

## **Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business**

### **Celo Friends Meeting, Fifth Month**

May 16, 2021

Present: Catherine Reid (clerk), Barbara Wulff, Donna Idol, Joyce Johnson, Sam Maren, Debra Rice, Jo Ann Fernald, Denny Fernald, Jenny Boyd Bull, Peggy Tibbits, Brian Yaffe, Gib Barrus, Annie Barrus, Bob McGahey, Rachel Weir, Lisa Rose (recording clerk).

**Minutes:** The minutes from April MFWAB were approved as read.

#### **Ministry and Care Report, Catherine Reid**

M&C Clerk: Debra Rice has stepped off of M&C, leaving the role of clerk open. The committee has been in discernment about how to fill the position. Hours before David Johnson took his wife Alice to the hospital, Catherine Reid had volunteered to be the interim clerk of M&C. Alice passed away shortly after that, and David has now stepped down from his role as co-clerk of the Meeting. This has left Catherine in the position of being both the sole clerk of CFM and the interim clerk of M&C. In order to relieve her from carrying both responsibilities, Barbara Wulff is considering the role of apprentice clerk of M&C. If she accepts, she would be expected to assume the interim clerk role as soon as she feels ready to do so.

The query for May: “How do I fortify myself for the known and unknown challenges that lie ahead?”

First Day School (FDS), Due to several important factors, including a shortage of volunteers to provide First Day School coverage, the fact that CFM children will not be going to Camp Celo this summer as they have done in the past, and Joanna Flynn requesting a hiatus from the FDS committee, M&C recommends that FDS be laid down for the summer, with a plan to resume in the fall. We appear to have volunteer coverage for the youngest children (childcare only) through the end of May, at which point we will re-evaluate. A Friend pointed out that laying the committee down suggests a permanence that doesn't feel accurate, so we agreed that FDS will take a hiatus until fall.

Regarding the Committee on In-Person Worship: With two sites for Meeting worship (Zoom and the chimney) connected via a laptop, there is a concern that the two groups can't really hear each other speak. M&C proposes that the clerk urge Friends at the beginning of worship to stand and speak loudly and clearly when sharing messages. A Friend spoke to the challenges of the hearing impaired when everyone is masked and our mouths aren't visible. A portable microphone is a solution that could help to solve this problem, and we are hoping to sort this out soon.

#### **Finance Report, Jo Ann Fernald**

We currently have \$13,038 in unrestricted funds. As of the end of March, income was on track to exceed expectations, however, we were earning interest on some CD's that have since rolled over so we are now receiving less interest and will no longer meet what we had anticipated for the interest line in the budget. Most of our annual donations to other organizations have now been paid. These payments are generally split up into 4 payments annually in order to pace them with our income.

Statement of Financial Position: Funds at the Latino Credit Union were earning good interest, but the \$12,000 3-year CD has rolled over and we are now earning a small interest percentage. Likewise, the Self Help Reserve CD rolled into our Money Market account, where interest is low, in February. Jo Ann hopes that within the next year interest rates will go up and we can put these funds back into a CD.

The World Peace Games Fund has been zeroed out. A check was written to South Toe Elementary and they are now managing it.

The Meeting's bank accounts: As of last Friday our old bank account at Wells Fargo is closed. Two new accounts at United Community Bank are open but not yet fully active-it will take 9 days for funds to clear. With this new arrangement, all of our special accounts are in one bank account and operating funds are in another. This will help with organization. It is requested that Friends making donations designated for multiple purposes write separate checks in order to help Jo Ann more easily deposit them into the correct accounts.

#### **End of Life Committee (EOL), Donna Idol**

Alyssa Alegretti-Morgan had joined EOL, but stepped away several months ago. She has now re-engaged with the committee and is energetic and getting involved again.

#### **Buildings and Grounds, Donna Idol**

The staining of Margithaus and a few maintenance repairs will happen in the first week of August. It's likely that Rachel will be away while the work is taking place, but the person works alone and is relatively quiet so it shouldn't matter whether she is home or away. Jim and Donna Erlandson donated a washing machine to Margithaus. It has been installed and is working well.

#### **Adult Religious Education Committee, Jennie Boyd Bull**

Friendly 8's groups are in flux. The Tuesday night group has paused. Ruth Jacobsen has returned to the valley and is continuing to host a group on Zoom. The names of several people interested in joining were sent to her. The group Brian leads and David Johnson hosts is also still meeting.

The "Who is Our Neighbor?" series: The last ARE educational session for the season took place in April. The committee will be meeting next week to evaluate the session. They are interested in hearing feedback and input on the series. The committee will pause for the summer and reconvene in August to plan the next series. They welcome input and suggestions.

