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Abington Quarterly Meeting

Fifth month seventh, 2017 at Abington Meeting

Abington – 37 : Byberry – 1 : Gwynedd – 10 : Horsham – 2 : Norristown – 1 : Plymouth – 3 :

Richland - 0 : Unami – 1 : Upper Dublin – 4 : Foulkways – 0 : Pottstown -0 : Germantown – 1

Clerk Amelia Diamond began the meeting with worship at 9:03, with a total of 60 Friends present.

February's minutes were **approved**.

The clerk asked for volunteers for a **Naming Committee** to find members for the **Nominating Committee**, which at present has only one member and one contingent member. We also have no editor for the **Quarterly newsletter**, because of the loss of Christine Greenland. Dan Turner, who manages our website, said that information for the newsletter comes principally from Yearly Meeting and from the monthly meeting newsletters. The task could be divided, with one person securing the information and another posting it to a page. It was suggested that a newsletter could be written and printed as plain text, without formatting or additional highlights. The clerk asked everyone to spread the word about this need.

Rochelle Tormollen (Abington) read the minute from the **Fellowship of Friends of African Descent**. Friends **approved** it. Comments revealed that there are a number of organizations working on the recommendations made in the minute including peace training and peace centers.

Robert Taylor, new president of AQM **Trustees**, reported on the current officers of the Trustees. Two temporary committees have been established: one to make recommendations for updating the bylaws, and one to make policy recommendations relating to any conflicts of interest. Friends accepted the report, which is attached.

Rebecca Cratin, administrator of the **Home and Care Committee**, gave the committee's report. Two presentations given at committee were part of ongoing education for members. These underscore the importance of spiritual as well as physical needs of Friends. The report was accepted and is attached.

Karen Shanoski reported on the **Middle and Junior Friends Conference plans**. The theme this year is "Voices of Change", and will encourage participants to think about what is important to them and how they might act on it. MFC-JFC conferences are celebrating their 40th anniversary this year, and the meeting approved acknowledging this at the August picnic. A third Sprint is starting that will look at how the Yearly Meeting can support **religious education for youth**. The report was accepted.

Rebecca Cratin read the Worship and Ministry Committee annual report, written by Christine Greenland, who has been clerk. The report spoke of paying attention to spiritual hospitality and mentoring; and offering, at times, pastoral care in healing or spiritual nurture in realizing gifts. The report was accepted and is attached. Christine Greenland was remembered in period of worship.

Amelia Diamond read the **Clerk's annual report** for 2016. The Quarter's involvements and concerns touched all monthly meetings and extended into neighborhood communities. The report was accepted and is attached.

Flyers announcing the AQM **picnic** have been distributed to monthly meetings. Outdoor worship will be at 9:30, followed by a brief business meeting, a pot luck lunch and swimming pool hours. The cost will be \$160 for pool use and the life guard. The clerk asked if Friends wished to approve the cost of renting a sun canopy. The meeting **approved** making a request of \$200 from the **Abington Quarterly Meeting Fund** for this purpose, in addition to requesting the base cost of \$160.

The clerk summarized inquiries made since Quarterly meeting in February and referred to an outline of **Crossroads Ministry's** "Critical Cultural Competency" workshop. Friends expressed their views: This work needs to be ongoing. It cannot be resolved by one eight-hour workshop. What is needed is a personal transformation of our own attitudes. Approaching a broad organization may be more effective than engaging local individuals. After lengthy discussion, Rochelle Tormollen and Karen Shanoski volunteered to form a committee to help identify focus points that may be valid for us in connecting with a facilitated workshop.

The meeting closed with brief worship.

Amelia Diamond, Clerk

Judith Inskeep, Recording Clerk

Incorporated Trustees of Abington Quarterly Meeting
Semi-Annual Report to Abington Quarterly Meeting
May 7, 2017

The Trustees held our annual Spring meeting on April 23, 2017. We provide the following update of our recent activities.

