

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2025!
THE POT LUCK PRESS

Richland Friends Monthly Meeting

“Decisions are made by those who show up.”
(Aaron Sorkin’s words said by President Bartlett in The West Wing series).

EDITOR’S NOTE: This is a difficult time. Wrestling with this, is evidently uppermost in all our minds. So we decided to lead this issue with the Clerks Corner.

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Hope

This season has brought many of us disappointment—in our bodies; in the degradation of our environment; in our hopes for a more just, equal, kind, and thoughtful society.

In these times, hope isn’t just a wish for better days, but an active choice to live our lives with love, truth, and peace.

It’s a call to move ahead in support and embodiment of compassion, to hold the world’s brokenness in the Light, and to trust that our small acts of compassion and empathy will take hold in ways we may never see.

As noted by Greta Thunberg, hope is not passive. Just as the stillness of Meeting for Worship can help to bring clarity to our hearts, the year ahead gives us a new opportunity to listen deeply—to our deepest conscience, to one another, to those outside our community and the world, and to the earth. And to act on what we hear—however small our actions may seem.

The clerk team—and maybe you, as well—have recently been able to see that hope needs to be paired with patience. Our bodies may not be bouncing back as quickly as we’d like. And big changes take time and a lot of work.

One thing for sure, things will change. It’s the nature of life. Together, and in concert with the Light, we can be instruments of healing and renewal. Let’s hope in, and be instruments of, a brighter 2025.

The Clerk Team

PEACE & LIGHT

The extreme cold may have kept our numbers down, but the food was hearty, as was the spirited carol singing and, as always, the intimacy of sharing in worship. Thanks to **William Woods** for this stunning photo



Actor Bradley Whitford (West Wing): It's not like we're going to elect one person & fix this. The fight, as we've learned in recent years, will never end. There's always going to be greed and injustice. But it's like that John Lewis Quote: **"Democracy is not a state. It is an *act*, and each generation must do its part."**

News from United Friends School January 2025! Submitted by Emily French

UFS is introducing Peaceful Plates, a new hot lunch program at United Friends School, available on Fridays beginning in January! Created in partnership with talented chef and caterer Sarah Wireman, this program features homemade, organic meals served family-style in classrooms.

Sarah's passion for healthy eating ensures the students will enjoy nutritious, delicious food in a warm, communal setting, while giving caretakers a day off from prepping lunches. Participating families must commit to the program one month at a time and can select one or all meals for the month.

Food for Friends RFM style

On a very cold January 8, Richland Friends once again hosted Food For Friends' meal. Approximately 140 meals were handed out. A nervous **Zoya Kachadurian** had extra help from Larry and Dylan Jalowiec in advance, and so many Friends during. **The next meal for Richland is on February 12.**



RICHLAND BOOK GROUP

The Richland Book Group invites you to join us. We meet at someone's home, share some snacks, and have a fun and stimulating discussion about the chosen book of the month. Even though we meet in person, we generally also have Zoom available. Here is the book to be discussed: ABOVE GROUND, poems by Clint Smith. Kathi Knight, who selected is asking us to pick a favorite poem to discuss.

If you are interested in joining us please contact: communications@richlandquakers.org

ED. NOTE: Clearly hope is on many Friend's minds. Here is a submission that came in too late for last month.

The Color of Hope

Submitted by **Dean Bratis**

It is not particularly splended nor is it melodic. Still... still, it brings with it something much more important. It brings hope. Its orange bottom reminds us that the equinox is near. That long-awaited time when days and nights will be of equal length is soon approaching.

As we come out of the winter darkness this early harbinger gives us hope and acts as a reminder that eventually the days will be much longer than the nights.

I usually hear them before I see them. But with patience a few are seen hopping along the ground in their own unique way. Often under the cover of trees looking for a place to call home.

As the seasons merge there are signs; everywhere there are signs. If only I could read the patterns and attend to all the signs. If only I could give free reign to my creative, intuitive mind.

How much more could I see and how much sooner would I be hopeful of riding the darkness?

Some signs are subtle. Spring turnover in ponds caused by an elevated spring sun and turnover are such subtleties. As the water warms from an elevated spring sun the material on the top is heated material from the bottom begins to churn in the spring winds.

This turnover gently hints to us of iridescent feathers brooding the next generation of mallards.

Other signs are not so subtle. These can appear as hopping orange bodies looking for a nesting site. In a short time that bird eye will tilt its head and look for food for its constantly hungry and chirping babies.

Soon they will be seen pulling and stretching reluctant earthworms who have rebelliously attached their bristles to the walls of their burrows.

These worms are destined to become bird flesh, in a way that only nature understands. I ask myself how can a creeping crawling thing rise up and fly?

Without a word the robins speak to me of flowers that will bloom. My vision changes and I find that my mind changes too. It is bemused by the sea of swaying yellow and white spotted daisies.

Or by a field of orange and black monarchs fresh from their trip to Mexico feeding on the nectar provided by their favorite milkweed?

