

**Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business**  
**Asheville Friends Meeting Minutes**  
**Fourth Month 12, 2026**

Present in the Meetinghouse: Interim Clerk: Robin Wells, Recording Clerk: Elliott Jarrett, Margaret Farmer, Isabella Bradshaw, Laura McCullough, Jim Cavener, Adrienne Weir, Pat Johnson, Suzanne Junkin-Fredericks, Steve Livingston, Diantha Hodges, Sarah Jane Thomas, Ellie Cox, Jim Barham, Katherine Kowal, Barbara Esther, Margaret Normile, Susan Oehler

Present via Zoom: Beth Eddy, Mike Eddy, Gita Larson

The meeting opened with silent worship.

Out of the silence, the Interim Clerk read a poem by La Verne Maria Shelton as published in Friends Journal in October 2014.

Beloved,  
grant that my soul,  
the workplace of Spirit within,  
have the grace of possessing  
both a window and a door.

Windows let in light and air from outside  
and bring hope and wisdom,  
when it is needed within.

And when the lights of my soul  
shine through clear, window glass,  
the radiance can be perceived,  
and can sometimes bring insight  
to perplexities that enthrall others.

Yet a window makes but part of  
the connection required for wholeness.

for Spirit moves out  
through the door of my soul,  
with the grounding of Love  
and a feathery flight,  
and brings joy when it alights  
upon its kindred—  
For, is any not its kin?

And when the stranger knocks at the door,  
spirit can fling it wide open,  
inviting the stranger to sup  
and become friend,  
giving succor, new learning, and renewal  
to both me and thee.

Beloved, may my soul—and my community  
—have the grace  
of both a window and a door.

### Presentation of the Agenda

**Minute #1: The Agenda was accepted.**

### Approval of 2nd Month Minutes

**Minute #2: The 2nd Month Minutes were approved.**

### Approval of the 3rd Month Minutes

**Minute #3: The 3rd month Meeting Minutes were approved.**

### Announcements

- During our second hour on April 19th, we will have an Earth Day program on several facets of food as an environmental justice issue. Several members will share projects going on in Asheville. We will also learn about things Meeting

folks can do to help and why these things are important. Please join us for refreshments and good talk.

- Our annual Youth Celebration will be held at rise of meeting on May 31st this year. We will have a short presentation about the children in Meeting followed by a potluck meal. Please join us.
- Our 2026 SAYMA Annual Sessions and Retreat will be held on June 18-21 at Berea College in Berea, KY. The theme is Seeking Spirit Together. Workshop proposals are being accepted until April 15th. Registration for the Annual Sessions will open soon.
- The 2026 Gathering of Friends General Conference will be held in Burlington, Vermont from July 7-July 12. Early registration (with a payment plan option) was open until March 17. Full Registration and work-grant applications open on April 1. Full details can be found at <https://www.fgcquaker.org/fgcprograms/the-gathering/>.
- The Hospitality Committee would like to request more help in the Kitchen. This would involve helping prep the kitchen before Meeting for Worship and preparing the tables after Meeting. This does not necessarily involve cleaning up after Meeting for Worship. Speak with Patty or Tim Burgess, Laura Yanasak or Barbara Burke if you are willing to help.

#### Ministry and Counsel Announcement—Robin Wells

It is with deep love and gratitude for her service to the Meeting, Ministry and Counsel is announcing that Lilith has asked to take a break from her role as Presiding Clerk. We thank her for all she has done and we look forward to her continued participation in the life of the Meeting. We will be looking for another Clerk or possibly a pair of Co-Clerks to step into this role.

If anyone is interested in Clerking or being a Co-Clerk for the Meeting please see the Nominating Committee. A Clerk must be a member of the Religious Society of Friends.

#### Labor Acknowledgement—Steve Livingston

The Peace, Earth, and Justice Action (PEJA) Committee recommends that this statement be added to our rise of Meeting announcements, directly following our Land Acknowledgement. In our previous Business Meeting we began discussion

of this proposal but it was cut short when Satchel arrived. Two suggestions were incorporated into the draft, and Meeting requested that I post it as a Google Doc for folks to consider and comment. One suggestion has been incorporated from that part of the process. Here is the statement as revised:

Asheville Friends Meeting acknowledges that we live in a region that was built in part with stolen labor of enslaved Africans and their descendants, and we benefit materially from their exploitation. We lament the incalculable deprivation and loss of life, and the resultant generational trauma exacerbated by injustice and inequity to this day. We acknowledge our responsibility to address these historical and ongoing harms through mitigation and reparative action. To this end we are committed to:

- \* nurturing our relationships with Asheville's Black communities,
- \* following the guidance of Black leaders in efforts to stop the harm,
- \* supporting and participating in the work of Black-led community organizations, and
- \* providing reparative compensation through our Meeting's Reparations Fund.

