

Annapolis Friends Monthly Meeting (AFM)  
Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business (MfB)  
Second Month, First Day, 2026 (2/1/26)

Present were: Ellen McBride (clerk), Phil Caroom (recording clerk), Ben Kilgore, Martha Baer, Nan & Sky Elsbree, Tammy Mayer, Mike Baker, Derek Williams, Dot Elsbree, Kathleen Hudson, Marjorie Kehoe, Mary Barbera, Fahima Gaheez, Jack Hogsten, Cairn Krafft, Martha Lurz, Karen Cunyngnam, Margaret Holmes, Colleen Lyons, Lisa & Jonathan Hall, Kim Finch, Judy Brown, Mary Pratt, Cindy Barry, Wekoye, Barb Thomas, Bonnie Peregoy, Diane Shandor, and Marcia Ormsby.

We met both in person and via Zoom, beginning worship with centering silence and a display of Faith and Practice queries as to our Meeting for Business practices. In introductory comments, our Clerk also reviewed our anti-racist queries and welcomed Friends to our Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business (MfB), appreciating those in person braving this second week of subfreezing temperatures, appreciating the snow-plow service which mostly cleared our parking lot, and appreciating our Zoom option for those unable to appear in person.

For Trustees, Phil Caroom reported that a Trustees' subcommittee (Phil & Ellen), along with Kim Finch for Meeting House and Land Committee (MHL), met on 1/28/26 with architects Jeff Broadhurst and Evan Lippincott. Reviewing MfB's prior approval of a \$10,000 retainer for the architects' earliest design work and our unhappiness that the work so approved was billed at three times the retainer amount, the Trustees' subcommittee advised the architects that AFM plans either to modify the current contract, or to arrange a new architect to provide benchmarks and an approval process before more costs again can be billed on an hourly basis. There is some possibility that AFM might want to consider a new architect, if we can't work out the details with Broadhurst.

Before we can negotiate that any contract, AFM will need to decide whether we definitely want to build this addition and which alternative design to pursue. Phil noted that these choices are not legal or procedural matters for the Trustees; rather, they are substantive choices for our MfB, probably after hearing from our ad hoc Advisory Group for Selecting the Plan (AGSP) and completing our threshing process. This process could take three or more months.

One Friend commented that it appeared that Artificial Intelligence (AI) was used in the architects' work submitted so far, wondering about the real value of the work submitted. Another raised concerns that multiple architects billed time for the same work. Trustees will bear these concerns in mind, if we decide to go ahead with the building addition and resume work with this (or another) architectural firm.

For Ministry & Pastoral Care (MPC), Martha Baer reports that MPC proposes 3/8/26, 9:30 - 10:45 a.m. for our Spiritual State of the Meeting worship sharing which will be based on the BYM recommended queries. Committees also are invited to hold their own discernment on these queries.

For Peace & Social Concerns (PSC) Committee, Margaret Holmes shared a minute written by Shepherdstown Friends Meeting and invited AFM Friends to consider also adopting this. (Link to the Shepherdstown minute - <https://shepherdstownfriends.org/where-we-stand/>) Others pointed out that the language could be even stronger due to more recent "atrocities" and "murders," including a recommendation that a shorter version might be more appropriate to send as a letter to the editor.

Friends approved adoption of this minute and follow-up with local media. Those interested in assisting AFM PSC with the follow up should contact Margaret.

One Friend urged that AFM also hang a U.S. flag with stars in the shape of the peace symbol. Others discussed whether an altered flag would be disrespectful and whether an unaltered flag might convey the wrong message. Another recounted her veteran father's support for the 1st Amendment right to burn a flag in protest. An immigrant Friend expressed concern about display of a single flag when Friends are not attached to a single nation; perhaps, Friends should be concerned more broadly with support for human rights around the world? Another agreed. Yet another expressed the concern that the U.S. flag should not be coopted and that the U.S. flag should stand for equality and fairness. Our Clerk concluded that we should postpone a decision on flag display and, perhaps, have a separate meeting to further discuss this topic.

