

Blue River Quarterly
Meeting for Business
April 12, 2025

Attendance: Beth Carpenter (clerk), Dale Gardner (recording), Margie Haworth (treasurer), Peter Lasersohn, Sharon Haworth, Grayce Haworth Mesner, Heather Evert, Mike Dennis, Mark McGinnis, Selina Miller Forsyth, Jared Forsyth, Fariba Murray, David Wixom

1. Opening with silent worship
2. Treasurer's Report: See report below. Report accepted.
3. Nominating Committee Report: Dawn Crimson will be clerk. Dale Gardner will continue as recording clerk. Margie Haworth continues as treasurer.
4. Spoon River Quaker Meeting requests to be laid down: See emails below. Will be moving memberships to other meetings such as Clear Creek.
Minute: Blue River Quarterly regrettably accepts the proposal of Spoon River to be laid down and passes this on to Yearly Meeting for action. The group wishes to continue as a worship group under the care of Clear Creek Meeting. Blue River Quarterly thanks them for carrying on for all these years and recognizes the difficulty of this decision.
5. Macomb Worship Group requests to be laid down: See email below. Blue River Quarterly mourns the request to lay down Macomb Worship Group and recommends that Clear Creek Meeting settle any final business.
6. Planning Committee for Fall BRQ at DuBois (Sept. 19-21) is needed. Meeting will revisit question of rotating a BRQ session closer to St. Louis or Missouri.
7. Spring 2026 location: BRQ will move to East Bay Camp in Bloomington area again. The dates for this gathering will be April 17-19.
8. State of Society Reports
Bloomington Normal: SoS below. Accepted.
Clear Creek: SoS below. Accepted.
Burlington: SoS below. Accepted.

Macomb: See email below.

Columbia: SoS below. Accepted.

Saint Louis: SoS below. Accepted.

Southern Illinois:

Spoon River: See emails below

Urbana Champaign: SoS below. Accepted.

Springfield: They have a very nice place to worship. 4-5 regular attenders.

9. Other: Blue River Quarterly Meeting thanks Beth Carpenter for her dedicated service as clerk.
10. Closing worship

TREASURER'S REPORT TO BLUE RIVER QUARTERLY MEETING
12-Apr-25

Balance on Hand September 21, 2024: \$ 11,052.11

DEBITS

9/21/24	Steve Tamari refund	50.00
10/1/24	DuBois Center - Fall '24 (incl \$500 deposit for '25)	7287.90
TOTAL DEBITS		7,337.90

CREDITS

9/22/24	Fall '24 Fees & Donations	3,626.00
9/30/24	Interest	4.39
10/13/24	Donation	558.00
10/31/24	Interest	4.83
11/10/24	Donation	250.00
11/29/24	Interest	3.20
12/31/24	Interest	3.58
1/31/25	Interest	3.47
2/28/25	Interest	3.13
4/5/25	Spring '25 Fees & Donations	605.00
TOTAL CREDITS		5,061.60

Balance on Hand April 12, 2025: \$8,775.81

Sep '24 - April '25 Meeting Contributions: Rec contribution: \$8/resident adult member

10/13/24	St. Louis	\$558
11/10/24	Clear Creek	\$250
4/5/25	Columbia	\$200
4/5/25	S. IL	\$50

Proceeds from sale of books:

Sep '24 - April '25	\$0.00
Accumulated Total	\$136.72

From: Jacquelynn Urban <j_urban_2@yahoo.com>
Date: March 28, 2025 at 9:08:24 AM CDT
To: beth.schobernd@gmail.com
Subject: Fw: Laying down Spoon River Quaker Meeting
Reply-To: Jacquelynn Urban <j_urban_2@yahoo.com>

Here is a copy of the letter I sent. This has not been the easiest decision, but we are all in agreement that it is necessary at this point.

Jackie

----- Forwarded Message -----

From: Jacquelynn Urban <j_urban_2@yahoo.com>
To: AdminCorr@ilym.org <AdminCorr@ilym.org>
Sent: Tuesday, March 18, 2025 at 04:55:28 PM CDT
Subject: Laying down Spoon River Quaker Meeting

Good Afternoon, Friend Wil,

I am writing today to ask that we be allowed to lay down Spoon River Quaker Meeting. This is not a lightly made decision, but we feel that our meeting is no longer viable. There are only three of us who meet every week, and we foresee no possibility of growing in size. It has been a long time since anyone has come or shown an interest. We did have one attender, but she is struggling with Alzheimers and can no longer come.

We have very few assets, some songbooks and a bank account. We can give those to Yearly Meeting.

Do you decide what to do about our meeting? Would it continue under the care of Clear Creek?

Jackie Urban (Clerk)

Macomb. The part about laying down the worship group we'll address ei

“Finally, though the Macomb Worship Group, which was under your care, has been inactive for

the worship group.”

