

New York Quarterly Meeting, Religious Society of Friends

Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business

Brooklyn Meeting and online

January 19, 2025

Attendance:

Clerk: Katherine Alford (Morningside)

Morningside: 9

Recording Clerk: Sarah Way (Brooklyn)

Staten Island: 2

Brooklyn: 18

NYQM staff:

Fifteenth Street: 10

Exec Director: Ted Bongiovanni

Flushing: 3

Community Organizer: nova sturup

Manhattan: 2

Visitors/Unidentified: 6

2025.01.01. The meeting settles into silence at 1:07 pm. Out of the silence the clerk, Katherine Alford, shares three readings:

“Returning hate for hate multiplies hate, adding deeper darkness to a night already devoid of stars. Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that. Hate multiplies hate, violence multiplies violence, and toughness multiplies toughness in a descending spiral of destruction. So when Jesus says “Love your enemies,” he is setting forth a profound and ultimately inescapable admonition. Have we not come to such an impasse in the modern world that we must love our enemies—or else? The chain reaction of evil—hate begetting hate, wars producing wars—must be broken, or we shall be plunged into the dark abyss of annihilation.”

— Martin Luther King Jr., [Strength to Love](#)

“Love is the will to extend one's self for the purpose of nurturing one's own or another's spiritual growth... Love is as love does. Love is an act of will — namely, both an intention and an action. Will also implies choice. We do not have to love. We choose to love.”

— M. Scott Peck

“If we want a beloved community, we must stand for justice.”

— [bell hooks](#)

2025.01.02. The clerk welcomes Friends to our quarterly meeting for business for January 2025. Clerk Katherine Alford intends to sprinkle announcements throughout the meeting.

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Friends approve the [minutes](#) from our October 20, 2024 meeting and the [agenda](#) for today's meeting.

2025.01.03. First announcement: nova sturup introduces Rachel Jackson, the community outreach manager from Playhouse Creatures Theatre Company, and the artistic director (Joseph W. Rodriguez). They are presenting a new play, "The Return of Benjamin Lay," and reaching out to our Quaker community due to our connection with him. They're planning a Friendly night at the theater and a promo code, and will be offering talkbacks and panel discussions. The play will be performed mid March-mid April at the Sheen Center in Lower Manhattan. Rachel's email is rachelynn1@gmail.com.

2025.01.04. Glenn Josey, 15th Street, presents the [report](#) from the Trustees. Most of the work of the Trustees is done within its subcommittees. Facilities Coordinating Committee oversees properties and helped prepare the capital budget which includes improvements to the cemetery, Brooklyn Meeting, and 15th Street. The Finance Sub-Committee approved a quarterly meeting financial investment policy and helped create the NYQM budget within the newly combined Audit and Finance Committee. This combined committee couldn't come to unity on the Operations Budget which will be presented here today for approval.

2025.01.05. Ted Bongiovanni gives the [Executive Director's Report](#). Ted gives a special thanks to Nancy Hadley-Jaffe, especially for her work with the "Old Paper Posse" that spent many hours sorting through the many papers in the NYQM archives. The Trustees also extend their gratitude to Nancy.

Ted's report looks back at the past year of accomplishments, beginning with thanks to the staff team. The quarter spent 900k in capital investments, AKA improvements to the physical spaces. The quarterly team has also been working on digital improvements, like the beginnings of a database, social media, and a new website. The community team is led by nova, who supports events like the retreat and the CQL events and programs like the Community Wellness Team.

The quarter has regular income from our properties and investments. In 2025, 15% of the operations budget will go to community programming.

The retirement of Miriam Perez is acknowledged. Miriam recently retired after 31 years of dedicated service at 15 Rutherford Place, and will be missed.

The Friends Shelter at 15th Street is winding down its operations due to changes in the NYC policy on how they screen shelter occupants. Guests at the shelter have been helped to find homes.

A Friend offers that there's a "rumor" CQL (Concern for Quaker Living) will offer a Meeting for Eating in February.

2025.01.06. Katherine Alford reads the [Clerk's Report](#). The New York Quarter gathered together for a first-ever retreat at Powell House in November 2024. Over 50 people attended, including members of every meeting and all ages. The weekend was full of worship and joy and imagining the future and possibilities of our quarter. The community values spending time together and is looking forward to more opportunities to do so in the future.

2025.01.07. Dan Seeger reports from the combined Budget, Investments and Finance Committee. As part of their good governance of the quarter's finances, they have prepared an executive summary of the new NYQM [Investment Policy Statement](#), which is being presented as a first reading. He asks everyone to review this.

Today they seek approval for the [Capital Budget](#) — for large expenditures that don't happen annually — and the [Operations Budget](#), which covers regular ongoing costs like staff and utilities.

2025.01.08. Friends ask questions about the Capital Budget. One Friend asks about the large amount allocated to the bench restoration project. Glenn Josey explains that the historic benches in the 15th Street Meetinghouse need to be stripped and refinished.

In response to a question Ted B explains the meaning of the two columns of income on the Capital budget. The "Friends/NYQM Reserves" column refers to a reserve fund to which Friends Seminary and the NYQM contribute, and may be more helpfully named "Friends Seminary/NYQM Reserves." The NYQM Reserves column is money from the NYQM investments.

Friends approve the Capital Budget.

