Quaker community that continues to thrive in Athens.

A note from Comer Friends:

The Comer Quaker worship group meets every first day for intergenerational singing at 10am followed by unprogrammed worship at 10:30. Over the past year attendance has ranged from 2 to 20 people, with 2-8 of those attending being children. Children stay for the first five minutes of worship and afterwards parents offer childcare.

About once a month we offer a first day school program. Once a month (2nd first day) we co-sponsor an interfaith worship followed by a potluck with the Baha'i community in Athens. Our home meeting location is on the back pavilion at The Perch community center. We're

grateful that Georgia weather and a smokeless fire pit allow us to meet comfortably outside most weeks. We have several attendees who have invited us to meet in their homes when the weather is too cold.

The Comer Quaker worship group has decided to work in collaboration with Jubilee Partners and Georgians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty to host vigils in Comer when the state schedules an execution. We are prepared to host our first vigil on March 20th when the state is scheduled to execute Wille Pye, though we are hopeful that the execution will be stayed.

Sincerely,

Laura Gordon (Co-Clerk, Athens Monthly Meeting) and Angie Martin (Comer Worship Group)

Atlanta Friends Meeting
2023 STATE OF THE MEETING REPORT [FINAL]

Faithfully submitted by Jennifer Dickie

The larger your beloved community, the more you can accomplish in the world.

— Thich Nhat Hanh

In a world that feels increasingly fraught with conflict and violence, it can be challenging to live into the promise of the beloved community, the matrix of love that grows our inward Spirit to support our outward actions. As Friends our commitment to this path is expressed in attention to the inward spiritual life of our meeting and the ways we enact the outward expression of Spirit in the world. This year, we are grateful for the deep and abiding ways members and attenders have leaned into the life of the Meeting and we hold in our tender care the challenges as we strive to live fully into the beloved community.

Atlanta Friends Meeting [AFM] has enjoyed growth and a sense of prosperity in 2023. We saw continued high attendance on First Day mornings and growing numbers of young adult Friends, teens who participate in the Southern Appalachian Young Friends [SAYF] program and young Friends in our First Day school classes. We welcomed 3 new babies into our community as well as 2 new members by application and 2 by transfer. We celebrated one marriage. We said goodbye to one member through transfer. We celebrated the lives of two long time members, Lynn Leuzler and Free Polazzo with memorial services held in our Meetinghouse.

The spiritual health of our meeting continues to grow, evidenced in the depth of ministry and Spirit in meeting for worship, growing attendance in meetings for worship, increased participation in spiritual nurture groups, sustained mid-week worship opportunities, and the increasing numbers of families attending Meeting. We have added a second elementary class to serve the growing number of children on First Days. We have maintained a welcome table for the many new attenders and welcomed more than 105 people who volunteered outside of committees and appointments in 2023. The Nominating committee reflects on a productive year filling needed positions stating, “[AFM is] fortunate to have a large and involved body of people in Meeting, many of them new, to look at as we fill these positions.”

AFM committees and groups overwhelmingly noted the importance of building and sustaining relationships this year, something that was deeply missed in the pandemic years. Nominating reflects that the Spirit led process of working together to fill roles in the Meeting has enriched their committee through its collaborative process. Care and Counsel notes that the committee is supportive of each other and Green Friends feels the spiritual health of the group is good and can reliably expect people with a deep commitment to stewardship at every meeting. Friends for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, and Queer [LGBTQ] Concerns celebrates establishing a consistent place for queer and allied members and attenders to create community through regular informal gatherings during potluck. Groups that meet together like the Group Reading

books by and about People of Color, the monthly Sewing Circle, and our young Friends built relationships through shared experiences in 2023. The Committee on Undoing Racism in AFM [CURAFM] was heartened by the enthusiasm within the Meeting to learn about restorative justice practices and to participate in growing a community of people trained in the practice. AFM continues to shepherd Macon Friends Worship Group which by the end of 2023 had decided to reinstitute monthly in-person meetings. The act of meeting together to do the work of Friends held us in relationship with each other to build and strengthen the loving matrix of the beloved community.

The health of the physical space is not insignificant to our ability to meet and flourish. AFM's framework is supported by many people and committees. This year the administration committee worked seamlessly to upkeep the Meetinghouse. The work of Green Friends in 2022 provided us with solar panels creating sustainable energy that saved us up to \$3000 in 2023. Our library committee along with many volunteers converted our catalog from a paper to digital making our holdings more accessible to a wider community of people. Our web manager and volunteers began the work of building our new website, and a small committed group of Friends managed the technology required for our hybrid meetings for worship, forums, and other events so that we might be enriched by those who join us online. The Ferguson Cabin Stewards maintained our property on Burton Lake for the continued enjoyment of Friends, hosting groups from AFM and Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting and Association [SAYMA] in 2023. This attention to infrastructure ensured healthy, vibrant, and welcoming spaces for members, attenders, renters, and visitors to experience hospitality and dwell in the Spirit.

On this firm footing, the Atlanta Friends Meeting expanded our reach inward through a multitude of opportunities for listening, learning and teaching. Care and Counsel made conscientious and vigorous efforts in outreach to homebound, sick and grieving members and attenders. Quakers for Racial Equality [QRE] continued their long practice of providing weekly virtual resources for the Meeting to access many opportunities for learning and enriching ourselves in our quest to become a multicultural and anti-racist meeting. They also continued the practice of a *Listening Ear* once a month for concerns regarding racism. Ministry and Worship, Social Concerns, CURAFM, Green Friends and the ad hoc committee on Reparations and Right Relations hosted forums for Friends that explored our shared history, celebrated Quaker ancestors, deepened our understanding of our Quaker practices, and our understanding and commitment to reparations for and right relations with indigenous Peoples and African Americans. Additional forums presented information about local, national, and international conflicts and concerns. Several forums included or were presented by Atlanta Friends reminding us of the depth of experience and knowledge among us. In 2023 Casa Altera welcomed the 500th asylum seeking guest into the Meetinghouse.

Building the beloved community extended beyond our Meeting with the Friends Committee on National Legislation [FCNL] Atlanta Advocacy Team lobbying members of Congress for increased funding for international peacebuilding programs and continuing to build and deepen relationships with congressional staff. They led a How to Lobby workshop for the *East Metro for Social Justice* group. AFM's Friends for LGBTQ Concerns helped to coordinate our participation in Atlanta's Pride Parade. Members of our community participated in multi-faith coalitions calling

for a ceasefire in Gaza, the coalition of activists to Stop Cop City, the Beacon Hill Black Alliance for Human Rights, and SAYMA's Racial Conflict Transformation Program. Social Concerns Committee used its budget to support many organizations working for justice, peace, and the rights of Indigenous People and other People of Color.

Our commitment to building the beloved community through our connections with each other and Spirit, and through outreach is rewarding and in building this community we also faced struggles.

While we have been enthusiastic about the growth within our meeting we have recognized that with growth can come challenges. We saw some new Friends who sought membership in 2022 attend less in 2023. Ministry and Worship ponders ways we might continue to invest in and welcome new members beyond the act of minuting their membership. We are heartened by the number of young adult Friends in our midst and with the changing demographic we are called to be open to new perspectives and responsive to questions that may challenge our assumptions about Quaker faith and practice.

Deepening our spiritual work is also perennially challenged by a need for more volunteers, energy, and time. Religious Education was delighted by the increased number of children in the program drawn by more families who attend Meeting and was frustrated at the difficulty in providing consistent and safe programming because of too few teachers and volunteers with the First Day School program. Care and Counsel felt called to care for more aging Friends and realized that this required a larger pool of volunteers to support adequately. QRE felt the continued call to help us progress toward an anti-racist multicultural spiritual community and noted the challenge of working with a small group of volunteers to energize white Friends to break out of patterns of white supremacy culture.

Some new initiatives by Friends struggled to get off the ground. Small group gatherings envisioned by Care and Counsel have not moved forward due to scheduling conflicts. The new Young Friends Support Committee was challenged to meet regularly for the same reason. They also recognized their initial plan to host young Friends events at the Meeting house regularly needed revision to accommodate the wide range of ages and the geographic disbursement of Quaker families.

In an effort to update the AFM Handbook, Nominating requested all committees review their descriptions. Many committees were challenged by envisioning their current work while remaining true to the original call of the committee. The Nominating committee halted the update work while they sought more clarity for their role and the request to committees.

Outward challenges included the continued gridlock in congress - rendering the work of the FCNL advocacy teams less effective. The growing disparity in our country, left the Social Concerns committee feeling stretched with so many needs. The Ferguson Cabin Stewards Committee is grappling, on our behalf, with a neighbor who continues to transgress on our property.

In each of these struggles Friends continue to be reflective and even through the challenges of our growth and changes we are called to build the beloved community. As we reflect on 2023 we recognize the many blessings of our community and we strive to recognize the places we fall short. As Friends, we are called to give our time through worship and service and listen to each other within and beyond our differences to allow Spirit to work.

Beloved community is formed not by the eradication of difference but by its affirmation, by each of us claiming the identities and cultural legacies that shape who we are and how we live in the world.

— bell hooks

Attachment P-4: SOTM Report - Berea Friends Meeting

[\(Return to the Minutes\)](#)

State of the Meeting Report 2023

Submitted March 2024 by Beth Parrish, Clerk

Berea Friends Meeting rose to the occasion of making those attending SAYMA (Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting and Association) annual sessions at Berea College feel welcome. Through tours, presentations, transportation, hikes, musicians and much more, we shared some of what makes Berea a special place.

Our numbers in Meeting for Worship have been small, numbering from 4 to 10. Our committee work and official responsibilities have been hampered as a result. However, we have continued and helped each other out as we are able. Computer and programming challenges have affected our treasurer's reports, which leaves us feeling unsettled. We are questioning our expectations of doing things as we have done them for decades and thinking about how to reimagine our Meeting.

We have had few young people involved in Meeting activities over the last year. Some graduated and went on to college and some to Boarding School. SAYF (Southern Appalachian Young Friends) has provided a kind of glue that keeps a few teens engaged with Quakerism. Our support of these teens going to SAYF makes some of the adults thrilled with that participation and others wondering what is needed to draw these young folks into the life of our Meeting.

Our biannual, spring Visioning Retreat resulted in a look at where we are and some approaches to building together a more congenial, joyful body even through our disagreements. We increased efforts to foster positive relationships through soup suppers and other informal interactions.

In spite of low numbers, we continued with usual projects. We took our turn at leading All Kentucky Gathering in October, which is an annual gathering/retreat of Kentucky Friends from the three Monthly Meetings in our Commonwealth. Its purpose is primarily for intergenerational community building. Our theme was "What have we done? What shall we do?" and featured information about abolishing slavery by eliminating the exception clause from our state and federal Constitutions.

Our members were leading and participating in the small group and modules about racism for SAYMA.

We carried concern about the Berea unhoused through donations to and volunteering with RITI (Room in the Inn) which provides shelter and food during the winter months.

Early in December our annual jail cookie project was well supported by Friends and community members. We provided a small plate of about a dozen cookies to each of more than 300 people detained in our county Detention Center along with two cards with postage for them to send. This working together and giving touches us.

