

WESTERN WORK

October 2023

Western Yearly Meeting is pleased to announce the calling of Tom Rockwell as our New Associate Superintendent!



Tom is wrapping up his final year at Earlham School of Religion in Richmond, Indiana, where he is a third-year student, Master of Divinity program. He has previously worked as a Licensed Minister / Pastoral Intern coordinating worship services with the Lead Pastor, has led worship services and presented sermons. He is an Earlham School of Religion Cooper's Scholar, Nancy Mullen Scholar and Fellow of the Congregational Foundation for Theological Studies.

Tom grew up in St. Johns, Michigan in the Congregational tradition. Previously having worked in forestry Tom felt the call to ministry and served in the leadership of several Congregational churches before getting interested in Friends studying at Earlham School of Religion. Tom and Jade currently serve as the co-pastors at West Elkton Friends Meetings in West Elkton, Ohio.

Tom has significant ministry training in previous positions that include newsletter design, new communication procedures, leading congregations through the discernment process. Tom's first working day with Western Yearly Meeting is October 1!!

Tom lives in Richmond with his wife Jade, their one-year-old daughter Agatha, and their soon-to-be 18-year-old-son Ezra. Tom's father Bill also lives nearby.

Tom is interested in finding creative new ways of gathering together, reaching out to the wider community, and connecting Friends more deeply to one another, especially international Friends. In his free time Tom enjoys tennis, hiking, novels, cooking, and gardening.

Tom says, "Western Yearly Meeting appeals to me because of its dedication to maintaining relationships despite differences amongst its members in theology and politics. I am interested in working for a yearly meeting that is committed to avoiding dividing into camps and insistent on working together to find unity in God's love."

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Tom met a number of Western Friends at the FUM Triennial this past summer and is looking forward to visiting Western Meetings and getting to know more Friends. Be sure to "stay-tuned-in" through the weekly UPDATES for more information as Tom is transitioned into the office.

A MESSAGE FROM SHAWN

Embracing Change

My local coffeeshop used to display a tip jar with a small sign that read, “if you fear change, leave it here”. A clever wordplay on what is a significant issue for many people. Change is hard. It is especially difficult when it means wrestling with our values and our deeply engrained traditions. We begrudgingly admit that to live is to experience change, but we can be very resistant to change.

On the survey I sent to many of our WYM leaders this summer, there were a high percentage of responders who mentioned something about the need for change. Looking back through the surveys it did not take long to find a few responses that suggested change is needed.

“A willingness to change so that growth can happen.”

“We continue to be stuck in old ways.”

“I wish we could shake a little traditionalism.”

“I want to see us planting Meetings in new places, reaching a new population that perhaps has no experience of Quakers.”

“I long for us to let go of our fears, our anxieties and all the what-ifs, so that we can be more fully the people/Quakers that God and the world need us to be.”

“A more flexible approach to doing church.”

While the nature of a survey, calls for forward-looking responses, it is obvious to me that there is a strong representation of our YM that feels we need to bring forward-looking change if we hope to fully live into God’s call for us. Sometimes that means saying yes to something that feels new or uncomfortable. Sometimes it means letting go of something that no longer has life.

Of course, change itself is not the goal, and just any change won’t do, though I might argue that mixing things up from time to time gives us fresh perspective. Even the survival of the institution of our Meeting or YM is not the goal. The goal is a deeper faith that calls us to expressions of love that are transformative for ourselves, our Meetings, and the world. I happen to think that when lived out, our Meetings will be seen as a bright light.

Of course, I am all too glad to express how others need to change while my willingness to prompt change in myself lags. But, it must begin in each of us. Our own growth and transformation make it possible to offer grace to others.

Here are some queries that we can ask ourselves as we consider change. I hope you will take some time in quiet to sit with these prompts. What is the Spirit saying? Am I willing to respond? I’d love to hear your thoughts.

What fear/anxiety do I carry that keeps me from living fully into the life Christ wants for me?

Who do I suspect that God has been nudging me about recently? Who needs my encouragement, or prayer, or forgiveness, or unconditional acceptance?

What would it look like for me to be a supporter of change in our meeting? Think back over the past year, am I more likely to say “yes” or “no” to a new idea?