The orange color of hope was hinted at by some prehistoric dust swirling the surface of a naked planet which of those particles you could have seen or even imagined color of spring?

But it was there nonetheless, somehow deeply embedded in a history yet to unravel. Who knew then that one day the dust would rise up and consider the color orange?

ANNUAL PEACE WALK by Allen Stokes

On Saturday, December 14th Richland attenders **William Woods** and **Donna Duffy Grimm**, my cousin Barbara Padgett, and I joined 80 other seekers of peace on a pleasant, sunny day on the 65th Annual Nazareth to Bethlehem Christmas Peace Pilgrimage 10-mile walk. We met our fellow pilgrims at The Center in Bethlehem from where we traveled by charter bus to the Nazareth Moravian Church on Center Square in Nazareth. Once at the Church, the Pilgrimage director discussed the afternoon's schedule and safety protocols over a brown bag lunch.

The Pilgrimage is "the world's oldest annual peace witness." Since 1960 people dedicated to peace have been gathering to walk these 10 miles together on the second Saturday of December. Persons of any age and from any spiritual background come together to join the Pilgrimage, symbolic of the journey of Mary and Joseph. Pilgrims seek to reflect on the non-violent life of Jesus and his truth of forgiving love.

At noon we started our walk south on Route 191. A police escort enabled our procession

to cross the many intersections as a group. After 3 ½ miles we stopped at Trinity Lutheran Church for an apple snack. After another three miles we arrived at the First Baptist Church for hot chocolate. As we walked, it was heartening to hear cars honking and pedestrians waiving in support of our message of peace. The four of us walked in pairs and in conversation learned much about each other's lives. At other times some of us walked and talked with others. Pilgrimage drivers kept moving ahead of the procession to shuttle any weary walker to the next stop.

About 4:30 p.m. after another three miles we reached College Hill Moravian Church on the Moravian University campus in Bethlehem. Here we each picked up an electric candle lantern for the rest of our procession through Bethlehem's festively lit and bustling downtown. We stopped at the Bethlehem Area Public Library for carol singing and ended at Christ United Church of Christ for the singing of Christmas carols and a soup and sandwich supper. After the program, we walked to our car at The Center for our carpool back to the Meetinghouse.

What a wonderful start to the Christmas season. Consider walking next year-December 13th.



Donna Duffy Grimm, Allen Stokes, Barbara Padgett, William Woods

*This article is an offshoot from (Clerk of Care & Worship) **Barbara Zucker's** presentation at Quaker Shorts.*

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A MEMBER OF A QUAKER MEETING?

The process of deciding to become a member of a Quaker Meeting is to me somewhat akin to deciding to marry. There are similar stages that one goes through in developing the relationship. First comes dating when you start to attend a meeting and begin to understand some of the things that are unique about Quakers. You begin to feel welcomed and comfortable within the community of Friends. You may pick up a copy of Faith and Practice and respond positively to the testimonies and practices you read about.

In the next stage a more serious commitment begins to develop. Perhaps you have had a strong spiritual experience in meeting for worship. You may want to participate more in the activities of the meeting by joining a committee or helping with Food for Friends. Potluck meals have become a time of getting to know one another better and having fun together. At a certain point, membership like marriage may seem like the next logical step in the growing relationship. When you consider membership, you are considering a full mutual commitment with benefits on both sides.

What are some of the benefits that meeting provides for you? Above all, meeting provides a spiritual home. It is a place for worshipping with others and for spiritual growth. It can assist with life-changing decisions through the clearness committee process. It can connect you with a wider Quaker community through Abington Quarterly and Philadelphia Yearly Meetings. Also, there are funds and scholarships that may be available for certain needs.

What are your responsibilities to the meeting as a member? You are expected to engage in and contribute to the life of the meeting, both spiritually and financially. Regular participation in meetings for worship and for business are also encouraged.

If you decide to apply for membership in Richland Meeting, there are several steps involved. First, send a letter stating why you wish to join, which can be by email, to a member of the Clerk Team or to the Clerk of the Care and Worship Committee. Next a clearness committee will be appointed to meet with you and to talk about your request. The clearness committee will report to the Care and Worship Committee which will report to meeting for business where a decision will be made whether to approve the request.

This is a very brief overview. More information can be found about the application process on pages 222-224 in the 2018 Philadelphia Yearly Meeting edition of Faith and Practice. Also, there is more information about membership on pages 62-66.

