

**344th Annual Sessions of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting
Called to Healing
Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business**

Held on Tuesday, June 25th, 2024 with 70 Friends participating remotely by Zoom.

The meeting began with worship.

Introductions. Clerk Melissa Rycroft opened the session and introduced herself and rising clerk Nikki Mosgrove, the recording clerks, Sally McQuail and Susan Kennedy and General Secretary Christie Duncan-Tessmer. Elders during this session are Bethann Morgan, George Rubin, Yelena Forrester, Terri Whiteford and Susan Elliot. Pastoral Care is provided by Meg Barney and Carter Nash.

Melissa Rycroft reminded Friends to be patient with folks who struggle with technology. On Zoom, you can chat to the tech host and the rising clerk. Please wait to be recognized if you wish to speak. Closed caption is turned on.

Meeting Reports.

The Epistle Committee nominees were presented by Nicki Mosgrove: Carol Holmes Alpern from Scarsdale MM, currently worshipping with Plymouth MM; John Broadfield, Chester MM; Andrea Henley Heyn, attender at Upper Susquehanna Quarter; Jada Jackson, Trenton MM; Jayson Massey, Germantown MM. The Epistle Committee will create the letter capturing what happened at these annual sessions. Friends approved the nominees.

The Finance Committee's 2025 Budget was presented by Tom Zemaitis.

The proposed budget for the fiscal year begins on October 1st, 2024. This is an operating budget. It does not include capital campaigns. The operating budget consists of unrestricted revenue. The majority of the unrestricted revenue goes to staffing. The majority of the restricted budget comes from investments. Staff salaries are increased this year, as we anticipate 100% of the positions to be filled. Also, we are increasing salaries as we were paying less than other similar organizations and we are rectifying that.

The unrestricted contributions to others are set for 2024, the specific amount of unrestricted contributions to others has not yet set for 2025. A Friend asked about the diversity of the Finance Committee. A Friend asked about donating funds outside of Quaker organizations. We are restricted in the distribution of these funds. Please contact Tom Zemaitis or Linell McCurry with questions regarding the budget. The budget will be presented for decision at a subsequent Annual Sessions Meeting for Business.

The Climate Stewards report was presented by clerk Jackie Bonomo.

Jackie asked Friends to reduce dependence on fossil fuels. The Climate Witness Stewards are recommending to the body that PYM measure the carbon footprint of our operations, gatherings and facilities and then identify how the yearly meeting could be carbon net zero by 2030 and that monthly meetings strive to reach 50% carbon reduction for members and meeting houses. This recommendation will come to Continuing Sessions for consideration for approval. Please take the proposed carbon reduction benchmarks to your monthly meeting. A Friend asked that the Climate Stewards use language that reflects the dire circumstances that we are facing. A Friend asked that Friends with skills and knowledge please consider joining the Ad Hoc group of the Net Zero Project which is stewarding the project. A visitor asked that individual Friends and Monthly Meetings under the care of PYM divest from investments with Vanguard, as these are not consistent with our climate goals. Members and attenders are encouraged to have stronger partnerships with Earth Quaker Action Team.

Minutes were read, corrected and approved.

Respectfully submitted,
Sally McQuail, recording clerk

Held in person and on Zoom at Haverford College on Saturday, July 6th, 2024 with 125 Friends participating in total.

The meeting began with worship.

Four Friends, Susan Claggett, Jean-Marie Prestwidge Barch, Jeannie Elberfield and Sue Dietz presented queries and read an acknowledgement of the Indigenous people on whose land we are living. We are committed to understanding and learning to live with respect to what has come before us.

Introductions. Presiding clerk Melissa Rycroft opened the session and introduced herself and rising clerk Nikki Mosgrove, the recording clerks, Sally McQuail and Emily Blanck and General Secretary Christie Duncan-Tessmer. Those serving on Pastoral Care: Carter Nash in person, and Meg Barney and Edie Nolan online. Elders Bethann Morgan in person, George Rubin and Yelena Forrester online.

The Clerk expressed appreciation for everyone who helped to set up sessions in conjunction with the Friends General Conference Gathering.

Melissa reminded Friends to be patient with technology. Please wait to be recognized if you wish to speak. Please raise your hand so a microphone can be brought to you. If you are on Zoom, please raise your Zoom hand, or you can message Nikki Mosgrove, who is clerking the Zoom. Please speak slowly and clearly.

We will be taking a break during the session.

The clerk presented Emily Blanck and Susan Kennedy to serve as recording clerks for Annual Sessions. Friends approved.

We welcome visiting Friends: Emily Provance, NYYM, and Lauren Brownlee, FCNL, Rashid Darden, FGC, Brian Blackmore, Gainesville YM and AFSC.

Setting the Table.

Worship. To help us prepare for Annual Sessions, we heard from Melanie Douty Snipes, who reflected on what worship means to her. She had two Quaker grandmothers. She joined Merion MM at the age of 13. She is currently a member of Fallsington MM. Going to Meeting has been her rock. Sitting in worship is profound, and it brings her into a powerful presence. The 23rd Psalm is very meaningful to Melanie. She finds profound love which restores her soul. Melanie and her husband, Jonathan Snipes, shared a beautiful duet, "Light the Fire".

Discernment. Steve Thompson, Central Philadelphia MM, spoke about discernment. He noted that the way we have always done decision making may build problematic biases. Our goal is to align our decisions to the spirit. Quakers work to reach unity. We find it by seeking the Sense of the Meeting. An awareness, as a corporate body, of the divinely led decision. We depend on the clerk to capture the sense of the meeting to the best of their ability. Friends help to make the decision clear. We are blessed when the recording clerk reads back the draft that it reflects the sense of the meeting.

Addressing Racism Witness. Nikki Mosgrove spoke about how we are addressing racism as a yearly meeting corporate witness. As an African American friend, she could see patterns of racism more easily than non-people of color. Some friends of color might feel pressured to stay silent. Pay attention to patterns of racism that show up in this gathering. Please feel free to interrupt racism. Send an email to Nikki if you would like to share something with her.

Climate Change Witness: Another concern is our witness for climate change. Jackie Bonomo, State College MM and PYM Climate Witness Steward, shared a carbon calculator for our diet. Eat more chicken and fish, less meat and dairy. Go meat free one day a week. Jackie grows food in her backyard and recommends we consider joining a CSA. Eating locally reduces use of plastic packaging and reduces dependence on food coming from far away. This could slash green house emissions by 70%. Consider cutting your carbon footprint. On the weekend of Annual Sessions, we could cut 1000 pounds of carbon dioxide if we all ate a vegan diet. Food waste accounts for 6% of total emissions. A friend asked how we take into account how the electricity is produced for electric cars? Please direct questions to our Climate Witness Stewards. Gas cars travel 2500 miles generating the same amount of carbon dioxide as an electric car generates in 9000 miles.

Clerk Melissa Rycroft shared a gift for all attenders of this gathering: A spork! With a case! Engraved with "This is how a Quaker eats!"

Nominating Report.

George Schaeffer from the Nominating Council presented the nominees to fill open positions. We are a profoundly prophetic community. He is looking for everyday prophets. Name the Friends who have gifts to share. Please refer to the report for the names of the Friends who have agreed to fill these positions, and see what positions remain opened that you may be interested in filling. Friends from AFSC would like to have more participation. There were 7 Friends released from their completed terms. Only 6 of the 13 Quarters have a representative serving on the Nominating Council. Friends approved the nominees with one correction: Tom Martin is a member of Birmingham MM, not Haddonfield.

Amy Duckett Wagner from Fallsington MM, and Peterson Toscano from Millville MM are PYM representatives to FWCC Plenary sessions in South Africa. Fallsington MM submitted a traveling minute to support Amy who will be attending in person. Peterson Toscano will be attending online.

The 2025 proposed Yearly Meeting budget was presented for approval by Tom Zemaitis, from Willistown MM, having been discussed on June 25th.

Please refer to the advance documents. The fiscal year begins on October 1st, 2024. We have both restricted and unrestricted budgets. Staff salaries are being increased. PYM's largest revenue stream is generated by the 4% annual return from Friends Fiduciary. A Friend asked when Monthly Meeting contributions are due. Linell McCurry explained that the fiscal year was changed in 2015, it doesn't matter when the monthly meeting sends it. The Yearly Meeting would be grateful for a 2% increase in Monthly Meeting donations. Friends approved the budget.

The Spiritual State of the Yearly Meeting Report was presented by Jean-Marie Prestwidge Barch from Quaker Life Council.

We have an opportunity to learn about each other by reading the Spiritual State of the monthly meeting reports. These reports are available on the website. Each Friend at the gathering was given a puzzle piece and asked to write one word that describes their meeting. We will connect them and create a larger whole. Our gifts fit together as a Yearly Meeting. To synthesize the reports, they chose six attributes that were common: Worship, caring for each other, continuing to learn with our communities, meeting for business, social interactions that create connections, and working together to live our values in the world.

The Middle East Collaborative (MEC) shared a presentation on the war between Israel and Palestine, led by Sandy Rea from Central Philadelphia MM.

American Friends Service Committee created a joint statement with Canadian Friends Service Committee, Friends World Committee for Consultation, Friends Committee on National Legislation, Quakers in Britain, Quaker Council on European Affairs, Quaker Peace and Social Witness, and Quaker United Nations Office. Philadelphia Yearly Meeting has endorsed the document. All Monthly Meetings can join. Middle East Collaborative member, Jonathan Evans from Westtown MM, spoke about the statement asking for a ceasefire and a call to action to the government of Israel, Hamas and other groups, western leaders, including the US. As Friends, we support the need for a permanent ceasefire. We commit to actions until this is realized and to support those who are working for peace. Joan Broadfield, Chester Meeting, spoke about Jonathan's call to focus on justice for all. Deb Wood from Westtown MM shared that Combatants for Peace is a website working with soldiers on both sides of the conflict. The MEC encourages Friends to go to AFSC and FCNL for suggestions for messages to take to your legislators, and to learn more about the deep history of this conflict. Rabbis for Ceasefire are Jews working hard for peace. Resources that the collaborative has compiled are available on the PYM MEC website, which includes a timeline of Quaker involvement in the peace process. Sandy Rea suggested the book "Why Palestine Matters". Please read the minutes from Caln Quarter and from Abington Quarter.

Friends are welcome to participate in their next meeting of the Middle East Collaborative Zoom, which is on July 14, 2024 at 1:30. For more information, contact Sandy Rea.

Jeanne Elberfeld, Reading MM, presented a report on updating our lobbying policy.

A core group scheduled three listening sessions. The results were shared with the Administrative Council and a Sprint was created. They plan to meet bi-weekly until early October to create a draft that will be reviewed by the Administrative Council and brought to Continuing Sessions in November of 2024. Please hold this Sprint in the light as they discern their way forward.

Discussion regarding our five strategic directions (connecting, belonging, witnessing, communicating and functioning) was led by Christie Duncan-Tessmer. General Secretary.

Connecting meetings: We are focusing on connecting our Monthly and Quarterly Meetings and working to implement these strategic directions. We as a Yearly Meeting work together and take information back to our Monthly and Quarterly Meetings.

Today we focused on how we can implement connecting our meetings. How do we get there? The General Secretary recommended we set up a sprint composed of 5-8 Friends who are willing to serve and shared a sprint charge. Please send nominees who are interested in participating to executive Administrator, Cecelia Filauro. Question: Does the person need to be a member? They can be attenders, too. A Friend hopes that the Sprint is considering the geography of connecting our meetings. A Friend likened the connection to an irrigation system. Another asked if we can inventory the ways that we already connect? Yes, this will be added to the sprint charge. The purpose of making connections is to find ways to energize our meetings and to help each other solve their problems. What is the time commitment for the sprint? That it is completed by March Continuing Sessions. There is no directive on how often they meet, as this is up to the sprint members to discern. The Sprint was approved with two additions: Add to the responsibilities of the Sprint charge that the group should inventory existing connecting structures around the Yearly Meeting, and add to the list of sprint participants a Friend who is active in their Quarterly Meeting.

Communicating Quaker practices: deepening our practices of worship and discernment. Quakerism has no creed, but the two primary practices are Meeting for Worship and Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business. This ensures that Friends find a sense of the meeting that is larger than each individual.

