

Doylestown Friends Meeting

Minutes of Meeting for Worship for Business - February 12, 2023

Clerk Liz Fritsch opened the meeting with a period of worship. About ten Friends attended in person and five via Zoom. The January minutes were approved.

Lisa Wildman read an annual report for 2022 that she had prepared and which was sent to the quarterly and yearly meeting. Her annual report is appended.

Finance:

- Ken Miller reported that \$2,000k in contributions were received in January, but Meeting revenues are running about \$2600 below revenues received by this time last year.
- A contribution of \$300 was received for the education fund.
- Payments were made for 10 copies of Faith and Practice, property insurance, communication bills (Zoom and Verizon) and the usual utility bills

Education and Conference Committee.

Alan reminded the meeting that this is the time of the year for families seeking support from the Meeting for Friends School expenses to submit a request. Liz Fritsch indicated that she has received some requests from families for support from the Nationals Friends Education Fund which she submitted to PYM.

Nominating.

Wendy Steginsky submitted a nomination of Rick Howe for Summer activities Coordinator (May/ June thru August). Rick expressed concern about his ability to keep up and manage children as the sole coordinator. Wendy suggested a co-coordinator to assist and Rick was amenable to this idea. Wendy will reach out for a volunteer to assist Rick as co-coordinator.

Hospitality.

Ted Dempsey raised the question of having a celebration on Easter Sunday with a pot-luck breakfast either before or after the meeting. The need for a pop-up canopy was discussed in case of rain. The Worship and Ministry committee will discuss a plan for this event during their Committee Meeting and will bring it to the Meeting for Business in March.

Worship and Ministry.

Maggie Boyer announced the Fourth Sunday Forum on Feb. 26 which will focus on the intersections of the Quaker Peace Testimony and the Doylestown Friends Meeting statement on Ukraine, with the first anniversary of the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the continuing war there. A QuakerSpeak video will be shown to start the forum and Nancy Mills will facilitate the discussion.

Peace and Social Concerns Committee:

- John Baker reported that the Peace and Social Concerns committee held their first meeting of the year and nominated John Baker as the clerk. The committee determined that their areas of focus would be directed toward promoting peaceful conflict resolution and advocating against Book Bans in local public schools. Two members attended a zoom meeting held by Bucks County Anti-Racism Coalition (BC ARC) led by a recent Meeting for Worship attendee, Kevin Leven. The Coalition is involved in developing an online interactive program to make banned books available to school age appropriate children who have been denied access to them. Our committee plans to keep attending those Zoom meetings as regularly as possible.
- John read a statement drafted and approved by the committee on book bans. The statement is appended.

Pastoral Concerns.

Bill Thode reported that the committee is rotating clerks each month. Bill discussed Carol Miller's memorial service and the continuing messages of comfort and joy shared on the listserv. The committee is putting ideas together for the April Sunday forum, including a potential topic of 'music as ministry' with live music.

Property.

Dave Crosman reported that he attempted to get guidance from contractors on the ventilation system but has not heard back from the contractor that we used in the Fall for cleaning the heating system. Some concern was expressed about the poor ventilation downstairs. Ted Dempsey and Dave Crossman will check to see if there is any potential to open up additional windows downstairs.

Communications.

Peter Schiano had nothing to report. Liz Fritsch mentioned that there was a request for training on the new computer and sound system used to host hybrid zoom meetings for worship. The idea to have training 30 minutes early on a Sunday before the meeting was discussed, as well as a request to update the written instructions.

First Day School.

Rosemary reported that she will be teaching this month and that there have been no issues getting people to teach and assist.

Bucks Quarterly Meeting. No reports.

Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. No reports.

The meeting was adjourned after a moment of silence.

Respectfully submitted,

Bob McMahon, Assistant Clerk

Doylestown Friends Meeting 2022 Annual Report

In 2022 Doylestown Friends continued to seek, discern, and follow our sense of the Light, in our hearts, in the ways we treat one another, in our local community, and in the wider world.