2025.01.09. Dan Seeger returns the discussion to the Operations Budget. Paul Flynt explains that the Audit and Budget Committee were in favor of adding a budget line for the Africa Education Committee last summer before the Audit and Budget Committee was combined with

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Trustees' Finance and Investments Committee. The Finance Committee had objections to adding this budget line, possibly because the Africa Education Committee is its own 501c3.

Paul also points out that Audit and Budget and the Trustee's Finance and Investments committees have different and somewhat opposing charges.

Dan explains that the debate about adding the Africa Education Committee to the budget line is not about whether or not the quarter supports the committee's work but where in the budget it should appear. The African Education Committee has requested funds past the 3 year cap the Witness Committee has placed on its donations. They requested a separate budget line. The question is: will the funds for the African Education Committee come out of the current Witness fund or will it be a separate NYQM budget line, additional to the Witness fund?

Many Friends raised concerns about the quarter's financial support of our Witness work, the work of the Witness Committee, and how its funds should be distributed. Friends spoke in support of the work done by the African Ed Comm and all the Witness work supported by the quarter.

Friends agreed to have a threshing session on what the Witness Committee wants to do with its funds, to give clarity and support. nova sturup offers to organize that session.

Friends approve the Operating Budget.

2025.01.10. Jonathan Fluck, Brooklyn, presents the [report](#) from the Witness Fund Committee. They funded 15 proposals in the past year. The report contains summaries of these proposals and a call for grant requests. The committee has agreed to remove the 3 year restriction of the funding of projects. Barbara Masters speaks on the Witness grant she received for JuriSee. They have identified a need for journalistic coverage of our state civil courts, which often deal with cases involving our civil rights. These courts operate with little accountability. The Witness grant makes it possible for JuriSee to join journalistic partnerships and helps them afford the technical costs of their work.

Friends accept the report.

2025.01.11. Bill Guy, Brooklyn Meeting, reads the Nominating Committee [report](#). Friends approve the nominations and accept the requests for release.

2025.01.12. CJ Holms, Brooklyn, reads the [report](#) from the Relief Committee. The committee distributed about \$29k in grants to Friends in need of financial assistance last year. They also converted an old outstanding loan into a grant. There are several other outstanding loans the committee would be happy to convert to grants if the recipients can be contacted. The committee has emergency funds available via an application available on the NYC Quakers website. Friends accept the report.

2025. 01.13. Marna Herrity, Brooklyn, announces that the Kisangura School (Tanzania) staff returned on January 13 to prepare for the new academic year and students return on January 20. Our sponsored students received their uniforms, book and school supplies at Distribution Day on January 17. The Great Lakes Region (Africa) Education Committee thanks everyone for their donations, plus the Witness Fund Committee for their grant.

2025.01.14. Barbara Masters presents the Brooklyn Meeting Report. The meeting has introduced a monthly “Intro to Silent Worship” meeting for newcomers. Two attenders became members. The meeting held an in-house retreat which 30 people attended at one point or another. They also had a joyful holiday party. Young adult Friends gathered several times, including for a hike. Friends accept the report.

2025.01.15. Gloria Thompson presents the Manhattan Meeting Report. David Herendeen continues to lead worship on 1-4th First Days. On 5th First Days a member of meeting leads worship. Membership remains the same. All are welcome to worship with them on First Days and on third Thursdays at 7pm for online worship. The meeting supported the building of two additional classrooms at a school in Kenya. Members were glad to participate in the NYQM retreat. Friends accept the report.

2025.01.16. Scott Blumenthal reads the Morningside Meeting [Report](#). The meeting is optimistic about the well-being of their community and feel that the meeting is gaining strength. New people have been attending worship and returning. Through their Peace and Social Action Committee they remain concerned about the conflict in Gaza and the rights of people in prison. A working group has formed about becoming an anti-racist community. Friends accept the report.

2025.01.17. Barbara Barnard gives the Fifteenth Street Meeting [Report](#). The meeting held two screenings of films followed by discussions, hosted a workshop on being a recording clerk, and welcomed two adult and one youth members. Children presented the annual Christmas pageant. There is new energy for outreach, including new Whats App groups and welcoming

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initiatives. Friends are referred to their robust website 15thstmeeting.org. Friends accept the report.

2025.01.18. Ted Lochwyn reads the Staten Island Meeting [Report](#). Routine post-worship activities include religious education for children. The meeting worships on 1st and 3rd Sundays. They continue to distribute witness funds. Friends accept the report.

2025.01.19. Ron Hogan speaks about Flushing Meeting, likening its internal conflicts to George Fox's description of "the lamb's war." They are grateful for the accompaniment they've received from other Friends. Flushing Meeting Friends struggle to love and trust each other in the midst of their disagreements. Friends accept his statement.

2025.01.20. Announcements:

- A Clerking Workshop — AKA "participating in Quaker business meetings with joy and confidence" — will be held at Powell House Feb. 21-23.
- The next Quarterly Meeting is on April 19, a Saturday, at 15th Street. (Easter is April 20).

The meeting ends at 4:20 pm after a brief period of worship.

UPCOMING NYQM DATES:

2025:

April 19*** (Saturday) — 15th Street Monthly Meeting

July 20 (Saturday) — Friends Cemetery Prospect Park

October 20 — Morningside

***Note this is Saturday due to the 3rd Sunday being Easter. The body minuted that when 3rd Sunday in April falls on Easter our NYQM business meeting will be held on Saturday.