Some results from small group sharing were:

- Acknowledges Lenni-Lenape land each week. They have a meditation group that meets weekly.
- Practices of worship are deepened when we understand clearly what we are doing through adult religious education. With that, the joy of worship will empower connections.
- Retreats and alternative ways to worship can be very meaningful.
- We envision comfort in diversity, embracing and appreciating our differences and a shared vocabulary that is inclusive, accessible and dynamic.
- We don't share our stories of our faith journey; we should do so.
- Encourage the use of clearness committees.
- Work to foster deep messages and deep silences.
- Openness and obedience to that voice; listening is the key to our worshipping discernment.
- Have brave spaces for worship, not safe spaces.

Minutes were read, corrected and approved.

The meeting concluded with worship.

Respectfully submitted,
Sally McQuail, recording clerk
Emily Blanck, recording clerk

Held in person and by Zoom at Haverford College on Sunday, July 7th, 2024 with 75 Friends participating in person and approximately 40 online.

The meeting began with worship.

Introductions. Melissa Rycroft, Presiding Clerk, opened the session and introduced Nikki Mosgrove, Rising Clerk, the recording clerks, Sally McQuail and Susan Kennedy, and General Secretary Christie Duncan-Tessmer. Melissa recognized Haverford Meeting for hosting our Meeting for Worship this morning.

Elder Bethann Morgan, is in person, George Rubin and Yelena Forrester are online. The Pastoral Care Team is George Schaefer and George Salloom in person, Meg Barney and Edie Nolan online. Ushers throughout sessions are Sue Dietz, Wendy Kane, Susan Claggett, Matt Bradley, and James Bradley.

Jean Marie Prestwidge Barch and Sue Dietz from Quaker Life Council presented the essence of a PYM meeting.

What is special about each of us in the vessel in which we worship? It is important that those spaces have support. What is a Meeting? A threshing session took place in April, and the Quaker Life Council considered this question. A meeting is a place to gather for worship, friendship and work. It is about our relationships with God. Our meeting business is the committee of the whole. We have responsibility to ourselves and each other. Small groups can be a meeting, without holding meeting for worship with attention to business.

We broke into small groups to ponder: What is essential to us about meeting? What does the body need to do in order to support its connection to Spirit? A few shared highlights from the group: meeting is not only MFW and MFB, but having at least one shared meal together a month, so we can get to know each other. Work days on the property together. Reaching out to friends online. Continuity of some people to keep the group going. Becoming a member to deepen participation. Fostering intergenerational community. We need people of all types, to respect each other, to hold deep meaningful worship. Everyone has gifts, a willingness to participate financially or to facilitate the work of the meeting. Clerk thanked Friends for their discipline.

A description of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting (PYM) community was presented by General Secretary Christie Duncan-Tessmer.

The Philadelphia Yearly Meeting is more than 100 meetings, and 10,000 members and all the ministries they carry. We are supported by our meeting together and doing our business effectively. She talked about two tools of the yearly meeting: sprints and collaboratives.

Sprints, and the template we use to describe a sprint's charge. A sprint is a task/goal-oriented committee, that generally doesn't last longer than six months. The participants are invited to participate based on their knowledge and experience. At times, a short term or very focused sprint can involve other Friends. We draw

from a wider range of Friends. It begins with a charge: The purpose is documented, and the member composition needed to help. Who is the body that is responsible for holding the sprint accountable; without identifying the accountability body, their support can feel like meddling. What specifically is required of the Friends on the sprint? What are the expectations of sprint? List all of those things. Please refer to the advance document to download. There are seven sprints in action at PYM right now. The Land Acknowledgement Sprint has completed its work. A sprint has expanded the Climate Change guide to creating a playbook be presented at schools. A Friend requested that we list all of the sprints on the website.

Collaboratives. Individuals from at least two meetings can join together to work on a shared goal in a collaborative.

The collaborative application is on the Quaker Life Council webpage. Collaboratives are supported by PYM resources such as staff support for connecting, logistics and funds. The most recent collaborative is Friends Ending Gun Violence. Any shared goal can be the motivation for a collaborative, like forming a bike riding group. A Friend asked about how sprints and collaboratives are formed and how they are laid down. The Quaker Life Council has oversight of collaboratives. Is there a place where Friends considering a collaborative can look to see which collaboratives are working now? Check the PYM website and the collaborative pages. How can we facilitate finding people to work together across our Yearly Meeting? Staff works with QLC. A visitor said that AFSC and FCNL can help interested parties collaborate on shared projects. Melinda Wenner Bradley, Director of Program & Religious Life, spoke about the Quaker Religious Education Collaborative. Direct questions to Christie Duncan Tessmer.

Resignation of the General Secretary

Clerk Melissa Rycroft shared that our General Secretary, Christie Duncan Tessmer, is resigning on July 31st, 2025. Christie feels that it has been a privilege to go to work every day. In the last 10 years we have developed methods to get things done and have a deeper understanding of the Yearly Meeting. We care for the needs of the community, and struggle to be a place of belonging for all, and to trust one another and God. Christie is grateful to have worked with Friends throughout our Yearly Meeting. Clerk Melissa Rycroft shared that it has been a joy to work together; Christie is visionary, strategic, generous, and faithful. Christie has made it possible for Melissa to be Presiding Clerk from Upper Susquehanna Quarter. She has always asked the question: How has our faith played out in our decisions? Christie is a beautiful example of servant leadership. Although forming a search committee is the responsibility of Administrative Council, all three councils will come together to form the search committee for our next General Secretary.

Epistle

The epistle committee consists of Carol Holmes Alpern, Joan Broadfield, Andrea Henley Heyn, Jada Jackson, and Jason Massey. This is PYM's outgoing letter to the wider Quaker World. The epistle was read by Andrea Henley Heyn and Jason Massey. The sessions theme was A Call to Healing. We need each other. There is a path to create forgiveness. Empowerment is a theme. Addressing Racism requires action. The second action is Climate Change, we are encouraged to change our food choices and daily habits. Our immediate action is needed. There are many ways to worship and gather, and it is important that we have brave spaces, not safe

spaces. Nearly 100 Friends met in person on Sunday morning, plus 48 on Zoom. We are strong and committed friends who are moved by the light. Friends approved the epistle.

Conclusion of the Presiding Clerk's service

Rising Clerk Nikki Mosgrove shared 1st Corinthians, chapter 13 verses 4-7: As a reflection at the conclusion of Melissa Rycroft's service as presiding clerk, Nikki shared these verses. Love is patient and kind. Love does not envy or boast, it is not arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way, it is not irritable or resentful. Love does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth.

Minutes were read, corrected and approved.

The meeting concluded with worship.

Respectfully submitted,
Sally McQuail, recording clerk
Suzy Kennedy, recording clerk



Nominating Council Report

Nominating Council Members (For informational purposes)

Name	Monthly Meeting	Quarter	
Ron Inskip	Gwynedd	Abington	Quarter Representative
Terry Christensen	Newtown	Bucks	Quarter Representative
		Burlington	Quarter Representative
John Christman	Lancaster	Caln	Quarter Representative
		Chester	Quarter Representative
Serita Spadoni	Birmingham	Concord	Quarter Representative
		Haddonfield	Quarter Representative
		Haverford	Quarter Representative
Chloe Rosenthal	Central Philadelphia	Philadelphia	Quarter Representative
Carleton Crispin	Woodbury	Salem	Quarter Representative
		Southern	Quarter Representative
		Upper Susquehanna	Quarter Representative
		Western	Quarter Representative
			At Large
			At Large
Nancy Robbins	Third Haven	Southern	At Large
Meg Barney	Providence	Chester	At Large
George Schaefer	Abington	Abington	At Large
Jim Waddington	Salem	Salem	At Large
John Marquette	Lehigh Valley	Bucks	At Large

Note: The complete current roster of Nominating Council is provided on the first page of this report for informational purposes. At-large members of Nominating are appointed by the Administrative Council; Quarter Representative members are appointed at their quarterly meetings.

Appointments

Clerks			
NAME	MONTHLY MEETING	QUARTERLY MEETING	TERM END
Nikki Mosgrove – Presiding	Trenton	Burlington	2026 (1)
Jeanne Elberfeld - Administrative Council	Reading	Caln	2027 (1)
Jean-Marie Barch – Quaker Life Council	Schuylkill	Caln	2027 (2)

Treasurer			
NAME	MONTHLY MEETING	QUARTERLY MEETING	TERM END
Tom Zemaitis	Moorestown	Haddonfield	2027 (1)

Quaker Life Council			
NAME	MONTHLY MEETING	QUARTERLY MEETING	TERM END
Jean-Marie Barch	Schuylkill	Philadelphia	2027 (2)

Nominating Council (For informational purposes only)			
NAME	MONTHLY MEETING	QUARTERLY MEETING	TERM END
Nancy Robbins	Third Haven	Southern	2027 (2)
Chloe Rosenthal	Central Philadelphia	Philadelphia	2027 (2)

Elders			
NAME	MONTHLY MEETING	QUARTERLY MEETING	TERM END
Yelena Forrester	Chester	Chester	2027 (2)
Cathleen Marion	Downingtown	Caln	2027 (1)

Climate Witness Stewards			
NAME	MONTHLY MEETING	QUARTERLY MEETING	TERM END
Eric Mayer	Westtown	Concord	2027 (1)

Representatives to American Friends Service Committee			
NAME	MONTHLY MEETING	QUARTERLY MEETING	TERM END
tonya thames taylor	Fallowfield	Western	2027 (1)

Representatives to Friends Council on National Legislation			
NAME	MONTHLY MEETING	QUARTERLY MEETING	TERM END
Sylvia Bronner	Haverford	Haverford	2027 (2)
Deb Hejl	Gwynedd	Abington	2027 (3)
Steve Olshevski	Radnor	Haverford	2027 (3)
Louis Pilla	Radnor	Haverford	2027 (2)

Representatives to Friends General Conference			
NAME	MONTHLY MEETING	QUARTERLY MEETING	TERM END
Howard Frysinger	Downingtown	Caln	2027 (3)
Sarah Haber	Newtown	Haverford	2027 (2)

Friends Peace Teams			
NAME	MONTHLY MEETING	QUARTERLY MEETING	TERM END
Clarkson Palmer	Swarthmore	Chester	2027
Tom Martin	Birmingham	Concord	2027

Releases and Completed Terms

Clerks			
NAME	MONTHLY MEETING	QUARTERLY MEETING	TERM END
Melissa Rycroft – Presiding	Pennsdale	Upper Susquehanna	2024 (1)
Jim Herr - Recording	Lancaster	Caln	2024 (2)

Quaker Life Council			
NAME	MONTHLY MEETING	QUARTERLY MEETING	TERM END
Guinevere Janes	At-large member	N/A	2024 (2)

Nominating Council (For informational purposes only)			
NAME	MONTHLY MEETING	QUARTERLY MEETING	TERM END
John Christman	Lancaster	Caln	2024 (1)

Representatives to American Friends Service Committee			
NAME	MONTHLY MEETING	QUARTERLY MEETING	TERM END
Marille Thomas	Green Street	Philadelphia	2024

Margery Rubin	Medford	Haddonfield	2024
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Pennsylvania Council of Churches			
NAME	MONTHLY MEETING	QUARTERLY MEETING	TERM END
Carter Nash	Harrisburg	Caln	2024

Full Position Listing (For informational purposes only)

Officers

Name	Monthly Meeting	Quarter	Term End
Nikki Mosgrove – Presiding Clerk Rising Clerk (Vacant)	Trenton	Burlington	2026 (1)
Sally McQuail – Recording Clerk Recording Clerk (Vacant) Treasurer (Vacant, Nominated) Assistant Treasurer (Vacant)	Downingtown	Caln	2024 (1)

Administrative Council

Name	Monthly Meeting	Quarter	Term End
Tom Zemaitis	Moorestown	Haddonfield	2026 (2)
Kruskal Hewitt	Media	Chester	2025 (1)
Neil Holzman	Camden	Southern	2025 (1)
Carter Nash	Harrisburg	Caln	2025 (1)
Jeanne Elberfeld	Reading	Caln	2026 (2)
John Marquette	Lehigh Valley	Bucks	2026 (2)
Chuck Devers	Salem	Salem	2026 (2)
Cathy Toner	Downingtown	Caln	2026 (2)
Andrew Anderson	MMFP	Philadelphia	2026 (1)
Jim Waddington	Salem	Salem	2025 (2)
Terry Cooke	Haverford	Haverford	2027 (1)
Vacant 1			
Vacant 2			
Vacant 3			
Vacant 4			

