

Minutes

Meeting for Worship with Concern for Business - Midlothian Friends Meeting Eighth Day, Eleventh Month, 2015 – 11:00 a.m.

Those in attendance included: Cate Grove, Chuck Grove, Claudia Farr, Bill Marx, Karrie Richards, Debbie, Jane Roberson, Annelise Ladore, Ann Duncan, David and Roselle Clark, Howard Brod, Liz Singer, Ethan Singer, Claudia Bates-Physioc, Leslie Skinker, Laura Clark, Brian McCutcheon Ryan Singer, Griffin Hardy and Tom DeWeerd

- Queries from BYM Faith & Practice on Stewardship of the Earth were read during the opening silence:
 - “Do you seek to preserve the beauty and balance of God’s world?”
 - “How do we use the world’s resources with care and consideration for future generations and with respect for all life?”
 - “Do you endeavor to understand the detrimental changes affecting earth systems and humanity?”
 - “Do you seek to meet your needs in a sustainable way by preserving resources, enhancing the health of the earth, and by protecting the future?”
- Brian McCutcheon, clerk of our Care and Community Committee, asked Friends if there was a need for some to be “Held in the Light” this month.
- Roselle Clark, clerk of Peace and Social Action Committee, announced that the Thrifty Quaker was again honored by the Richmond Peace Education Center at their annual dinner. In addition, the October charity recipient, Prisoner Visitation, was sent \$2,746.01. This brings the total donations this year to over \$26,000.

Roselle, speaking for PSAC, sought approval from meeting for a proposed “Minute” on climate change. The minute is very timely given that there is a worldwide summit coming up. Some of the decisions reached following a lengthy discussion included, first, that we do want to make a statement about climate change as a meeting. Secondly, we do want to move forward and accept the joint minute circulating among meetings around the world. The list of supporting Quaker groups and meetings that will be sent to a Paris summit on climate change in December was shared. Our meeting will be added. **Midlothian Friends Meeting unites with this minute for the purpose of joining this worldwide effort.** Additionally, we do want to adopt our own MFM unique statement from our community to be posted on our website and shared with the Richmond community knowing that this is going to be an ongoing issue. See attached approved “Minute” on climate change.

Roselle will ask PSAC to make suggestions for our meeting to consider for our own statement. One example the committee already suggested shows the difference in point of view. Original: As Quakers, we are called to work for the peaceable Kingdom of God on the whole Earth, in right sharing with all peoples. Revised: As Quakers, we are called to be stewards of our natural world, and promote right sharing with all peoples.

- Ann Duncan, treasurer, submitted a report through October. It shows MFM is at 89% of donations needed to meet our budget. If there is no increase in donations the projected deficit will be \$1,905.00 (attached).
- Dave Clark, clerk of Spiritual Nurture Committee, presented the committee’s idea for a spiritual nurture theme for the year 2016. This was presented with further discussion held over until 12th month (attached).
- Nominating Committee David Stocker, Jane Roberson, Maria Cannady and Tom DeWeerd will begin work during this next month on the roster for positions and committee members for MFM next year.
- A short silence ended business meeting as our children returned from First Day School.

Facing the Challenge of Climate Change
A shared statement by Quaker groups
January 2015

“It would go a long way to caution and direct people in their use of the world, that they were better studied and knowing in the Creation of it. For how could [they] find the confidence to abuse it, while they should see the great Creator stare them in the face, in all and every part of it?”

William Penn, 1693

As Quakers, we are called to work for the peaceable Kingdom of God on the whole Earth, in right sharing with all peoples. We recognize a moral duty to cherish Creation for future generations.

We call on our leaders to make the radical decisions needed to create a fair, sufficient and effective international climate change agreement.

As Quakers, we understand anthropogenic climate change (climate change due to human activities) to be a symptom of a greater challenge: how to live sustainably and justly on this Earth.

We recognize that the current rise of greenhouse gas emissions is leading to an unprecedented rate of increase in global average surface temperature of extreme detriment to the Earth’s ecosystems and species, including human beings.

We recognize that catastrophic global climate change is not inevitable if we choose to act urgently.

We recognize a personal and collective responsibility to ensure that the poorest and most vulnerable peoples now, and all our future generations, do not suffer as a consequence of our actions. We see this as a call to conscience.

We recognize the connections between climate change and global economic injustice as well as unprecedented levels of consumption, and question assumptions of unlimited material growth on a planet with limited natural resources.

We recognize that most greenhouse gas emissions are created by fossil fuel combustion. We recognize that our increasing population continues to pursue fossil fuel-dependent economic growth. We recognize that the Earth holds more fossil fuel reserves than are safe to burn, and that the vast majority of fossil fuel reserves must remain in the ground if we are to prevent the catastrophic consequences of climate change. We therefore question profoundly the continued investment in, and subsidizing of, fossil fuel extraction.

We seek to nurture a global human society that prioritizes the well-being of people over profit, and lives in right relationship with our Earth; a peaceful world with fulfilling employment, clean air and water, renewable energy, and healthy thriving communities and ecosystems.

