

Strawberry Creek Monthly Meeting
Meeting for Worship on the Occasion of Business
September 8, 2019 Minutes

The meeting opened at 11:55 am with silent worship. Elizabeth Strain clerked the meeting. Nancy Wilkinson was Acting Alternate Clerk, substituting for Charlie Blanchard. 33 Friends were present.

Erik Wilson read the responses by Facilities Committee to the advices and queries on Reaching Out. Friends reflected further on the advices and queries out of the silence.

A Treasurer's Report was added to the meeting agenda.

The Recording Clerk read the minutes for the August 11, 2019 Meeting for Business. The minutes were approved with the following correction: the study session on the Green New Deal by Peace, Earthcare, and Social Witness Committee was only on Sunday, September 1. Co clerk David Rutschman said the committee is open to having more study sessions in the future.

Correspondence and Clerk's Business

The meeting has received a card from East Bay Sanctuary Covenant announcing its Annual Dinner on Saturday, October 19, from 4:30 pm to 8:00 pm at St. John's Presbyterian Church in Berkeley. For information call 510-540-5296, ext. 133. The Clerk will post the card on the bulletin board.

Bridging the Gap Committee membership (Elizabeth Strain)

The Clerk gave the background on the committee that is working to improve communications between the Berkeley Friends congregations. In addition to Berkeley and Strawberry Creek monthly meetings, Berkeley Friends Church is now represented. The Clerk announced that Lee Douglas from Worship and Ministry, Leonard Joy, and Carl Anderson will be the members of the committee representing Strawberry Creek.

Old Business

Naming Committee (Elizabeth Strain)

The Clerk read the names for the Naming Committee that have been seasoning for one month: Peter Lin, Philippa Barron, and Margaret Schneider. Those names were approved.

Kat Stenstedt Membership Committee Report (Rhea Farley)

The membership clearness committee for Kat Stenstedt was Carl Anderson, Beth Rodman, and Rhea Farley, convener. Rhea read the report for the clearness committee. Care of the Meeting Committee recommends Kat's membership be approved. The recommendation will season for one month. Concerns and questions can be brought to Care of the Meeting Committee.

Nominations (Elizabeth Strain)

Nominations have been seasoning for Michelle Bellows to become a member of Mutual Care, Richard Leath continuing as Treasurer, and Larry Strain as Clerk of Finance. By taking the

treasurer position, Richard would no longer co-clerk Finance Committee with Larry. No concerns were raised regarding the nominations. Those nominations were approved.

New Business

Regional Gathering Request (Stephen McNeil)

Care of the Meeting Committee received a request from College Park Quarterly Meeting to have a regional gathering with other Bay Area meetings and worship groups. CPQM has been exploring how smaller regional meetings, apart from the three yearly quarterly sessions, may help monthly meetings find greater fellowship between them. Only a fraction of CPQM's membership attends the winter, spring, and fall sessions. There were three regional meetings held last spring. CPQM suggests a regional gathering could perhaps address a particular topic or interest and could include Berkeley and San Francisco meetings and worship groups. Two committees at Berkeley Meeting are currently considering CPQM's request. A Friend suggested including Napa Meeting. Stephen said a regional gathering might include Berkeley Friends Church. If Friends are interested in and willing to organize a regional gathering, they may speak to Stephen or CPQM Representative Tom Yamaguchi. Tom has served on the ad hoc committee of CPQM Ministry and Oversight Committee that was tasked to explore and help organize regional gatherings.

Request for the Meeting to sign a letter to Congress sponsored by the Poor People's Campaign (David Rutschman)

David Rutschman, co clerk of Peace, Earthcare, and Social Witness Committee read the Pastoral letter being circulated by the Poor People's Campaign. It is addressed to the President, members of Congress, and candidates for President in the 2020 election. It condemns the "President's racist attacks on immigrants" and white nationalism that has "fueled the violence of indigenous genocide, slavery, lynching and Jim Crow." It calls the President "a symptom of our decaying moral fabric." The letter is attached to these minutes.

David had posted the letter to the meeting's Yahoo Group and suggested that the meeting sign on to it. He said he has signed the letter as an individual, and Peace, Earthcare, and Social Witness came to unity to sign the letter, as well. He asked Strawberry Creek Meeting to sign the pastoral letter. One Friend expressed concern for the wording of the letter, which she felt was engaging in name calling. "In a way we are playing his game," she said, regarding the use of name calling by the President of his opponents. She said she didn't want to be emotionally manipulated by the "us vs. them" aspect of the letter.

