

Annapolis Friends Monthly Meeting (AFM)
Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business (MfB)
Fourth Month, Seventh Day, 2024 (4/7/24)

Present were: Karen C. (clerk), Phil C. (recording clerk), Jack H., Jack L., Sky E., Nan E., Ellen M., Martha B., Alison B., Barb T., Jean C., Barbara S., Katherine , Margaret H., Ann R., Larry M., Martha L., Judy B., Mary B., Pat S., Marjorie K., Ria H., Cairn K., Ani W., Ted R., Patty R., JoAnne S., Kim F., Joan P.-M., Diane S., Steve P. and Christina F. with video staffing by Ben.

We met both in person and via Zoom, beginning with centering worship and screen-sharing of BYM's Fourth Month Faith and Practice queries. From the initial silence, our Clerk welcomed Friends and reviewed AFM's anti-racist queries, also inviting Friends to suggest better ways to hold these in our minds. Then, we proceeded with reports and action items from various AFM committees.

For Ministry and Pastoral Care (MPC) Committee, various items were presented:

- Barb, Jean and Ellen reported a recommendation for membership in AFM and the Religious Society of Friends for Ani Warneka, recounting the clearness process and describing Ani's spiritual journey. Ani thanked Friends and stated that joining Friends feels like she is "coming home." Friends joyfully approved.
- Martha offered our revised 2023 Spiritual State of the Meeting report which previously was circulated online. (See attachment.) Friends approved. M&PC suggested that Friends and Committees also might treat the report as a tool for ongoing discernment.
- Our Memorial minute for Doug McClelland was read by Martha. Friends accepted this minute; it also will be recorded with Baltimore Yearly Meeting. (See attachment.)

For Peace and Social Concerns (PSC) Committee, Margaret H. reported various items:

- First, she noted that a decision previously was made by MfB to direct a \$5,000 Retrospective and Restorative Justice (RRJ) donation to the Anne Arundel Community College Foundation for the Black Male Institute (BMI). However, PSC later learned that the BMI donation would not be applied directly to scholarships and, therefore, has changed its recommendation so that this donation would be directed, as hoped, via the Christofel Teaching and Nursing Scholarship. Friends approved this change.
- Second, Margaret reviewed a proposed PSC minute (attached) seeking to support a ceasefire, peace negotiations and aid for refugees, noting that this international crisis now has continued for six months. She noted the document also includes background and recommended actions and was circulated previously in March and again recently, having received recommended improvements within the committee and via our online AFM discuss list. Recommended actions would include circulating this to Senator Ben Cardin and other Friends organizations.

With the qualification that this request should seek a permanent ceasefire, Friends approved this minute.

- Third, as to FCNL's biennial Congressional priorities survey, meetings and individual Friends are invited to offer up to 5 statements of priorities in 30 words or less. A draft (attached) previously was circulated online. Margaret read this revised statement of priorities. Another Friend reminded us that FCNL is a great national resource that offers weekly meetings for worship, conferences and assistance in contacting our national legislators. With a few more words inserted, Friends approved this statement of priorities to be finalized by PSC and sent to FCNL on behalf of AFM.
- Fourth, Jo Anne S. provided an informational report on the conclusion of our Afghan refugee family committee work. She noted that Meeting, together with our neighbor Unitarian (UU) congregation, began support for an Afghan refugee family almost two years ago. Our initial commitment technically ended in 6/23, with LSSNCA; but the family then still needed urgent support. By agreement, AFM and UU extended our support through 2/24. We now have completed this extension, over the months assisting the family in finding a home (and paying rent through 2/24 as well as many other expenses), furnishing the apartment, providing computers, acquiring a car, getting school-age children into school, finding employment and mentors, and as best possible addressing health concerns. While the family still faces many challenges, the AFM/UU committee agrees with the LSSNCA agency that the agency is best suited to assist them in continued progress towards self-support. Friends accepted this report and especially thanked Jo Anne, Al and other Friends for their generosity with time, energy and resources. Friends are urged to hold the refugee family in the light and, as individuals, may choose to maintain ongoing contact with the family as led.