Quaker Life Council

Name	Monthly Meeting	Quarter	Term End
Jean-Marie Barch	Schuylkill	Caln	2027 (2)
Meg Barney	Providence	Chester	2026 (1)
Sue Dietz	Medford	Haddonfield	2025 (2)
Susan Claggett	Third Haven	Southern	2025 (1)
Robert Greene	Princeton	Burlington	2026 (2)
Michael Moulton	Germantown	Philadelphia	2026 (1)
Debbie Murray-Sheppard	Wilmington	Concord	2026 (1)
George Schaefer	Abington	Abington	2026 (1)

Kathryn Pettus	Third Haven	Southern	2026 (1)
Emily Blanck	Mickleton	Salem	2026 (1)
Rose Ketterer	Westfield	Haddonfield	2024 (1)
Vacant 2			
Vacant 3			
Vacant 4			

Elders

Name	Monthly Meeting	Quarter	Term End
Bethann Morgan	Buckingham	Bucks	2025 (2)
Susan Eliot	Chester	Chester	2026 (1)
Anthony Stover	Germantown	Philadelphia	2026 (1)
George Rubin	Medford	Haddonfield	2026 (2)
Terri Whiteford	Downingtown	Caln	2026 (1)
Yelena Forrester	Chester	Chester	2024 (2)
Vacant 1 (Nominated)			
Vacant 2			
Vacant 3			
Vacant 4			

Climate Witness Stewards

Name	Monthly Meeting	Quarter	Term End
Andrew Anderson	MMFP	Philadelphia	2026 (1)
Jackie Bonomo	State College	Upper Susquehanna	2026 (1)
Ruth Darlington	Medford	Haddonfield	2025 (1)
Patricia Finley	Old Haverford	Haverford	2025 (1)
Robert Greene	Princeton	Burlington	2026 (1)
Eric Mayer	Westtown	Concord	2027 (1)
Vacant 2			

Representatives to AFSC

Name	Monthly Meeting	Quarter	Term End
Vacant 1 (Nominated)			
Vacant 2			
Vacant 3			

Representatives to FCNL

Name	Monthly Meeting	Quarter	Term End
Sylvia Bronner	Haverford	Haverford	2027 (2)
Bill Cozzens	Germantown	Germantown	2026 (2)
Deb Hejl	Gwynedd	Abington	2027 (3)
Joe Laird	Downingtown	Caln	2026 (2)
Stefanie Morgan	Trenton	Burlington	2026 (3)
Lynn Oberfield	Providence	Chester	2026 (2)
Steve Olshevski	Radnor	Haverford	2027 (3)
Louis Pilla	Radnor	Haverford	2027 (2)
Judith Inskip	Gwynedd	Abington	2026 (1)

Representatives to FGC

Name	Monthly Meeting	Quarter	Term End
Keith Barch	Schuylkill	Caln	2026 (2)
Frank Barch	Schuylkill	Caln	2025 (2)
Howard Frysinger	Downingtown	Caln	2027 (3)
Sarah Haber	Newtown	Bucks	2027 (2)
Carrie Karhnaak-Glasby	CPMM	Philadelphia	2025 (1)
Carter Nash	Harrisburg	Caln	2025 (2)
Laura Pickering Ford	Harrisburg	Caln	2025 (2)
Jeff Rosenthal	CPMM	Philadelphia	2025 (2)
Melissa Rycroft	Pennsdale	Upper Susquehanna	2025 (2)
Carl Stanton	Chester	Chester	2025 (2)
Anthony Stover	Germantown	Philadelphia	2026 (2)

Representatives to Friends Peace Teams

Name	Monthly Meeting	Quarter	Term End
Clarkson Palmer	Swarthmore	Chester	2028
Deb Wood	Westtown	Concord	2025
Vacant (Nominated)			

Representatives to FWCC

Name	Monthly Meeting	Quarter	Term End
Joan Broadfield	Chester	Chester	2026 (2)
Jeff Keith	CPMM	Philadelphia	2024 (1)
Josh Ponter	Haddonfield	Haddonfield	2027 (1)
Jack Waltz	Mount Holly	Burlington	2026 (2)

Amy Duckett Wagner	Fallsington	Bucks	2027 (1)
Peterson Toscano	Millville	Upper Susquehanna	2027 (1)

Representatives to PA Council of Churches

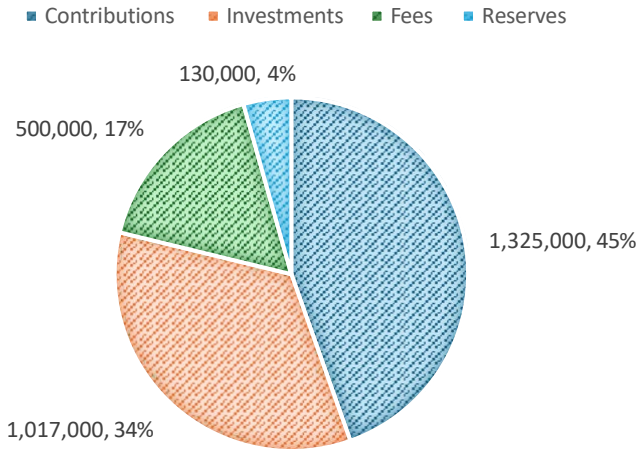
Name	Monthly Meeting	Quarter	Term End
Vacant 1			

Quaker Earthcare Witnesses

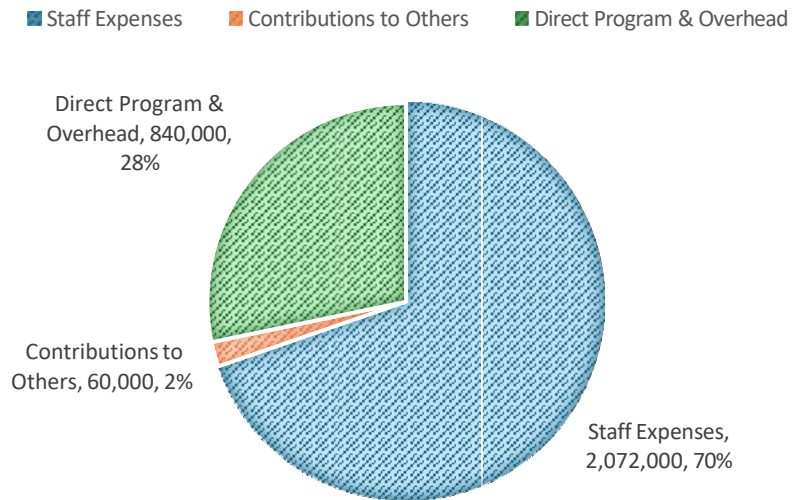
Name	Monthly Meeting	Quarter	Term End
Ruth Darlington	Medford	Haddonfield	2025
Pat Finley	Old Haverford	Haverford	2025

Administrative Council	FY 2025 Without Donor Restrictions	FY 2025 With Donor Restrictions	FY 2025 TOTAL	FY 2024 Budget
PROPOSED BUDGET 2025				
	Sept. 30, 2025 Budget	Sept. 30, 2025 Budget	Sept. 30, 2025 Budget Total	Sept. 30, 2024 Budget
All Periods are 12 Months				
INCOME AND FUNDS AVAILABLE				
1 Support from Meetings (Covenant)	975,000	0	975,000	965,000
2 Arch Street Donations/ASMHT Fundraising	0	75,000	75,000	75,000
3 Grants and Other Gifts	0	100,000	100,000	85,000
4 Bequests	0	0	0	0
5 Support from Individuals (Annual Fund)	350,000	0	350,000	350,000
6 Contributions Income	1,325,000	175,000	1,500,000	1,475,000
7 Distributions on Funds Held at Friends Fiduciary	617,000	1,345,000	1,962,000	1,975,500
8 Distributions on Funds Held at Third-Party Banks	400,000	15,000	415,000	383,500
9 Event and Program Fees	75,000	125,000	200,000	132,000
10 Administrative Fee on Restricted Funds	425,000	0	425,000	400,000
11 TOTAL FUNDS AVAILABLE	2,842,000	1,660,000	4,502,000	4,366,000
EXPENSES				
12 Staff Salaries and Wages	1,640,000	274,000	1,914,000	1,808,962
13 Payroll Taxes, Benefits, Employee Travel	432,000	85,000	517,000	502,891
14 Total Staff Expenses	2,072,000	359,000	2,431,000	2,311,853
15 Contributions to Others	60,000	1,030,000	1,090,000	1,204,662
16 Event and Program Expense	60,000	80,000	140,000	136,067
17 Professional and Service Fees	80,000	40,000	120,000	135,000
18 Development Expense	20,000	3,000	23,000	23,000
19 Copying, Printing and Postage	35,000	5,000	40,000	38,200
20 Rent	305,000	0	305,000	295,000
21 Utilities	10,000	50,000	60,000	60,000
22 Office Supplies and Support	10,000	3,000	13,000	9,200
23 Computer Support and Licenses	80,000	2,000	82,000	77,000
24 Insurance	40,000	0	40,000	40,000
25 Repairs and Maintenance	80,000	88,000	168,000	120,800
26 Fixed Asset Depreciation	120,000	0	120,000	100,000
27 TOTAL EXPENSES	2,972,000	1,660,000	4,632,000	4,550,782
NET INCOME AVAILABLE PRIOR TO THE APPLICATION OF				
28 RESERVES	-130,000	0	-130,000	-184,782
29 Repairs at ASMH (Capital Reserve)	80,000	0	80,000	100,000
30 Other Misc Reserves (Grants & Granting Groups)	50,000	0	50,000	84,782
31 NET BALANCE	0	0	0	0
32 No. Full-time Equivalent Employees (FTEs)	21.00	5.00	26.00	26.00

**FY 2025 UNRESTRICTED BUDGET SUPPORT & REVENUE
\$2.97 MM**



FY 2025 UNRESTRICTED BUDGET SPENDING \$2.97 MM

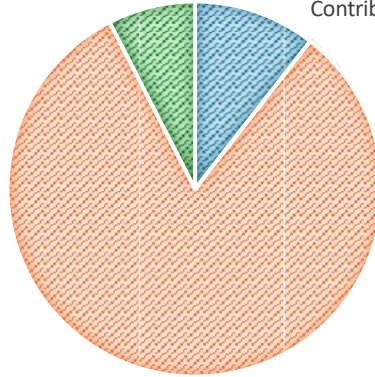


FY 2025 RESTRICTED BUDGET SUPPORT & REVENUE \$1.66 MM

■ Contributions ■ Investments ■ Fees

Fees, 125,000, 7%

Contributions, 175,000, 11%



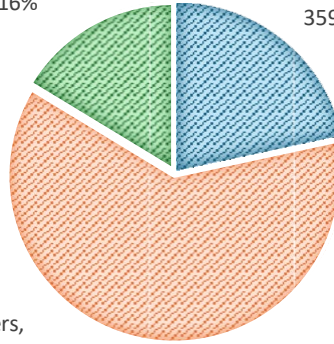
Investments,
1,360,000, 82%

FY 2025 RESTRICTED BUDGET SPENDING \$1.66 MM

■ Staff Expenses ■ Contributions to Others ■ Direct Program & Overhead

Direct Program &
Overhead, 271,000, 16%

Staff Expenses,
359,000, 22%



Contributions to Others,
1,030,000, 62%



2023 PYM contributions to other organizations

Each year PYM contributes financially to a limited number of other nonprofit organizations. This is a line in our budget titled “Contributions to Others.” This report describes what governs that line and which organizations received contributions from PYM in 2023. In the future this report will be shared at the end of the fiscal year at Fall Continuing Sessions.

Contributions to other organizations are guided by a policy which is included at the end of this report.

Recurring annual recipients of contributions from PYM

Each year PYM contributes financially to the organizations to which it also contributes representation to the governing body. The organizations each have a governance structure that asks its member organizations to identify representatives to serve on its governing body and PYM has agreed to do so. With two exceptions, the Nominating Council is responsible for identifying PYM Friends to serve as representatives. Those names are brought to the PYM body in meeting for worship with attention to business for approval. In the two exceptions the governing body of the organizations is formed in a way that asks the General Secretary to serve in an ex officio capacity and therefore approval by the body is not required. The following organizations have received contributions annually for many years:

American Friends Service Committee

Friends Committee on National Legislation- Education Fund

Friends General Conference

Friends World Committee for Consultation, Section of the Americas

Interfaith Philadelphia

National Council of Churches

Pennsylvania Council of Churches

There are two additional organizations that have received occasional gifts in the past and are slated to receive annual contributions going forward: Friends Peace Teams and Quaker Earthcare Witness.