Friends discussed concerns about the length and repetitiveness of our acknowledgements. One Friend suggested that the repetition helps them to internalize and inform their belief system. They also had concerns about the specificity or generality of acknowledgements. Several Friends spoke in support of the Acknowledgement as written and appreciated the reminder and call to action. We were reminded that statements like this tell people who we are as a Meeting and welcomes new attenders. The Meeting discussed the possibility of putting the Statement in the foyer but this option will be discussed at a later time. We agreed to view this acknowledgment as “Living” and we will in the future be able to change and add to it as we grow as a Meeting. A concern was raised that acknowledgments like this come across as a creed, but friends allayed this concern.

**Minute #4: The Meeting approved the addition of this Labor Acknowledgement to the meeting announcements. It will follow the Land Acknowledgement.**

### Proposed Change of Terminology Used for Sandwich Sunday—Robin Wells

Two months ago, we proposed the idea of changing the name, “Sandwich Sunday” to “Potluck Sunday.” We have found that people new to Meeting are confused by the name “Sandwich Sunday,” since we don’t serve sandwiches and it doesn’t say anything about bringing a meal to share. We have heard people say, “If I knew it was a potluck, I would have brought something. I am embarrassed that I didn’t know.”

**Minute #5—The Meeting approved the change of terminology used for Sandwich Sunday. It will be named Potluck Sunday.**

### Statement in Opposition To War Against Iran—Steve Livingston

The PEJA Committee recommends that Meeting approve this statement to be shared publicly to the extent possible and in hopes that such sharing will be rendered moot by a swift and favorable resolution of the conflict:

In violation of federal law and internationally agreed humanitarian principles, the executive leadership of the United States launched a war of aggression against Iran, without any effective opposition from Congress, and without support from, or even consultation with, the United Nations Security Council. The executive ordered military personnel to participate in the assassination of Iran’s political leadership in violation of international law, and decreed that military personnel ignore established rules of engagement, target non-combatants, and give no quarter to captives.

We Quakers of Asheville Friends Meeting acknowledge that as tax-paying citizens we are complicit in the waging of this war, and for the sake of conscience we cannot remain silent or complacent in the face of such a travesty of justice. We are unequivocally opposed to this assault against human life, human rights, and international law, and will take every opportunity to stand up and speak out against it.

The Meeting was overall in support of the intent of the message. We worked together to make edits to make the message the most clear and representative of the Meeting as a whole.

**Minute #6: The Meeting approved publishing this statement in opposition to war against Iran. The committee will disseminate this statement and share with the Meeting.**

Library Committee—Ellie Cox

The Library Committee is sharing with the Meeting that Margaret Normile has felt the need to retire from this Committee. We will miss her consistent presence, thoughtful consideration of issues requiring decisions, and the performance of the tasks she accepted. Without her initiating the process of reclaiming a neglected library, we would not be able to take advantage of the resource we have today. Thank You, Margaret! The committee offers the following minute of appreciation:

We appreciate the caring and faithful service that Margaret Normile gives the Meeting. We are grateful for her work helping restore order to the Asheville Friends Meeting library.

The Library Committee invites interested Friends to join our committee.

There is a continuing need for:

- shelving books,
- occasional shelf reading,
- someone to hang out in the Library after Meeting for Worship to help acquaint visitors with the Library,
- assist anyone looking for something in particular,
- special projects as needed.

There is also an ongoing need for someone to work with Marcia Master to prepare new acquisitions for circulation.

If anyone is interested in learning more about what is needed and how they might contribute to the Library, please speak with me, Margaret Farmer or Laura Yanasak.

Margaret expresses her thanks. Our good friend and continued helper, Marcia Master, is given acknowledgement that she and I worked together to organize the committee.

**Minute #7 –We appreciate the caring and faithful service that Margaret Normile gives the Meeting. We are grateful for her work helping restore order to the Asheville Friends Meeting library.**

Nominating Committee—Mike Eddy

Our Meeting has need of a new Presiding Clerk. As you have heard, our Friend Lilith needs to step down from this position at this time. If you are interested, please talk with a member of Ministry and Counsel or a member of Nominating Committee.

As minuted below, Margaret Normile is leaving the Library Committee.

The Nominating Committee is happy to report that a new committee is forming in Meeting. We will have a Music Committee and Isabella Bradshaw has come forward to clerk it. Do we have any other Friends interested in joining the Music Committee?

We discussed the creation of the Music Committee. Some Friends encouraged thoughtfulness in the creation of the committee. We discussed the importance of choosing and changing hymns to better reflect the Meeting's principles. We also wanted to recognize and include the work of Jim Barham who has recently led this practice of singing at 9:30. We are encouraged to find new hymns and maintain the practice of singing familiar ones. The Meeting is excited about the formation of this committee.