What is the State of the Meeting depends on the state of our membership and attenders. Our low numbers became lower at the latter part of the year because of illness and because of disagreements, unresolved conflicts and the tension created due to the way we communicated that shut others up or made them want to avoid interaction, or to walk away. We are not of one mind about our concern for equality/equity/racial justice. A number of those disappointed with Meeting do not feel heard. Listening is a quiet proposition, but without response by word or action people find it deafening, intimidating, unsafe, and look at others with distrust because their views, words, ideology, ethics are not affirmed. We struggle to Listen to the voice of the Divine in everyone.

What have we done? What is there to do? Where is our Center, our Light? What is our Common Denominator?

Attachment P-5: SOTM Report - Celo Friends Meeting

[\(Return to the Minutes\)](#)

State of Celo Friends Meeting in 2023

The theme for Celo Friends Meeting in 2023 was *community through Spirit-led worship and work*. Our meeting holds space for spirit led worship for everyone who enters. It is through the silence that each of us comes into the light following our own path. By listening in waiting to the spirit from within, and vocalizing when the spirit cannot be contained, all present are changed by this moment of inspiration. Be it sadness, or gladness, the change has already happened.

Our meeting community is held together by our abiding love and respect for one another, which manifests in an ability to listen deeply to each other. Our weekly potlucks provide ongoing cheer and nourishment, encouraging and deepening our felt sense that we are a family. Despite our sometimes quirky personalities, at the core of our community, we have faith in each other.

Our spring and fall Work Days are another way to get to know each other better. This year, in addition to the regular chores of cutting back brush, raking leaves, moving woodpiles, and painting and repairing neglected areas in the three buildings, we cleared an area for a new 8' x 12' storage shed. It arrived in December, which means the tools, fuels and paints that had long been stored in the crawlspace under the caretaker's apartment, are now housed in an easily accessible area. The joy of such shared labor—when our efforts are so visible—is a vital antidote against the grimness of the day's news.

The children's program in Meeting has continued to grow this year. We all benefit from this as the children bring love and Light to us. There are broad smiles of members and attenders as we sing with our children and watch as they share. We are grateful to have young families and dedicated leaders. First Day School is a balm for us all.

When the Israeli/Palestine conflict broke out in October, young adult attenders openly expressed their grief, and were led to coordinate a peace vigil to hold Israel and Palestine in the Light. The openness and response have increased witnessing in worship about the conflict and more focus on the peace testimony in the meeting.

Celo Friends Meeting Adult Religious Education Committee has utilized worship sharing groups, online readings and videos to explore the Vocal Ministry, The Testimony of Equality and Racial Justice, Quaker Eldering, and our history of Quaker Social Activism. These sessions deepen our personal relationships and also strengthen our understanding of our prophetic faith.

Racial Equity and Refugee support have been other concerns, through participation by some members in the SAYMA Racial Conflict Transformation program, reinstitution of the meetings' Racial Equity Committee, and Adult Religious Education programs and worship-sharing groups on racial justice. The approach to dealing with racism has been varied within the meeting and has created conflict with SAYMA, with some members withdrawing financial support from SAYMA due to a lack of trust in the Uplifting Racial Justice Committee.

Our Meeting community has also been struggling to meet the increasingly complex needs of some of our older members with both bodily disease and mental pain. We have realized that our resources are limited despite our hearts being ready to help.

Celo Friends Meeting is a loving spiritual community, which is bolstered by our children and by our faith in each other.

CHATTANOOGA FRIENDS MEETING

State of the Meeting Report for 2023

Our Meeting like many other Meetings and other organizations was hard hit by the pandemic. In last year's State of Meeting Report (reflecting on 2022) we said that "there are glimmers that suggest the darkness is penetrable." In 2023 the glimmers became Light and it is now clear that we have recovered a lot, though not all of our lost Light has come back. Our Meeting is once again feeling like a healthy and vital community, with energy that is obvious and appealing to visitors.

We have embraced that Light by welcoming increased numbers of visitors and more younger people and even occasional children. A number of visitors have become regular attenders and valued contributors to our community. We have embraced the Light by having the confidence to step out of our comfort zone and take on new projects. One of these was our involvement with Avis Wanda McClinton and bringing her here to present her 339 Manumissions & Beyond Project. This involved many people in the Meeting working hard together for at least half the year and it deepened our connections with each other and with the broader community, especially U.T. at Chattanooga. Another was preparing to do the Faithful Meetings Program presented by School of the Spirit. Even though the Program did not start in 2023, we spent a good part of the year learning about it and preparing for it. Experiencing some of the samples of what it could be and what it could do for us has brought a sense of hope and renewed spiritual commitment to the Meeting.

We have been holding and carrying several things as we work to recover from the pandemic. The heaviest of those is our relationship with SAYMA, our Yearly Meeting. SAYMA has been struggling with divisive conflict for four or five years now and that affects us as well. We have a number of members of our Meeting for whom SAYMA has been an important part of their life and their spiritual nurture for years or decades. The conflict within SAYMA makes it less nurturing and more distressing to be a part of. The number of people from Chattanooga Friends attending SAYMA has steadily declined and several of our members have chosen to entirely dissociate themselves from the Yearly Meeting. Our Meeting has held several discussions (second hours, threshing sessions, etc) about what to do about SAYMA without yet reaching clarity on how to move forward. We did send two minutes to SAYMA stating our positions. Other things that we have been carrying are happier. As the Meeting is once again growing, we are again starting to feel the limitations of our small Meeting House and to wonder what we can do about it. And we took on and completed the project of having almost all of the

first floor windows in the Meeting House replaced, having been able to agree to spend \$12,000 to accomplish this. As we go through joys and struggles, worship remains the center of who we are and what holds us together. We have been growing in ability to provide safe space for our members and attenders where we can speak our own truth. We appreciate that while we all have different backgrounds and perspectives, we can still come together in worship and in loving kindness. Being part of a community devoted to peace and love helps us to avoid being overwhelmed by the darkness of some of what is happening in the wider world. This especially true when we are involved in Quaker committees and projects. We connect with each other by serving together and gain energy from doing something.

Overall this has been a positive year. For the first time we have a Clerk Team rather than a single clerk. This has seemed to function well and be a good experience. The Meeting continues to support people in their individual ways of living the Testimonies. We make regular contributions to the Food Bank. We have a regular presence at Moral Mondays “standing out” with signs on a downtown street corner. Through our members and attenders we are connected with a number of community and environmental groups. We are a member congregation of Tennessee Interfaith Power and Light, a faith based environmental advocacy group and get regular updates on activities of Sierra Club. One of the hardest things in 2023 was the passing of Lon Eilder who was our most recent new member and made significant contributions in his unfortunately short time with us. One thing that brought us joy was to see a picture of our Meeting House worship room with light streaming into it on the cover of a new book, Seeking the Light, by Linda Seger.

We look forward with hope to 2024 in the expectation of continued growth in connection and deepening in Spirit.

Attachment P-7: SOTM Report - Columbia Friends Meeting

[\(Return to the Minutes\)](#)

January 2024: State of Columbia Friends Meeting (CFM)

2023 presented several challenges. Using Quaker processes and good will, we addressed several conflicts which threatened our ability to speak to the divine in each other. By focusing on our spiritual heritage, we fostered a more robust appreciation of our Meeting community. And although we remain few in number, we are committed to adapting to change and future challenges with creativity and kindness.

Our size has meant that folks fill multiple roles and realizing the budget for building upkeep and donations is harder. We have a beautiful meetinghouse and grounds which is an asset to the Columbia community, our neighbors and Friends statewide. Our goal is to be aware of the realities of this situation and explore solutions while living a rich community and spiritual life.

There are numerous examples of how we embraced the light which fostered positive growth. One was our assistance to a PhD student from a war torn country whose background included peace work with Friends. We wrote minutes on issues of peace and justice, letters to our local paper, and engaged in peace pole initiatives. Our interfaith, state-wide FCNL advocacy team was very active. We provided space and support for monthly music and poetry events as well as gardening plots and the First Day School recently held a very well attended George Fox 400 birthday party that was widely enjoyed. It filled our meetinghouse! These activities served to uplift and nourish our faith community.

Columbia Friends have drawn upon the spiritual heritage and testimonies of Quakers to act in the world today. This habit of principled engagement on issues of peace and social justice is well known and we continue, in that spirit, to address our broken world buoyed by each other and the knowledge that activism is integral to the life and spirit of Quakers.

Cookeville Friends State of the Meeting 2024

Just existing and being together weekly has been very important to us. Going from Zoom to a hybrid Meeting and having several potluck meals together felt like big accomplishments. We find that we need time with like-minded people in order to face our current issues. We feel supported by our Meeting community in the small steps we have been able to take to ameliorate the climate crisis, along with other steps taken as individuals to help our human world be a kinder place. Support was also felt while dealing with family losses and health crises. There was a grace present in helping one another and then letting go of decisions made that we might not agree with.

We invited Star Smith to lead part of our annual retreat and enjoyed a day of fellowship and challenge. She asked us many important questions and helped us delve deeper into the reasons why we want to become an anti racist community. Two of us were led to join the racial justice working groups after Star's visit and have benefited greatly already.

We continue to be concerned about the state of SAYMA and its seeming inability to change. One of us was so upset by the spring representative meeting that they are taking a break from participation. For those of us who participate in Yearly Meeting activities and decisions it is sometimes hard to maintain hope and connection. After our retreat experience one of us was baffled by SAYMA's upheaval and asked. "Are we not taught as Quakers to seek to understand others even through our personal discomfort?". We feel that Star Smith and the Uplifting Racial Justice committee have been an excellent catalyst for change.

We have felt much joy in having two young attenders among us who helped us in so many ways. They have felt welcomed and comfortable with us and they have enjoyed the variety of perspectives and the commonalities that we share. One of them has been heartened by the online young adult friends group.

We are slowly working on outreach and defining who we are and why we exist as a Monthly Meeting. We hope to have a working website up and running this next year. We embrace the Light by allowing each other the grace to be where we are, even when this has been a struggle.

**Greenville Friends Meeting
State of the Meeting Report
June 1, 2024**

Greenville Friends Meeting continues to be a small, vibrant and committed group of Friends. We warmly welcome visitors and encourage them to return and become involved in the life of the Meeting.

We make every effort to provide a sense of “what happens here” to those experiencing Quaker Meeting for Worship for the first time. We also encourage vocal ministry , as Friends are led.

On first First Days each month, we gather for food and religious education at the rise of Meeting. Friends take turns providing food which is paid for by the Meeting so there is no financial hardship to anyone. At this time, we are discussing John Woolman’s Journal. There is no designated discussion leader – we find that thoughtful reading and discussion by all works well.

We conduct regular Meeting for Business on the second First Day each month.

We are currently planning visits to nearby Friends Meetings in Asheville and Hendersonville with the hope of sharing worship and fellowship with Friends.

Visitors can find us easily. We have an excellent Meeting website and a Facebook page. We are fortunate to have a designated meeting space on the campus of Furman University. We have very visible signage directing visitors to us.

We are giving thoughtful consideration to a request to establish , under our care, a weekday afternoon Meeting for Worship in Clemson.