The source for these contributions is the Chace Fund. The Chace Fund is held in trust by Friends Fiduciary Corporation (FFC) to support religious organizations and PYM is the named income beneficiary. Chace instructs FFC to distribute funds to PYM for PYM’s own use and to ensure PYM makes grants as well to other 501(c)(3) religious organizations. FFC asks the General Secretary to distribute the funds and to report to FFC a list of the organizations to which it has contributed Chace income. Due to the nature of trust legal language at the time the Chace Fund was established, its income is considered unrestricted, however it is expected to be used exclusively for supporting religious organizations.

Limited contributions to specific ministries

In addition to the recurring contributions some additional gifts may be made each year. These are chosen either because a request was made by Quaker Life Council or because the work of the organization is in alignment with active ministry in the yearly meeting that year. The following organizations received a contribution in 2023:

Ujima Friends Peace Center

Good News Ministries, Emily Provance

Friends Peace Teams--Toward Right Relationship with Native Peoples program

Friends General Conference Gathering Together Capital Campaign

These contributions also come from the Chace Fund (see section above for description of this fund).

Contributions from specific funds

When there are unrestricted funds that must be used in a specific way related to contributions to others, they will be included in this line item. The following funds were represented in the 2023 budget:

Louisa & Corson Poley Fund income was granted out to Burlington Quarter, per the 2017 Burlington Meeting House Agreement.

Membership Development Support Fund grants, which come from a reserve fund, were distributed by the Membership Development Granting Group.

PYM policy on contributions to other organizations, approved by Administrative Council in December 2023. Quaker Life Council received the policy and united with it in June 2024.

Administrative Council

December 9, 2023

Approved Policy on PYM Contributions to Other Organizations

At its meeting of December 9, 2023, Administrative Council approved this policy on PYM contributions to other organizations.

PYM contributes financially to other organizations under a set of guidelines and expectations.

Use of General Funds. General funds are not used as contributions to other organizations. They are funds given to the yearly meeting for its operation, either by individuals, meetings, or unrestricted endowment. They are therefore not passed through PYM as contributions to other organizations.

Use of Restricted Funds. PYM stewards a range of restricted funds, some of which are restricted for supporting other organizations in specific ways. These funds are distributed as grants by PYM granting groups in accordance with the restrictions.

Annual contributions. Each year the yearly meeting contributes money to other organizations under two circumstances. PYM contributes financially to organizations for which it is committed to appointing PYM members to serve on their boards. Additionally, each year small contributions are made to a few organizations which are engaged in ministries related to the current concerns of the yearly meeting.

The monetary contributions to other organizations come from a fund that is restricted as to purpose to support religious organizations, the Chace Fund. The Chace Fund is held in trust by Friends Fiduciary Corporation (FFC) and PYM has beneficial interest; PYM annually reports to FFC a list of the organizations to which it has contributed Chace income. The General Secretary is responsible for ensuring these funds are distributed.

Quaker Life Council Funds. The PYM budget allocates funds to the Quaker Life Council to be used in any way the council determines for program and initiatives to help the yearly meeting thrive. On occasion, Quaker Life Council may approve some of those funds to be granted to an outside organization with which the yearly meeting is collaborating to support a joint ministry. As these are general funds, this practice should be limited in scope and amount.

501(c)(3) requirement. Any organization receiving PYM funds must be a currently recognized 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation in accordance with the federal tax code.



PROPOSED SPRINT: Map to the Destination of Connecting our Meetings

Charge:

To identify strategies and pathways to help navigate to a place where our meetings are connected based on the vision of PYM Friends.

Background:

Connecting, a strategic direction of PYM, asks us to connect Friends and meetings to one another so that we may experience vibrant, Spirit-led faith community. A specific destination for this direction is to increase the interactions that meetings have with one another. Through Continuing Sessions, council meetings and a fundraising and email campaign on the subject, Friends have already contributed to a vision of what it looks like when we arrive at the destination of interconnected meetings. The next step is to make a map that shows how we will get to that destination.

Composition of the Sprint:

The sprint will include 5-8 members. The membership of the sprint will include at least:

- One person active in their local meeting but not in the yearly meeting community
- One person who is not staff or governance who is a young adult (under 35ish) and one who is in the second third of adulthood (35-60)
- One council member
- One staff member from communications and/or program

Sprint members will be PYM Friends who have familiarity with our meetings and bring a strategic and or creative mindset and carry a sense of curiosity and hopefulness.

Friends who would like to be considered for service as a sprint member may contact Cecilia Filauro, Executive Administrator (cfilauro@pym.org).

All Friends will be invited to contribute to providing feedback on the work of the sprint.

Accountability:

The sprint will be approved by and report to the yearly meeting in session. It's members will be approved by Administrative Council (Admin) and Quaker Life Council (QLC). Between sessions the sprint will be held accountable by Admin and QLC which will ensure that it maintains momentum and the work is completed. In the event the sprint requires assistance, whether the need is perceived by the sprint itself or by others, Admin and QLC are responsible for providing the assistance.

Responsibilities (what the sprint will do):

1. Become familiar with the shared visions of what it will look like when our meetings are well-connected.
2. Become familiar with the structure of PYM's governance and staff and the locations of all of our meetings.

3. Identify the current strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and pressures that will help or hinder our reaching the destination.
4. Develop a wide range of ideas about the strategies, activities, resources, etc that could move us from our current location to the destination of connected meetings. The initial list may include impossible ideas!
5. Develop a set of possible pathways.
6. Share possibilities with councils and PYM Friends to receive fresh perspectives and feedback.
7. Develop a first draft proposed map to reach our destination.
8. Consult with any individuals or bodies that would be required to provide any kind of action or resources when enacting the proposal (councils, committees, meetings, staff, for example)
9. Develop a revised map that includes consideration of all feedback.

Outcomes (what will happen as a result of the sprint carrying out its responsibilities):

1. At least two opportunities for PYM Friends to play with ideas about pathways with the sprint and to ask questions and provide feedback on the sprint's work in progress.
2. Give a status report to Continuing Sessions in November
3. Post an update to the PYM website about the progress of the sprint on an alt-monthly schedule at a minimum.
4. By March Continuing Sessions present a proposed plan ("map") that identifies:
 - a. Specific outcomes of how our meetings will be connected
 - b. Recommended actions for our community that will result in reaching outcomes
 - c. Who would be responsible for the actions
 - d. Who would be consulted about the actions along the way.
 - e. A timeline for the actions.

Next Steps (what will happen after the work of the sprint is complete):

1. The councils will propose next steps based on the reception of the proposed map at Continuing Sessions.
2. The councils will be responsible for taking and reporting on next steps. Possibilities include activating additional sprints, discerning with the wider body, setting up a committee, working with staff, etc.

March 31, 2024

Dear Friends,

We send forth loving greetings from Friends at Fallsington Monthly Meeting in Fallsington, Pennsylvania, part of the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends. With this letter, we commend to your loving care friend Amy Duckett Wagner, a member of Fallsington Monthly Meeting who is led to travel among Quakers.

Amy has been travelling with a minute from Fallsington Meeting since 2015 when she shared her leading to travel to worship among friends. This letter includes updates about this friend's work, travel plans and her music ministry, which is recognized by our meeting. Amy is a singer, songwriter and guitarist who works as a performing musician in retirement communities, places of worship and folk music venues. She shares her music within our Monthly and Yearly Meeting, and when she travels among Friends.

After serving as Clerk of our Meeting during the pandemic, Amy currently clerks the Membership Development/Outreach Committee and organizes a social justice music singer-songwriter concert series at our Meeting. She has served on the Aging Assistance Granting Group for Philadelphia Yearly Meeting for many years.

In 2016, Amy traveled as an Open Representative from Philadelphia Yearly Meeting to FWCC, Friends World Committee for Consultation international plenary in Peru, and has participated in FWCC meetings since then. This year, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting's Quaker Life Council asked Amy to become an official representative to FWCC to PYM and attend the upcoming FWCC international plenary in Johannesburg in August.

This summer at FGC (Friends General Conference) Annual Gathering, she will facilitate a weeklong workshop – "Meeting for Worship for Singing: Roots, Branches, Fruit." Amy is a member of the Pendle Hill international worship community.

Friends at Fallsington will hold Amy in the Light and pray for her safe travel. We trust that your time together will be blessed by Divine Spirit and look forward to hearing about the worship, music and visitation with Friends.

On behalf of Fallsington Monthly Meeting,



Michael Caro, Clerk

Fallsington Monthly Meeting

6300 New Falls Road, Fallsington, Pennsylvania 19054

Philadelphia Yearly Meeting

Minute of Concern on Israel and Palestine

March 24th, 2024

The members of Lancaster Friends Meeting are horrified and appalled at the ongoing violence, death, and destruction suffered by the civilians of Israel and Palestine, brought on by the misguided policies of Hamas, the Palestinian Authority, the Israeli Government, and other third-party actors.

As Friends we envision a peaceful Israel and Palestine, the long-yearned-for peace of these two peoples. The seeds of this peace have already been planted by an extraordinary number of Israeli/Palestinian peace groups and everyday cooperative interactions between Israelis and Palestinians. As Friends, we are committing ourselves to let the world know this truth and support their efforts both practically and spiritually

We renew our call for the leaders of these governing bodies, drawing on the respect for human life that their faiths teach, to lay down their arms, and begin negotiations for a peace that recognizes the rights of their adversaries. We urge them to immediately cooperate with international agencies in providing food, shelter, medical care, safety, and other essential services to those displaced by the Israel-Hamas war.

We call on the government of Israel to abide by international law regarding Israeli settlement of the West Bank, fully recognizing the state of Palestine and the rights of Palestinian citizens to live in their ancestral homeland in peace and security.

We call on Hamas and the Palestinian Authority to recognize the state of Israel and the rights of the Jewish people to live in their ancestral homeland in peace and security.

We call on all parties to negotiate mutually acceptable, fixed borders for the nations of Israel and Palestine in which their peoples can live in peace, respecting the rights of each other.

This minute was approved by Lancaster Monthly Meeting & approved by Caln Quarter. Downingtown and Reading Meetings have approved minutes in support of this minute.

Minute Concerning the Ongoing Violence between Israel and Palestine
Gwynedd Monthly Meeting

As members of the Religious Society of Friends, we seek to end all wars and to take away the threat of war. But our path to peace also requires justice.

We find ourselves grieving over the loss of life, the human suffering and the presence of fear that is occurring in the ongoing conflict between Israel and Palestine. We unequivocally condemn the attacks on Israel on October 7th and demand the immediate release of all hostages. Yet we also mourn the attacks on innocent civilians and the deaths of thousands of people in Gaza and other parts of Palestine due to Israeli bombing and blockades.

We call for an immediate and permanent ceasefire in the region, and the restoration of humanitarian aid under the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East. In addition, we call on Congress to prohibit the transfer of more weapons and military assistance to Israel. Instead, we urge that the United States work diplomatically to support de-escalation across the Middle East and to support the enforcement of international humanitarian law.

We believe that war and violence only begets more of the same. We pray that peace will be restored to the area and that human life, sustenance and dignity is restored.

March 17, 2024

Greetings to our beloved Friends around the World,

We send you this epistle from Philadelphia Yearly Meeting's 344th Annual Sessions. This year's unusual sessions, which met June 25 (online) and July 6 and 7 (hybrid) on the Haverford College campus, were arranged to embrace the celebrations of George Fox's 400th birthday at the historic Arch Street Meeting House in Philadelphia and Friends General Conference Gathering, also held at Haverford College.

"Called to Healing" was the theme this year. In four Bible Studies held online during June, each facilitator focused on the theme and a call to action to experience the Spirit. We need each other and, if we falter, there is a path to create listening and forgiveness. "For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them" (KJV).

Empowerment was a thread that wove through all three sessions of Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business. Addressing racism is one of two corporate witnesses adopted by Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. By acting together, we are empowered to witness, notice and then change the many patterns of racism here at Annual Sessions, in our homes, at our Meetings, and in our hearts and actions. It is crucial to listen closely to Friends of color, who may spot these serious, pervasive, and divisive issues. We commit to addressing the structures and patterns of white supremacy and racism wherever they exist.