For Quaker Market Committee, as an information update, Cairn K. reviewed some Friends concerns about the 75/25 division of Market proceeds that was approved in March. Having reviewed minutes from previous years of MfB, Cairn reported that this division has been the practice of AFM for more than 20 years since 2003. (See attachment.)

One Friend commented that everything in Quaker meeting should be connected to our Quaker identity and that some aspects of Market don't seem to reflect this, adding that the Market seems to have its own life and sometimes seems unrelated to our Quaker ministries.

Our Clerk invited Friends to hold this concern in the Light, noting that Market is the Meeting's largest committee and that its operations are long standing among us. She invited Friends to look to the spirit to guide us. From the silence, one Friend recalled her decades long involvement with the committee and hoped that Friends can embrace and speak to this concern with more clarity. Another Friend noted that Market committee has been unanimous in embracing Meeting causes. Our Clerk urged Friends to hold this concern for further consideration and to cooperate with our Meeting's discernment process.

For Stewardship and Finance (SF) Committee, Jack L. reviewed the committee's previous recommendation to dedicate last year's \$5,256 surplus to the Retrospective and Restorative Justice (RRJ) fund and invited more input from Friends on the use of these funds. On this basis, SF may present revised recommendations at a future MfB.

Additionally, Jack reported that SF has made arrangements to more conveniently permit renters to pay rental fees via Zelle. We have not, as yet, approved donations to AFM from members via Zelle.

For Meetinghouse and Land (MHL) Committee, Kim initially thanked SF for approving Zelle for renters, helping our Business Use Coordinator (BUC) to step into the 21st century with Zelle and other new software. She also reported MHL's proposal for a dinner and weekday night "listening-information" session as to the Building Fund, perhaps with a hybrid format. Two dates are under consideration: Thursday, 4/18 or Tuesday 4/23; there probably would be additional meeting on some later date(s). One Friend suggested that having the event later in the evening or on a weekend; another suggested that the meeting could be recorded for later viewing by some unable to attend; a third supported the Zoom option. MHL will consider this input and schedule the session in the near future.

As AFM's Green Group (here called GG and not "Gang Green"), Kim reported that tomorrow five Friends will go to a Scenic Rivers training program as to methods for removal of invasive plants. If others are interested in joining this training, they may contact Kim. GG also is considering planting a "firefly / wildlife" meadow on the slope beside and behind the Meeting House; an initial change that Friends may notice is the placement of a perimeter of snow-stakes between the meadow and the streambed. This area will not be mowed so as to permit more wildflower growth; pollinator and firefly friendly plants will be grown behind that new line. Also, to act consistently with our "Sacred Trees" commitment and our Interfaith Partnerships of the Chesapeake (IPC) pledge, GG has applied to participate in the Maryland 5-Million Trees program and to plant additional native trees and shrubs on the property this fall or next spring. AFM would commit not to cut the trees for 15 years but may select areas where new trees would go. These are expected primarily to be understory trees and oaks less susceptible to a current blight. Friends appreciated these plans.

Finally, Kim noted that all are invited to AFM workdays this coming Saturday from 9 to noon and on later months' second Saturdays.

After these committee reports, we returned to unfinished minutes from 3/3/24 MfB. Phil read one minute for which changes had been requested by one Friend. The current minute draft reads with the passage in question highlighted:
Quaker Market (QM) Committee: Cairn presented the results of their recent discernment meeting regarding potential causes to support with AFM's Quaker Spring Market: the first \$250 to be allocated to AFM's Young Friends for their discernment; equally splitting the remainder for 25% to each of three External 501(c)3 causes (Chesapeake Bay Foundation, Mennonite Central Committee for their relief work in Ukraine and Gaza, and the Native American Rights Foundation); and the Internal 25% to AFM's Meetinghouse and Land Committee to be put toward steps

in upgrading to ADA standards for safety and accessibility at the meetinghouse, particularly at entries and exits. Considerations included concerns for anti-racist values and our political context, noting that AFM Peace & Social Concerns (PSC) has concurred with this discernment of causes. (See longer report attached.) QMC expressed their gratitude to all who contributed time and thought in recommending potential causes to support, and their regret that we cannot meaningfully support all of the causes at this time.