Alan Johnson continues as our representative to SAYMA and he consistently brings us information about SAYMA from meetings that he has attended

State of the Huntsville Area Friends Meeting 2023

March 2024

The Huntsville Area Friends Meeting (HAFM) experienced another year of organic growth, loss, interest, development and sharing. Due to the pandemic beginning in March 2020, the Meeting has consistently met virtually and finally resumed in-person worship in the last quarter of the year. Now hybrid, HAFM continues to be a centered place of worship for members, attenders and visitors to come and get some peace and listen for that of God/and Spirit.

The Meeting spent some time worship-sharing on the suggested queries and reading over them and sharing thoughts within the Meeting and in messages to the clerk. The queries and responses were as follows:

What has our Monthly Meeting been holding/carrying this past year?

Concerns of HAFM members and attenders: family health declines and deaths, serious illnesses, separations, rejections, work concerns and stresses, and also, worldwide humanitarian concerns. HAFM has a virtual attender from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) that the Meeting was led to support. Friend Olo runs a community program supporting groups women and children in need. The Meeting enjoys seeing Olo, occasionally getting updates on what has happened in the DRC.

A new member felt very held by the group, including introductions to other social activities like the Huntsville Feminist Chorus and support from members. Some of our members voiced how grateful the meeting is for the energy and vision of new attenders, and a new baby! Returning to physical meetings and enhancing meeting with hybrid has brought joy, connection and some additional vitality to the meeting.

The Meeting has held connection with SAYMA and many activities including volunteering for SAYMA committees, participating in racial justice conflict transformation small groups and training, participating in FCNL advocacy groups and sharing information about relevant organizations like Global Ties, Interfaith Mission Service and others.

The Meeting supported a local-based community free clinic that serves those without funds or insurance. Also, HAFM supported a local non-profit, Crisis Services of North Alabama. HAFM members/attenders involved in the Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) Huntsville Advocacy Team met with local representatives, Members of Congress staff from Senators Britt and Tuberville and personally with Representative Strong and communicated FCNL concerns. HAFM also donated to the University of AL in Huntsville to benefit students with special financial needs. The meeting used Friends Journal and Pendle Hill resources on "Vocal Ministry," a session led by a member for "Second Hours."

HAFM worked with Brent Bill's Life Lessons from a Bad Quaker: A Humble Stumble Toward Simplicity and Grace over many Second Hours, a light and Light-filled experience together. The Meeting used the discernment process to provide recommendations to FCNL for new focus for national legislative advocacy.

How has our Meeting embraced the Light, and in so doing, how have we been changed?

The Meeting embraces the Light in others and the new energy and decisions they have brought (most particularly, meeting in person). The appearance and active participation of new attenders and seasoned Quakers have added to the Meeting's energies. Their wisdom, ideas, and vision and active participation have been encouraging. HAFM embraced and encouraged new attenders and their energies to contribute to the Meeting's life. Several are younger (university or career folk); some are seasoned Quakers; one is a newborn (last March). This growth has been a joy. Reconnection to Friends in person has helped member to rebalance and improve the sense of community in worship.

A member pointed out that the Meeting returned to using queries more often in meetings for worship and discussions and in conjunction with shared processes. This queried worship brings us into a state of listening. The Meeting embraces the value of Quaker practices, connections and worship, adding depth and strength to daily life.

Some members joined with the Huntsville City Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and the Huntsville Public Library to support the Smithsonian Traveling Exhibit on "The Bias Inside Us." The exhibit helped members grow in many ways. Meeting members collaborated with the Black Quaker Project to disseminate information about international contributions of African Americans to peace and justice.

What holds us together and helps us avoid becoming overwhelmed by the brokenness of the world?

Meeting together with shared worship brings us peace in silence, finding perspective, and space to heal. When we simplify life, we remember our path in this world. As we voice our common despair, we know we are not alone, and this joins our hearts. The testimonies we share in Meeting offered “hope in spite of....” and improved our meeting’s connectedness. The Meeting grows with every example we have seen this year of members and attenders “going through and coming out the other side.” We grow and heal together.

Quaker testimonies help us to have hope in spite of evil and mishaps in the world. Sharing after worship time the joys and concerns regarding illnesses, declines, deaths, concern for family members, so many of us see ourselves come out and into the other side with compassion, and this joy helps us lean on one another and grow in a positive light.

We come together in Meeting with common sense, hope and help. Media and business make money by making people dependent, inflamed and angry. The calm normalcy of worship brings joy in spending time with others with shared soul searching, power and light.

The complications of the world created the opportunity for focusing back into our basic needs and guidance. We collaborated with the Interfaith Mission Service (of which HAFM is a member), as well as Global Ties, to support refugees, e. g., Afghan and Ukrainian immigrants. Also, we met with Ukrainian guests of Global Ties for listening and sharing about Quaker involvement, past and present to benefit immigrants/refugees. The members have spoken with Ukraine refugees, and to just be with them so recently out of a warzone was grace at work and a privilege to be with people whose lives are so very complicated. This was shared with the meeting.

The Meeting has supported emotionally and spiritually the HAFM community in times of illness and death of family members to be “beloved community” together. Many members went together to a Rocket City Trash Panda baseball game at Madison Town Center. The Meeting has a get together or two during the year in a non-meeting status to share our personal lives which strengthens our spiritual ties.

HAFM has the pleasure of being in the company of others with similar concerns, goals, leadings. We enjoy one another’s company, wisdom, strengths; we support one another when one of us is troubled; and we rejoice with one another when a trouble passes or a gladness arrives and give thanks for and with that person.

Conclusion:

The Huntsville Area Friends Meeting focuses on our time of unprogrammed worship-the growth, sharing, and connection during worship. If someone witnessed one or two of our worship meetings, HAFM wouldn't appear highly active. But over the course of a year, like this last year, the cumulative effect adds up and gives the Meeting a decent footprint of care of this world around us and of our members and attenders. HAFM is a peaceful organization that promulgates a fertile ground for all to be introspective and to find their current purpose. HAFM has been a place of healing, growth and regeneration. Out of respect, love and spiritual drive, we have stumbled into a good year for HAFM's little part of this world.

Attachment P-11: SOTM Report - Macon Worship Group

[\(Return to the Minutes\)](#)

Over the last year, Macon Quakers, known formally as Macon Worship Group under the care of Atlanta Friends Meeting, has experienced a number of changes that we feel indicate growth in a positive, satisfying direction, and we appreciate the opportunity to have a voice in the wider Quaker community that is SAYMA and to share our many recent developments.

Early last year, the group began meeting outdoors in person every 4-6 weeks in Macon locations such as The Labyrinth at Mulberry Methodist Church, The Peace Fountain at Tattnall Square Park, and The Art Garden at Wesleyan College. These meetings complemented our ongoing Zoom gatherings held weekly on Wednesday evenings and provided additional context for strengthening community. While the simplicity and enjoyment of nature enhanced our experience, we began to desire a less transient approach.

Eventually, we secured a monthly indoor meeting location within Centenary United Methodist Church at 1290 College Street in downtown Macon, adjacent to the Mercer University campus and Tattnall Square Park. We meet in the large, well-lit, yellow “round room” off the sanctuary and have been very comfortable there since our first meeting in December 2023. We spend roughly 30 minutes in silent worship, followed by sharing of joys and concerns and, lastly, enjoying refreshments and fellowship. Attendance has ranged from 8-17 at these meetings.

Centenary has generously waived rental fees for us; however, we have agreed to earmark \$30 of our collections each month as a gift to the church. We continue to utilize our financial account through Atlanta Friends Meeting and anticipate receiving periodic balance updates, hopefully through the establishment of an attendance rotation at Atlanta’s Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business sessions. Our only expense at this time is our website, which we have agreed is in critical need of updating. We appreciate the use of attenders’ personal Zoom account at this time for our regular online meetings.

Outreach efforts are ongoing. Last fall, we offered to the community an “Introduction to Quakerism” session with Bill Holland and Mary Ann Downey in which approximately 10 people attended. We also maintain a Facebook presence and send *The Macon Quakerly*, a weekly email newsletter received by 62 addresses. Our newsletter features a very thoughtful and personal original reflection written typically by Bill Holland, although in more recent months, other Macon attenders have provided contributions. We share these reflections on Facebook and with our Atlanta Friends as well and have often received word that they are appreciated by readers, sometimes even outside our expected sphere of influence.

Interesting to note, while the number of our regular attenders at either our Zoom or in-person meetings exceeds our pre-pandemic numbers, the composition of attenders is now entirely different, except for Macon Clerk Kellie Divis and Bill Holland and Mary Ann Downey from

Atlanta. There is no current attender who attended prior to 2021, and only one new current attender has a Quaker background. As such, in many ways the group has completely started afresh, and there is a great need for ongoing support from Atlanta. We encourage our Atlanta f/Friends to visit Macon to share seasoned experiences, insights, and encouragement.

We would also like to note that Macon has had representation at SAYMA and has consistently sent two youth to participate in the SAYF retreats via Atlanta Friends Meetings throughout the year. We appreciate the opportunity for this inclusion and wish to continue seeking ways to build our youth community.

At our February meeting, we held a worship sharing opportunity in which the group considered the three SAYMA queries intended to facilitate state of the meeting preparation. Contributions included the descriptors “authentic,” “naturally-developing,” “grounding,” “consistent,” and “sustaining.” There were also expressions of interest in eventually increasing the frequency of in-person worship opportunities both at Centenary and outdoor locations, and our clerk Kellie Divis revealed her leading for the group to consider transitioning to a new clerk soon, as she has held the responsibility since spring of 2018. Along with our need to strengthen involvement with Atlanta and further emphasize outreach (e.g., website updating), these statements will inform the direction of our future efforts. We feel gratitude for the connection we have to each other and look forward to journeying on together.

We close with two statements directly provided by regular attenders of the worship group:

“Both the weekly Zoom meetings and the monthly in-person meetings have given me opportunities for community that I have been missing for several years. Finding a regular place and time to meet face-to-face has been such a blessing and a joy, and those monthly meetings are something that I look forward to as they approach. The in-person meetings give us a chance to get to know one another in a deeper way, to feel the connection with each other, and know that whether we are silent or sharing, we accept and love each other. When we say that we hold each other in the Light in our sorrows and our joys, we are also being Light for one another. Weekly reflections shared by Friends give us perspectives and insights that grow our faith. I believe knowing we can bring our joys and sorrows and lay them before our Friends in Meeting, knowing that we will not be judged or critiqued as we share, and bending low to listen to someone’s heartache in Meeting has made it possible for us to feel connected in ways that overcome the chaos and turbulence in the world around us and within us. I am not a Quaker (yet), but attending Quaker meetings has answered a need within me that has long been unanswered.”

“When I first decided to come to a Quaker meeting, I did not expect it to become such an important part of my life. As someone who is interested in many faith traditions, with many unconventional and eclectic beliefs, I did not see myself becoming regularly involved in an

organized religion. But when I arrived at the meeting for worship, I found the practice to be immediately resonant. I loved the meditative aspect of the silence, and always appreciate the thoughtful insights and vulnerable sharing from the community. The more I learned about the Quaker faith, the more I found that appealed to me. I was struck by the simple yet radical egalitarian message that each person has the Inner Light. There is no higher authority to dictate interpretations but rather each person is seen to have something to offer through their own special contribution and insights. I think this naturally encourages us to listen to one another more, rather than instructing on the 'correct way.' This is confirmed by my experience in the meetings, where it is not so important what you believe, but how we show up for one another. As someone who feels constantly misunderstood and an outsider, being able to have that sense of community is something I am eternally grateful for."