The second corporate witness Philadelphia Yearly Meeting has adopted is the call to every person, every household, and every Monthly Meeting in the Yearly Meeting to address the climate crisis. A serious yet hopeful report from the Yearly Meeting's Climate Witness Stewards was received with gratitude. In particular, *Creating a Playbook for Climate Action* (a Power Point presentation and workbook available for download on our website) offers guidance on ways to counter the climate crisis. We were shown a calculator that tallied the carbon dioxide emissions from the food choices we make. We learned that if all Friends attending Annual Sessions were to adopt a plant-based diet instead of a meat lovers' diet, our CO2 emissions would drop by tons. Temperatures nearing 100 degrees Fahrenheit (38 degrees Celsius) outside our air-conditioned auditorium kept us mindful that our immediate action is needed.

Reports of the spiritual state of the Monthly Meetings provided uplift in their many approaches to worship, spiritual growth, community, and social action. This uplift had to be weighed against the dwindling participation at Annual Sessions and the many unfilled openings on Yearly Meeting committees and many committees in the wider Quaker community.

Urgent minutes from two Quarterly Meetings mourned the death and destruction from the conflict in Israel/Palestine. Reports from Philadelphia Yearly Meeting's Middle East Collaborative, a committee that has for many years studied the increasing tensions there, sought to empower us with further education, multiple resources and accurate information to inspire create thoughtful action and more involvement.

Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Epistle
344th Annual Sessions, June-July 2024

Philadelphia Yearly Meeting has implemented five strategic directions, one of them includes a focus on deepening worship and discernment as empowering and foundational practices for Quakers. As we talked of connection and acting on one's leadings, one Friend noted that "brave spaces are more important than safe spaces."

Before both Annual Sessions and Friends General Conference Gathering, there was a joyful celebration of George Fox's 400th birthday held at the historic Arch Street Meeting House in Philadelphia. A Spirit-ed discussion called "Fox Forward" brought together four Friends in leadership positions who explored radical solutions to continuing concerns throughout Philadelphia Yearly Meeting: envisioning the future of faith, of Friends' witness, and of propelling justice forward in a war-torn world. An "Angel of Merging" was one novel idea introduced to help address concern for the many small meetings with declining membership. Quaker Peace Teams presented the "Power of Goodness" workshop emboldening people to act from love, hope, and conscience.

At the hot All Together Meeting for Worship Sunday morning, almost one hundred Friends were in the room and some thirty-five individuals and six Monthly Meetings were on Zoom. The Spirit of all the Friends who have ministered in the historic Haverford Meeting House surrounded us. Vocal ministry rose up about our spiritual awakenings, about non-theist Friends, about the danger we are facing in our political lives, about moving out of our "silos" and joining with others, and about being more "weird," stepping forward into our testimonies.

In the final Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business, Friends were asked to consider what the essential aspects of Monthly Meetings were. Worship, work, meals, communications, children, diversity, cooperation, respect, friendship, recognizing gifts, and financial support are all part of a vibrant Meeting.

The General Secretary described two key tools available to Monthly Meetings and individual Friends: sprints and collaboratives. Sprints are short-term, focused committees that address a given concern and invite more people into the process. A collaborative grows out of an interest of two or more Monthly Meetings, who then join to work on that shared interest. Both sprints and collaboratives have access to resources and support from the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting staff and the larger community.

We are a strong group of committed Friends, sharing our joys and concerns, our work and worship. And we send to you, Friends around the world, this epistle sharing how the Light moved among us at our 344th Annual Sessions.



Report of the Middle East Collaborative of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Annual Sessions, 2024

To: Claire Kinnel, Melinda Wenner Bradley, Sue Dietz

Friends, The PYM Middle East Collaborative annual report below follows the same prompts as the document I prepared a year ago. I'm not sure whether this format is what was called for/expected for 2024, but here it is.

It has been a tremendously difficult year for those of us who love the region east of the Mediterranean Sea.

What do you want the PYM body (all 10,000 of us in PYM membership) to know about your collaborative.

- PYM Middle East Collaborative is a group of Friends –mostly PYM Friends-- dedicated to learning about details behind current issues, developments, and opinions connected to the Middle East Region. Many in our group have spent time living in the Middle East. We historically have continued the connection begun at Yearly Meeting Sessions in 2002 with Ramallah Friends Meeting in Ramallah, PALESTINE.
- Together with Ramallah Friends School and Brummana High School outside of Beirut, LEBANON, we have direct connections to both the history and current events at each of these Quaker schools.
- The Hamas-Israel War of October 7, 2023 and since has brought challenges we've not faced in my tenure as Clerk of MEC. We share concerns, thoughts for our own advocacy for justice, and resources for learning new perspectives.
- While we spend a majority of our focus on search for a just peace in Israel/Palestine, we have also considered current situations in Lebanon, Syria, Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and, to a lesser extent, Egypt, UAE, and Jordan.
- Beyond the Middle East Region itself, we examine ways that MEC members and PYM Friends might work here in the US in collaboration with local (e.g., American Friends Service Committee, Jewish Voice for Peace, Christian-Jewish Allies, Al Bustan Seeds of Culture) and national (e.g., Friends Committee on National Legislation, Friends of Sabeel North America, Combatants for Peace, Quaker Palestine Israel Network) organizations.

How does your group meet and how frequently?

- Middle East Collaborative meets every other month, First Sunday at 1:30pm: January, March, May, July, September, November. We have met virtually since mid 2020 and likely will continue via that mode. We aim for one in-person meeting per summer, often a potluck in late August or early September. All are welcome -- virtual and/or in person..

How is the work of the collaborative being shared with the PYM community?

- Historically, our group has led workshops at PYM Annual Sessions.
- We have made our selves available to monthly and quarterly meetings for presentations. We invite Friends and non-Friends alike to join our presentations (both virtual and in-person.)
- Again in Winter 2024 three of us from Middle East Collaborative led virtual classes of the content Why Palestine Matters from the book of the same name published by Presbyterian Church USA.
- We have a website that is improved and expanded in the last year. Most notably in our expansion is a timeline of Quaker history in the Middle East <https://www.pym.org/middle-east-collaborative/timeline> The timeline itself has links to present day and historical resources.

How does your collaborative remain spiritually grounded through its work?

- We begin and end each meeting with a time of silence. We enjoy ‘check-ins’ as a means of staying connected to each other and the spiritual bases in our individual actions.
- Our first meeting after the beginning of the Hamas-Israel-Gaza war was a reflection and worship sharing format as Friends were so troubled by the steady news of the war’s atrocities. We saved more standard “business” for a briefer meeting in early December.

A report showing the requested budget vs actual expense

- We greatly appreciate the support of PYM in the form of supplying the collaborative with a modest budget.
- MEC was granted a working budget of \$1,500 in late October 2023. For the 2024 version of the Why Palestine Matters course in February and March 2024, the cost of the books was covered by the publisher. Mailing print copies of the book to registrants who requested same was/will be covered by that grant.
- We have not had occasion to grant honoraria to Speakers.
- To consider would be covering costs of tech support for speakers’ presentations.

- We'll have funds remaining to use in 2024-2025. Most helpful use of those remaining funds might be offering an honorarium to a guest speaker or supporting the travel of Friends to Middle East related events.

What are the major accomplishments for the year?

- Collaborative Fair display at Annual Sessions. Summer 2023
- Co-sponsored with Philadelphia Christian-Jewish Allies a talk at Friends Center by Phil Weiss, editor of Mondoweiss, an online newsletter looking at justice issues in Israel/Palestine. October 2023
- Co-sponsored with Central Philadelphia MM Peace and Social Concerns Committee a talk by Steve Chase of Friends Meeting of Washington DC. Steve had traveled to Palestine in June of 2023 and offered his perspectives including in light of the current war. January 2024
- Shepherded and mentored by our collaborators at Philadelphia Christian-Jewish Allies, three MEC Friends taught the content of the book *Why Palestine Matters*. Across seven evenings in February and March 2024, we hosted numerous guest speakers to present the issues of intersectionality, white supremacy, and injustices not only in Palestine but also as experienced by our African-American and Indigenous American neighbors. After a couple classes focusing on historical and current Gaza, we were able to shift the tenor of the last class in late March from informational to registrants' offering reflections and their own comments – all particularly in light of the (at that time) 51/2 month war in Gaza.
- (We have not ruled out offering the *Why Palestine Matters* course again in 2025.)
- At the invitation of Haddonfield Quarterly Meeting, two speakers from MEC provided both historical and personal perspectives on the Gaza war. May 2024
- Three of our members regularly meet (virtually and monthly) with Christian Jewish Allies for a Just Peace in Israel/Palestine.
- Two of our members regularly meet (virtually and monthly) with Quaker Palestine Israel Network.
- Other MEC members have planned or traveled with groups that visit Israel / Palestine.
- For Quaker Timeline including link, see above.
- Through BRIEF REPORTS and DISCUSSION in our regular meetings, we are able to focus on news from Ramallah Friends School and Meeting, Lebanon, Palestine, Israel, and other countries.

What are the things that are stopping/hindering your mission,if any?

- There are plenty of worthwhile, not Middle East related issues to which PYM Friends may give their attention and direct action efforts.
- Congresspersons fear backlash from specific elements of their constituencies if they are to support legislation sympathetic to the Palestinian cause, or Lebanon, or Iran, or Yemen
- The issues of justice with equity through non-violent resolutions to bring improvements –concrete movements toward peace-- in the Middle East region seem overwhelming and distant, if not impossible, to many. I suspect that learned helplessness restricts the participation of many.

Is there anything you need of PYM administration (from PYM staff, the Clerk(s) or the Program Committee?

- Not that I think of right now. We very much look forward to working with Claire Kinnel.

Thank you all,

Sandy Rea

Clerk, PYM Middle East Collaborative

Spiritual State of the Yearly Meeting Report 6th Month 2024 compiled by the Ministry and Care Committee of Quaker Life Council from reports submitted by Monthly and Quarterly Meetings

For each monthly meeting, the practice of self-examination can provide “...a deep and meaningful opportunity that draws the community together”.* Sharing this self-assessment with the yearly meeting allows us to come together as a larger community and helps Quaker Life Council better understand the strengths and weaknesses, needs and gifts of the monthly meetings.

Process:

About half (50) of the monthly meetings from across the Yearly Meeting submitted reports. Meetings received a general written request, and individual meetings were contacted directly by a member of Ministry and Care Committee. Some reports grew from input at business meetings, some from threshing sessions, others from the work of individuals or committees who gathered information from members of the meeting. Some responded to all the queries, while others selected queries to which to respond or reshaped the queries to facilitate writing their own narratives. (A link to the original invitation can be found here:

<https://www.pym.org/spiritual-state-of-the-meeting-invitation-2024/>

In preparing this report, one member of Ministry and Care Committee read all the reports. In addition, each member of the committee read reports from one or two quarters (about 12 reports for each committee member) and prepared a distilled report. These sources form the basis for the Spiritual State of the Yearly Meeting Report which was then read and commented on by all members of M&C. All the reports received from Monthly and Quarterly Meetings can be found here: <https://www.pym.org/state-of-the-meeting/>.. You are encouraged to read them!

Major themes that run through the reports are: reconnection; use of technology; renewed understanding of what it means to be a meeting; exploring ways to do business; property concerns; right relationship with the community; young adults, children and families; and enacting our testimonies.

This has been a year of seeking increased connection. Meetings, both large and small, are finding ways, including in-person worship, to reconnect, recommit and return to treasured activities as the acute phase of the COVID-19 pandemic recedes. Many comment on the joy in being together once again, and also recognize that their community has been forever changed.

Having learned to use technology during the pandemic, meetings are now being served by zoom and other platforms as a way to stay in touch and to decrease their carbon footprint while still allowing deeply centered worship and mutual care. From their experiences during the pandemic, many meetings have brought a commitment to the ongoing use of technology to allow those at a distance (current and would-be Friends) to participate in the life of the meeting. Many find that committee meetings easily lend themselves to an electronic format; however, some have found Zoom less conducive for meeting for business.

Friends regard their meetings as safe havens where members can gather and share in joy and gratitude as the Spirit moves among them. They appreciate the depth of silence in worship, which draws them closer and also creates an energy that grows from being gathered. They care for and about one another and share in seeking the beloved community.

The challenges of the past several years have encouraged consideration of what it means to be a meeting and what membership means as well. Meetings have come to understand that being gathered does not necessarily require being in the same location, nor does being in a single location guarantee the meeting will be gathered. For several meetings the question of “critical mass” has become very salient. Which committees are required? How much time face-to-face is necessary to form and maintain community?