One Friend expressed concerns that QMC fundraising has not invested much in the Meetinghouse and suggested that 50% of proceeds be invested for AFM's future. Another expressed a similar concern. Our Clerk suggested that the current allocations are consistent with guidelines previously approved by MfB, and could be reconsidered as a future matter. Friends initially considered deferring action to reconsider the underlying policy of 75% external use and 25% internal use. However, recognizing that Spring Market is only a couple of months away and that time is short for this MfB, Friends approved but recorded the Friend's concerns "standing in the way." Friends agreed on more focused, future consideration of funding and Meeting House priorities with sufficient time allowed for these.

The Friend requesting changes to this highlighted passage urged that the Minute read as follows:

"A Friend rose in the traditional Quaker manner and noted the spirit directed them to stand in the way of the proposal and reconsider. Meeting determined that the discernment was not valid for the proposal and chose to proceed accordingly."

There was not time to fully consider this suggestion, so Friends approved the minutes except for this section, agreeing to hold the proposed change under consideration for further discernment.

We concluded with brief silence. *-These minutes respectfully submitted – Phil C., Recording Clerk.*

Annapolis Friends Meeting
Spiritual State of the Meeting for 2023
Second Reading, April 7, 2024

Annually, Annapolis Friends engages in a self-reflection process where we consider prepared queries, listening deeply to Spirit (the Light, God, Love, the Divine, etc.) and sharing our sense of Spirit's leadings for us aloud—with open heart. This process helps us gain clarity on our current spiritual state—both strengths and areas for needed growth. This report endeavors to capture the themes from our collective spiritual reflection on the 2023 spiritual state of our Meeting and serves as a response to Baltimore Yearly Meeting's request to account for the spiritual state of our Meeting.

Many expressed the value of worshiping together in our community, and pointed to it being **a joyous spiritual community** in which individuals show great care for one another. We are an unusually dynamic and welcoming, exciting Meeting. "This Annapolis Quaker community is one of the best faith-based community enriching and enriched groups I have experienced ...[we] are doing something very right, very connected, spiritual and loving." "I have been so moved by the worship and people. The spirit of altruism is what the Lord has shared. This, in conjunction with simplicity, has motivated me to reassess my own life. I have found much joy in attending."

Many conveyed appreciation for the **many forms for spiritual growth** that our Meeting offers. One Friend writes: "My spiritual journey is greatly enriched by my interactions with AFM Friends in so many contexts, including meetings for worship, learning, and attention to business, committee meetings, work on Quaker Market and our silent retreats. Over and over, I am amazed and touched by the deep wisdom shared so freely by members of our community." We are aware that each of these diverse gatherings have important spiritual meaning to those who participate in them. "It's important to understand all the spiritually rich things that are going on....I can't attend them all, but it is comforting to me knowing they exist and people care about doing them."

Some shared concern that because of the multiple forms of worship, we have **become splintered**. Expanding our 8am worship to meet weekly has been welcomed by those who attend and has introduced some need for adjustment as we negotiate limited space, back-to-back worship services, and added demands related to technology. Others spoke to the loss of opportunities for socialization, fellowship, and meals together at the heart of a sense of community. One Friend spoke of us as a collection of "scattered bones" that needs to be pulled together.

While some find the **technology less than satisfying**, others spoke to the rich gifts they had gotten from connecting to others through technology and blended meetings—that otherwise would have been lost. Zoom has made it possible for Friends at a far distance to continue to connect with us, to worship with us, to lead us in meeting for learning, and to share with us deeply spiritual messages. "To my mind there is absolutely no question that being able to have **blended meetings have greatly enriched our Meeting**." Some mentioned that technology has made it possible for those with **disabilities and health limitations** to worship with us in circumstances where attending in person would have been impossible.