As members of this beautiful human family, we seek meaningful commitments from our leaders and ourselves, to address climate change for our shared future, the Earth and all

species, and the generations to come. We see this Earth as a stunning gift that supports life. It is our only home. Let us care for it together.

Quakers in Ghana
Quakers in Britain
Living Witness, UK
EcoQuakers Ireland
Quakers in Australia
Quakers in Denmark
Norway Yearly Meeting
Quaker Service Australia
Netherlands Yearly Meeting
Miami Friends Meeting, USA
Quaker Institute for the Future
Northern Yearly Meeting, USA
Memphis Friends Meeting, USA
New York Yearly Meeting, USA
Storrs Friends Meeting, CT, USA
Quaker Concern for Animals, UK
Quaker Earthcare Witness (QEW)
Newtown Monthly Meeting, USA
Croton Valley Meeting, NY, USA
Quakers in Aotearoa New Zealand
FWCC- Asia West Pacific Section
Cookeville Monthly Meeting, USA
Eugene Friends Meeting, OR, USA
Winnipeg Monthly Meeting, Canada
Lafayette Friends Meeting, IN, USA
Princeton Friends Meeting, NJ, USA
Nashville Friends Meeting, TN, USA
Trenton Meeting of Friends, NJ, USA
Honolulu Monthly Meeting, HI, USA
Humboldt Friends Meeting, CA, USA
Santa Fe Monthly Meeting, NM, USA
Westtown Monthly Meeting, PN, USA
Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre, UK
Quaker United Nations Office (QUNO)
Sacramento Friends Meeting, CA, USA
Twin Cities Friends Meeting, MN, USA
Chena Ridge Friends Meeting, AL, USA
Salmon Bay Friends Meeting, WA, USA
Belgium & Luxembourg Yearly Meeting
FWCC - Europe and Middle East Section
Northampton Friends Meeting, MA, USA
Yellow Springs Friends Meeting, OH, USA
Delta Monthly Meeting, Stockton, CA, USA
Canadian Friends Service Committee (CFSC)
American Friends Service Committee (AFSC)
Quaker Council for European Affairs (QCEA)
Société Religieuse des Amis (Quakers), France
Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL)
Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC)
South Central Yearly Meeting (TX, OK, AR, LA), USA

Midlothian Friends Meeting - Spiritual Theme for 2016

“Making Space for What Matters”

Proposal:

The Spiritual Nurture Committee is proposing a spiritual direction or theme for Midlothian Friends Meeting in 2016: Emphasizing simplicity, or **“Making space for what matters”**.

Background

Why simplicity

There seems to be a general trend in our modern society to live our lives with as much activity as possible, to do more and get more out of our lives. Employees are being asked to work longer hours, and produce more, meaning less free time and greater stress. Children whose parents can afford it sometimes over schedule their children, giving them little free time. This trend can be called simply “Busyness”.

This busyness is affecting Midlothian Meeting as it is other churches and volunteer organizations. We have gradually shortened the time allocated for an annual Gathering for Clearness to the point where this year we skipped it altogether. We see it most manifest in the feedback we have been getting from new attenders that they will come to Meeting for Worship, but “please don’t put me on a committee!”

In addition, young parents and others find that losing a half day on the least busy day of the week is just too much: they want to rest and gear up for the week to come. This author has seen this personally in a couple that were active in Meeting, but then decided they wanted the time to do just that (and they were kind of enough to share their reasons with us).

What

To help Meeting, we feel that our worship time, and our beliefs and community, can offer an antidote for that busyness: simplicity.

Simplicity is one of our SPICES testimonies, and has long been an important Quaker value. It was visible in the simple clothes that early Quakers wore: plain grey, with little adornment or accessories.

We have already seen the effects of simplifying our organizational structure by de-emphasizing committees, and the reception to that has been very positive. But while a simpler organizational structure is one step in this direction, we believe we can all find other ideas that would benefit Meeting as a whole as well as our lives outside Meeting.

Possible ways to implement

As an overarching theme for Meeting, simplicity can become part of all of what MFM does:

1. Meeting for Worship: Friends could listen to what the Light says about simplicity in their lives while they worship.
2. Meeting for Business: Simplicity could be an inspiration for the regular queries before Meeting for Worship.
3. Religious Education Simplicity could be woven into lessons for RE: Our wonderful teachers will certainly have some ideas.
4. Committees: Committees could ponder how their processes and meetings could be simplified, and how their work outside the committee could present simplicity.
5. Small groups could gather physically or through electronic means, and exchange ideas about a particular part of simplicity; for example, the simplicity book that Friends purchased through Karrie Richards earlier in 2015.

It is our hope that the Spiritual Nurture could offer some guidance: for example, offering different ways to define simplicity and distributing information about it. The committee could also tailor specific programs to help Friends with implementing simplicity in their lives; for example programs on better organizing people's personal and work lives.

Summary

We believe that a theme for MFM to worshipfully incorporate into their lives, and making space for what matters, could provide spiritual nurture for Friends.

As a theme, there doesn't have to be any specific programs to implement it, nor is there any sort of mandate about it. It is just something for Friends to consider during Meeting for Worship and throughout their lives.

Meeting could consider different themes in the following years. For example, 2017's theme could be another of our SPICES beliefs, like inner and outer piece.