**Minute #8–Meeting accepts the resignation of Margaret Normile from the Library Committee with appreciation for her many years of service.**

**Minute #9– Meeting approved establishing a new Music Committee. Isabella Bradshaw will be taking leadership with this committee and will be reaching out to others.**

Outlay from the Community Support Fund–Steve Livingston

The PEJA Committee reports to the Meeting that we agreed to an outlay of \$500 to invest in the work of 40 Acres LOTSA, a non-profit consisting of former members of the Asheville-Buncombe Community Reparations Commission seeking to bring about the Commission's recommendations as agreed by City and County governments.

**Approved 2025 State of the Meeting Report**  
**Asheville Friends Meeting**

*How has your meeting maintained its center and focus on Spirit?*

We find that we receive a regular spiritual lift as we sit together in worship. Connecting with Friends helps us know we are not alone. Sitting in the silence allows us to wait together with the intention of clearing the unhelpful thoughts and feelings, centering down, opening up, and finding much needed wisdom. This is a process that takes practice and time, and is easier and more powerful when done in community. When together, we expect Spirit to open the way.

Sharing our joys and concerns helps us practice empathy and experience solidarity. Shared information about local activities and protests which reflect our values encourages participation. However, the way that we were sharing directly after the hour of worship made it difficult for some, especially newcomers. We seek to differentiate between the messages rising from the Inner Teacher during the silence and messages that are personal and political. We have separated the sharing of personal joys and concerns from the hour of meeting for worship. Our new process of closing meeting creates space for more people to participate, rather than the few who may speak out of the silence. To better meet the need to discern whether a message is to be shared during meeting for worship or shared as a joy or concern, we offered a second hour program that focused on vocal ministry. This reminded us of ways to discern which messages derive from Spirit and when they are meant to be shared.

*How does your spiritual community support Friends in discerning and pursuing what is theirs to do in today's world?*

We continued to carry the weight of 2024 tropical storm Helene's impact on surrounding communities and in the lives of those still suffering. We were able to channel donations to those in need through various organizations.

We are aware of the impact of what we do, as individuals and as a Meeting, regarding the health of our planet. When our west end furnace died we supported Friends' recommendation to pay more to install mini-splits in three locations in order to move away from the use of oil and gas power.

Our connection to nature sometimes comes in surprising ways. Not long ago, during a business meeting, we were visited by a hawk in the dogwood tree outside the big south-facing windows just as we were transitioning from one agenda item to another. We interrupted the business meeting and turned our collective attention to the Hawk and were excited for the opportunity to photograph it while we waited for the Treasurer's report. We value the nurture of the turkeys, bears and occasional birds who visit us, even if they did help themselves to the kale that the children and one of our adult gardeners planted in the Fall!

We have also shown our solidarity with Friends called to support the rights of immigrants in our area, hanging a banner at the front of our property, and distributing yard signs that remind us to love our neighbors by defending immigrants' rights. Friends from our meeting are participating in wider-community training around immigrant justice. We joined an alliance with other faith groups to be more aware of and respond to the needs or challenges facing immigrants. Friends stepped up to serve and form a response team in case we have a visit from federal immigration agents, writing a protocol with specific roles of various people if such a visit were to occur. Ministry and Counsel collaborated with Friends who had taken training in immigration rights and justice. We are learning to trust practices that center Quaker perspectives of compassion, understanding, non-violence, and inclusivity as we plan for what we hope will never happen.

We shower our children with love and respect and find that sharing our values with each other, helps us appreciate and better reflect those values. Religious Education offers our children perspective, reflecting the basic jewels of Quakerism. Their activities, such as making care bags for unhoused individuals, show their caring spirit.

Where we live, we're surrounded by gun culture. With the calm that one carries from meeting, we can be better listeners, not reactionary, but instead listening to those around us who keep guns. Friends enthusiastically support Raw Tools South, the ministry of one of our members to transform gun metal into garden tools and other objects from surrendered guns. At gun surrender events, he often finds opportunities to minister to the people surrendering firearms, They are granted release from the trauma many of them experienced, especially when the guns were used in a suicide.

Asheville Friends feel connected and strengthened knowing that there are Friends who share pressing concerns. Friends who share their leadings to address injustice help our Meeting more clearly see the wrongs of the world, to maintain hope and find ways to act. We sense the fragility of the Peace Testimony when we do not act. We are held together by our commitment to help and protect others, and our hope for a more uplifting outcome. We contemplate the state of affairs in the world with a combination of fear of what's happening and determination to make a positive difference in the lives of the most vulnerable.

We provide opportunities for clearness committees when individuals reach out for help. New attenders seek and find materials in our meeting library to engage them as they learn more about Quakerism.

*Where is the leading edge of spiritual growth in your Meeting community?*

We have had an increase in spiritual activism, merging inner spiritual work with external social change. Many feel a deep connectedness with those being oppressed and are driven to address it in a variety of ways.