Several Friends responded to this concern. One Friend noted that because this is not our letter, we do not have the "luxury of wordsmithing." Signing the letter is somewhat time sensitive because it is intended to be delivered early in the coming session of Congress.

Several Friends defended the blunt language of the letter. "We need to speak the truth in words that can be heard," one said. "We need to call out the moral decay."

Another Friend found the anger expressed to be appropriate. "You don't have to agree with it," she said. "It is a response to Trump's anger."

Another Friend said that Friends "tend to be allergic to anger." She added, "We need to be outraged. Sending a letter is just a tiny piece. We need to stand up."

The meeting approved signing the pastoral letter with one Friend standing aside. David said that we can sign the letter as individuals, as he has done.

Reports

Peace, Earthcare, and Social Witness (David Rutschman)

David also recommended individuals sign letters to Governor Newsom, asking him to sign AB 32 “to end the state’s support for companies that earn financial profit from the incarceration and detention of thousands of Californians.” Peace, Earthcare, and Social Witness Committee is not bringing the letter for endorsement by the meeting. David said he brought copies so that individuals can sign them and send them to the governor.

The committee is sponsoring an education session on the third Sunday in November on local actions being taken on environmental concerns. Leonard Joy will speak at that session, and David asked Friends to suggest activist groups who might make presentations.

Finance Committee (Larry Strain)

The committee has completed its Friendly Financial Review.

The committee is selling one the CDs for the Site Contingency Fund to pay individuals requesting a refund.

The committee is still looking for a new treasurer. Richard is willing to train anyone who wishes to serve the Meeting in this capacity.

Treasurer (Richard Leath)

Richard presented the report for the year through August. He noted that the \$400 spent in the Other category of the Special Activities Account was for BOCA and for an invited speaker for an education session on gender identity.

Richard expressed concern over the increased cost of the meeting’s storage space and will be speaking with Peter Lin, who oversees this rental, to explain the increased cost.

Richard noted that the meeting’s current deficit of around \$18,000 to date is no greater at this point than in past years.

Pacific Year Meeting Annual Session (Nancy Wilkinson)

Nancy Wilkinson presented her report as PYM Representative on the annual session at Walker Creek Ranch, July 12 to 17. That report is attached.

After five years of discernment, PYM has agreed to request affiliation with Friends General Conference. Nancy said she was impressed by the clerking process in reaching unity, that included a threshing session and a “further threshing at a second meeting, after some friends had expressed concern about the queries posed for the first threshing session.”

The keynote address was delivered by David Johnson from Australia Yearly Meeting on the topic of “the offices of Christ” as described in Paul.

Two interest groups concerned the reviving of PYM’s Unity with Nature Committee, which has been having difficulties in recent years.

The current assessment structure is remaining unchanged at \$122 per member.

PYM is considering a “Pay as Led” registration fee for future session attendance.

The next annual session will return to Walker Creek Ranch, Friday, July 10, 2020 to Wednesday, July 15.

Power, Privilege, and Race Subcommittee (Susan Burr)

Power, Privilege, and Race Subcommittee has received positive feedback on its summer reading group on the book *Mindful of Race*. Susan reported that 40 Friends attended all or part of the sessions, with at least 20 in attendance at each. She said the trust level between participants increased throughout the sessions, which included mindful meditation sessions and suggestions on specific practices to stay centered. The subcommittee will be working on suggestions that arose from the reading groups, including a group healing plan and bystander intervention. The subcommittee is taking a fresh look at and redrafting the minute on uprooting racism. They are reviewing a North Pacific Yearly Meeting minute that was approved after a two-year process.

Susan recommended Friends register for the Friends General Conference eRetreat titled "Understanding and Healing White Supremacy," beginning September 22. Information and registration can be found at fgcquaker.org.

Announcements

Next Meeting for Business, October 13, 2019 at 11:50 a.m. at Berkeley Technology Academy
College Park Quarterly Meeting Fall Session, October 18-20, 2019 at Sierra Friends Center,
Nevada City, CA

Stephen McNeil announced that a Clerk's Meeting is scheduled for Saturday, November 2, at Berkeley Friends Meeting. Meeting representatives are invited to attend, as well. The start time for the meeting has not been set yet and will be announced.

Tom Yamaguchi announced that he used the meeting's annual pass to attend last weekend's clerking workshop at Ben Lomond Quaker Center. He will be posting his report on the workshop online and will have an announcement in the newsletter.

The meeting closed with silent worship at 1:45 pm.

Submitted by: Elizabeth Strain, Clerk, Nancy Wilkinson, Acting Alternate Clerk, and Tom Yamaguchi, Recording Clerk