The Spring meeting is the time at which new officers assume office; officers are elected annual for one year terms. There were a variety of changes that we would like to report. Taking office at our April meeting were: Robert Taylor (Abington) as President, Karen Russell (Gwynedd) as Secretary, Daniel Hazleton (Unami) as Treasurer, and Robert Reiff (Unami) as Assistant Treasurer. Thomas Armstrong (Plymouth) continues as Vice President. And Clerk of the Investment Committee We would like to acknowledge Bob Reiff's long-time service as Treasurer, his attention to detail, and willingness to train a successor -- thanks Bob. Rebecca Emerson completed her term as President.

Two new members joined the Trustees at our April meeting: Loretta Fox (Abington), and Russell Bishop (Gwynedd).

The Trustees established 2 temporary committees that we would like you to be aware of.

- The purpose of first committee is to bring recommendations to the Trustees for modernizations and revisions to our by-laws. The by-laws require: a set number of Trustees that include one for Cheltenham Meeting which was laid down in 2007; does not provide for the formation of additional Monthly Meetings; does not address the circumstance of a monthly meeting not suggesting a person as a trustee; and does not address the Clerk of the Quarter being a trustee. All of these omissions affect having a quorum to transact business.
- The purpose of the second committee is to bring a recommended policy to the Trustees relating to conflicts of interest, both actual and potential.

At the April meeting the Trustees received the usual reports from the Treasurer and the Home and Care Committee. The investment allocations with Friends Fiduciary remain the same as reported in our last report to Quarterly Meeting, and distributions from Friends Fiduciary are adequate to fund operations.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Taylor, President

**HOME & CARE COMMITTEE REPORT TO
TRUSTEES OF ABINGTON QUARTERLY MEETING
APRIL 23, 2017**

Since the last Trustees meeting in September, the Home & Care committee has been working with the new treasurer Dan Hazelton and assistant treasurer Robert Reiff on several cases that required much communication. It is wonderful to feel the smooth transition under Bob's careful guidance. The work of this committee depends on easy access to the treasurer, as well as the wealth of knowledge about HCC that Bob carries and is passing along to Dan and to Rebecca. We are very grateful to both of them for their support and hard work.

Our committee has had two presentations at our committee meetings in January and in April. The first was given by Pauline Sexton, the new Spiritual Care Coordinator at Foulkeways, who explained her role within the community where she serves the spiritual needs of residents and staff alike. Rebecca Cratin serves as Pauline's support and clearness as the Board representative who initiated the creation of the position. Since membership on the Foulkeways Board is a function of the Administrator, this was an opportunity for the committee to understand how Rebecca is interacting in that role. Foulkeways residents who are committee members appreciated Pauline's service thus far.

At our April meeting, we had a powerful presentation by Barbara Mancini who had been prosecuted on the charge of aiding the attempted suicide of her dying 93 year old father. The case was overturned, but the experience was devastating to Barbara and her family and made clear the pitfalls of our health care and legal systems when dealing with end of life. Her presentation was certainly thought provoking and questions that were raised will be considered at our next meeting. Six members of the Foulkeways nursing staff also attended.

These presentations are part of the ongoing continuing education component for this committee, for the members are very interested in the spiritual as well as the physical needs of Friends as they age and at the end of life. We are well aware that the financial assistance we provide is only one part of the ministry of this committee.

The Administrator toured Pennswood in the fall to gain information on the community and its financial information, in order to be able to share such information with members of Abington Quarter. She is also communicating with family members of a deceased recipient of a large amount of assistance who did not honor the Letter of Intent due to having spent down all of the estate for his care. We will continue to pursue this communication in hopes of getting some resolution before writing off the loss. Our new policy of also sending a copy of the annual statement sent to the recipient of funds to their designated representatives will, hopefully, help to avoid some of the confusion at the time of the recipient's death because they will have been receiving statements annually.

We are currently processing a swing-loan for a couple at Foulkeways. This case points out the need to work smoothly with the treasurers and Trustees in order to move around large sums of money. We thank Bob and Dan for making it so easy.

Rebecca continues to visit Monthly Meetings to encourage Friends to seek the assistance they need. It is clear to us that no matter how much information we put out, there is always a need for more. She also attended an excellent workshop on Diversity in the Aging Population sponsored by Phoebe Ministries of Lehigh Valley, and will attend their next one in May.