We faced challenges:

The Covid 19 pandemic continues. At first we worshiped virtually via Zoom only; attendance averaged ~18. With careful consideration of the science, and with care for one another and our many diverse feelings, in April we reopened our Meetinghouse with excellent ventilation, CO2 monitoring, and made masks and vaccination optional. Attendance averaged ~17 in our meetinghouse, ~7 on zoom (whether hybrid or zoom only). (These numbers include all ages.) We continue to strive to balance the needs and wishes of those who cannot attend or don't feel safe in person to the meetinghouse with the needs and wishes of those who cherish in person worship, and/or do not feel comfortable with technology for various reasons. Our efforts to improve the experience of technology in hybrid worship continues. (Hybrid worship is when online worshipers virtually connect with in-person worship in the meetinghouse.) Virtual worship enabled us to occasionally join Friends across Philadelphia Yearly Meeting in All Together Zoom worship.

We have had trouble filling some committee positions and roles in our Opportunities for Service, and trouble finding volunteers to run technology for hybrid worship. So we came to offer hybrid worship only on the second and fourth Sundays, when after worship we monthly hold meeting for business or forums. On first, third, and fifth Sundays, we worship via Zoom, and in person in the Meetinghouse, but these two groups worship separately.

In recent years, we have benefited from having two Co-clerks, but for 2023 only one stalwart Friend will wear the Clerk mantle.

We planned to repeat our outside Christmas program in the backyard of the meetinghouse as in 2021, a bonfire carol sing, but canceled due to extreme cold.

We met these challenges, and we found reasons to hope and feel encouraged:

Our robust First Day School program continues. Dedicated Friends teach new generations about our testimonies, especially Peace. All enjoyed our Easter Egg hunt. Our children's First Day School is small, but vital. Children attended on most Sundays, and we are happy that our visitors included children.

In May we virtually hosted Bucks Quarterly Meeting; our featured speaker was our longtime member, Gretchen Castle, Dean of the Earlham School of Religion, who spoke about the Peace testimony in the global context. This topic has been heavy on our hearts, especially as the war in Ukraine rages on, and some of us struggle with how to respond in light of our Peace testimony.

In 2022, after we started meeting in person, and dropped the mask and Covid vaccine requirements, we had more visitors than in 2021. Some visitors are motivated by racial justice, and some are motivated to oppose the bans of books about LGBTQ and racial diversity in the Central Bucks School District. Many of our faithful members share these concerns, and many chose to read books banned by CBSD.

We have worked to address racism, and acknowledge that we have more to do. For example, one member volunteers with the Coalition of Natives and Allies to educate the public and oppose the racist policy of using Native peoples as sports mascots. Another member sought guidance from the meeting regarding a pair of moccasins, handed down from his ancestor who worked at the Carlisle Indian Industrial School. We learned that school staff stripped children of every aspect of their Native identity, such as moccasins, as they entered the school and, sadly, that Friends were among the European American perpetrators of this cultural genocide. Once they indentified to what Native American peoples they belonged, our members reverently returned the moccasins to a Native member of the Coalition of Natives and Allies who plans to return them to her Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate community in South Dakota, along with the remains of two boys returned by the Carlisle School for burial on their homelands.

In September, we held a DFM Open House during the Doylestown Arts Fest. It was a great success and was well received by many people in the wider community who attended and expressed interest and curiosity about the Meetinghouse and our beliefs.

Monthly Forums: the Pastoral Concerns, Worship and Ministry, and Peace and Social Concerns committees took turns organizing monthly forums after Meeting for Worship. Some popular forums included singer songwriter Reggie Harris, Outreach ideas, and discussion of book bans by Central Bucks School District.

Our meeting garden flourishes; flowers in front of our meetinghouse beautify our community, and vegetables out back we donate to a local food bank. We updated the bricks around our meetinghouse and sidewalk in front of the meetinghouse, making the way smoother and safer for all.

This report features highlights of our 2022, but is not all the ways that DFM members and attenders corporately and individually live out our testimonies and seek continual revelation of the Light.

Humbly submitted with love,

Lisa Wildman, retired Co-clerk

The DMMF Peace and Social Concerns
Minute on Book Bans

We submit that Book Bans executed by any public school board or any entity of a public education institution are anathema to Quaker Testimonies of Peace, Community, Integrity and Equality.

Adherents of the current nationwide book ban efforts appear to be focused upon eliminating public education efforts to help mitigate the dangers of homophobia and racism in our culture. We submit these efforts will serve only to take us all backward and away from realizing the aforementioned Testimonies rather than illuminate and promote them. Education should edify and lead students toward compassion and understanding of all people, rather than act as a barrier to that end.