Learning opportunities through Meetings for Learning, Worship Sharing and Bible Study are appreciated for their contribution to the spiritual richness of our Meeting. Using a blended meeting format, topics this past year included "Quaker Experience of Holding in the Light"; "Entering the Eternal Stream"; "Salvaging Sense of Meeting"; "Vibrant Committees"; "Bible Study: Old Testament" and The Parables of Jesus"; "2023 Triennial in Kenya: 'Come. Abide. Go.'"; and a 3-part "Living Our Truth" worship sharing series. These were led by those at the meetinghouse as well as those at distance from Annapolis—often with partnered leadership in the blended offering.

Despite the range of perspectives articulated, there was a **desire for wholeness** expressed. Perhaps we need to ask ourselves how can we come to see ourselves as whole, as one Meeting, as one faith community?

- Can we acknowledge that those who worship in a structure within AFM other than the 11:00 Meeting, are not absent from Meeting nor are they lessening our own spiritual experience?
- Are we open to the idea that some experience one form/structure of worship as more personally satisfying, more spiritual, than another? Are we okay with that level of individual difference?
- What shift in our own inner sense of spirit is needed?

One Friend writes, “I hope we can lean into and embrace a perspective of being one worship community with various forms of worship and spiritual enrichment, which I believe we currently are. This is a micro-opportunity for us to exercise our muscles of **building understanding across difference** even within our small world, recognizing the array of preferences for ministry, access through technology, perspective based on age, gender and race, and even understanding of what it means to be Quaker.”

In speaking to the queries, Friends noted that **Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business** is an integral part of our worship experience as a community—and it was characterized as impressive and efficient. “It helps our efficiency to have items prepared in advance by committees, but especially for challenging issues, we always benefit from greater use of silent worship before Friends speak,” and “We get a lot done, but we are so rushed.”

Those new to the Business Meeting process have found it interesting and satisfying. There’s a wish that more Friends understood the role of Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business and were able to participate in that process.

We continue to **address the contention among us** related to financial policies, fund raising and restorative justice efforts that fray our fabric. Unhealed breaches of trust from last year continue to challenge our sense of wholeness. One Friend expressed concern about “real and deepening divisions present within the meeting”, citing feeling marginalized and ignored. Another Friend reflected that how agreement is reached sometimes seems confusing, noting that “it seems that people are able to block reaching agreement” when they refuse to address an issue. Others question if committee discernment is adequately honored.

Several expressed concern about **how we bring Spirit** into our decision-making discernment and unity – how it occurs and whether it is occurring well. A Friend reminded us that “Patience is needed to allow Spirit, moving through the membership, to bring about a decision that expresses the sense of the Meeting...It is more important to have a sense of the Meeting than to have a decision made.”

- Do we enter Meetings centered and prepared to listen to Spirit?
- Are we releasing our points of view to Spirit to find a way forward?
- Are we seeking Spirit’s will or our own?

It will require more “prayer, worship, community gatherings, and the groundswell of devotion” to give us the spiritual strength to mend, renew, and expand our community and continue to flourish.

Friends seek to **broaden our welcome**, wanting to explore how we can become genuinely inviting to those whose absence saddens us, weakens us, lessens us. And, if the absence grows out of disagreements, how do we care for each other even as we disagree?

We are aware of our **yearning for young families and children** to be part of our community. We have a generational divide. Our Meeting is composed mostly of older adults. Children’s Religious Education

prepares and is present with almost no young people to participate. As one Friend writes, “I hunger for the gifts that come when children and young families are here. I feel the difference in the Meeting when we stretch across generations.”

We also long for **greater racial and ethnic diversity** within our Meeting. We wonder if part of our “arrogance of certainty” stems from our lack of awareness. Most who attend the Meeting are white and involvement with people of other races is limited. “We don’t know what we don’t know.”