Our committee lost a member who had served us for many years but had not been able to be with us recently. Liz O'Brien of Richland meeting died in December and Nancy and Rebecca attended her memorial. Our committee also misses the presence of Alice Wetherill at our meetings, but Rebecca has had the pleasure of sitting with her several times to share our activities and to gain her wise perspective on what we are doing.

The Spruance Fund continues to provide assistance for several residents at Foulkeways, and we are about to begin to provide assistance with rent for a meeting member who is living in an apartment on her own. Thus, the work continues in the spirit of loving outreach.

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca Cratin, Administrator

AQM WORSHIP & MINISTRY COMMITTEE

Annual Report 2/5/2017

Several times a year, members of AQM Worship and Ministry explore the blessings and challenges that arise in the spiritual life of Abington Quarter meetings. In fellowship, we share our disciplines: journaling, reading the Bible, and being together. We are encouraged by the depth of searching, by the open welcome and encouragement we find. When perplexed by conflict, we are reminded that community spiritual life is grounded through prayer, worship and fellowship – a glue that binds us together.

Spiritual hospitality allows attenders and members to feel at home in the meeting and engaged in the meeting's work. Mentoring is essential. If a meeting loses its core through attrition (moving away, aging/illness, death), we need to find opportunities to know each other at a deeper level, and include those whose gifts might assist us, despite different stages of understanding (age, heritage, and other differences.)

Living as a Friend requires constant renewal and re-examination as a caring community. Larger meetings rotate responsibilities. Smaller meetings are stretched to care for members, maintain properties, or address differing ways of being Friends. The use of the queries in *Faith and Practice* serves as a vehicle to explore how we as individuals and communities might do things better.

Some individuals care for others by instinct. This involves offering a safe place for expressing pain or holding sacred space. At times, we need to offer appropriate pastoral care, take care in our use of words, and use our own language to express our faith. "Pastoral care" and "spiritual nurture" are other terms for the function of helping each other realize the best use of our talents, our joys – and sometimes our struggle and pain.

Our work beyond the quarter included the clerks' meeting at Newtown and other gatherings sponsored by Yearly Meeting, including days of extended worship that offer additional opportunities. A session on Healing and Forgiveness at a UCC church was helpful and inspiring to those who attended.

Gwynedd has two worship groups under its care: 1st day meeting at Foulkeways provides worship time or meditative space; 5th day worship is also available. Pottstown Worship group moved to Bethel Community Church, 575 Keim Street, Pottstown PA 19464 at 11 AM for the 2nd and 4th First days at 11 a.m. Pottstown worship group is growing. Some meetings in Quarter hold mid-week meeting and conversation once or twice a month, or each week as time permits.

In a polarized political climate, Friends began to offer care and counsel in meetings and surrounding communities. We wonder how to develop better relationships with each other, and to expand our sense of calling and a sense of what the Holy One would have us do together.

To end the year, 36 Friends from throughout the Quarter came together for an evening of fellowship at Rebecca Cratin's home, including opportunity for worship. Rebecca provided the opportunity and expansive hospitality that enabled many Friends to join us, including those who no longer drive at night.

Do we partake of the joy of the love of God and make our lives a celebration of the sharing of this love? Do our daily lives so demonstrate Friends' testimonies as to commend them to others? -- New York Yearly Meeting, query #15 *Christine Greenland, clerk; 1/4/2017*

ABINGTON QUARTER - CLERK'S ANNUAL REPORT - 2016 CALENDAR YEAR

Calling up images of Abington Quarter in 2016, the texture of our spiritual life becomes more apparent through the movements of our times. This has been a year of gathering resources, deepening commitments and appreciating the gifts of the Divine among us. Two of our Meetings bore heavy losses. Beloved Friends passed on. Avenues of support diminished. And Friends embraced each other. Three of our Meetings had been challenged by prior-year concerns. These were called to 'hang in' and rebuild. And Friends rediscovered each other.