The number of regular members and attenders as well as their age and other commitments all have impact on meetings both large and small. Use of committee of the whole and other alternative ways of accomplishing business has become more common. While for some this feels like a necessity because of small numbers of people willing and able to engage in the work, others have found that new structures allow for broader involvement. Some meetings, for example, are trying clerking teams where primary responsibility for the expected tasks of the clerk is shared on a rotating basis. More meetings are using Co-clerks. Several meetings are particularly concerned that young adults are not engaged in the life of the meeting. There is renewed attention to create opportunities for more people to take on leadership roles and to be successful.

Throughout the yearly meeting, the reality of older meetinghouses on larger properties with smaller and older populations of members and attenders have come together to create concern and challenge. Meetings have creatively sought solutions including sharing, selling or gifting their properties or seeking the funds necessary to maintain and continue to use what they have. Some meetings are finding new uses for their land which supports greater climate consciousness. Other meetings with historic meeting houses have not chosen to make changes that might improve their climate or accessibility impact.

Meetings seek various ways to let their community know who they are and what they believe. They are concerned about maintaining and strengthening their relationships with the community, seeking both to outreach to potential new attenders and to be good neighbors. Many share space with other groups, (e.g. schools, Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, etc.) and engage the broader community in meeting activities of interest (e.g. book

groups). Several meetings are engaged in growing medicinal plants for companies like Singularity Botanicals. Meetings and their members contribute generously to support and advocate for social justice causes and have publicly addressed issues such as gun violence, mental health support in prisons, and book banning, engaging in social justice work that allows them to share testimonies and beliefs with the broader community. They are advocates for the LGBTQ Community and meetings have participated in Pride parades. Meetings reach out to their quarter as a way to stay connected to the broader Quaker world. Those meetings which have found their numbers in attendance on First Day have not rebounded to pre-pandemic levels are working to learn how to be smaller.

Meetings small and large are rededicating to providing religious education in some form for children and adults as well. Meetings see this as part of striving to be welcoming and engaging particularly to families with children. For the small meeting, providing educational and enriching experiences for all (e.g. religious instruction for youth and forums for younger and older adults as well as multi-generational worship where all are welcomed) is a challenge. Several meetings have engaged in intergenerational worship with considerable success and great joy. Many meetings support the formation of book clubs, spiritual groups, and accompaniment for individuals' spiritual journeys. Often, meetings open experiences to individuals in the larger community who express interest in participating in these activities, combining in-reach and development of programs for current members and attenders with outreach to the broader community.

We are often engaged in social action, predominately as individuals but sometimes as a monthly meeting wide witness. A number of meetings have members who are very active in anti-racism work and some have engaged in learning about reparations. Desire to increase awareness and to find appropriate action moving forward to combat racism in its many forms has engaged many meetings.

Many meetings are engaged in activities either as a meeting or as individuals that are consistent with the witness on climate, though only a few have appointed a climate witness liaison. Most cite the lack of sufficient person-power to do so. Several meetings have installed solar panels to decrease their carbon footprint. Others have engaged in plantings and other property redesign that are more climate aware. One meeting notes the inclusion of a green burial option in their graveyard and another is exploring this possibility.

Several themes emerge where we can learn from and support one another:

- +attracting and keep families with young children,
- +increasing capacity for religious education for children,
- +receiving effective assistance with outreach,
- +engaging and supporting young adults in the meeting community
- +dealing with property effectively

Regarding outreach, one meeting suggests that reaching out to newcomers by wondering what the meeting can do for them rather than what they can do for the meeting has been successful in encouraging newcomers to return. Many meetings are engaged in re-committing to the “how, when and why” of vocal ministry and helping those in attendance find the right balance for sharing during worship; this can make the worship feel more accessible, particularly to newcomers.

Community lunches, picnics, retreats, forums, game nights, community sings, progressive dinners at the meetinghouse, adults sharing their time and attention with children, making frequent personal connections with those in attendance, and taking care to create an inviting space in the meeting room for children, have all been cited as useful to strengthen connection and support deep worship. Creating a way of sharing clerking responsibilities (e.g. a clerks’ team, a clerks’ group, rotating clerkships) has been noted as useful for broadening the base on which responsibility for the conduct of business rests.

We need to better understand what works for a meeting community and to develop greater flexibility in our shared worship. We can express confusion and uncertainty even as we nurture a consistent, familiar and quiet space. While the silence is paramount for some, we can also encourage vocal ministry that improves on the silence. We want to encourage and maintain connection with children, families, young adults and older adults. We want to be clear about the relationship between our testimonies and how we conduct our lives, grounded in the gathered meeting and our shared connection to Spirit, focused on what is essential for us as Friends.

As meetings move further away from the stresses of the pandemic lockdown period, opportunities for learning, deepening and growing (whether or not in numbers) are many. Let us seize them together.



Report of the Friends Ending Gun Violence Collaborative of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting

To the Program Committee of Quaker Life Council

The **Friends Ending Gun Violence Collaborative** is now up and running! With staff support from Claire Kinnel, we have designed and provided initial content to the webpage on the Yearly Meeting site.

The Collaborative now has twelve participants and has been meeting monthly via Zoom.

Partnering with **Heeding God's Call to End Gun Violence**, we are encouraging Friends meetings to host a Memorial to the Lost to recognize those lives lost to gun violence. Upper Dublin Monthly Meeting has recently held a Memorial; Norristown Friends Meeting and Downingtown Friends Meeting hosted events in June. Our focus now is on Chester County and especially invite meetings there to host the Memorial. The purpose of the Memorial is to recognize lives lost, educate ourselves and our communities about the causes and solutions to gun violence, and raise awareness of the health crisis caused by Pennsylvania's lax gun laws.

The Collaborative has designed t-shirts for Friends to purchase to build a shared community of concern to end gun violence. The t-shirt order form will soon be available on the webpage.

We welcome other concerned Friends to join the Collaborative and help raise the visibility of this important issue in the Quaker community and beyond.

Martha B. Bryans, Co-Clerk

Pam Yaller, Co-Clerk

June 20, 2024

Annual Report from the Addressing Racism Collaborative May 2024

1. What do you want the PYM body (all 10,000 of us in PYM membership) to know about your collaborative?

We want Friends to know that addressing racism requires energy and commitment. Antiracism is the energy to actually act in ways that contribute to dismantling white supremacy culture, which we all swim in. The work to address racism is often seen as negative -sometimes attacking, even when the language used frames it carefully. It is often uncomfortable, against mainstream cultural norms. Following a year of offering resources and a thread gathering, and in the many challenges facing the DEI work at large, our focus became sorting out many issues to consider what would be most helpful. We continued to visit meetings, monthly and quarterly, both to share and to learn - hearing about concerns for repair/reparations, a meeting/church partnership, sessions on courageous conversations - all the while considering ideas for activities and further resources we might bring. Our conversations included other areas showing patterns of racism - Palestinian struggles, indigenous concerns. We got more involved in the concern for the lobbying/advocacy issue that arose out of concern for the work of advocacy in addressing racism. We also again encouraged our collaborative members to take workshops. It was a year of sorting through, of conversation - and of learning.

We know we are not perfect. We look forward to the next season as we pull together the threads that have emerged to offer a year with a clear focus.

2. How does your group meet and how frequently?

We meet monthly - the 3rd, or the 2nd, Monday of each month - 12:30 to 2 - and in special settings to address pieces of our work.

3. How is the work of the collaborative being shared with the PYM community?

Reports of our work have been shared via the YM newsletter, and when collaborative members visit meetings - monthly and quarterly - we both gather and offer shared information and insight. We see the need to share more about what is on the website in different ways, and we are in the process of thinking more about how the website can reflect more of what we see, how it can be shared more robustly.

4. How does your collaborative remain spiritually grounded through its work?

Spiritual grounding is absolutely necessary to be connecting to the vision of Beloved Community and getting there. We ground our meetings in worship, knowing that such grounding does not limit full process, including humor or grief - or anger.

5. If possible, please provide report showing the requested budget vs actual expenses.

Budget Request:

- \$2,500 for travel to meetings and materials
- \$1,500 for presentations (e.g. books, pamphlets, videos)
- \$1,000 work with other Collaboratives & PYM Groups (e.g. thread gatherings, presentations)

This continues the request from last year that was not spent.

6. What are the major accomplishments for the year?

We stayed in the conversation in our collaborative as we continued to explore ideas to engage with Meetings and Friends in their many different places in this work. We continued to connect to monthly and quarterly meetings and while our efforts may not fully match our hopes, the hard work of faithfully showing up to these explorations is important in our role of accompanying Friends to be antiracist.

7. What are the things that are stopping/hindering your mission, if any?

One of the issues we face is a misunderstanding that the ways we might approach this work will always be painless, free of conflict. Being ready to stay in the moment, in the conversation helps to build resilience.

One hindrance to this work is seeming separations in the YM around addressing racism. Some ongoing inquiries:

- What are the expectations for a collaborative?
- Why are there 2 web pages 'Addressing Racism' - with no communication between the ones posting these, no connection between them?

While we long for a day to see more diversity in our meetings, we understand that every meeting is at a unique place in its antiracist leading. We offer to accompany them on their brave antiracist walk.

8. Would you like additional support from PYM staff, the Quaker Life Council Clerk, your Program Committee liaison, or the Program Committee?

We look forward to connecting with and assistance from the new staff in community engagement, and staff in communications as we work on our webpage.

Eco-Justice Collaborative 2024 Annual Report

PYM Program Support Committee

Collaborative Annual Report 2024

Queries

1. What do you want the PYM body (all 10,000 of us in PYM membership) to know about your Collaborative?

The Eco-Justice Collaborative consists of seventeen highly skilled and passionate climate justice activists, organizers, and experts. Their experience includes Friends with extensive expertise in policy/legislation, monetary systems, climate science, energy, food, land, education, media, law, bio-diversity, carbon forests, resilience, and activism. EJC is a collaborative of professionals who represent different concerns and experiences, but who consider each other's work as crucial as their own and each works to advance the goals of the whole collaborative. We recognize we are not alone in this work within the yearly meeting, and we rely on many friends within PYM to either support us or lead the way on our shared work to save the planet.

The EJC continues to publish a monthly newsletter, which PYM distributes through the Peace and Justice Network to more than 2,000 subscribers. Sections on Action, Upcoming Events, Good News, and Resources provide Friends with information and inspiration to support their work on the existential challenges of climate change, environmental injustice, agriculture, and biodiversity loss. The opportunities for involvement in climate issues are categorized according to the five action areas listed in the Climate Change Sprint Report: advocacy, education, finance, lowering carbon footprint, and mourning loss and instilling hope. All sections include links to articles, reports, workshops, and websites where Friends can find more information. We also try to highlight resources, actions and events that show what other Quakers in the Yearly Meeting and Quaker organizations beyond the YM are doing so that readers can connect to the wider community.

2. How does your group meet and how frequently?

The whole collaborative gathers at a regularly scheduled meeting each month. However, small ad hoc subcommittees meet more often to address particular actions or monitor continuing projects.

We have been meeting by Zoom well before the pandemic because our members are widely distributed across PYM, and we have a strong desire to reduce our travel impact on the planet.

3. How is the work of the Collaborative being shared with the PYM community?

- a. EJC publishes a monthly newsletter, distributed by the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting staff. EJC produces regular webinars on important climate and climate justice topics. EJC also connects to the YM through presentations at Monthly Meetings and Quarters and at workshops at sessions. In the past year and a half, EJC has been compiling a presentation of Monthly and Quarterly Meeting work on Eco-Justice specifically climate, environmental racism, and biodiversity.
- b. You can subscribe to the Eco-Justice Newsletter
<https://go.pym.org/l/791983/2019-08-27/gmg> People have to select Peace and Social Justice to receive the EJC newsletter.
- c. Throughout the year we provided educational webinars on issues we were addressing at the time. We recorded all our webinars, and they are available on the Eco Justice Collaborative webpage (<https://www.pym.org/eco-justice-collaborative/>). In the previous year, some of the topics included Greening Sacred Spaces (a four-part series), The Inflation Reduction Act and funds available for climate projects, Climate and Money, and others.

4. How does your Collaborative remain spiritually grounded through its work?

EJC begins every meeting with worship, acknowledging the spiritual foundations of our work because we are members of the Religious Society of Friends and without spiritual grounding, we grief and burnout would overwhelm us. We follow worship with check-ins which allows members to share their joys, their grief, their hopes, and their current work. Though grief, hope, and deep spirituality are individual emotional conditions, sharing them is a spiritual exercise in humility and trust. We believe unity is possible when the community is strong and deeply committed to each other. In all our work, we try to find ways to articulate our reverence for creation while simultaneously using whimsy to lighten our communication and remind us of our humanity.