ON GOING & ONE-TIME EVENTS

For information about these events contact:
 Communications@richlandquakers.org

MONDAYS & THURSDAY S 9:30 AM	ZOOM YOGA Gentle, Friendly virtual yoga led by Ann Tucker, and others
TUESDAYS 7 PM	LIGHT GROUP MEDITATION
WEDNESDAYS 5 PM AT THE SCHOOLHOUSE GIVING OUT AT 6 PM	FOOD FOR FRIENDS a take-out community meals program. 2nd, 4 th , and 5th Wednesday every month. RFM cooks February 12
SUNDAYS	<u>CONTEMPORARY QUAKER CONCERNS</u> In person and virtually at 9:30- 10:15 AM <u>MEETING FOR WORSHIP</u> In person and virtually at 10:30- 11:30 AM <u>MEETING FOR WORSHIP WITH A CONCERN FOR BUSINESS</u> After fellowship 4 th Sunday
SUNDAY 2/2	<u>ABINGTON QUARTERLY MEETING</u> Hybrid - In person and Zoom * AQM ZOOM: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86997190584?pwd=WIBiNWRsVDZEUWdlZW5DZG1Od0h3Zz09

ChatGPT and Me Submitted by Willam Woods

Below are some exchanges I've had with ChatGPT, an artificial intelligence app, regarding Quakers.

Why do some people not consider the Religious Society of Friends to be a Christian denomination?

There are a few reasons why some people may not consider the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) to be a Christian denomination:

1. **Non-creedal nature:** Quakers are known for their lack of formal creeds or doctrines, and they place a strong emphasis on individual spiritual experiences and direct communication with God. This can sometimes make it difficult for outsiders to categorize them within traditional Christian denominations.
2. **Distinctive beliefs and practices:** Quakers have unique beliefs and practices that differ from some mainstream Christian denominations. For example, they emphasize the importance of non-violence, simplicity, equality, and social justice, which may not align with all Christian traditions.
3. **Diversity within Quakerism:** There is a wide range of beliefs and practices within the Religious Society of Friends, and some Quaker communities may have more liberal or universalist views that differ from traditional Christian teachings. This diversity can make it challenging to classify Quakers as a homogeneous Christian denomination.
4. **Historical persecution:** Quakers have historically faced persecution from some Christian denominations, leading to a sense of separateness from the wider Christian community. This history of conflict and exclusion can contribute to some people not considering Quakers to be fully Christian.

Overall, the question of whether Quakers are a Christian denomination is a complex and subjective one, and opinions may vary depending on individual perspectives and interpretations of Christian identity.

Joys: Zoya Kachadurian will be directing two shows this spring. One, WASABIA will be produced by Centenary Stage in Hackettstown NJ, which is 1 hour away. There will be 2 pm matinees on April 6, 9 and 13th. Much easier than the previous field trip to NY....**Travis Jalowiec** recently left Texas to visit his family in Q-town..... **LIGHT:** To all our Friends healing from injuries or facing other health challenges.....To all who are facing challenges as our government transitions.....To all who have lost their homes because of fires, floods and other climate triggered catastrophes...and to all First Responders who continue helping.

FEBRUARY 2, 2025

Hosted by Byberry Friends Meeting
3001 Byberry Road, Philadelphia, PA 19154



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QUARTER**

Where Quakers Meet Friends
For Worship, Spirit-Led Business,
Food, Fun, and Fellowship.

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- Child and Youth Program (RSVPs helpful - 610. 331-6341)
- Easy Parking, Wheelchair Accessible

8:30

Breakfast

9:00

Quarterly Business, *part 1* *

10:00

Worship with Byberry Friends *

10:45

Quarter Business Discussions *

Noonish

Soup Party & Fellowship



Agenda Highlights:

News about Quarter Clerks

Worship and Care in the Quarter

Funding for meeting projects

Tools 4 Growing Quaker Meetings

* NOTE: AQM ZOOM LINK IS FOR BUSINESS & WORSHIP

AbingtonQuarterlyMeeting.org

Log on or Scan QR for Zoom link, Full Agenda & Reports
- or contact your Quarter Rep!



THINK SPRING.... THE LITTLE LIBRARY

The Little Library box will be returning to the Schoolhouse this month along with a box to collect books to fill it in the Spring. This will allow you to check the size to make sure that it fits before donating it. The post still needs to be constructed, and instructions are available online. Let Kim Landon know if you are interested in doing this woodworking project.

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Advocates for the Homeless of Upper Bucks (AHUB) Code Blue Homeless Shelter Program 2024-2025

AHUB is a non-profit organization which serves the needs of the homeless of the Quakertown, Pennridge, and Palisades areas. One program under AHUB is a volunteer staffed community ministry called **Code Blue** which provides a warm bed and hot meal to the homeless of Upper Bucks County on cold winter nights from November 15 to April 15 when the temperature is 26 degrees or lower. The homeless shelter is located at the Masonic Lodge in downtown Quakertown. Approximately 80 volunteers are needed from area churches and the community to effectively run this program. Please consider volunteering for one of the positions described below, complete the volunteer registration on the front page of this document, and return it to Mary Kate Nealis.

If you would like to volunteer in this vital ministry to those in need in our community, please fill in the other side of this sheet and return it to Mary Kate Nealis, 1012 Juniper Street, Quakertown, PA. 18951 or scan & e-mail it back to her at mknealis@gmail.com.

For more info on volunteering, call Mary Kate Nealis at 215.620.3490. After we receive this form from you, we'll contact you with more information.