Attachment P-12: SOTM Report - Memphis Friends Meeting

[\(Return to the Minutes\)](#)

Memphis Friends Meeting, State of the Meeting Report for 2023

2023 began with a twelfth night candlelight on Epiphany that was postponed from Christmas Eve. As we discern where our orbit takes us, it seems that our meeting is full of life and in the process of awakening.

Grief has been a theme interwoven throughout our meeting. We have grieved the loss of Friends who are no longer able to worship with us. We have grieved both Friends and dear friends who are no longer with us at all. Yet there are glimpses of our healing that call us back to the people we have lost and those we still have around us - a dance block in the meeting room, the flowers in the yard and along the fence, a brightly colored lap blanket that was used to comfort a dying Friend, the donations we made of belongings of a friend to those in need, and the unused food purchases of a friend that were used in our first day potlucks. Not only are these glimpses seen in the physical remembrances that they have left behind in the meetinghouse, but also these glimpses are seen in our ability to continue to be with one another, in spite of our differences.

More broadly, we have wrestled with the fracturing of our meeting, our yearly meeting, our communities, our city, our country, and our world.

However, we endeavored not to be overwhelmed by the heaviness we feel in our lives, in our community, and in the world. We continue to hope. And we have looked to what has sustained us, nourished us, encouraged us, and kept us going:

- Getting more fully back into the Meetinghouse: creating a new sense of normalcy and keeping our meeting's proverbial cogs greased & moving.
- Caring for each other and the meetinghouse, in large and small everyday ways: committees such as Ministry and Nurture, as well as House and Grounds quickly came to mind among Friends — but also Finance, First Day School, Education and Events, and Nominating, that play integral, at times behind the scenes, roles.
- Sharing space and resources: with each other, as well as Peacebuilding en las Américas (PLA), an initiative of Friends Peace Teams; a global sojourner from Japan who visited us and stayed with Friends in our meeting; students from a Quaker school in PA who visited on their tour of the South to better learn about civil rights; regular clothing contributions to Manna house, which provide hospitality to unhoused people; and routine donations to New Tyler AME food pantry.
- Connecting and communicating with each other and F(f)riends regionally: daily online worship at noon, the newsletter, monthly candlelight services, restarting monthly First Day potluck, and sending and supporting a Friend to provide listening and support to monthly meetings in SAYMA.
- Carrying Friends' concerns and standing up for racial justice: supported Quaker legislative priorities via FCNL, advocated for equality and against discriminatory legislation to the LGBTQAI+ community, advocated for reproductive rights, advocated

against gun violence, approved a minute regarding Quakers & Indian boarding schools, and struggled with our relationship to yearly meeting.

- Supporting Friends: championing Friends' professional and personal ministries that grow from their connection to the meeting.

These are the practices that sustain us, the regularity and advocacy that have us turn inward so that we may move outward. And with that, we closed out the year as we began it - with a Christmas Eve candlelight service, the first one held actually on Christmas Eve in the meetinghouse since the beginning of the pandemic. We hope that this was a significant sign of the re-opening to further connection of the spirit, and our deep, deep connection to each other as we look towards gathering in a retreat together this upcoming year.

Generated based on a listening session held on January 21, 2024

Edited by Friends over several months

Read in draft form in meeting for worship with attention to business, April 14, 2024

Approved in meeting for worship with attention to business, May 12, 2024

State of Nashville Monthly Meeting, 2023

As Quakers in the liberal tradition, we lack many of the ties that bind other religious congregations together. We have few specific creeds to unite under; we have no clergy serving as leaders to unite behind; and, perhaps above all, our belief in continuing, personal revelation means that no one of us can claim spiritual authority over another. In some ways, the lack of these conventional tools create challenges. However, Nashville Friends Meeting has found that a richer, deeper sense of shared religious community can be attained by working and discerning together, human to human, in our shared commitment to following the leadings of the Spirit. The last year has seen both tests of that commitment and joyous occasions for it to flourish. Although a simple recitation of events cannot capture the full spiritual dimensions of our time together, below is a non-exhaustive account of notable events from 2023.

❖ Membership and Attendance

- We welcomed two new members.
- Several long-time members of the Meeting moved away or announced that they intended to do so in the coming months.
- We also honored the life of member Dick Houghton whose memorial meeting was delayed due to the COVID pandemic.
- While we are sad to see these weighty Friends go, Spirit still moves strongly within our community, and we have welcomed many newcomers. Weekly worship was well attended throughout 2023.

❖ Life of the Meeting

- In March, we held a newcomer/oldcomer event at the Meetinghouse. It was a great success with strong attendance and positive feedback by those who participated.
- Many members and attenders, as well as some from the wider Quaker world, participated in spiritual deepening groups that not only contributed to the spiritual depth of our Meeting, but also to the relationships among participants.
- We held an Exploring Quakerism course that served as an introduction to Quakerism for newcomers and an opportunity to reconnect with foundational dimensions of our faith and practice for more seasoned Friends.
- Members of the Prayer Committee diligently prayed for those for whom we hold concerns. This has been an underlying support to our community.
- The Children's Education Committee began having NFM members describe their spiritual journey and answer questions with the children. The engagement of children in the life of the Meeting has progressed. The number of children in attendance has grown from 3 to 8 young Friends. Young Friends now attend the first fifteen minutes of Meeting for Worship before attending

first day school. Many parents are involved in our Zoom planning meetings and have volunteered to help teach the children once a month. With consistent parental support, young Friends, ages 12-18, have been able to regularly attend SAYF (Southern Appalachian Young Friends) gatherings, more than in recent years. We find joy and gratitude in these opportunities for our youth to engage in the wider Quaker world. Additionally, we began planning for a JYM (Junior Yearly Meeting) retreat to be held in Nashville in 2024.

- We continued our discernment in how to balance protecting the health of those attending Meeting in person in light of the increasingly manageable, but still present, public health emergency that COVID presented. As part of that discernment, we ended our mask requirement and reintroduced the shaking of hands to signal the rise of worship. Hybrid worship- offering in-person and Zoom attendance options- continued to be our practice throughout the year.

❖ Witness

- We channeled our Quaker belief into actions in the wider world.
- We responded to FCNL's (Friends Committee on National Legislation) request for discernment on reproductive health rights.
- In response to the Covenant shooting, we wrote a letter to the Governor and General Assembly seeking gun safety reforms in our state.
- The Meeting approved signing on to an FCNL letter to Congress to protect non-Pentagon spending for Three Peacebuilding Funds around the world.
- Members of the FCNL Nashville Advocacy Team held meetings with our Senators and the three Congressman now representing what had been a single district for Davidson County to seek increases in spending for peace building and reductions in military spending. They also lobbied for passage of the Truth and Healing bill which would establish a commission to investigate and document harms committed by government-supported boarding schools against indigenous people.
- In November, joining many other Quaker Meetings and organizations, we united as a Meeting in publicly calling for an immediate peaceful resolution to the conflict between Israel and Palestine.
- We continued in our careful discernment of the allocation of the Meeting's giving to Quaker organizations and also to those in our own community doing important work that aligns to the world we seek as Friends. The Peace and Justice Committee reminded us to consider what it means to give and be in community with the organizations that we support.
- The Meeting's Alternatives to Violence Project team trained seven facilitators among the women at Debra K Johnson Rehabilitation Center and five facilitators among youth engaged with Gideon's Army.
- Members of the Meeting engaged with other groups to support the resettlement of an Afghan family seeking refuge in our community.
- There was no participation in SAYMA Friends of Color because there was no

gathering of SAYMA Friends of Color.

❖ Meeting Administration

- Our Archivist completed the monumental task of scanning the entirety of our Meeting's business minutes and other important documents dating back to its origins in the 1950s. The Meeting minuted our appreciation for this work.
- The Meeting also minuted thanks to two long-term members as they completed their service on Ministry and Counsel.
- We invited members and attenders to complete the Friends General Conference (FGC) Institutional Assessment and Implementation Committee's demographic survey. Because many did not complete the survey, it is an imperfect snapshot of the Meeting. It did, however, indicate that we are still, in many ways, much less diverse than the city, nation, and world around us. We have continued to strive to remain aware of the effects of that limitation. The results are shared as follows:
- Results of Friends General Conference (FGC) Institutional Assessment and Implementation Committee Demographic Survey Conducted Among Members and Attenders of Nashville Monthly Meeting in 2023:

Total Respondents: 23

Racial/Ethnic Identity*

White 23 (100%)

Indigenous/First Nations/Native: 1 (4%)

Jewish descent: 1 (4%)

Age

18-35: 6 (26%)

36-65: 5 (22%)

66+: 12 (52%)

Gender Identity

Woman: 17 (74%)

Man: 4 (17%)

Nonbinary/Genderqueer: 2 (9%)

Do you consider yourself to be trans?

Yes: 2 (9%)

No: 20 (87%)

Missing data: 1 (4%)

Relationship to Meeting

Member: 11 (48%)

Regular attender: 9 (39%)

Occasional attender: 2 (9%)
Visitor: 1 (4%)
All other responses: 0 (0%)

*Percents total to greater than 100 due to individuals holding more than one racial/ethnic identity.

- We created an Instagram account that offers queries and updates about the Meeting.
- Although the life of the Meeting was active, our donations were well below our budgeted expectation. The factors for that shortfall are likely many, including a high cost of living and the presence of many younger Friends with comparatively limited resources. We have been able somewhat to offset the reduced donations through our income from groups who use the Meetinghouse. However, the ongoing fiscal health of the Meeting is an issue of genuine concern, particularly given the fact that we continue to be embroiled, against our will, in litigation about a property line dispute involving the long-ago-sold property on which we used to meet.
- Squirrels take occasional residence in the Meetinghouse; 2023 was no exception.

Attachment P-14: SOTM Report - West Knoxville Friends Meeting

[\(Return to the Minutes\)](#)

WKFM — State of the Meeting 2023

This year the WKFM property has presented challenges. Winds brought down a large tree and the subsequent removal of hazardous trees by friends left stacks of logs that are now joyful playthings for children who come to meeting. Development on adjacent land resulted in damage to our forest. There had to be a costly survey of the property and the developer had to be encouraged to work with care. Continuing into 2024, a fence will be needed to separate the burial grounds from the backyards of new homes.

The issues with the property highlighted that the meeting is smaller and older, and we found ourselves serving on multiple committees and wearing several hats. How could we do things with the people and gifts we had? People helped out when asked and we were able to get through each crisis step by step.

We continued the practice of a hybrid meeting for worship and second hours. New attenders were welcomed and the absence of those who left was felt. As the online Quaker cloud came to an end, one of us stepped forward to create an online presence for WKFM. Members took advantage of programs offered by the greater Quaker community, often via Zoom either at home or at the Meeting House.

Individuals shared their gifts by keeping the Meeting House in good order; caring for children during meeting and providing for their religious education; providing technical skills; representing the meeting at SAYMA; participating in Justice Knox; and volunteering with Family Promise. The Peace and Social Concerns Committee organized several events throughout the year: a potluck and sing along with Maryville Friends Meeting; a community gathering featuring Paulette Meier, a Quaker Singer/song writer, with a carousel and ice cream; a chanting at the Church of the Good Shepherd led by Paulette; and participated in the Christmas program at Maryville Friends. All this was in addition to regular letter writing sessions in support of FCNL.

