

*The Green Street Messenger*  
Green Street Monthly Meeting of Friends  
45 West School House Lane  
Philadelphia, PA 19144  
267-285-0553  
[secretary@greenstreetfriendsmeeting.org](mailto:secretary@greenstreetfriendsmeeting.org)

West Philadelphia Preparative Friends Meeting  
4718 Windsor Avenue  
Philadelphia, PA 19143



Meeting for Worship

10:30 AM Via Zoom/83195217639

## February 2021

<b>Sunday, 7th</b>	10:30 AM	Via Zoom/83195217639
<b>Sunday, 14th</b>	10:30 AM	Via Zoom/83195217639
<b>Sunday, 21st</b>	10:30 AM 12:30 PM	Via Zoom/83195217639 Monthly Meeting for Business
<b>Sunday, 28th</b>	10:30 AM	Via Zoom/83195217639

## ***Minutes of Green Street Monthly Meeting for Business Held First Month 17, 2021***

Via Zoom, Green Street Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, held at 45 West School House Lane, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on First Month 17, 2021.

Business Meeting convened at 12:40 pm in prayerful silence.

Clerk Gabe Ehri welcomed friends and asked for the reading of our shared query:

How does our time together today support Green Street Meeting in its goal to transform into an actively anti-racist faith community?

### **21-01-01 Care and Counsel**

Lola Georg, Clerk, reporting

Care and Counsel brought forward for a first review their recommendation that Ashlynn Sylvain be approved for membership at Green Street Meeting.

Ashlyn met with her clearness committee (JoAnn Seaver, Paul Jablonski, and Traci Hjelt Sullivan) who favorably recommended her membership, noting that Ashlyn would be a valued and cherished contributor to the life of the Meeting. This recommendation will be held over for one month. Anyone who has any questions or concerns, should contact Lola or any other member of C&C.

Lola reported on the start of a Zoom-based Art Journaling program, offered on Thursday evenings from 7:00 to 8:30 pm. The first session was held on January 14<sup>th</sup> and they will continue through March 18. All are welcome, though attendance at each individual session is limited. No previous art experience or special art supplies are required. A writing implement and a scrap of paper will suffice.

Lola announced that C&C is organizing an accompaniment program for the young-adult child of a one of our members who lives close to the Meeting. For their safety, this friend needs daily accompaniment as they take walks and run errands while their mother is at work. Friends can volunteer for this service once a week or once every other week by contacting Lola or JoAnn Seaver. C&C will be meeting to explore further ways that the Meeting can support this family and others in the Meeting. If you have a need, contact a member of C&C.

JoAnn Seaver and Cheryl McFadden reported on the Meeting questionnaire that C&C distributed in September. 26 friends from the Meeting responded, which C&C considered significant. The questionnaire was designed to identify various needs within the Meeting. Many friends reported being well and adequately supported. Others reported needing specific forms of support or feeling isolated. Many reported feeling overcommitted. Some wanted more contact from the Meeting and C&C. C&C will be exploring ways to respond to these requests.

The greatest number of responses came to the question “What do we at Green Street need to care for each other as a community?” Among friends’ responses were communication, support, acceptance, staying in touch between Meetings, a buddy system, and nurturing a culture of connection in the Meeting.

C&C owns responsibility to take a lead in organizing these kinds of support initiatives in the Meeting, but they wanted to share the results of the survey in the knowledge that everyone connected with Green Street can be part of a culture of mutual aid. C&C wonders if we are willing to hold this work collectively and also encourages everyone who feels a need for support to reach out and ask any member of C&C.

As friends explored these questions, a particular focus rose on the “Circle of Care” program that C&C initiated a number of years ago. Some friends know who their C&C contact person is. Others do not. One friend suggested that, if they knew the identities of everyone in their Circle, each could play a role of mutual support and the initiative to reach out would not fall solely on the C&C member.

Friends expressed deep gratitude to the members of C&C for their work, particularly in these pandemic times.

### **21-01-02 Nominations**

Walter Hjelt Sullivan, clerk, reported.

Walter brought forward the nomination for final consideration of David LaFontaine for a new three-year term (through June 2024) on the Children & Youth Religious Education Committee. Friends approved.

Walter reported that the Nominating Committee is somewhat behind in its work so far this year. New members are particularly needed on Children & Youth Religious Education and as representative to Philadelphia Quarterly Meeting. If friends are interested in learning more about the ways they could participate in the formal work of the Meeting, they are encouraged to contact him.

### **21-91-03 Philadelphia Quarterly Meeting Event**

Gabe Ehri, Presiding Clerk, reported.

The first PQM session in 2021 will be held at 1pm on January 24th, hosted on Zoom by Central Philadelphia Monthly Meeting. Included in the schedule will be a program facilitated by CPMM members, Chuck Esser and O, entitled “Working on Racial Healing, Equity, and Justice.” Gabe plans to attend and encourages others in the Meeting to join him.

### **21-01-04 Green Street Relationship with Philadelphia Yearly Meeting and Racial Healing**

Gabe Ehri, Presiding Clerk, reported.