Committee membership: Lydia Wexler has agreed to join the committee. Richard Martin and Alyssa Alegretti-Morgan are potential members. Current members are Chip, Brian, and Jennie.

#### **Racial Equity Committee, Sam Maren**

The committee has chosen Sam as clerk. They spent the last year looking at how Western European dominance of the world over the past 500 years has trickled down to the current time, and how we are all complicit (consciously or unconsciously) with white superiority and the domination of people of color, especially those of African ancestry.

Starting the week of June 21, the committee will offer an educational program designed to heighten awareness of this. *Radical Acting in Faith for White People*, an AFSC video-based program, will be the first offering. It consists of a video once per week for 4 weeks, with an accompanying discussion. The next offering, based on the book *Me and White Supremacy*, will likely take place in the fall. The committee is hoping to organize groups of 8 people, and if there is a large response they will run more than one group. Details will be determined once we know the level of interest.

Members of the committee have spent the last year doing the work they will be inviting Friends in the Meeting to do. They learned that this process requires time, steadiness and a willingness to be open to new ideas. "If we were

fish, we'd be examining the water we swim in-looking at all of our assumptions." Topics are approached methodically and help to open us up to seeing what our education and conditioning has blinded us to. It's a process akin to consciousness raising.

#### **Meeting House Committee, *Peggy Tibbits***

Every summer Mari has a program for children in the Celo area. This summer she would like to meet with 8 children on Tuesday mornings (with one helper). They would meet on the playground for outdoor time from 9 am to noon. In the past we have charged rent when this program has met more frequently—\$5.00 per week. Given the hardships of this year and the fact that they will only be meeting one day per week, we agreed to waive the rent for this summer. A Friend expressed the sentiment that Mari graces us by using our playground.

#### **Nominating Committee, *Barbara Wulff***

The Meeting approved Lydia Wexler as the newest member of the Adult Religious Education Committee.

A draft of the Trustees Committee job description was read. The meeting suggests the following changes:

- Rearrange the order: Since the Harry Abramson Fund is no longer the committee's primary responsibility, begin the job description with the responsibilities of committee, then add the phrase, "...also responsible for the Harry Abramson Fund at the end.
- In house documents: Change to "...such as construction and repair contracts and CO letters..."
- Meeting frequency: Change to "Trustees shall meet and report to MFWAB at least once per year."

#### **Ad Hoc Committee on In-Person Worship, *Donna Idol***

In light of the newest guidelines from the CDC and the NC Governor dropping the mask mandate, a new proposal has been crafted by Geeta McGahey and Jerry Cade. The proposal has not yet been seasoned, but was read, as follows:

Drs Jerry Cade and Geeta McGahey after talking to several members of the meeting suggest this revision to our policy beginning June 1:

Since the CDC has dropped the recommendation for vaccinated people to wear masks and Governor Cooper and the state health department have dropped mask and occupancy requirements, we recommend that:

Celo Friends meeting may meet in person in the meeting room with vaccinated people wearing masks at their own discretion. To protect our children and others we request that unvaccinated people wear masks and sit outside on the porch. We encourage Friends to keep as much space between families as is convenient.

If the weather on fifth Sunday is inclement, friends worshipping at the Chimney may open the glass doors and move inside as they feel led.

A robust discussion was had, in which a range of sentiments were expressed, some in favor of keeping the current agreements in place for a while longer, and others longing to move toward holding Meeting for Worship in the Meetinghouse as soon as possible. We heard appreciation for the sweetness of meeting out of doors and being held

by nature as we worship, and worry about increasing the divisiveness between those in support of and those opposed to getting the vaccination for Covid-19.

As a next step, we agreed to hold a Listening Session next Sunday at 1:30 pm to enable us to hear one another more fully. We will meet via Zoom in order to be as inclusive as possible. Barb and Donna will collaborate on contacting some of the younger folks we haven't seen for a while to make sure they are aware that this will be happening—we understand that some do not keep up with email.

As we hear suggestions, the conversation may keep growing and more than one of these sessions may be called for. Current agreements will remain in place until we have reached consensus on the way forward.

**Announcements:**

**Alice Johnson:** A celebration of Alice Johnson's life will be held on Saturday, June 12 in the morning. Expect a combination of Quaker and Episcopal traditions. The exact time is TBD—but it will be 11ish, with lunch afterward. The location will be either at David's home or next door at the Rices'. Carpooling is encouraged.

**MFWAB this Summer:** With so much up on the air, we may continue to hold MFWAB through the summer months, including July when we traditionally don't meet.