We have had many visitors and seekers join us in worship this past year, to experience stepping out of the prevailing tumult of change and confusion. Friends' worship, the caring community, and the varieties of outreach among Asheville Friends appeal to some who have begun to attend regularly. While attracting newcomers may be easy, our meeting finds that retaining them is difficult. Newcomers who are young and/or people of color often cease attending after a few visits. This is a concern of our meeting.

One recent second hour was lovingly focused around neurodiversity, touching our hearts and deepening our compassion and our understanding of ways we can better support and care for one another. The panel presenting included a professional and three generations of Friends on the spectrum.

New attenders seek and find materials in our meeting library to engage them as they learn more about Quakerism. We provide opportunities for clearness committees when individuals reach out for help or seek membership.

*In what ways does or doesn't your meeting connect with the Religious Society of Friends and/or the wider Quaker world?*

In the Quaker historical spirit of addressing sufferings we try to serve those within our community who need assistance or encouragement. For example, we were providing a meal each Sunday evening for the widow of a beloved member. When she died this all, several of us celebrated her life with her family and friends at the Basilica in Asheville.

Throughout the year we had opportunities to work with other Quaker meetings and wider Quaker organizations. We have collaborated with Swannanoa Valley and Celo Friends Meetings to work with both Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians. We supported the development of Celo meeting's land acknowledgement. We attended several meetings that Swannanoa Valley Friends organized around right relationship with Native Peoples. Several of us participated in a walk of

Remembrance for the children who attended the Indian Boarding Schools and Day Schools. The walk recognized & acknowledged the intergenerational trauma from the forced family & cultural separation in attempts to assimilate Native Peoples. This remembrance is held each September 30. We were delighted to see many Friends that day in Cherokee from several meetings in and near SAYMA.

A couple of months later we received eight letters from fourth graders attending Carolina Friends School asking us what the meeting was doing to make reparations for the harms done by Quakers and others by schooling indigenous people in ways that were detrimental to their language and culture. Individuals responded about our attempts to seek right relationship with Native Americans in our area, and the journey toward making amends.

In 2023 we approved setting up an Indigenous People's Fund supported by a portion of rental income, the value of our own time at the Meetinghouse & individual donations to be donated to a Cherokee organization as a rent payment for their property that we occupy. This year we determined that the recipient of the rent payment is the Center for Native Health. The director, Trey Adcock gave a presentation that shared the goals and activities of the center.

Two Friends in our meeting have become very active in Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL). Because of their encouragement and the work of our Peace, Earth and Justice Action Committee (PEJA), many of us were moved to lobby our representatives in government through visits, calls, card writing, and paying attention to the priorities of FCNL that we participate in setting. Another Friend serves on Friends General Conference's newly-formed governing board, and works to support the Ministry on Racism. Both the meeting and individuals have consistently participated in and developed connections, information, and friendships from the SAYMA yearly meeting gatherings, committees and workshops. In our budget we allow for contributions to those and other wider Quaker organizations. That budget process serves as an example to individuals regarding what work we want to support.

We would like to thank the SAYMA Ministry and Nurture Committee for these thoughtful queries. We find this annual time of reflection to be helpful and inspirational.

**Minute #10: The Meeting approved the 2025 State of the Meeting Report. It will be sent to the SAYMA office.**

Ad Hoc Yard Sale Committee Report—Robin Wells

The Ad Hoc Yard Sale Committee currently consists of Robin Wells (clerk) and Barbara Esther. Pat Johnson and Rylin Hansen have agreed to serve as well. We are looking for two or three additional members. Who would like to join this committee?

As we get closer to the Yard Sale date, we will have a volunteer sign up for tasks related to the sale: transporting items to the Meetinghouse, organizing and pricing items on Friday, staffing the sale on Saturday, and taking leftovers to Habitat for Humanity or Goodwill after the sale.

The collection of things to sell is well underway. Thank you to the people who have already contributed to this sale. We need to set a tentative date for the yard sale, which is contingent on weather. We don't want to have it in the rain. Our first proposed date is June 6th. Does anyone see a conflict with this date?

The committee has considered where the funds from the Yard Sale should go. We would like to propose that they be split between the Community Fund, the Reparations Fund, and the Indigenous Peoples Fund. A friend recommended that we consider funding the new playground or a new minisplit in the meeting room. We welcome other ideas and discussion will continue. We will not approve a date at this point.

**Minute #11: The Meeting approved the addition of Pat Johnson and Rylin Hansen to the Ad Hoc Yard Sale Committee. Ellie Cox and Bobby Carter have agreed to help with the yard sale, but not be on the committee, depending on the date.**

The business meeting will close with silent worship until way opens for our Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business on the 10th day, 5th month 2026.