Gabe started by sharing some of his journey with Green Street Meeting, his personal learnings about the spiritual value of worshipping with a diverse group of Friends, his more recent sadness and wondering if there is a white supremacist culture at work in the Meeting that keeps many of our Black and Brown members from attending Worship and Business, and a greater awareness of the need to address racial wounding in the Yearly Meeting and in our Monthly Meeting.

Last month, Gabe had promised to bring back a proposed process for moving forward the conversation and action on these issues at Green Street. He had to confess that he did not have such a process to present. Instead of suggesting yet a new initiative for the Meeting, Gabe pointed out that there are many people in the Meeting and across the Yearly Meeting who are doing the work. Personally, he is committed to immerse himself in some of these opportunities and encourages others in the Meeting to join him. In particular, he raised up two current events: the 1/24/21 Quarterly Meeting program mentioned above and the proposed fifth Sunday program for 1/31/21 from Green Street Worship and Ministry.

Sharon Mullally, from W&M, reported briefly about the fifth Sunday program which will consider the 2020 Friends of Color Epistle from their pre-FGC Gathering. The epistle powerfully describes their shared experience within the predominantly white Religious Society of Friends: They can't breathe. Sharon, Viv Hawkins, Lola Georg, and Ann Bayless have formed a study group exploring the epistle and its accompanying queries for White Friends and will be facilitating the fifth Sunday program during our regular worship time. The design will be quite different from the usual fifth Sunday intergenerational program. The epistle will be mailed out in advance for friends to consider. Then during our regular worship time that day, the epistle will be read to us, followed by a time of worshipful conversation guided by the queries. At the end of our traditional worship time, there will be the opportunity for people to join breakout groups for further discussion. Perhaps a new process forward for the Meeting may arise from these explorations.

White friends in the Meeting had a number of responses to this specific proposal and the larger question of our anti-racism work in the Meeting. One suggested that in our meeting we have people who are very much new comers to anti-racism work, some who dip into the work regularly, and some who have no choice but to address it on a daily basis. This friend wondered if, like a previous Meeting they attended, Green Street would benefit from acknowledging this spectrum as we work to consider next steps. Another noted that the Yearly Meeting is working with a six-stage framework of becoming an anti-racist organization. A member of the Greene Street Friends School Board reported that the School is implementing a new racial identity curriculum and the School Board is developing a new vision for strategic anti-racism with the assistance of a skilled consultant. Yet another white friend asked that we not

forget the specific concern with our relationship with the Yearly Meeting, the question of what level to set our covenant, and our concern that the Yearly Meeting has not been willing to work to repair specific instances of racial wounding. One friend expressed a concern about only seeing racial issues as those between Blacks and Whites and a wish that, whatever program is offered on the fifth Sunday, that it be grounded in worship.

A Black friend passionately shared their frustration and disappointment that once again both the current and historic lived experience of Black people was getting lost in this conversation. Friends received this message with a mix of emotions including expressed gratitude and some awkward silence. The Clerk expressed his hope that we would regularly revisit these issues, continue to commit ourselves to this work, and remain faithful in it. Friends agreed.

The Clerk asked for the minutes on this section to be read. After some time and being held in the Light by others, the Recording Clerk hesitantly shared a preliminary version of these minutes. Friends offered some very helpful corrections and feedback. Acknowledging that all minutes are imperfect at capturing the full depth of what occurs, friends approved this portion of the minutes. The Recording Clerk drafted this formal version later that day, to the best of their abilities.

Friends expressed their confidence in the planning group for the proposed W&M fifth Sunday program in January.

#### **21-01-05 Minute in Memory and Celebration of Kathie Bowes**

Anthony DiGiovanni, former Clerk of the Greene Street School Board, raised up the recent passing of Kathie Bowes, a long-time teacher at GSFS who played a crucial role in the development of the current life skills curriculum at the School. Others expressed great sadness and deep appreciation for Kathie's many contributions and her kind and gentle spirit.

Friends asked the Clerk to work with others to write a letter to the family on our behalf, expressing our condolences, sharing our sadness, and celebrating her life.

#### **21-01-06 Friends approved the rest of these minutes.**

#### **Closing**

With gratitude for our work together, at 2:40pm, Meeting ended in worship with the intention of meeting again at the appointed time on Second Month 21, 2021.

Gabe Ehri, Clerk

Walter Hjelt Sullivan, Recording Clerk

Attending:

Susan Christian, Sam Connell, Anthony DiGiovanni, Rachel Ellis, Lola Georg, Rebecca Grant, Viv Hawkins, Mike Kelley, Cheryl McFadden, Sharyn Mead, Chris Mohr, Robin Mohr, Sharon Mullally, Mary Noland, Ruth Reber, JoAnn Seaver, Lori Sinitzky, Ellen Sleeter, Traci Hjelt Sullivan, Ashlynn Sylvain, Bill Van Stone

## **News & Announcements**

Please submit all news and announcements to the secretary by the 28<sup>th</sup> of each month.

**Meeting for worship is at 10:30. All are welcome.**