Yet, our work to be an **anti-racist faith community** continues. We bring our queries as an Anti-Racist Faith Community to Meetings for Business to guide our decisions. Our long-standing Deconstructing Racism group offers a forum for spiritual discernment, support, and accountability in actions that we intend to take against racism. As we grappled with how to respond to the call for restorative and retrospective justice, we struggled to engage Spirit as we listened to differing voices and perspectives. We were supported by sharing readings and discussion during Black History month and came together for a session on “Journeying toward Justice and Repair” with Lynda Davis to help us deepen our understanding of Quaker roots through learning and reflection. We felt the tug of Spirit to move forward with a small step toward funding our Retrospective and Restorative Justice initiative.

We continue to wrestle together with finding our way forward. Questions about **Quaker process and discernment** raised during this Spiritual State of the Meeting process call us. We remain mindful of the unending work needed. What is the relationship between our anti-racist work seen as **activism**, and our anti-racist work held as **spiritual work**? What seeds of individual calling, and calling at a collective level are being planted now?

As one Friend notes of the urge to be more inviting and inclusive, “We need more thorough knowledge of the self-understandings of different religions, a more extensive understanding of the differing expectations for DEI [diversity, equity and inclusion] among ourselves, and a deeper understanding of the Meeting committing to serve and care for the spiritual and human needs of people who participate.”

We wonder how to **hew to our beloved traditions** without being blind to the **ways those traditions may create barriers** to new people just entering our community. How might those traditions conflict with what we yearn for? Are there practices that dissuade people or are similarly unwelcoming to others (e.g., Is the name “Friendly 8s” welcoming to everyone?)? In our manners and expectations, do we subtly project disapproval or a lack of welcome? Are we open to feedback about that?

We note the **significant effort required** to make a community like ours function effectively, and while some individuals have stepped in—especially during the pandemic—to keep us functioning, that level of individual effort may not be sustainable. Many Friends have expressed concern about workload that is exhausting people, worrying that we are perilously short of people to serve on committees and concerned that we may have lost those who were overtaxed and under-supported.

- How can we celebrate the efforts of those who have found themselves offering a great amount of time and energy in response to the challenges created by Pandemic season and also explore whether that level of effort is sustainable?
- Are we able to discern where our commitments as a Meeting outpace the resources of our volunteers? Are we willing to explore other ways to get critical work done?
- How do we manage the work if we do not have enough people to help? Can we accept our frailties when we can’t do it all? As in hiring tech support for blended meetings, are there other paid positions needed?

- How can we create inviting space for participation and leadership of those whose life stage or circumstances means their efforts are necessarily more limited or bounded?

Friends expressed their concern for **our ability to care for one another** as we age. “What weighs on my mind is our ability to provide pastoral care.” Are we able to look clear-eyed at the implications of the generational divide for getting the work of the Meeting done and for caring for our community? What discernment might lead to **greater health for all**? Are there paths forward that we are overlooking?

During the year, messages in worship have expressed concern about **war and the conditions that lead to war**. There has been regular posting in our newsletter of global opportunities to worship with Quakers for those in Ukraine and beyond. Assistance for those who are caught in the intersection of violence has been given through donations from our emergency funds. Our support for a local family from Afghanistan who was resettled to the United States continued. Yet, despite a query asking about the **peace testimony**, very few spoke to this as part of our spiritual discernment process. How do we make our concerns heard and not become overwhelmed by the enormity of it all? Or how might peace within us and among us, be the place to start?

As we reflect on 2023, we wish to **honor and grieve the losses** felt by some long-time members of the community who miss what Meeting once was and, at the same time, **spot the beginnings of what Meeting is becoming and might be**. One Friend writes, “I see the Meeting as feeling a little unmoored since the pandemic....I am optimistic we will find a cadence again, especially if we can see this as a time to experiment with new ways of doing things as we move toward a new ‘comfortable’ routine.”