Also, for PSC, Kathy T. reported as to AFM participation in the local Holiday Sharing program which provided Thanksgiving and Christmas meals to six different families and holiday gifts for 16 children. We also received a note of appreciation from DSS which coordinates this program. Friends thanked PSC for coordinating this effort.

For Stewardship & Finance (S&F) Committee, Jenny Isaacs reported that AFM received nearly \$61,000 in donations from 61 unique contributors this year. Many gave on more than one occasion or via recurring monthly donation. This total includes 55 contributing households (Meeting members and attenders) plus 5 other individuals and the Kiwanis Club who gave a total of \$1780 in memory of Meeting members. Our lowest month of income was June (when we brought in just a little over \$600) while the highest were, expectably, November and December (\$13K and \$16K respectively. S&F encourages Friends to consider regular monthly donations. AFM's tax-id is available for those who may need it for investment account distributions. A year-end report should be completed and submitted for our March MfB.

For Advisory Group for Selecting the Plan (AGSP), Coleen Lyons reported that the group has begun to consider the three priorities previously set by MfB: 1) accessibility, especially as to restrooms, 2) improved storage, and 3) a quiet 40-seat worship space. So far, AGSP has focused on a) a review of AFM's current & future storage needs and b) efforts to inform everyone of possible alternate plans- (informal "mini-listening sessions" today, and on a number of other dates, to discuss questions and collect online and written comments; 15 comments from Friends have been received so far with a goal of 20 comments.) On 2/22, there will be a threshing session between 9:30 and 10:45 a.m. in hopes of reaching unity on a single basic design; more threshing dates will be provided later, so that

all Friends can participate, keeping in mind some Friends who primarily participate in both early worship, and some have another commitment on 2/22 (Dayspring Retreat).

For Meeting House and Land (MHL) Committee, Kim Finch reported that the committee has been busy this week, acquiring new snow shovels and more salt. MHL plans to change the regular work-day for February due to BYM Young Friends visit on 2/14; the new date will be 2/21 from 9 am to noon.

MHL recently adopted a new practice of putting “abandoned dishes” from the kitchen on the bookshelf in the hallway near the kitchen for 30 days; after the 30 days, MHL will remove them. For Quaker Market Committee (QMC), Cairn agreed to accept unclaimed dishes. The community is grateful for the food everyone brings to share. Friends can help further by labeling your serving dish with your name before you bring it, and checking the bookshelf in the hallway near the kitchen to make sure there isn't a dish you've forgotten.

Kim also noted the Committee's appreciation for its new members helping with new projects including:

-as to replacement of our 30-year-old Multi-Purpose Room (MPR) floor, Mike Baker has obtained 4 estimates from which MHL will be able to make a selection. (As a preview, Kim noted that one quote is for \$18,500! -- nearly twice as high as anticipated. Another Friend who is AFM's treasurer informed us that the Capital Improvement Fund has over \$80,000 that would cover the cost. )

-as to work on an ADA ramp is pending and the permit application has been submitted and is under review by the county; contractors' quotes still will be needed to complete this, so Friends' referrals are invited. Relatedly, an accessible door opener also is under review as an electrical project; this aspect of the project can be added to the same permit application.

Another Friend also noted that young people seeking to be Eagle scouts possibly may take on some projects if there is an Eagle scout interested in helping.

For Ministry & Pastoral Care (MPC) Committee, Barb Thomas reported on plans for a series of eight meetings for learning (MfL) as to Friends' testimonies. Volunteer facilitators still are needed. She noted that the series will not be held in consecutive weeks due to competing events. She also noted that, when Baltimore Yearly Meeting (BYM) young Friends spend a weekend here (February 13 through 15), AFM committees cannot meet in person at the Meeting House. The first Testimony MfL will focus on how we think of the testimonies in general; it will be offered this coming Sunday (02/08) at 9:30 in the meetinghouse and via Zoom, led by Elise Albert. More information will be offered online as to later sessions.

Our Clerk concluded with an announcement that Chesapeake Quarterly Meeting (CQM) will be held on Feb. 8 at Stony Run Friends Meeting 5116 N. Charles St., Baltimore, MD 21210

After approval of the foregoing minutes, we closed with brief centering silence.

