

Abington Quarterly Meeting for Business

Held at Gwynedd Monthly Meeting

Second Month 3rd, 2019

Abington – 2: Byberry – 0: Gwynedd/Foulkeways- 30: Horsham – 2: Norristown –5 : Plymouth –4 : Richland –1 : Unami – 3: Upper Dublin – 3: Guest – 1:

Ranvir Bakshi welcomed Friends to Gwynedd. He told of Gwynedd's accomplishments and challenges in the areas of peace and social justice, outreach, and environmental stewardship. Gwynedd has undertaken a leading to aid Syrian refugees and in almost three years has raised \$60,000 through a variety of fundraising initiatives. Gwynedd participates in the interfaith housing network every summer to assist homeless families in our community. Gwynedd has raised over half a million dollars through the AFSC Flea Market. Gwynedd considers its main challenge to be to grow membership. They work on this by offering coffee houses several Saturdays each year. The Gwynedd Peace Camp is another outreach effort. Gwynedd's Gathering Garden includes yoga, meditation, a book discussion, silent retreats, and a program of spiritual nurturing and all programs are open to the public. Gwynedd restructured its worship time so that they have fellowship at the rise of meeting, which encourages people to mingle and welcome new attenders and visitors.

Friends approved the agenda and the minutes from Tenth Month.

Lynne Calamia from Arch Street Meeting presented an update about the building and its current programming. She has been the executive director there for six years. She told about the Arch Street Meeting House Preservation Trust, founded in 2011, the year the building was entered into the National Register for Historic Places. The trust handles all the operations of the building. There is a new program for volunteers called "Ask a Quaker." Much of the historical information and frequently asked questions are now displayed on panels, and the volunteers are free to speak from their experience. Another volunteer opportunity is to be a "researcher" and find historical information to share with visitors. There will be a Valentine's inspired family-friendly event at the meetinghouse on February 9, showing *Willie Wonka and the Chocolate Factory* and talking about Cadbury and the "Chocolate Wars."

The clerk shared the annual report of the Quarter (attached). It was received and approved with appreciation.

Kathleen Geist (Gwynedd) shared a summary of the efforts that meetings in the Quarter are doing to live sustainably. She said that the sustainability committee at Gwynedd considers meetinghouse resource usage, care of the grounds, and educating members about sustainable choices. Kathleen then presented results from a survey that the committee recently sent out to all

the meetings in the Quarter.

- The majority of meetings consider global environmental concerns: First Day School programs, Citizens' Climate Lobby, fundraising, etc.
- Almost half of the meetings are moving toward renewable energy.
- Most meetings have reduced their use of single-use dishware and recycle and a few meetings compost. Three meetings have converted to LED lights.
- The vast majority of meetings have considered sustainable land management: native plants, reducing pesticide use, removing invasive plants, installing a pollinator garden, planting native trees, and improving stormwater management. One meeting has received a state grant to restore a neighboring stream.
- Most meetings consider food and water choices: using green caterers, having vegetarian options at meeting gatherings.
- Two-thirds of meetings support EQAT work, contact legislators, sign petitions, attend rallies, or otherwise organize political advocacy for environmental protection.
- As for transportation, several meetings spoke of individual members who have electric or hybrid cars. Members take trains to marches, and some meetings ride share and offer rides to those who do not drive.
- Two meetings offer green burial. Many meetings have switched to green cleaning supplies, and those with LED lights have disposed of them safely.
- Two thirds of meetings engage in environmental education: articles for the newsletter, teach children, organize Adult First Day school presentations.

Judy Inskeep (Gwynedd) shared a minute that Gwynedd's Peace and Social Action committee approved about family detention at the southern border (attached) The committee sent this minute to Senators Toomey and Casey. Friends approved the minute, which will now be forwarded to PYM. A Friend asked if the minute can also be forwarded to FCNL.

Phil Donnelly and Lynn Biddle (Unami) engaged Friends in a sample session of "Courageous Conversations." They have led these conversations with members of their ministerium and with members of municipal boards. Interfaith Philadelphia is leading a similar series of conversations, inspired by the work of Krista Tippett ("Better Conversations: A Starter's Guide").

Friends paired off to examine a question about when another person changed one's mind. Pairs then shared in small groups.

There will be a longer “Courageous Conversations” workshop on Saturday, April 13. Location yet to be finalized.

Announcements: The Peace Walk will be Sunday, April 28. Organizers are arranging for vans to take people downtown.

The meeting closed with a moment of worship.

Respectfully submitted,

Paige Menton

Amelia Diamond, AQ clerk