Bloomington-Normal Friends State of Society 2025
Draft, not yet approved as final report

Being together in worship and community is a source of joy and hope. We are holding each other up when we are downcast, frustrated and angry about decisions on the national political scene that hurt people we care about. Attenders and members who have been inactive for a time have been returning to participation in worship, where we seek support from each other and the Spirit. Our worship space at Normandy Village in Normal is peaceful. For years, we have used queries from Philadelphia Yearly Meeting to add focus to our worship once per month. This past year, we have noticed an increase in vocal ministry, which has been a blessing and a benefit to us.

We formed an Advocacy Team with the help of Friends Committee on National Legislation and made the Apartheid-Free Communities Pledge, responding to leadings among our members to make a long-term commitment to freeing Palestinians in Gaza from violence and deprivation. We shared our meeting space to host training for the Advocacy Team, which includes allies from other local faith communities.

Children coming to First Day School bring joy and hope in our Friends community. Their idealism and concern for others has guided our meeting in where to direct charitable donations. The adults and children together are learning more about the history of Friends in the United States through the past year's lessons at B-N Friends meetings. We have been coordinating our First Day School around the schedule of educational activities at the local Unitarian Universalist Church, allowing for more consistent support of the growth of our youth.

One area of spiritual growth that we have neglected over the past year is adult religious education. We miss the leadership of our past adult RE coordinator, who moved out of the area. In the upcoming year, we may not be able to return to holding a regular monthly adult RE hour, but there is interest in doing it more often.

Clear Creek Monthly Meeting
State of Society
Approved March 16, 2025

Clear Creek Friends maintain deep spiritual connections to each other and to this place. Our stewardship of the Illinois Yearly Meeting grounds extends back 150 years and we hope will continue well into the future. We are a small, loving community who supports its members and attenders in countless ways.

The coming of spring sees us having our traditional Easter worship and potluck. In 2024 we had no children present so there was no Easter egg hunt, but we enjoyed a wonderful meal and fellowship after worship.

Clear Creek Friends are an aging group but continue to do what we can to care for the grounds, participating in work days, site prep, planting flowers and picking up the ever-present collection of sticks and branches that fall from the many trees. Storms damaged even more trees this year but we were thankful no damage was done to either the meetinghouse or Clear Creek House. One of our attenders repaired the split rail fence panels around the meetinghouse this spring. We are glad that the yearly meeting has engaged the services of Shirley Maubach as caretaker, relieving us of the need to meet contractors and check the buildings and grounds regularly.

We have had some changes at Clear Creek this year. Kay Drake, our treasurer for more than 30 years, handed over those duties to Mike Murphy in April. We are thankful for Kay's faithful service and for Mike's willingness to step into the position. We've had several visitors in worship this year, one of whom has become a regular attender. We are thankful for her presence among us and for the depth she brings to our worship and our fellowship.

We continue to use a memorial fund designated for that purpose to support our students pursuing college or trade school education. This summer one of our adult young Friends attended a Bolivian Quaker Education Fund program in Bolivia. We also continue to donate to local charities and Quaker organizations, including a special donation to World Central Kitchen for relief in Gaza in support of the efforts of the ILYM High School Friends.

In March we hosted a retreat, "An Introduction to Quaker Meditation," led by Co-Field Secretary Marcia Nelson. The retreat was an effort to reach out to our surrounding community to let them know we are here and to give them a glimpse of what Quakers have to offer. We welcomed three seekers from the community and had several others indicate they were interested but could not attend. The day was enriching not only for our guests but for Clear Creek Friends as well. Time will tell if we will see any increase in participation because of our efforts at outreach.

It is always a joy for us to welcome the ILYM community to campus for work days, site prep, annual sessions, and this past fall for Continuing Committee. The spiritual energy brought by larger gatherings of Friends is a boost to our spirits. Visitors are a blessing to us.

Columbia Friends Meeting

State of Society Report 2024

This has been a year of strengthening our meeting and preparation for uncertain times to come. Some of these preparations were physical—we decided to replace crumbling siding on our meeting house, enlarge our parking area, and install solar panels, and our front-yard garden bloomed with life. We also increased our visibility by printing kid-designed t-shirts that help us represent our values in the community. Some of our preparations were emotional and spiritual. Many of our attenders were active in national and state-level elections in November, and have some apprehension about what the next few years will bring, but we are determined to stand with people around the world in opposition to violence and hatred, as Quakers have done for centuries.

We continue to offer hybrid meetings on Sundays, welcoming friends from afar (Seattle, WA, Jefferson City, MO, Colorado, Kansas, and Michigan). We've had visitors from other meetings, including Steve Tamari, from St. Louis Friends Meeting, who presented about his work opposing genocide in Palestine. We continue to have Midweek meetings on Zoom on Wednesdays. Our meeting room is full most First Days, with twenty or more people and messages frequently shared. We also had several people attend the Blue River Quarterly Meeting in the fall, and it was great to reconnect with other Quakers in the region.

Our First Day School attendance varied, with two to six children attending (ages 2-12). Kids designed a Quaker t-shirt, helped with the garden, and visited a Catholic Church to learn more about other religious traditions. We have a rotation of adults regularly teaching in First Day School. We face a challenge in coming years to meet the needs of younger kids as well as our teens and tweens who are often busy with sports and other activities. The kids join the worship 5 to 10 minutes before the rise of meeting, and they love to introduce themselves and share the projects they worked on.