We might think of this as a period of **continuing revelation**. We find strength and resolve in the silence and we strive to grow as a community. A Friend notes, “I appreciated...worship sharing on the spiritual state of the meeting. If only other organizations and institutions could adopt this quiet, respectful, insightful approach to annual reviews, we would have so much more calm and congruence in this poor, agitated world!”

Our work awaits.

Respectfully submitted by
AFM Ministry & Pastoral Care, April 2024

Celebrating the Life of
Douglas Keith McClelland
May 16, 1947 – March 10, 2024

Our dear friend of many years left this earth at Hospice of the Chesapeake, surrounded by friends, family and the loving Light of the divine. His unique gift of engineering brilliance remains within the very systems he instituted in our Meeting House, our communities and his own Triton Engineering Services. He offered super-geek expertise to anyone facing technical difficulties, without regard to his own time or convenience. He had enormous social capital. His huge heart was evident to all those who met him; he was especially drawn to those with differing learning, cultural or generational styles. The terms “blustery,” “feisty,” “opinionated,” and “prickly” have been used to describe Doug, as well as “sensitive,” “brotherly,” “protective,” “insightful,” and “humorous.” His engineering brilliance is most apparent to all who knew him. Though largely self-educated following high school, Doug could fix literally anything - boats, charging stations, computers and even pumps.

Raised in Briarcliff Manor, just outside NYC, Doug has an older brother, Chip, who now lives on the West Coast, and a younger sister, Barbara, who predeceased them.

Throughout his life, Doug remained devoted to his family, especially his three nieces Erin, Megan, and Shannon. Whenever, wherever they called for help, Doug came running.

He served our country in the Navy in Vietnam for four years and struggled with the war, disease and violence he witnessed. He returned a changed man and wrestled with mounting health challenges throughout his life.

The value of inclusivity first drew Doug to Quakerism. He was familiar with the Religious Society of Friends before becoming active in our Meeting where he enjoyed fellowship and worship. His generosity of spirit touched many Friends. To those who encountered Doug, it was obvious that he did not make assumptions; he followed the dictum, “Don’t judge until you’ve walked in their shoes.”

Doug will be sorely missed. He is well loved, probably more than he knew. His life goes on eternally within our hearts.

Submitted by
Ministry & Pastoral Care,
Annapolis Friend Meeting

Annapolis Friends (Quaker) Meeting minute - another call to preserve human life and bring a just peace to Israelis and Palestinians

Background

1. On October 7, 2023, Palestinian supporters of Hamas launched the most deadly terrorist attacks on Israeli communities since that state's founding in 1948, killing over 1,200, injuring more than 3,000 others, and taking approximately 240 hostages.

In addition to slaughter of unarmed civilians, Hamas attackers at many locations committed rapes and mutilation of female victims.

While Israelis had hoped they had built an impregnable 40 mile, \$1 billion security wall with barbed wire and electronic surveillance, over 1,000 trained Hamas fighters breached the wall at nearly 30 locations, through a network of tunnels and otherwise, launched approximately 3,000 rockets into Israel, and employed explosive-carrying drones.

This attack is the latest chapter in the 75 year history of violent conflict between Palestinians who see themselves as having been pushed from native lands in the 1948 Nakba ("Catastrophe") or Arab-Israeli war and parts of the Jewish community who fear that their Arab neighbors – particularly Hamas– still want to push them into the sea and to destroy their Jewish homeland. From a Palestinian viewpoint, they as long-term refugees are held in increasingly repressive, apartheid-like containment by the Israeli military. From an Israeli viewpoint (especially that of the ruling party and settlers), the October 7 attack culminated a long series of smaller but lethal attacks by Palestinian terrorists.

Despite past efforts towards peace negotiations, extremists on both sides have prevailed and prevented proposed "two-state solution" peace plans.

2. Israel's counter-attack via aerial bombardment, begun within hours, followed by armored ground assaults, and heavily-armed soldiers, has not been limited to military targets. While civilians were urged to evacuate northern cities in the Gaza strip, Israeli attacks followed the refugees and included attacks on Gaza's 17 hospitals. At this writing, only two hospitals remain capable of partial functioning. Israel's attack also has destroyed Gaza infrastructure, eliminating reliable water, electricity, sewage, and communication.