*-These minutes respectfully submitted. - P. Caroom, Recording Clerk*

## **Shepherdstown Friends Meeting**

### **Minute on Harms Caused by the Actions of our Current Government**

The term "Friends of the Truth" was the original name used by members of The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers). Seeking and speaking truth motivates us to create the following statement of our deep concern with the current government's stark disregard of Constitutional principles and laws, and the harm being done to the people of our country.

We Quakers believe in the inherent value of every person, in fostering peaceful and supportive community relationships, and in equal rights for all. We recognize that the principles and laws laid out in the Constitution of the United States align with many of our deeply held spiritual beliefs: those of liberty and justice for all, fundamental rights, human equality, and opportunity for everyone.

The Constitution states that the President shall take the following oath:

"I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will faithfully execute the Office of President of the United States, and will to the best of my ability, preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States." (Article II, Section 1)

President Trump has actively failed to honor his oath of office and has thereby caused the following serious harms to the people of the United States:

#### ***Harms Caused by the Failure to Protect our First Amendment Rights:***

Three of the fundamental freedoms granted by the First Amendment are the freedom of speech, the freedom of the press, and the right of the people to peaceably assemble. Examples of violations of these rights include:

- In an unprecedented encroachment on the freedom of speech in places of learning, the executive branch directs universities on what can be said and taught.
- Language supporting diversity, equity, and inclusion is banned from use in government agencies and educational systems.
- Press with a potentially critical point of view are denied access to press conferences and other sources of information. Support for publicly funded media such as PBS and NPR is withdrawn.
- The freedom to gather for peaceful protests is suppressed by the presence of armed military forces.

### ***Harms From the Failure to Provide Due Process of Law for All People:***

The Fourth and Fifth Amendments of the US Constitution provide protections for *all people living in the United States*. Due process requires that before depriving an individual of "... of life, liberty, or property..." (Fifth Amendment), the government must provide notice of charges, an opportunity to be heard and present a defense, and a decision by an impartial tribunal or neutral decision maker.

Examples of harms caused by the government's failure to honor due process include:

- Persons targeted by federal agents because of their race or ethnicity are seized and detained without access to representation, resources, or communications with family members. Families are often permanently separated by this practice, and the safety of children is compromised.
- Immigrants and refugees are deported without access to due process of law. Detention centers serve as camps where people endure cruel and inhumane treatment, including physical and psychological deprivation.

### ***Harms From the Failure to Support Equal Rights for All People:***

Laws and regulations designed to protect oppressed communities are being dismantled or ignored.

- Organizations such as Planned Parenthood that support women's and LGBTQ health are defunded, making essential medical treatment harder to access and further increasing disparities in health care.
- The history of America is rewritten so that the complete history of oppressed communities is not told.
- Food (SNAP) and health care programs (Medicaid) are cut, thereby depriving children, the poor and the elderly of basic human services.

### ***Harms Caused by the Failure to Preserve the Constitutional Limitation of Executive Powers through a System of Checks and Balances:***

Our three branches of government- the executive, judicial, and legislative – are designed to protect our society from authoritarian rule and support a government "of the people, by the people, for the people". This constitutional system of checks and balances is being undermined by the abuse of executive power. Our democracy is harmed, when, for example:

- Judicial rulings directing the executive branch to cease certain deportations of immigrants are repeatedly disregarded.
- Federal employees are fired without regard to labor laws and union agreements.
- Executive orders abandon years of work promoting international peace, economic development, and humanitarian aid.
- Executive orders defund scientific and medical research approved by Congress, thereby robbing us of scientific knowledge and lifesaving medical advances.
- Cities are occupied by active military and National Guard troops despite laws that forbid military involvement in domestic law enforcement.

We, the members of the Shepherdstown Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, adopt this statement as our truth about the harm being done to the people of the United States in the name of a president who fails to uphold his oath of office. The United States was founded on the values stated in the *Preamble to the Declaration of Independence*:

“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.”

Without immediate action by the Congress and Judiciary to restore the checks on presidential power, the United States is at risk of losing the constitutional democracy created 250 years ago.

*Adopted by the Shepherdstown Friends Meeting, WV, Sept 14, 2025*