Our Interracial Wellbeing and Restorative Justice Committee helped the meeting establish a Reparations Fund and it is doing well. The CMU Fund continued to provide financial help to students in Uganda. The meeting joined Justice Knox and grew in awareness of what other spiritual groups are doing and our combined efforts made a positive difference in our community. Meetings for Healing have returned as regular second hours. The updating of the Statement of Practice was completed, and we are grateful.

What held us together was caring for each other. Work was shared through regular committees and by ad hoc committees for special tasks. We appreciated and used Quaker Practices, which are powerful and contributed to our staying together as a meeting. Though our numbers are smaller, the members of the meeting have maintained the level of giving.

We look back on 2023 as a year of challenges and a willingness to engage in work that is physical, emotional, and spiritual. We remain committed to living up to Friends' testimonies.

Attachment Q: State of the Yearly Meeting Report

[\(Return to the Minutes\)](#)

Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting and Association

State of the Yearly Meeting

Prepared June 2024

We come together for our annual retreat and sessions experiencing the anticipation of seeing one another as we travel from all over the Southern Appalachian region. The continuation of hybrid sessions and workshops demonstrates the width of our caring reach to those who cannot travel to join us.

We continue to face challenges as we strive to change and become breath of Spirit, as our theme this year has invited us to do. Many Friends work to further our goal of becoming a multicultural, welcoming, and inclusive yearly meeting. We find change to be a difficult process. We notice those Friends who are consistently faithful in accountability to this and other social justice concerns and those Friends who hold the Yearly Meeting in the Light. These efforts have kept us strong as we work toward transformation.

We have had some opportunities to visit among Friends including our first hybrid representative meeting in several years, visits by members of Ministry and Nurture Committee, gatherings of Young Adult Friends, SAYF and Junior Yearly Meeting retreats as well as visits by individuals. Those visits and in-person meetings have been rich and helpful. We encourage Friends to continue inter-visitation when opportunities arise.

In conclusion, the yearly meeting remains tentative as we struggle to change through our efforts to listen deeply and accept continuing revelation as we agree or disagree. We seek to continue the love and community we cherish even as we imperfectly understand the experiences and perspectives of others.

Sincerely,

The members of the Ministry and Nurture Committee

Joan Barnette, West Knoxville FM
Brenda Barrington, Columbia FM
Daryl Bergquist, SAYMA co-clerk, Birmingham FM
Annie Black, Cookeville FM
Wood Bouldin, Charleston FM Greenbrier WG
Rob Collins, Birmingham FM
Maggie Davies, Birmingham FM
Barbara Esther, clerk M&N, Asheville FM
Margaret Farmer, SAYMA co-clerk, Asheville FM
Diana Masso, Charleston FM
Adrian Mehr, Memphis FM
Lissa Place, Atlanta FM
Melissa Preast, West Knoxville FM

Minute of Appreciation for Kendall Ivie

Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting and Association is thankful for the time and care Kendall Ivie has given to this community over the years.

He attended and kept useful records for the Nominating Committee, bringing close attention to detail and institutional knowledge of our past practices. A thoughtful and diligent treasurer in the past, he stepped in once more when our acting treasurer had to give up the position.

Kendall has persevered with humor and grace, despite personal health challenges for him and his wife, but is unable to continue. The Nominating Committee is urgently seeking a person to take over this vital job.

As a community, SAYMA is deeply grateful for all Kendall has done for us.

Sincerely,

The members of the Ministry and Nurture Committee

Joan Barnette, West Knoxville FM

Brenda Barrington, Columbia FM

Daryl Bergquist, SAYMA co-clerk, Birmingham FM

Annie Black, Cookeville FM

Wood Bouldin, Charleston FM Greenbrier WG

Rob Collins, Birmingham FM

Maggie Davies, Birmingham FM

Barbara Esther, clerk M&N, Asheville FM

Margaret Farmer, SAYMA co-clerk, Asheville FM

Diana Masso, Charleston FM

Adrian Mehr, Memphis FM

Lissa Place, Atlanta FM

Melissa Preast, West Knoxville FM

Minute of Appreciation for Ron McDonald

As we look back through many years of SAYMA retreats and sessions we can find Ron McDonald present in many of the activities we associate with times of fun and caring for each other.

Ron played music and led evening singing for generations of Friends attending yearly meeting. He brought activities as varied as playing with Mississippi mud and rope bridge building to Junior Yearly Meeting. Many of us remember the grace of Ron waltzing with Susan Penn in the talent shows.

We express gratitude for Ron's service as a former clerk of the Ministry and Nurture Committee. Clerking this committee comes with challenges that Ron met with all his humanity. Many thanks to Ron McDonald for the years of generous service to the yearly meeting and its participants from the youngest to the eldest of our f/Friends.

Sincerely,

The members of the Ministry and Nurture Committee

Joan Barnette, West Knoxville FM

Brenda Barrington, Columbia FM

Daryl Bergquist, SAYMA co-clerk, Birmingham FM

Annie Black, Cookeville FM

Wood Bouldin, Charleston FM Greenbrier WG

Rob Collins, Birmingham FM

Maggie Davies, Birmingham FM

Barbara Esther, clerk M&N, Asheville FM

Margaret Farmer, SAYMA co-clerk, Asheville FM

Diana Masso, Charleston FM

Adrian Mehr, Memphis FM

Lissa Place, Atlanta FM

Melissa Preast, West Knoxville FM

Minute of Appreciation for Adrian Mehr

The SAYMA Ministry and Nurture Committee holds up Adrian Mehr for his service to us as a committee. Friend Adrian has served on various committees and been a vital part of our yearly meeting, giving of his gifts despite challenging circumstances.

Adrian brings thoughtfulness, compassion, and spiritual presence to the roles he accepts along with a sense of humor and his understanding of Quaker practice. We deeply appreciate how he grounded us in Spirit.

Adrian has served in various capacities within SAYMA Ministry and Nurture as a representative of Memphis, as assistant clerk, as interim clerk, as co-clerk, and technology clerk.

Adrian began the practice of Ministry and Nurture Committee entering each year in retreat. This experience brought us into a consistent practice of worship sharing, transforming us into a community engaged in the work of Spirit. His contributions strengthened our community, guiding us toward a more spiritually connected and supportive fellowship.

Thank you, Adrian, for your ministry to us and the many meetings you visited.

Sincerely,

The members of the Ministry and Nurture Committee

Joan Barnette, West Knoxville FM

Brenda Barrington, Columbia FM

Daryl Bergquist, SAYMA co-clerk, Birmingham FM

Annie Black, Cookeville FM

Wood Bouldin, Charleston FM Greenbrier WG

Rob Collins, Birmingham FM

Maggie Davies, Birmingham FM

Barbara Esther, clerk M&N, Asheville FM

Margaret Farmer, SAYMA co-clerk, Asheville FM

Diana Masso, Charleston FM

Adrian Mehr, Memphis FM

Lissa Place, Atlanta FM

Melissa Preast, West Knoxville FM

Minute of Appreciation for Diana Masso

Diana Masso served as a caring and faithful clerk of the Ministry and Nurture Committee. The yearly meeting benefited from her dedication and hard work while SAYMA was in turmoil. In tandem with her co-clerks, a foundation was laid for a Spirit-based and nurturing environment within the committee. Her leadership and focus on listening for guidance from the Spirit shepherded us on the path toward healing. Her attention to detail led us to reexamine the purpose of the committee. Despite serious challenges, she continued to do everything possible to fulfill the clerk's duties. Diana remained faithful to her leading, encouraging the Ministry and Nurture Committee to complete its work as a caring body. Thank you, Diana, for your heartfelt, Spirit-led work.

Sincerely,

The members of the Ministry and Nurture Committee

Joan Barnette, West Knoxville FM

Brenda Barrington, Columbia FM

Daryl Bergquist, SAYMA co-clerk, Birmingham FM

Annie Black, Cookeville FM

Wood Bouldin, Charleston FM Greenbrier WG

Rob Collins, Birmingham FM

Maggie Davies, Birmingham FM

Barbara Esther, clerk M&N, Asheville FM

Margaret Farmer, SAYMA co-clerk, Asheville FM

Diana Masso, Charleston FM

Adrian Mehr, Memphis FM

Lissa Place, Atlanta FM

Melissa Preast, West Knoxville FM

Minute of Appreciation for Susan Phelan

This minute is to acknowledge and honor the dedicated service Susan Phelan has given to the Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting and Association (SAYMA) as the Administrative Assistant over the past six years. Her quick and effective responses to the numerous requests from clerks have been invaluable. All SAYMA benefited from her unfailing kindness.

She was the stabilizer through clerk changes, nurturing and caring for each outgoing and incoming clerk. She resiliently adapted our processes during the pandemic, redefined nearly all the administrative practices, and was instrumental in our ability to have virtual Annual Sessions in 2021.

Though her presence was often behind the scenes, we consistently felt and greatly appreciated her quiet support. Thank you, Susan, for your steadfast dedication and unwavering support.

Sincerely,

The members of the Ministry and Nurture Committee

Joan Barnette, West Knoxville FM

Brenda Barrington, Columbia FM

Daryl Bergquist, SAYMA co-clerk, Birmingham FM

Annie Black, Cookeville FM

Wood Bouldin, Charleston FM Greenbrier WG

Rob Collins, Birmingham FM

Maggie Davies, Birmingham FM

Barbara Esther, clerk M&N, Asheville FM

Margaret Farmer, SAYMA co-clerk, Asheville FM

Diana Masso, Charleston FM

Adrian Mehr, Memphis FM

Lissa Place, Atlanta FM

Melissa Preast, West Knoxville FM

Attachment S: AFSC Representative Report

[\(Return to the Minutes\)](#)

My report of the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) annual Corporation Meeting held in Philadelphia from Thursday, 24 to Saturday, 26 April 2024 as representative of Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting and Association (SAYMA).

Hugh Thomforde, member of Cookeville Monthly Meeting. cell: (931) 287-2826, email: hthomforde2@yahoo.com or hthomforde@gmail.com 31 June 2024

Traditionally, the highpoint to the AFSC annual Corporation meeting occurs toward the end, but this year the keynote speaker started things off on Thursday 24 April with resounding effect. [Jose Antonio Vargas](#), an openly-gay, openly undocumented celebrity figure, provided a heart-wrenching, yet humorous, optimistic and defiant extemporaneous account of his [experiences](#), of how he established his place as “[an American without papers](#).” I felt as if he spoke to me, personally, in several ways. He spoke of his childhood in the Philippines. (During 7 years in the Philippines, I adopted 3 Filipino siblings, aged 6, 10 and 11.) He described how he learned that he was “illegal”: When he first applied for a driver’s license, he was told that his Green Card, given to him by his grandfather, was fake! (My middle child, Helen, had a similar experience in 1988, although her trauma was caused by an uninformed, rogue Alabama official who recanted as soon as I involved the ACLU.) Jose Antonio Vargas described how he successfully shelters himself from well-intentioned government bureaucrats, from the IRS to Homeland Security, by creating his own company, Undocumented LLC, which operates within Federal and State law. (This again spoke to me because my wife and I have been providing a lot of support for a young, undocumented person who set up her own licensed business in our covertly white-supremacist Tennessee County. [Here](#) is an un-vetted example of the approach.) The link to Jose Antonio Vargas’ address to AFSC was taken off the website after a month due to contractual agreement. However, this [Radiolab podcast](#) of 24 November 2023 reflects a similar content.