Paying attention to Abington Quarter life, our Quarter's Worship & Ministry Committee- clerk, Christine Greenland- has continued to provide spiritual and convivial support: visiting our monthly meetings, sitting in prayer, opening conversation as may be led. A locally held Healing and Forgiveness session, attended by several committee members, enlarged our view.

Our Quarter's Home & Care Committee- executive members, Nancy Gold, Bonnie Miller, Rebecca Cratin- has worked to ease life care concerns by offering avenues of financial support with compassionate consideration. A special session of the committee featured Bio-ethics Basics in life care decision-making.

The fluency of our Abington Quarter Trustees and Investment Committee, and the dedication of our AQ Treasurer, Bob Reiff – followed by Dan Hazelton - has allowed caring work to be carried forward. Bob Taylor is our newly approved president of Trustees.

Our JFC/ MSFC Youth Conferences- director, Karen Shanoski- again held session in June on the theme "Open Your Heart". In addition the children's activities, the enhanced Faith and Leadership Program opened opportunities in workshops and volunteer services for young people. Preparation for conferences included the greater challenge of adopting an updated child care policy for our Quarter that complies with current state mandates. This was completed and approved. The process included a called session presented by Family Support Alliance that brought us clarity on child care certification.

This year we are grateful for a new opening. We thank Tom Dwyer for taking the lead in our All-Clerks Support Group. Meeting bi-annually, our monthly meeting clerks share the joys and challenges of their respective meetings.

The circle of our embrace, our discovery, reached beyond our own membership. Through our monthly meetings, we invited our neighbors in, sharing our space and our truth. From a school benefit in springtime to information tables in summer to soup nights throughout the year, with safe space opened to a broad base of human need; Norristown, Richland, Unami and Upper Dublin Meetings, though smaller in membership, were well engaged. Byberry and Horsham Meetings faithfully served their members in deeper spiritual community. Foulkeways and Pottstown Worship Groups gracefully moved through the transitions time and space, age and location, can bring. All our monthly meetings have shared with us their witness and work -

coffeehouses, food distribution, national and global networks, invitations to Light Group and Gathering Garden including book discussions, meditation, spiritual nurture. And we thank our means to communicate; our newsletter, our website. Yes, we did enjoy our annual picnic!

Many Meetings held sessions for our Quarter and our neighborhoods: historically- Benjamin Lay (AMM), Women in Penn's Woods (UDMM), pastorally- End of Life / 5 Wishes (GMM), Stand Up for Kindness (RFM), internationally, The Lemon Tree, narratives of Palestine/Israel (GMM) Year's-end social concern called us into, Colloquy in the Midst of Turmoil (UMM), Civil Discourse, Respecting Differences (PMM). The lists are as long and full as our prayers. And we opened our doors for spontaneous worship.

Many of us raised the hope and demonstrated the power of calls to action. This year, Abington Meeting installed a burial marker and plaque to note the unknown souls of early Quakers and those of African descent. Abington MM, with Bethany Christian Alliance and area churches opened up support to an extended family of refugees from the Congo. Gwynedd MM began supporting the UN Lifetime Project, sending funding to refugees overseas. Continuing in good works, we again witnessed Heeding God's Call for gun control with a T-shirt installation at Gwynedd MM. We heard a presentation on this issue at Unami MM. Also, in meetings for worship for business, we recaptured resources against human trafficking, learned how to support literacy and we opened our hearts to foster care at home.

We hold our bond with PYM. We've joined in PYM annual and continuing sessions. Monthly meeting clerks have participated in PYM's clerks group. AQ clerk has shared with fellow quarterly clerks through PYM means. We are represented on Nominating and Administrative Councils. To name one highlight, several of us were enriched by a thread- gathering at Lancaster MM on diversity. We have opened to conversation shared in discernment of our concerns held in the Light of peace, love and, might we anticipate, joy.

Our year ended with a chorale of community dinners and holiday mitten trees; voices raised to all ages, all families of thought. We continue to be challenged in realizing the unity we seek. Our Quarter is strong. We pray that we transcend our own senses; so that we may hear, see, perhaps touch upon, the workings of the Divine. As ever, may we align our eyes with God's long view.

Amelia Diamond
Clerk, Abington Quarter 01/17