Gaza's Health Ministry reports over 29,000 Palestinian killed and more than 69,000 injured with over 70% of the casualties being women and children, as of this writing in late February 2024. According to U.N. officials, approximately 80% of Gaza's people have driven from their homes and approximately 25% are in danger of starvation. Today, as we write this minute, Israel has announced plans to begin its attack on Rafah, the final refuge for more than half of Gaza's 2.3 million refugees.

3. At the same time, tensions have increased in the West Bank territory occupied by Palestinians and Israeli settlers. Israeli sources report hundreds of small terrorist attacks there by Palestinians; Arab news sources report more than 300 Palestinian deaths in that territory since October 7 and the evacuation of more than a dozen Palestinian villages faced violence from settlers.

4. The Hamas-led fighters' attack on Israeli citizens was wrong, outrageous, and violated international law. Israel's counter-attack involved less face-to-face violence, its sheer violence and lethality also is wrong, horrific and violates international law with its use of heavy bombs on population centers and its knowing attack on civilians inflicting more than 20 times greater deaths and casualties than were perpetrated by the original Hamas-led attack.

Like all wars, this conflict cannot resolve the underlying problems that face Israelis and Palestinians.

5. The Biden administration has called on Israeli leaders for restraint in their ongoing attacks on Gaza to no avail. Recently, five U.S. Senators have proposed "Operation Gaza Relief"- a plan for a ceasefire and immediate humanitarian relief for Gaza civilians:

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2024/02/16/israel-gaza-aid-senators-merkley-durbin-warren-vanhollen-welch/> This proposal promptly should be adopted as a good first step towards peace.

Minute:

As Quakers,, we believe there is that of God in every person. Every life is precious. All persons deserve to live in a peaceful and just world. War is and never will be the answer to our conflicts. Peace must be actively cultivated.

We are outraged and heartsick about the deaths, destruction, and disregard for human life that we witness still unfolding in Israel, Gaza and the West Bank. We condemn the recent and long-standing historical cycles of violence, particularly the widespread attacks on civilians. We deeply grieve for those both in Palestinian and Israeli lands who still experience this horrific suffering.

We join other Friends and people across the world in calling for a permanent ceasefire now, immediate release of the hostages held by Palestinian factions, of war prisoners held by Israelis, and the provision of urgent humanitarian aid to Gaza.

We call on the United States to act with integrity by consistently applying its weapons policies for allies, including monitoring appropriate use and addressing any violation. We are particularly grieved that bombs provided by the United States have been dropped indiscriminately on heavily populated areas. The death of civilians and near total destruction of Gaza, funded in large part by American tax dollars, weighs on our hearts and collective conscience.

We also call for the United States government actively to support negotiators' efforts to establish a permanent bilateral ceasefire, negotiate a durable peace, and contribute to humanitarian assistance and peace-building, both in Gaza and other Palestinian territories. The United States should fully support the efforts of the United Nations to enforce international law, establish a ceasefire, and negotiate a long term peaceful solution. Particularly, we urge the Biden administration to support the recent proposal of 5 U.S. Senators to initiate "Operation Gaza Relief."

We call for respect for the humanity of all people. Dehumanizing words and actions fuel polarization and conflict. They are used to justify degradation and violence. The current eruption of violence in the Middle East is increasing Islamophobia, anti-Semitism, and anti-Arab bias in the United States and around the world. The consequent bigotry and violence that follow neither will make people safer nor forge a path to peace; they tear at the fabric of our shared humanity.

Finally, we ask everyone, including those in power, to learn from and work with the peace-builders,

who have labored long and hard on all sides in this dark time. The core religions of Islam and Judaism share common roots and cultures that both fuel violence and possess the seeds of peace like two sides of one coin. As Friends, we support initiatives large and small to help both Israelis and Palestinians, plus the larger Jewish and Arab worlds that support them, to move away from mutual hatred and fear to find ways they can foster mutual understanding and common activities that could lead to a functional two state solution and peaceful coexistence.. May they lead us all in creating an enduring peace built on justice and reconciliation that provides safety, sovereignty, and a future free of war for Palestinian and Israeli children and all people of the region.