On Friday morning, 25 April, in the historic Race Street Meeting House, Álvaro Alvarado, AFSC Board Clerk, led the roll-call of Yearly Meetings. (This led to my acquaintance with Dianne Raleigh of Atlanta Meeting. She was there as a member at-large of the AFSC board.) A number of routine matters were covered, including approval of the minutes of the 2023 annual meeting, and my appointment as 1 of 5 to the Ad Hoc Committee to Name the Standing Nominating Committee.

Joyce Ajlouny, AFSC General Secretary, then presented her [annual report](#), starting with a review of AFSC’s mission: commitment to the principles of nonviolence and restorative justice, seeking through work and witness to draw on the power of love, serving the most marginalized peoples by standing respectfully and knowledgeably with them. She reviewed AFSC’s work: peace-building, human immigration, economic justice, prison reform, relief during disasters, quiet

international diplomacy as well as similar work domestically, material aid for refugees and displaced families, and to feed and clothe victims of war.

Joyce Ajlouny spoke most passionately of her Palestinian heritage, of trauma on all sides of the Middle Eastern conflict, particularly since the Hamas attack on Israeli civilians, and longstanding systematic apartheid inflicted by the government of Israel on her people. She also invited all in attendance (some 60 of us!) to please approach her during the course of the gathering. She is about 10 years younger than me (I am 69), she grew up in the West Bank under Israeli occupation since she was 2. She told me that she currently finds her bed-rock-support from an informal group of Palestinian women activists in the DC area. She attended, and eventually served 13 years as head of, Ramallah Friends School. She also was Country Director for Oxfam in Israel and Palestine. In a small-group setting, she answered questions: The recent Gaza war has brought a surge of more than 7,000 first-time donors to AFSC. About 60% of Corporation members and 100% of board members donate regularly to AFSC. AFSC's current annual operating budget is \$48 million. AFSC maintains relations with people and communities in "pariah" states, such as North Korea, Myanmar and Somalia, and supports human rights work among immigrant communities. Blaming immigrants has long been a way to sow seeds of violence. Everywhere, immigrants need more support. AFSC works for peace and justice "from the inside" to reduce prison violence through conflict resolution training, mentoring and arts programs.

Back in plenary session, we reviewed AFSC's financial position. The Treasurer reported, in detail, that AFSC remains in very good financial standing. I regret I didn't take notes during this presentation. I think I was having difficulty staying awake during this early afternoon session. To balance my lack of notes, I looked up this current review of AFSC by the [Better Business Bureau](#).

I had several in-depth conversations with Susan Cozzens, formerly of Atlanta Meeting. I recall asking someone, probably her, what was not being addressed at the Corporation meetings, and I was directed to [this news article](#) from the Philadelphia Inquirer of 10 September 2023.

A couple of years ago AFSC hired Brian Blackmore as *Director of Quaker Engagement* to strengthened relationships with Monthly and Yearly Meetings and Churches, to connect more intentionally with Friends. They invite anyone interested in fostering and supporting a relationship with AFSC to join their liaison program. Anyone interested may do so [here](#).

The 2025 AFSC Corporation meeting dates will be 24 to 26 April, 2025, by teleconferencing and in-person at Friends Center, Philadelphia.

The annual AFSC Corporation meeting is a special time for communication between AFSC and Yearly Meetings. The meeting provided me opportunity for spiritual, practical, and legal counsel on a broad range of policy and issues. I was honored and grateful to represent SAYMA at the AFSC Corporation. My time was well spent. I welcome suggestions of how I could better facilitate communication between AFSC and our Yearly Meeting during the coming year.

I invite anyone to explore the many other issues, campaigns, and programs on which AFSC focuses: <http://afsc.org/our-work>.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Hugh K. Thomforde". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Additional notes:

[This podcast](#) describes how AFSC, FCNL, and the Quaker UN Office promote non-violence in times of crisis. It was produced by AFSC a year ago, but I am only providing it now to SAYMA. I was working for Catholic Relief Services in East Timor a year ago, did not attend the 2023 Corporation meetings, and only recently learned of this podcast.

AFSC always provides brief break-out sessions during the annual meetings for Corporation members to learn more about the work. I attended one led by Jacob Flowers and colleagues about [Cop City](#). As with most AFSC programs, the general format was to provide information, and invitations to [advocacy](#).

I attended another break out session led by Jennifer Bing regarding AFSC's educational campaigns to inform Americans of the stark injustices in Gaza: <https://gazaunlocked.org/author/jennifer-bing>. AFSC also calls us to oppose Israeli apartheid: <https://apartheid-free.org/>

AFSC provides [comprehensive data](#) on how to divest from companies complicit in Israeli violence in Gaza. This [Al Jazeera podcast](#) of 4 days ago, 27 May 2024, reports that my alma mater, Earlham College, a Quaker seminary and school of higher education with strong ties to Ramallah Friends School, has not divested from these companies.

Posting on the AFSC website seeking support for Gaza, 23 May 2024: <https://afsc.org/news/6-ways-you-can-support-palestinians-gaza>

AFSC promoting quality of life for children in Gaza, 5 April 2024: <https://afsc.org/news/bringing-moments-joy-children-gaza>

AFSC's curated [webpage](#) to engage constituents with our elected leaders in Congress, to urge them to support a cease fire, and humanitarian access to Gaza

AFSC General Secretary was interviewed on Democracy Now regarding violence targeting Palestinian students in the US, 28 November 2023:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z8W0qhJP5VQ>

Attachment T: FCNL Representative Report

[\(Return to the Minutes\)](#)

Friends Committee on National Legislation: 80 Years and Counting Report to SAYMA

FCNL continues its steadfast work for peace and justice sustained by faith and hope. Fiscal Year 2023 by the numbers reveals its commitment in deeply divided times.

771 lobby visits by 3,226 constituents.

336 young adults went on 135 lobby visits to address the harmful legacy of the Indian Boarding School era during Spring Lobby Weekend.

1,090,350 page views at fcnl.org

119,889 people were subscribed to FCNL emails.

Friends Place hosted 94 groups and 1,758 guests, including 465 migrants bused from the southern border.

Advocacy Teams (2,011 people) made 312 lobby visits and were able to protect peacebuilding funding in the FY2024 Appropriations Bill

Through innovative planning, FCNL expanded its young adult programs this fiscal year. They also began to network various local Advocacy Teams in 47 states to combine their power and impact. FCNL grew its digital community and began bringing its information technology infrastructure up to current industry standards.

At Annual Meeting, the General Committee approved a strategic plan for 2024-2028 — a strategic commitment to the future. The building blocks of the plan include:

- Strengthening FCNL's nonpartisan influence to build democracy and advance policies
- Making our advocacy network more powerful, diverse, strategic, and intergenerational
- Advancing policy changes through prophetic narratives using strategic communications
- Fostering beloved community by integrating anti-racism, anti-bias, justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion (AJEDI) in all our efforts
- Restructuring and boldly resourcing FCNL to support current needs and future capacities.

You can explore the key strategies for each part of the plan at

www.fcnl.org/about/staffgovernance/governance/2024-2028-strategic-plan

This year the policy committee reports a high volume of responses to the call for legislative priorities. They anticipate having online listening sessions around the priorities again this year. Stand by for the announcement of the theme for 2024's Annual Meeting and Quaker Public Policy Institute. SAVE THE DATE: NOVEMBER 13-17, 2024

Respectfully submitted by Jane Hiles and Susan Penn, SAYMA Reps to FCNL 6/7/2024

2024 Report to Yearly Meetings

Dear Friends,

Our Quaker faith and practice call us to bring into being the world we seek. Since 1943, the Friends Committee on National Legislation has carried on this witness of the Spirit through national advocacy. Your engagement, financial contributions, and spiritual support make this work possible.

Pursuing Peace with Justice in an Uncertain World

FCNL seeks peace, justice, and an earth restored by advocating for federal policy change in the areas identified by Friends through our bi-annual priorities setting process. Priorities for the 118th Congress are at fcnl.org/priorities. Updates on these, and other issues are at fcnl.org/issues.

Ceasefire Now in Israel and Palestine. FCNL has been advocating for a ceasefire since the October 7, 2023, Hamas attacks, condemning both Hamas's violence and Israel's indiscriminate response. Working in concert with more than 80 other organizations, our network has taken more than 500,000 actions to lobby, demonstrate, and minute their concerns. A February 2024 New York Times article highlighted FCNL's efforts to counter political spending with "people power" to support a ceasefire, de-escalation, and humanitarian aid in Gaza.

Help Millions of Children Escape Poverty. At the height of the pandemic, Congress expanded the Child Tax Credit, reducing child poverty by more than 40 percent. Since that legislation expired, child poverty in the U.S. has rebounded to high levels. FCNL is integral to lobbying efforts to revive the expanded Child Tax Credit, with the potential to help 16 million children. The Tax Relief for American Families and Workers Act (H.R. 7024) passed the House in early 2024 and moves to the Senate, where our advocacy continues.

Heal the Harms of Nuclear Testing. FCNL has partnered with communities most affected by U.S. nuclear testing to advocate for an extended and expanded Radiation Exposure Compensation Act (RECA). Congress needs to act before the RECA program expires in 2024.

Support Truth and Healing on Indian Boarding Schools. FCNL is supporting the formation of a formal commission to investigate the horrific past and impact of the 367 federally sponsored institutions run by religious groups that existed until the 1960s. At our 2024 Spring Lobby Weekend, more than 300 young adults lobbied for passage of the Truth and Healing Commission on Indian Boarding School Policies Act.



▲ A Spring Lobby Weekend participant poses with her hand-drawn poster, made during the Art and Advocacy workshop, taught by staff from Friends Place. Photo by DAGFOTO/FCNL.



◀ West Wing's Bradley Whitford, center, joined FCNL's Bridget Moix and Odelya Mater on the Hill, lobbying the offices of Senator Van Hollen and Murphy for a ceasefire in Gaza and to resume funding of UNRWA. Photo by Eric Bond/FCNL.

Nationwide Advocacy & Radical Hospitality

Our conviction that there is that of God in every person leads us to advance this work through a focus on relationship: among advocates, Friends, and FCNL staff and with decision-makers. We foster a community that can engage amid conflict, uplift each other, and find creative ways to make change in the face of the many crises in our world.

The knowledgeable, passionate advocates in our network live in all corners of the country. We now have more than 130 **Advocacy Teams** across 47 states. Our 2023 campaign focused on investing in conflict and atrocities prevention programs. The Teams' efforts culminated at November's Quaker Public Policy Institute, where participants logged more than 120 lobby visits in two days. In 2024, Teams are lobbying for reductions in Pentagon spending. See fcnl.org/teams.

Friends Place on Capitol Hill. This guest house and hospitality center on Capitol Hill hosted 94 groups, totaling 1,758 guests, between July 2022 and June 2023. This total includes more than 400 migrants bussed from the southern border, whom FCNL hosted as a partner of the Migrant Solidarity Mutual Aid Network. Friends Place also anchors FCNL's engagement with the D.C. community and offers advocacy programming. More at friendsplacedc.org.