Our Peace and Social Justice Committee, our Meeting for Learning Committee, and our Hospitality Committee are all contributing to the life of the meeting. We revived our monthly vigil, with the focus shifting depending on current events. Attender Julia Tayon occasionally organizes a "museletter," which offers us the opportunity to get to know each other by answering various prompts or questions. We continue to partner with a local Buddhist organization, Show Me Dharma, to provide meals to unhoused people six times per year. Additionally, we have had several Fun Nights, with potluck suppers, movie nights, and games.

We were fortunate not to have deaths among our regular attenders this year. Our longtime attender Carolyn Doll shared openly her process of moving toward death in her mid-nineties.

We look forward to the new year with hope to build stronger connections with each other and trust in our expanding community.

Spiritual State of Society – 2025 - St. Louis Friends Meeting

St. Louis Friends Meeting continues to be gathered and active, despite the strains of life in our social and political environment. At times, it seems we are experiencing more gathering because of the outside strains. We have welcomed more visitors to Meeting for worship who seek spiritual support for coping with the turmoil and conflict in the world. At a recent meeting for self-examination, Friends and attenders spoke of meeting for worship as an anchor, a source of support and energy, as well as a place for reflection, forgiving, and peace. Fellowship and hospitality in our after-worship times help deepen our connections.

We are deepening our understanding of the Quaker path through monthly book discussions. This winter we have had one group discussing Douglas Gwyn's *The Anti-War: Militant Peacemaking in the Manner of Friends* and its flip-side *Peace Finds the Purpose of a Peculiar People*. Another group has been discussing Parker Palmer's *On the Brink of Everything: Gravity, Grace and Growing Old*. These have generated new growth among us. At the same time, we see evidence that we need greater understanding of the value of Quaker practices within our Meeting, which may be the subject of our next Adult Religious Education series.

We treasure the presence of our youngest friends, and we continue to seek ways to attract new young friends to Meeting and First Day School. We are grateful for the love and commitment of our First Day School teachers.

We are seeing a gap between our perception of the world's needs and our ability to follow a consistent and focused effort for healing. This can lead to friction among us. It also has led to our laying down, our functioning as an overnight shelter on the coldest nights. Our Shelter Committee is working to discern how we can best help the unhoused people in our neighborhood, with the person-power available, and at the same time keeping peace with our housed neighbors. We need prayer and wisdom to understand what commitments we are called to do and what is in our capacity to accomplish. These struggles have on occasion left us with divisions, and we feel a need to deal with them in more supportive ways.

We do take a monthly collection for Spirit Sunday supporting a variety of Quaker efforts across the world, and we continue to make office space available for Friends Peace Teams, as well as for the Neighborhood Association's monthly meetings. We ask ourselves, What is our calling and our capacity beyond these efforts?

Urbana-Champaign Friends Meeting State of Society Report 2024-2025

In many ways the State of Society of Urbana-Champaign Friends Meeting is much the same as it was at this time last year, and that is a good thing. Once again, while we mourn the loss of valued Friends, we joyfully welcome new members and attenders to Meeting for Worship, and our Meeting is enriched by their presence and ministry.

As we move on from the pandemic years, our Meeting is growing and changing. The many threads that held us and sustained us during those difficult years are now lengthening and strengthening. New formal and informal groups meet regularly, not only in the meetinghouse, but in homes and in public spaces. These groups meet for Bible study, to knit and crochet, to walk in our public parks, and to share meals. These gatherings allow us to not only talk about our lives and get to know each other on a deeper level, but also let us weave together stronger spiritual connections. We feel that we are part of a growing community.

Among the threads that we feel binding us together are both our children and our older members. We enjoy the children's close of Meeting reports on First Day School activities and delight in their spiritual development. Although we wish for more young Friends, we hold close the ones we have. For some of our older members, it is difficult or impossible to come to meeting, yet these Friends are an important part of our spiritual lives and our Meeting's history.

The decision to join the Apartheid-Free Communities Campaign was not an easy one, but we are stronger for holding fast to our Quaker decision-making process. During two called business meetings, we listened patiently to each other's concerns and labored to come to a sense of the meeting.

We feel bound together as a Meeting as we consider our responsibility for the stewardship of funds that were left to the Meeting last year, and we strive to make our Meetinghouse and our local and broader communities healthy and thriving places for us all. Among our efforts last year, we installed a geothermal heating and cooling system at the Meetinghouse, we donated funds to the Urbana Neighborhood Connections Center for after-school and summer enrichment programs and also donated to the Education Justice Project for a new college-in-prison program at Decatur Correctional Center, a women's prison not far from Champaign-Urbana.

We continue to discern how best to use the funds from the aforementioned bequest. Our original process for making decisions was somewhat divisive, but a new process born out of the dissension is carrying us forward in greater unity in our mission to be of peaceful service to the community. We consider this a Spirit-led development.

We look forward and pray for another year of growth and stronger spiritual connections. As we look around us, in our own community and around the world, we know that there is much more we can do.