5. If possible, please provide a report showing the requested budget vs actual expenses.

NOT YET AVAILABLE

6. What are the major accomplishments for the year? How do they compare to the goals identified in your funding request?

Since the adoption on the Climate Sprint report in 2021, EJC has been serving the yearly meeting by engaging the five action areas proposed in the report. There is

considerable crossover among the action categories and our choice of categories for particular actions is sometimes arbitrary.

- a. Advocacy: During 2023-2024 EJC Friends appreciated the creation of a Quaker lobbying group, Quaker Action Mid-Atlantic Region (QAMAR). We are grateful that there is an organization that will assist and educate Friends on critical public policy.
- b. Education: Webinars, including one to support friends' access to funding from the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA). This was followed up by preparation and distribution of documents and information from the IRS on the availability of funds. Recent work includes a partnership with Concord Quarter Climate Action Working Group to educate Friends about the crucial need to create ecologically diverse habitats in sacred spaces. Currently Eco Justice and the Concord Quarter Climate Action Working Group have been co-hosting the Greening Sacred Spaces Series.
- c. Reducing our Carbon Footprint: We are in the process of finding ways to support John Munro's carbon forest project, while encouraging Monthly Meetings to increase their use of their property for carbon capture.
- d. Finance: EJC has carried a concern for toxic corporate banking systems and has continued to advocate for public banking. Members of EJC often work with EQAT to confront energy and finance institutions that have negative environmental practices. We have a deep concern about political and economic systems that are so inequitable that the power and influence needed to save the planet is increasingly unavailable to a democratic process.
- e. Mourning Loss and Instilling Hope: In order to address the frightening reality of global warming and assess the work we need to do, we will first have to understand what is lost, mourn that loss, adapt to it, and then begin again with the necessary response.

7. What are the things that are stopping/hindering your mission, if any?

- a. The PYM Lobbying Policy. Public policy, the legislative process, and regulatory capability of government are crucial to making any difference in our threatened planet.
- b. We are concerned about our inability to maintain a dynamic up-to-date webpage on the PYM website.

8. Would you like additional support from PYM staff, the Quaker Life Council Clerk, your Program Support Committee liaison, or the Program Support Committee?

We appreciate the assistance of Claire Kinnel, the PYM Engagement Coordinator. She has helped us with professionalism, enthusiasm, and competence. Her support has been invaluable.



**2024 Annual Report from the First Contact Reconciliation
Collaborative
Submitted to the Quaker Life Council Program Support
Committee of
Philadelphia Yearly Meeting (PYM)**

Might Philadelphia Yearly Meeting congregants contemplate what relationship and trust building might feel like with/by/ for those whose lifeways over centuries have remained hidden from and slighted by predominant culture; spaces where Friends' words may have fallen short of true loving actions?

First Contact Reconciliation Collaborative (FCRC) has been birthed from darkness, a void within the Yearly Meeting, rectified by a proposal submission, officially approved, debuting at Philadelphia Yearly Meeting (PYM) Annual Sessions 2017, held at The College of New Jersey. Previously, PYM lacked a space of T/truth and Healing for/ with Indigenous Nations, verified Peoples who have remained on their ancestral homeland, a space where “loving one’s neighbors” calls-in gifts of listening and restoring relations. By Spirit, Light within guides peacemaking through relationship building and reconciliations. We are led by the Treaty of Amity, where leadership among Lenape: Friends communities agreed to live in perpetual peace and friendship. Today, historic truths call-in Friends of shared convictions across Yearly Meetings, Friends who are acknowledging and reconciling with Indigenous Nations’ leadership, by listening deeply, seeking our hearts and asking what we might do. Indigenous worldviews are best understood by listening to Indigenous leaders. Efforts have been extended to include Indigenous “cousins” who have been removed from their homeland, where PYM Friends’ meetinghouses and congregants reside. This Annual Report, due by the end of May 2024, represents June 2023 – May 2024 with intersections for parts of Fiscal Year 2022 (June 2023 – Sept 2023) and FY 2023 (October 1, 2023 – May 2024).

Congregants of First Contact Reconciliation Collaborative most often “meet” at events – showing up for justice matters. This has included on-site and virtual experiences – Indigenous headquarters/ socials, local Indigenous Nation-hosted Pow-Wows, Friend-hosted talks, National Museum of American Indians (NMAI), National Congress of American Indians (NCAI), Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition (NABS), Delaware Riverkeepers, Coalition of Natives and Allies, Friends Peace Teams Toward Right Relationship, and quarterly Joint Yearly Meetings’ (virtual) Gatherings.

The work of your FCRCollaborative is being shared with the PYM community on the PYM calendar of events, PYM news pages, and PYM website - <https://www.pym.org/first-contact-reconciliation-collaborative/>. After attending the public, annual Nanticoke-Lenape Nation's Pow-Wow (second weekend in June), Friends wrote and had widely published a 2023 Pow-Wow Epistle. Individual Monthly Meeting and Quarterly publications have posted news/advertised in-person events when FCRC individuals have made themselves available for speaking engagements. Monthly Meetings and Quarterly Meetings have hosted talks addressing concerns arising from their relative Spirit led spaces, such as Religious Education, Peace & Social Concerns, Restorative Justice, and Indigenous Affairs. With appreciation, this year we have been additionally afforded a PYM dedicated email address – FirstContactReconciliation@pym.org. We look forward to hearing from seekers and potentially showing up in “new-to-us” spaces, toward growing our edges nearer.

Working with Indigenous Nations' leadership engages us with inherently Spiritually based Peoples. During these opportunities we hear consistent abundant gratitude for what the Creator provides, even in dark situations Light endures, where injustice occurs, resilience endures. Culturally, Spirit given gifts are absorbed in community with equity for the diversity of creation, which includes kinship relations with non-human beings. Within predominant culture, FCRC individuals are spiritually grounded in practices of wholeness and care of one's vessel; open to visual & performing arts (music, dance) – noticing and creating beauty, eco-justice advocacy, human justice advocacy, sowing-growing-harvesting food and medicinal herbs, equine therapy, and practices of well-being – meditation, walking meditation, yoga.

The PYM Financial Year and PYM Annual Report dates are not in pure alignment; despite precise accounting by this collaborative during previous years, required documentation, and submission forms, multiple requests for staff assistance failed to produce past reimbursements and honorarium requests; we hold that honorariums are not to be navigated as contracts. The proposed & approved 2023-2024 budget, below, has been created with intention and FCRC is grateful for PYM's Quaker Life Council's subsequent approval of \$1,675. Faithful PYM F/friends of FCRC's shared witnessing remain under the weight of two movements - Honor the Promise and Truth & Healing. The lingering effects of prior unmet fiscal responsibilities shadowed the 2023-2024 approved budget; to a degree, currently, there is some lack of trust with institutional obligations. Instead, to date, Friends have discerned “payment-in-kind” donations for eight of ten expenses moving forward our acts of Light, amounting to no less than \$1,300. Two budgeted expenses (items d & h below) have not been tended and await clearness in the form of actual deeds (named in last year's epistle), promises yet to be kept. With clearness, we

relationship. We intend to grow into this commitment, connection and communication, "...as long as the creeks and rivers flow and the sun, moon, and stars endure."

Queries:

- *What do I know about the indigenous people who live and have lived in the region in which I live? How can I grow more fully into that?*
 - *What do I know about the relationship between the indigenous people in the region in which I live and the Federal and State Government? How can I grow more fully into that?*
 - *How am I living into my responsibility to be a good steward of the region in which I live, including the land and the relationships with other living beings? How can I grow more fully into that?*
- b) Friends unified voice & accountabilities lent to the creation of the 2023 Nanticoke-Lenape Pow-wow Epistle
- c) networking with 501 (c4) designated organizations, channeling individuals' Spirit leadings to spaces that are afforded rightly ordered structural liberation – Coalition of Natives and Allies, Delaware Riverkeepers, Friends Committee on National Legislation
- d) hosting virtual Joint Yearly Meeting Gatherings, Quarterly informal sharing of works taking place on land predominantly occupied by non-indigenous Peoples/ of Canada and The United States; Yearly Meetings frequenting these gatherings are Friends in 7 YMs - Canada YM, Pacific YM, InterMountain YM, New England YM, New York YM, Baltimore YM, Philadelphia YM
- e) several workshop proposals yielding presentations by FCRC Friends & Indigenous friends for Friends Association for Higher Education Conference 2023 at Haverford College
- f) relationship building with verifiable (state and federally recognized) Tribal Nations; see National Congress of American Indians (NCAI)
- g) speaking platforms with recordings of Chief Urie (Fox Sparrow) Ridgeway, [YouTube](#) - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OOPYIXU1dEo>
- h) Select FCRC individuals invited by the Lenape delegation for a talk by Robin Wall Kimmerer, and reception hosted by [Princeton University](#) - <https://lectures.princeton.edu/lectures/2024/dr-robin-wall-kimmerer>
- i) Participation with a Quaker Indian Boarding School (IBS) Research Group; access to Friends (Swarthmore and Haverford Colleges collections) is now part of the digital archives of the Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition (NABS), [NIBSDA](#) - <https://boardingschoolhealing.org/nibsda/>
- j) Independent research of Friends: Lenape, including IBS, requested by Lenape leadership with assistance from research historian, Jean Soderlund, utilizing Friends archives and Carlisle IBS digitized records by Dickenson College
- k) Honoring the Indigenous children interred at Carlisle IBS, Carlisle Barracks
- l) Friends are carrying forward our ministry of concern with the guidance, support, and accountability of our monthly meeting, quarterly meeting and Philadelphia Yearly Meeting together, continuing our advocating for a Federal Truth and Healing Commission, presented to PYM during Annual Sessions 2022, recognized by FCNL – web address here

- m) Supporting Lenape Nations' leaders who are refuting Peter Schagen's letter to the Dutch West India Company/ Netherland's 400th anniversary referencing a purchase of Manahahtaanung, Manhattan
- n) Season of story-listening with Indigenous storytellers, embedding language, history, and self-identity - the state of being indigenous, Indigeneity

Financial vestment and management (money) seems to be a hinderance to the mission of FCRC. Historically, our faith-based institution benefits from monies left in its care; in the past, Friends "care" is evidenced toward "civilizing" Indigenous Peoples; less stressed, "Christianization" by Friends was inherent based in daily/ cultural lifeways. We might be left to wonder about "our" inherited Friends' legacy. We are left contemporarily concerned by Philadelphia Yearly Meeting's structure which continues a pattern of what might be identified as historic patriarchal oversight (through granting), perpetuating myths, biases, and stereotypes of Tribal Nations/ Peoples. Moved by Spirit, any and all forms of inequitable means of domination, rather than truer relationship building, requires discernment toward reconciliations with all our relatives. We stand by the words of Edgar Villaneuva, "Philanthropy, honey you need an intervention." Given this country's historic relationship with Indigenous Nations, given Indigenous voices rising, might PYM Friends seek to unbind processes of vested funds tagged for Indian concerns: might PYM Friends enter into mutually beneficial relationships with Indigenous communities where Nations have been impacted by centuries of civilizing and Christianizing Indians; might Friends reconciliations lead us toward liberating all monies tagged for Indigenous concerns directly and fully to Indigenous Nations?

Measures of truer reconciliation toward equity and empowerment with Indigenous Nations call on the PYM body at large, all congregants, and particularly those who serve as staff and those who volunteer their gifts of leadership - Clerk, Administrative Council, Quaker Life Council, and Nominating Council. Short of lobbying, we ask that you continue to keep us in your heart and on your lips as community(ies) find ways of growing edges toward unity.

Na ne lekech.

As directed by PYM's Program Support Committee clerk. Wendy Kane, this report has been sent to the PYM Community Engagement Coordinator, Claire Kinnel, at ckinnel@pym.org; in addition, the QLC Program Support Committee FCRC liaison, Betsy Crofts.

<https://www.pym.org/quaker-life-council/wp-content/uploads/sites/41/2020/02/FINAL-9-12-14-Approved-Minutes-of-Concern.pdf>

India Friends Collaborative Report 2024

The India Friends Collaborative of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting continues to strengthen its ties with India Friends. Our Collaborative and India Friends meet by phone, email and occasionally in person. When we have discussions with India Friends, they lead in the decision making process. We learn from them, and support them in the implementation of their decisions. Our focus last year and this year has been the construction of a new classroom building at Sohagpur Friends School for Girls. This year classes are being held in it while the school is purchasing furniture and educational material that is needed. Recently the school purchased a school van for transporting students. The Collaborative has been involved in these two improvements in various ways. One member of our Collaborative has traveled to India and has had discussions with Friends there about the two projects and other matters of concern.