Charting a Course Toward the World We Seek

Creating the world we seek begins with our own transformation. As FCNL builds its influence on national policy, we also focus on the patterns and practices of our own community. Our new **strategic plan** for 2024–2028 focuses on both areas. It calls on FCNL to strengthen its nonpartisan influence as a leading faith advocacy organization, foster beloved community, engage new people in advocacy work, and become better equipped to meet the challenges ahead. More at fcnl.org/strategicplan.

A key part of this plan is the continued **integration of anti-racism, anti-bias, justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion (AJEDI)** into our work. We are building skills and structures for listening, clearness, and restorative practices to embed these principles throughout FCNL. This work allows us to better align the experience of people in our community with the values we hold.

These efforts are, as always, guided by Spirit and by the leadings of you and others who give of their time, resources, and talent. The spiritual depth of this work was evident in the year-long process of developing new policy guidance around reproductive health care and abortion (see fcnl.org/ReproductiveHealthPolicy).

Abortion had been named as a “challenge” to Friends that FCNL took no position on. More than 300 Friends meetings, churches, and other groups gave input, representing many perspectives. The revised statement names differences among Quakers, supports individual choice and equitable access for healthcare decisions, recognizes the sanctity of human life, and opposes the criminalization of abortion services.

Thank you, Friends, for all the ways that you participate in this work to build a better world.

In peace,

Michael Fuson

Michael Fuson
Clerk, FCNL General Committee
Granville Friends Meeting
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Attachment U: FWCC Representative Report

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FWCC Report June, 2024

FWCC's representation in SAYMA has suffered because of the recent inactivity of its two representatives, Adrian Mehr, who recently resigned, and Geeta Jyothi McGahey, who is also SouthEast Regional coordinator. There is also a third representative position available. Nominating committee is trying to fill that spot.

From 5-12 August 2024 Friends from more than 80 Yearly Meetings around the globe will gather for the FWCC World Plenary Meeting. Onsite places in South Africa are fully booked, but online places are still available - \$130 or pay as led. Learn more and register: fwcc.world/wpm Both the [songbook](#) and the [study guide](#) are now published, in English, KiSwahili and Spanish.

QUNO Geneva invites [applications for Programme Assistantships](#) - Applications are now open for two programme assistant positions based at QUNO's office in Geneva from September 2024 to August 2025 working on: Human Rights & Refugees Human Impacts of Climate Change These are exciting opportunities for young professionals with an interest in international affairs to learn about and contribute to Quaker work at the United Nations.

[Quaker Connect](#) is a new program which supports Friends meetings and churches to try new experiments and learn from each other how to connect the depths of our Quaker tradition and the breadth of our Quaker community with the living reality of our local context under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

The FWCC Section of the Americas Meeting was a one day on-line opportunity to enjoy programs and time together. Five minute connections with four people offered a chance to connect with old friends from different countries and meet new ones. I also attended a Representative Engagement Committee meeting in Guatemala in October and was amazed how important FWCC is to Latin American Friends.

Robin Mohr, Executive Secretary, has resigned and interviews for a replacement are in process. Thank-you for supporting me in this service to FWCC and the yearly meeting. I hope to be able to mentor new representatives soon.

In the Light,
Geeta JYothi McGahey

Junior Yearly Meeting (JYM) Support Committee Report to SAYMA

Submitted by Laura Lane, clerk

June 2024

We were excited to return to the Berea campus this year. Due to small numbers last year, we offered a combined JYM and Playcare program for ages 2-12. We also offered babysitting for children under 2 years of age.

We were pleased to have many more children in attendance this year. There were 16 children registered, ages 4-12. They represented 6 different monthly meetings or worship groups and included several first time attendees.

Our staff this year included program coordinator Laura MacNorlin (Atlanta) with assistants Asa Kramer-Dickie (Atlanta), Hugh Thomforde (Cookeville), and J Thomas (Atlanta). We are also supported by the JYM committee and volunteers and families from the broader SAYMA community.

Childcare at SAYMA does many things:

- Allows parents and guardians to attend SAYMA adult programming
- Builds a community among our youngest friends through nurture and play
- Allows parents and guardians to share in a Quaker parenting community
- Engages other adults in SAYMA with our young friends through volunteer opportunities

The JYM support committee continued meeting through zoom this year, meeting monthly through the winter and spring.

We are so pleased that we were able to hold two JYM family retreats this year. This fall retreat in Asheville was attended by 18 Children from 5 meetings. The spring retreat was held in Nashville and included 5 children from 3 meetings. We believe that these retreats will continue to strengthen the JYM community and hope they will encourage higher attendance at SAYMA in future years. Almost all of the children in attendance at SAYMA this summer attended one of the

retreats this year. The children were delighted to see each other upon arrival to Berea, and inquired about children who were not present. They are building a strong community that extends beyond the confines of the summer sessions.

We continue to believe that childcare at SAYMA creates opportunities that nurture the spiritual life of children and adults that will encourage families and other Friends to continue to attend as their children grow.

Laura Lane (Asheville), clerk

Alexis Hamnett (Nashville)

Rose Black (Cookville)

Attachment W: SAYF Report to SAYMA

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SAYF Report to SAYMA

June 5, 2024

Southern Appalachian Young Friends (SAYF) held 6 regular retreats during the past retreat cycle, August 2023-May 2024, with SAYF at SAYMA retreat upcoming. There were two Nurturing Committee retreats in August and February, meeting jointly for business with SAYF Steering Committee. SAYF will meet in Berea, KY on June 20-23, 2024 for SAYMA's yearly gathering. We have averaged 24 Young Friends (YF) per retreat across the six regular retreats during the school year, compared to 19 per retreat in the previous year, showing a positive direction for recovery of the program post-Covid emergency.

40 different teens attended at least one retreat during the past year. Some Young Friends attended all 6 retreats and others attended only one. Details of each retreat are summarized below.

Most retreats were hosted at Meetinghouses, but we also gathered at Arthur Morgan School in Celo, NC. We are deeply appreciative to Friends for allowing us to use their facilities. Also, we are thankful to Durham and Atlanta Friends Meetings, and individual SAYF families, whose generous donations have helped support scholarships for SAYF, and contributed to nourishing the program.

SAYF Retreats:

| Retreat | Location | Participants | Theme |
|---|---|--------------|---|
| Steering, Nurturing and Support Committee Retreat | August 2023 Swannanoa Valley Friends Meeting | 7 | <i>Nurturing Retreat</i> |
| SAYF Retreat | September, 2023 Atlanta Friends Meeting | 27 | Metamorphosis: Grow into Your SAYF Self |
| SAYF Retreat | October, 2023 Berea Friends Meeting | 14 | Fostering Inclusion |
| SAYF Retreat | November, 2023 Asheville Friends Meeting | 20 | Gratitude and Adventure |
| SAYF Retreat | January, 2024 Atlanta Friends Meeting | 30 | Quaker Values and Civil Resistance |
| Steering, Nurturing and Support Committee Retreat | February, 2024 West Knoxville Friends Meeting | 9 | <i>Nurturing Retreat</i> |
| SAYF Retreat | March, 2024 Arthur Morgan School, Celo, NC | 27 | Reconnecting |
| SAYF Retreat | April, 2024 Durham, NC | 28 | Wealth Inequality |

Sample of Retreat Overviews or Activities

November 2023 - Asheville

We started the retreat Friday evening and waited for guests to arrive from other states. We then went over sleeping guidelines, and headed to bed. In the morning after breakfast, we discussed the query of this retreat, followed by meeting with attention to business. After lunch we went into Asheville for a scavenger hunt intended to bring attention to the everyday beauty around us. Upon arriving back at the meeting, we prepared for Friendsgiving, which we started with information on the original thanksgiving, and how the spirit of the holiday has changed. Sunday morning we cleaned the meeting house, and started singing.

January 2024 - Atlanta

Flying & chalking in Decatur square, Stop Cop City, Palestine, Board Games, Chalk Talk

March 2024 - Celo

27 Young Friends and 10 FANs gathered and enjoyed the early spring retreat with the theme of Re-Connecting. The schedule stayed flexible with the weather. Planning group gave much consideration to wholesome food with little waste. The activities included nature identification walks and group singing around the campfire connecting our soul to earth and our heritage. AMS campus was conducive to playful exploration to nature and community building.

April 2024 - Durham

Nurturers hosted the first SAYF retreat at Durham Friends Meeting in about 6 years. We have two buildings with a playground in the middle and the youth really enjoyed all the space. At least a third of the youth answered the query Saturday morning. One speaker spoke about the causes of wealth inequality and another talked about the difficulties folks face when they come out of prison. There was a walk to and picnic lunch in Duke Gardens. We packed Welcome Home boxes for prisoners. One SAYFer's early graduation was overflowing with love. Bear was fun! Visiting and local FANs shared their experiences and ideas for working with youth and children. We have four new Nurturers!

Nurturing + Steering + Support Committee Retreats

August 2023, Swannanoa Valley Friends Meeting

Nurturing Committee Members: 7

We conducted the business meeting to plan for FY24 retreats. We had only one nurturer who had attend the last August nurturers retreat, and 6 nurturers who were new from last year, two of whom had never been to any nurturers' retreat. There was a lot of energy and enthusiasm to take on the leadership of SAYF. We spent time thinking about how to be inclusive of attendees who are on diverse places of the neurological spectrum, and may struggle to engage socially in the same ways. The nurturers learned about and practiced leading a clearness committee. We had a wonderful dinner provided by the Swannanoa Valley Friends Meeting.

February 2024, West Knoxville Friends Meeting

Nurturing Committee Members: 9

The nurturers' retreat was a productive planning weekend. As a combined body we discussed how FANs can make more space for nurturers to lead during retreats and reviewed how the process of adding new nurturers has changed from the handbook.

Young Friend Queries

1. How can we create peace in a hostile world?
2. How do you stand firmly against inequality? How do you peacefully challenge problematic social norms?
3. How do you create and nurture community?
4. How do you practice good social work while nurturing your well being and what avenues exist between those?
5. What do you do that harms/affects the environment and how can you better such impact
6. In what ways do you use your voices and express your perspectives?
7. How do we support people's identity and growth?
8. When do you reevaluate your perspective?
9. How do you remain grounded in a materialistic society?
10. How do you reconcile simplicity and self expression?
11. How do you apply Quaker values to your social media presence?
12. How does your energy change as you enter adulthood?
13. What is the light? Where do you find that in your life?
14. How do you identify as quaker and how do you explain that to your peers?
15. To whom do you extend your compassion?

Attachment X: SAYF Support Committee Report

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Southern Appalachian Young Friends (SAYF) Support Committee Report to SAYMA Yearly Meeting 2024

The SAYF Support Committee was established by the 2018 Yearly Meeting. It has been some time since we have reported to SAYMA. The main intent of this report is to remind Friends that one of our main purposes is to provide a conduit for SAYF adults, teens and Friendly Adult Nurturers (FANS), and the SAYMA community at large to express their concerns and needs regarding the SAYF program. Please know that we are looking forward to hearing from you!