As Annapolis Friends (Quaker) Meeting, we pray that this conflict will end quickly in a way that promotes equality, safety, and justice for all. Let us seek paths to work for an enduring peace with the tools available to us. We are called to act in faith and love, with persistence, patience, and courage, as partners and hands of the divine spirit as we pursue the sacred goal of peace, shalom, salaam.

Recommended actions:

Annapolis Friends Meeting recommends this minute be circulated to all members of the Maryland delegation to Congress and that members of Meeting ask for time to discuss them in person with the two U.S. Senators and the four U.S. representatives whose districts include Anne Arundel County.

It recommends sending it as a letter to the Annapolis Capital, the Baltimore Sun, and Washington Post following up with the editors to try to secure publication.

It recommends copying this minute to BYM, all BYM monthly meetings and FCNL with a call to generate similar minutes.

And it recommends setting up a local forum accessible to the public at a venue such as Anne Arundel Community College, Johns Hopkins, USNA or St.Johns to discuss, again, how peace better may be pursued and war better may be prevented with representatives from other faith communities and from the U.S. military, including the U.S. Naval Academy and Fort George G. Meade.

SECOND DRAFT FOR 5 TOP PRIORITIES SURVEY- 30 WORDS OR LESS
REQUIRED!:

- 1) Israel / Palestinian -U.S. support for an immediate ceasefire, refugee aid, plus long-term peace with a two-state solution; independent investigation of possible war crimes committed on both sides. -27 wds;
- 2) Civil rights (reproductive justice; equity and freedom from violence, bias and other oppression for those impacted by race-based, sexual identity and disability-based discrimination)-24 wds;
- 3) Poverty disproportionately impacts minorities and requires systemic changes to criminal justice, firearms, housing, healthcare, minimum wage, and daycare policies; child tax credits and free tuition must be expanded -28 wds.
- 4) Climate change extinguishes an estimated 100 species daily, causes large-scale famine, poverty, disease, displacement, migration, violence, and, ultimately, war; support for systemic remedies should be international, not just domestic-30 wds.
- 5) Immigrants built this country and, with U.S. aging and low birth rates, still support SSA, Medicare and economic growth; we need plans for healthy immigration and international conditions that reduce refugees-30 wds

Quaker Market Committee Update

Fourth month 2024

The Quaker Market Committee wants to let Friends know that our committee is spending time reflecting on some concerns expressed recently, including regarding the allocation of Quaker Market proceeds. As expressed at last month's meeting for worship with attention to business, the 75% to External Causes and 25% to Internal is a policy that was approved at an earlier meeting for business. We have since had a chance to review records and confirm that that formula was approved at AFM's meeting for worship with attention to business on 2 October 2005.

Looking at the financial records on AFM's Quaker Markets, we also see that that practice was already in place when our formal recordkeeping began 20 years ago, in 2003. The External portion of Quaker Market proceeds has been used to support a wide diversity of 501(c)3 causes over the years. The Internal portion has also been used to support a wide variety of needs over the years (e.g., Building Fund, Suffering Fund, Adult Scholarship Fund, Memorial Garden Project, Solar Panel Project, Peace and Justice Center, Emergent Social Concerns, Light House/Conflict Resolution Center, as well as a number of personal ministries).

QMC feels that this split of proceeds has served our community well over the last 20 years. As AFM begins to consider larger issues such as whether to move forward on building the ultimate meeting for worship room and AFM's fundraising policy, we look forward to the community's deep listening and sharing on the larger topics, and how the larger topics might relate to Quaker Markets. In the interim, Friends are, of course, always welcome to email their Quaker Market joys and concerns to market@annapolisfriends.org.