Friends in India from various Yearly and Monthly Meetings have been holding an All India Friends Gathering every three years. They have not met since 2018 because of the Covid pandemic. There will be a Gathering this year and two members of our Collaborative will be attending. The dates are October 9th to October 13th at Rasulia, a Quaker farm and Conference Center in central India. Most accommodations are bunkbeds and communal meals. The language is Hindi with some translating and worship is programed with some degree of silent worship. Representatives from other Yearly Meetings attend especially from the Asia West Pacific Section of the Friends World Committee for Consultation. There are discussions, meetings and worship on many different topics that are of concern to all Quakers. Worshipping together, living and working together creates and strengthens a bond between us.

Young Friends participate in the India Friends Gathering, and then afterwards Young Friends from about 12 years old to about 25 years old participate in a Young Friends Study and Work Camp at Rasulia. At both events, members of our Collaborative have spoken on various topics. For instance, I have spoken about John Woolman at both events.

Friends who would like to attend and/or would like to participate in the India Friends Collaborative should write me at indiafriendscollaborative23@gmail.com.

Pictures of the new classroom building and the school bus which was purchased this June, are attached to this report. We offer presentations to Quaker groups and would be glad to give a power point presentation to the Program Committee and the Life Council.

While only there for a total of six weeks I have developed a strong friendship in both senses of the word with India Friends. Even though I have not been there since 2015 working with them

via emails and conversations on the phone I (and the other members of the Collaborative) have developed a deep commitment to them.

Quakers in India are a tiny minority of a small minority of Christian based Meetings and Churches in India. Having a strong relationship with Philadelphia Yearly Meeting and Meetings from the Asia and West Pacific section of the FWCC and Britain Yearly Meeting have strengthened their resolve to continue in the Faith and know they are part of the greater Quaker Community!

Thank you for your support of the India Friends Collaborative.

Jack Walz, Clerk

India Friends Collaborative of PYM

Annual Report for the Spiritual Formation Collaborative for the period of May 1, 2023-April 30, 2024

1. What do you want the PYM body (all 10,000 of us in PYM membership) to know about your Collaborative?

We want PYM Friends to know that the SFC has been an ongoing resource for spiritual growth for individuals, Meetings and Quarters for the last 25 years. Through those years, our own spiritual resources have deepened through our work, and we continue to offer plentiful opportunities for spiritual nurture and deepening throughout PYM. We want the body of PYM to know that the Spiritual Formation Collaborative (SFC) offers the opportunity for deepening the spiritual life of any group of Friends including within a Monthly Meeting/Quarter or several Meetings at once. We will come to any Meeting and will offer our program for a few hours, a day, a weekend, or for the full nine-month traditional program. We hope to deepen individual spiritual lives and have a lasting spiritual effect on Meetings through our programs, retreats, spiritual friendship/accountability groups and reading groups. We want Friends who participate in our programs to better understand how to help one another grow and thrive within a Meeting and to deepen their own spiritual practices. We have been offering our program since 1998 and have used our long experience to continually improve the program and offer additional options. Our evaluations are a testimony to the effectiveness of this program for strengthening the spiritual life of everyone in the Meeting. They are available for viewing on our website. <https://www.pym.org/spiritual-formation-program-collaborative/> .

2. How does your group meet and how frequently?

The entire collaborative meets every other month on Saturdays from 10:00am-12 or 1:00 pm. We may call additional meetings as needed. From May 1, 2023 to April 30, 2024 the entire Collaborative met 7 times. In addition, teams organizing specific events meet as many times as needed to plan the event; an average of 3-4 times before each retreat or event. For example, a team planning a SF program for a Meeting might have an introductory session with the Meeting, 4 planning sessions for the Meeting program, and then 3 weekend retreats themselves. Members take individual time preparing their pieces for the retreats/events and then share the results at team planning meetings. We also hold a weekend annual retreat in August for the Collaborative itself for spiritual refreshment, renewal and long-range planning.

3. How is the work of the Collaborative being shared with the PYM community?

We offer the 9-month Spiritual Formation Program, weekend programs, day long program or partial day programs to any Meeting in PYM that requests our programs. We offer a retreat at Summer Sessions and a yearly weekend retreat currently being held at Pendle Hill to the entire body of PYM. We maintain a website sharing information on our programs, all our materials and designs, as well as a calendar for our upcoming programs. This link gives a 3-minute video that is a nice overview of our programs. <https://www.pym.org/spiritual-formation-program-collaborative/>. In addition, we have a print brochure that can be printed or shared electronically. We often prepare individual flyers for specific programs to encourage registration. We rely on PYM staff to provide PR for summer sessions and our annual weekend retreat.

4. How does your Collaborative remain spiritually grounded through its work?

The first hour of all of our meetings is used as a check-in spiritually. If a member requests it, we hold that member in the Light. We take care of one another spiritually, nurture one another and Elder one another. Team meetings also begin and end with prayer. And before a program begins team members meet and pray for an hour before the program, pray throughout the program and times are scheduled for Worship during the program. It is also our custom for each facilitator to be paired with an elder, who holds both the facilitator and the group being facilitated In the Light.

When we hold retreats, if we are not facilitating, members will often participate in the activities either with other SF members or participants if appropriate. Spirit and the audience always teach us and guide us during retreats. We continually learn new things and have the Spirit guidance affirmed.

Once per year our collaborative holds a retreat for members when we renew, refresh and examine our work. We pray for one another and support one another in our lives and in our SFC work.

5. If possible, please provide a report showing the requested budget vs actual expenses.

(See attached)

6. What are the major accomplishments for the year? How do they compare to the goals identified in your funding request?

Listening One Another Into Wholeness on April19-21, 2024

One of our major accomplishment this year was our Annual Spiritual Formation Weekend Retreat entitled **Listening One Another Into Wholeness** on April19-21 ,2024 held at Pendle

Hill and open to all of PYM. This year we had 32 people attend from 12 different Meetings. A description of the retreat is as follows:

“Nurture your spirit with a weekend retreat designed to uplift your sense of hope and interconnectedness through listening deeply to self, others and to nature. We will have the opportunity for loving conversations and activities with fellow travelers on the Spiritual Journey. We are pleased to provide an opportunity to gather with .O, a member of Central Philadelphia Meeting and a seasoned facilitator of workshops focused on Quaker values rooted in love, peace, and social justice. Additionally, we will be joined by Molly Hicks, a member of Old Haverford Meeting, who will share her creative music and songs that express her spiritual relationship with God and with others.”

Retreat to prepare the Holy Ground of our Summer Sessions Gathering on Wednesday 1-4pm July 26 and Thursday 10-12 July 27, 2023.

We treasure our role of setting the atmosphere for Spiritual led Summer Sessions by offering a pre-retreat that we hope will help summer sessions participants come from a deeper spiritual place before beginning Sessions. Below is a description:

“ We will approach the annual session’s theme of “Living with our Neighbors: Growing into Beloved Community” by exploring the question that Jesus is asked at the beginning of the parable of the Good Samaritan, “And who is my neighbor?” Friend Tom Gates will lead that part of our discussion.

During the workshop we will deepen listening skills and share with Friends in intimate as well as large groups. This is a chance to delve into your Inner Light with Friends by your side. We will share in w(holy) listening, Lectio Divina, passages from Thomas Kelly’s “Beloved Community,” and our own experiences and challenges of being in this world as a neighbor and a member of a blessed community.”

We also offered an information table on the Spiritual Formation Program (SFP) at the summer session fair.

Offering the 9-month Spiritual Formation Program to Haddonfield Meeting September 15, 2023 to May 17, 2024 Both the opening retreat on September 15-16, 2023 and the Midyear retreat on January 13, 2024 Happened during this time period. The closing retreat was on May 17-18, 2024. A description follows:

“A 9-Month Program Community

The Spiritual Formation Program components of two weekend and one one-day retreats, personal spiritual disciplines, readings, devotional groups and prayerful support combine to provide a structured community in which each member may discern God’s call and prepare to follow it.

Throughout the nine months, many insights and deep relationships are forged in this intimate exchange. The Spiritual Formation Program encourages Friends to take seriously God’s call in their lives. This is done through a structured, supportive community where:

- Each person commits to full participation in the entire program so that everyone will have a rich experience;
- Each person undertakes a daily spiritual practice for the entire program, a critical component of spiritual formation;
- Each person is a member of two regional groups that meet monthly: a reading and a spiritual friendship group;
- The reading groups (7-10 people) gather to share, worship and discuss responses to assigned devotional readings. These are books about spiritual experience, prayer, scripture, community, the Religious Society of Friends and ministry;
- Smaller spiritual friendship groups of 3-5 within the larger reading groups are also formed and meet on another day each month, sometimes over a meal, to relate their on-going experience of their daily spiritual practices and to share how the Eternal is breaking in on their lives”.

We will be offering this 9-month program again in the fall for Bucks Quarter and are now diligently recruiting for the program. We currently have 16 people registered.

Sharing and Teaching one Another in the Beloved Community: Retreat for Old Haverford Meeting on December 10, 2023

Old Haverford offers members and attenders 2 retreats every year. They invited the Spiritual Formation Collaborative to facilitate their retreat on December 10, 2023. The focus of the retreat was to share transcendent experiences more vocally to enable Friends to teach one another. In order to do this, we examined our spiritual journeys, considered how to deepen worship and when to share revelations during worship.

We are pleased that individual Meetings have been contacting us programs within their meetings. As noted above we designed and offered a one-day retreat for Old Haverford, Gwynedd Meeting requested a speaker which we identified for them and Lansdowne Meeting has requested a 2-hour session for June 8 as a part of their retreat.

We believe our programs not only deepen the spiritual life of individuals and meetings but also result in participants joining their meeting as members.

Our activity matches our funding request and includes an additional Spiritual Formation program: Introduction for Bucks Quarter on April 14, 2024 A few things to note: Haddonfield’s closing retreat was scheduled for May 17 and 18; we have been accepted to provide an FGC workshop on July 1 and are working hard on that program and we are fulfilling a request from Lansdowne Meeting to be a part of their Meeting’s retreat on June 8 as noted above.

7. What are the things that are stopping/hindering your mission, if any?

New members We need help recruiting younger members for SF. Anyone below 70 would do. This is intense work and needs Collaborative members to devote a fair amount of time. As a result, our members are often retired but we continue to look for those still in the work force and will accommodate our planning meetings to their schedules.

Need to Improve the registration and recruitment for our yearly weekend retreat

First of all, we would like to thank PYM staff for their work and support of our program. They have been wonderful. That being said, we would like to make a few suggestions to improve our work and need PYM staff to assist us in making these improvements

Registration link 6 months before the program: Every year it is difficult to get registration for our yearly weekend retreat on the PYM website far enough in advance, to give us time to recruit a fair-sized audience. Online registration is often ready 1-2 months before the program. We would like it up 6-8 months before the program so that when we recruit throughout the year, we can give possible participants the registration link. Registration this year was improved by the timely responses of Melinda Wenner Bradley

Post card out well in advance of the program: Currently one post card is sent to each meeting clerk and clerk of worship and ministry 1-2 months before the program. We would like additional recruitment efforts and approaches earlier. For example, at 6 months before the retreat and 3 months before the retreat.

Using a timeline, work together as a team: We realize PYM staff needs specific information from us in order to make these changes and suggest we agree on a mutual timeline so PYM staff can do this advance work. We hope these changes can improve the number of people benefiting from our program.

Online listing: It would be great if the travel reimbursement form and guidelines were listed on the PYM website so members are more likely to submit expenses

8. Would you like additional support from PYM staff, the Quaker Life Council Clerk, your Program Support Committee liaison, or the Program Support Committee?

We have received excellent support from Wendy Kane and Melinda Wenner Bradley. Despite the fact that Melinda was doing 2 jobs she responded very quickly to our requests and was instrumental in making our annual retreat in April a success.

Wendy Kane is my go-to-person with questions and has helped with budget creation, PR for the annual retreat and guidance regarding PYM processes. The Collaborative is deeply grateful to both of them and to PYM continued support of Spiritual Formation Programs.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Thompson, Clerk

Spiritual Formation Collaborative of PYM

Member of Newtown Monthly Meeting

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