Over the past several years

- We updated the Friendly Adult Nurturer (FAN) training materials and held many training sessions.
- We participated in the ongoing revision of the SAYF Handbook and are reviewing the updated Retreat Planning Manual.
- We helped the SAYF Steering Committee navigate some personnel concerns.
- Members of our committee have participated regularly in SAYF Steering Committee meetings via Zoom and at the twice-annual Nurturing Committee/Steering Committee/Support Committee retreats.
- We have discussed the potential need to ask other folks to assist with specific matters.

Finally, as a reminder, the charge for our committee was approved in RM142, Spring 2019 as follows:

SAYF Support Committee Responsibilities

The purpose of the SAYF Support Committee is to support the SAYF program and provide a conduit for SAYF adults, teens and FANS, and the SAYMA community at large to express their concerns and needs regarding the program. The committee will work closely with the SAYF Steering Committee to facilitate smooth functioning of the program, recruitment of adult volunteers and teen participants, and other administrative tasks.

The Committee will consist of 4 to 6 members, one of whom will be selected from the SAYF Steering Committee. The committee will:

1. Collaborate with SAYF Steering Committee to review and revise program guidelines and policies on a continual basis.

2. Review serious behavior issues that may occur from either teen participants or adult volunteers and determine appropriate sanctions, with the goal of restorative justice and healing.
3. Assist SAYF Steering Committee with recruitment of adult volunteers.
4. Arrange relevant trainings for both the steering committee members and adult volunteers.
5. Assist the SAYF community with issues of inclusion, particularly for teens and families of color.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Dickie, Lee Ann Swarm, Aaron Ruscetta, and Sig Christensen

Attachment Y: Report of the Web Manager
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Report of the Web Manager
June 2024

Our website should serve the needs of the monthly meetings, worship groups, committees, staff, clerks, and individual Friends that make up SAYMA. If the website could better support you or the work you are trying to accomplish, please be in touch.

Friends can help me to keep the website useful in the following ways:

Committee clerks: please let me know if you would like space on sayma.org to publish news and information on whatever work you are doing.

Monthly Meeting clerks and SAYMA Reps, or anyone else who spots something incorrect or out of date: please help me keep your meeting's information current on the sayma.org website.

Respectfully submitted,

Charlie Wilton
SAYMA web manager
web@sayma.org

Attachment Z: Released Friend Report

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This is my story & experience.

As well as being an accurate narrative, it is mine to give, & share.

Not for others to share, misuse, misquote, misrepresent, or make commentary on.

It is common in this yearly meeting to share a narrative that is not based on what was communicated, nor the factual events that happened.

To then Dominate with it, till it is the only narrative left, heard, & then falsely believed.

This has happened to individuals, as well as whole monthly meetings.

I come from a back ground of much discord, disfunction, abuse, trauma, diverse backgrounds & experiences. I have spent my entire adult life undoing, relearning, & building a life away from, as well as disconnected from drama, & other maladaptive coping mechanisms.

I have done my work therapeutically.

More than once I have been through divisive, divisions in faith & religious organizations, one with topics that included part of my own identity.

I have built an unimpeachable integrity, with out pretense, or subtext.

Anyone who tells you otherwise does not know me, has other motives for saying so, or has been misinformed from one of the reasons above.

I have honed in on my observation, understanding, ability to see something for what it actually is, the big picture & the prophetic gifting to accurately call it by name.

I build & grow communities, which is another one of my gifts.

SAYMA have I loved, drama have I hated.

I have devotedly & joyously given my all to this yearly meeting for a decade, consistently serving on M&N, then Nominating, on two iteration of SAYMA-URJ.

On more than one occasion my giftings were recognized with being asked both to clerk the yearly meeting, as well as SAYMA-URJ, to which I declined both based on the unhealthy state of interactions.

As effective as I can be as a clerk, I can not stomach the toxicity.

The last iteration of SAYMA-URJ I was on, I was horrified to observe other members dismissed, disregarded, demeaned & dissected, to which the committee imploded, as the other three of us resigned. This was not the only time this had happened either.

After ending my term as clerk of M&N, I had a leading to gather & grow the monthly meetings, post pandemic,, as well as years of increasing strife & loss.

When things pertaining to Star came up in committees that I served on, i abstained from the discernment, in part because there were many false accusations, pitting the two of against each other.

During this period, While trying to give a report at yearly gathering, it was coopted, to be made about Star, when our paths are very different. Untrue statements were made & not corrected,

including, but not limited to the currently defunct LGBTQAI+ group n SAYMA, & the waining earth justice committee, also pitting them against SAYMA-URJ.

As well as when an unprecedented act of generosity occurred with Quakers passing a hat, to support my leading, with the room being directed from the back, not the front, after the funds were collected for me, they were arbitrarily redirected to have to be split between Star & myself, then since they went into the fund, all would then have to go to Star.

This was was the corporate theft from Friends, the money was already given & received for my leading. Whereas financial restitution was made to me, this public act has still not been addressed.

Later last year, the former co-clerk of M&N breeched confidentiality, when I shared concerns, further pitting the two released Friends against each other.

When by use of process violence fall representatives meeting 2023, to keep pushing for what some wanted, for Star to go to south Africa under the banner of SAYMA, it was left solely to me to discern funding.

I communicated to the yearly meeting co-clerks that it was unethical to be asked, especially since Star had already begun unfounded & non factual attacks against me, that I must recuse myself from this unfair discernment request.

This set boundary was not good enough for the other FWCC rep., who began a hounding forceful, dramatic, intrusive barrage of emails, adding more & more Friends that the conversation did not pertain to, pushing against my boundary.

To which Star unleashed not only attacks agains me, & my identity*, but also against other non white Friends in the Memphis meeting, thinking the misinformation was about me.

*My identity is mine, & mine alone. When I first encountered SAYMA-URJ “ my ancestors were calling me” (Star Smith), for anyone in the 21st century tell me what my identity is, not ask, but duplicitously tell me, is absurd.

As is to refer to someone from from the Middle East, as “legally white”.

Historically on this continent, is this not the mentality that started dividing people by color?

If there was a friend who had a relationship to walk along side me, to aid my understanding, that would be another, & SAYMA-URJ would be what it has supposed to have been all along.

After this intense which was brought on by the actions of Geeta McGahey, many Friends who had been drug into receiving theses emails were bothered & disturbed to not sleeping well. I was asked by the yearly meeting co-clerks to please no longer recuse myself, to give an answer of one direction, to bring some semblance of closure.

In a further cowardly act, Kevin Moran resigned form M&N after this email, instead of having the courage to try to repair the damage he himself had done.

I then communicated that there was no way in good conscience I could say anything other than no for funding Star, some one who lashes out & attacks even people they does not know, based on misinformation they think is about someone else, should not be in this position, or any position of leadership.

To which Geeta yet again pressed my clear boundary of me needing no further discernment, or communication. Emailing & emailing again & again.

I will note this behavior is about control, forcing communication on someone, when they have said no, dominating to capitalistically get what you want, no matter what. These abusive socially, & culturally incompetent, taking behaviors will dynastically show up in any therapists handbook.

I agreed to meet, to try to put an end to the chaos.

I was first informed that even for an informal gathering of a few “Friends” that I had replied too late to address the inappropriate interactions that lead up to this point.

It was was then stated that the likely & potential harm that I, & Venessa Julye would encounter, was outweighed by the possibility of change.

It took me months to realize why this was triggering for a rape survivor such as myself.

Non of us are Spock, that is why you shouldn’t be saying or thinking such things.

Others on the call also begin having the predetermined conversation about where the funding could come from, while I was still on zoom.

I was dismissed & ignored, which was the plan to begin with, if I did not change.

After this, A dear Friend of mine started their journey to the end of their life with cancer, my brother hit a semi head on, & both my parents were ill, among other difficult aspects of my life in poverty to navigate, while emotionally abused & triggered.

Emails went through the “SAYMA Anti racism network”, stating that I was to be asked to a meeting, gotten off to myself, them pressured to resign, so Star could go in my place, or any real Friend of color, that i would also likely back out (to something I never agreed to?).

Because I had not replied to what I do not know what to call, other than a set up, It was then pushed for me to be removed from the position I had already held, & worked towards.

Me, not the 3 Friends who had already crossed many inappropriate, & unethical lines. Kevin, Geeta & Star.

Not once has their mistreatment of Friends via email been addressed, then when I am not able to reply to one, after all of that, I am some how somehow now the problem?

This is another false narrative, the three Friends above, among other, have done much to destroy movement forward, to change anything.

I should have no communication from these friends, less it be a simple apology, fully owning their behavior, laying out a plan of change & righting their wrongs.

This yearly meeting has long abounded justice of any kind, as well as most of the SPICES along the way.

Instead it has become divisive, with more fighting, infighting, deviousness & distraction from actual gaslighting, as well as manipulation, over the past 8 years, than any movement forward.

This regression, not progression.

There is plenty of that on the national stage, yet somehow it is tolerated here.

While fascism moves forward in this country, let us fight each other some more, while replicating the behavior.

With all of the Friends of color who were active or involved in the yearly meeting & the onset of SAYMA-URJ, gone, except one.

They have left because they don't agree, with the mode/methods used. Because what is said does not speak to their condition, nor their decades of lived experience in this yearly meeting.

There is no space for them.

Their voices.

Their input.

Their Light.

I miss have missed them greatly.

Their presence.

With them we have also lost the ability firmly & gently correct, as well as effectually change anything, much less hearts & minds.

Instead we have allowed birthed a toxic, trumpian demagoguery.

Full of self-righteous, condemning, legalistic, browbeating, soapboxed, European descended, guilt-laden, ivory-towered, enlightened saints.

Preaching neo-protestant hellfire about how evil you are, if you do not do as told.

In such hostility, no one can heal, change, or grow.

It has come time for me to shake the dust off of my prophetic feet & bid adieu.

I have do not deserve this, no one does.

More so when all I have given was myself, my heart, my soul, working to gather together, what others are hellbent on destroying.

Effective at the rise of yearly meeting, I resign from all yearly meeting positions, appointed by my monthly meeting, or the yearly meeting.

Including as representative FWCC, I can not conscientiously go anywhere under the name of this yearly meeting.

I am reclaiming my peace.

This is the correct & accurate account of why I am leaving.

The yearly meeting has not stood up for the truth, nor defended me, asking me to be the adult in the room, but not having my back when I do so.

V. Adrian Mehr.

Attachment AA: Registrar Report

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Registrar's Report 2024

| Category | 2019 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 |
|----------------------|---|------------|---|--|--|
| Registered In person | 220 | | 157 | 145 | 140 |
| Registered Virtual | | 168 | 33 | 16 | 17 |
| Attended | 216 | 141 adults | 182 | 152 | 157 |
| JYM/Playcare | 21 | 19 | 19 | 4 | 17 |
| SAYF | 32 | 8 | 22 | 21 | 19 |
| YAF | 11 | | 25 | 18 | 21 |
| Friends of Color | | | 16 | 10 | 13 |
| First Time Attenders | 40 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 22 adults • 2 YAF • 8 SAYF • 6 JYM • 2 WQO | | 38 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16 Adults • 7 YAF • 5 SAYF • 8 JYM • 2 WQO | 29 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 17 Adults • 6 YAF • 3 Staff • 2 FOC • 2 WQO | 24 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 19 Adults • 4 YAF • 2 Staff • 5 FOC • 1 WQO |