Shawn McConaughey
General Superintendent

OUTGOING EPISTLE

July 30, 2023

Western Yearly Meeting
203 S. East Street, PO Box 70
Plainfield, IN 46168

Greetings to Friends Everywhere:

Western Yearly Meeting met in Plainfield, Indiana from July 27-30, 2023 for its 166th annual session to explore the theme, "You are the Light of the World" based on Matthew 5:14-16. Throughout the meeting, a large mural illustrating the theme was available for attendees to share in coloring the pattern. Brilliant markers and stimulating conversation while working allowed the Lights of many individuals to leave a lasting impression of the meeting.

Pam and Ron Ferguson of Winchester, Indiana Friends, conducted our morning worship times. They were able to share their local and overseas personal experiences to illustrate how the presence of Light in their lives has allowed them to remain powerful in situations of powerlessness. In doing so, they encouraged each of us to share the inward Light of God in the darkness of the world, trusting God to make the best use of that witness.

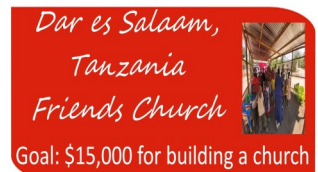
Superintendent Shawn McConaughy facilitated an open discussion on Thursday morning. Examining the question, "Where is Western Yearly Meeting Headed," he encouraged us to honestly evaluate the mission of Western Yearly Meeting and the mission of each of our individual meetings. He challenged us to "think differently" in order to meet the changing needs of individuals in today's world. Thursday afternoon, a time of remembrance allowed us to celebrate the lives of those who have died in the last year and how each of them "shared the Light" during their time with us. They and their wisdom are, and will continue to be, missed. Thursday evening, Shawn shared how "Love Fuels our Light," in a message of hope, reality, and optimism. He pointed out that life does not exist without change, and change depends on making choices. Deciding not to decide is a choice that leads to stagnation, decline, and eventual death. After the inspiring and motivating messages of the day, attendees gathered to share their lives and the day's impact with each other over watermelon and fruit kabobs.

Routine business was conducted Friday and Saturday. WYM continues to be financially stable. Written reports included in attendance packets enabled only brief summaries, questions, and approval of action items to be addressed during active sessions. One of the more interesting reports was presented by Rachel Doll-O'Mahoney. This report reviewed results of an ongoing project to discern the needs and concerns of those between ages 21 and 41. This information was enlightening and will help WYM and its individual meetings determine how they need to adapt moving forward.

Epistle continued on page 4

Special Project Update:

As of July 31, the total raised is **\$3704.33**.



For a copy of the
QUAKER LECTURE, contact
the WYM office at
317-839-2789 or
office@westernyearlymeeting.org

Epistle continued from page 3

As is customary, multiple workshops were available on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. These included programs on the Friends United Meeting projects in Tanzania and South Sudan (Turkana); prophetic thought and Quaker theology; supporting

and attracting young-ish adults; estate planning; Quaker engagement strategies as they pertain to legislation on poverty and affordable housing; ideas and resources to help local meetings enliven Vacation Bible School and Sunday School programs; solar power as a renewable energy option; experiences in revitalizing growth and community; an FWCC workshop; and how Right Sharing of World Resources (RSWR) is continuing to impact families around the world including Guatemala.

The Quaker Lecture presented by J. Brent Bill on Friday night was thought-provoking. The title, "Living Witnesses: How do Quakers Speak to Today," examined how the Quakers of today sometimes struggle to explain what we stand for today rather than what we are against. Brent's statement, "... in the Quaker tradition, true spiritual witness, at its best, is rooted in positivity." speaks to today's conditions. While our historical past is important, it is what we are doing and living out NOW that will speak to people today. The Quaker lecture was followed by fellowship over strawberry shortcake and ice cream.

A highlight of the business session on Saturday morning was the recommendation for Recording of Gifts for Ministry of Ben Snyder. Many supportive letters from Carmel Friends Meeting were read and friends present spoke in support of Ben's ministry; the recommendation was approved heartily.. Saturday afternoon included a missions report on FUM and triennial from Friends United Meeting, followed by a time for the gathering and business of Quaker Men and United Society of Friends Women groups. These gatherings were then followed by a "Ministry Fair" highlighting ways to be involved in, and aware of, the many ministries of WYM. "Family Night" closed the evening with an evening celebration of fun, trivia, music, and a 1950's Soda Fountain treat time.

Sunday's program "The Light of Hope" was led by Ron and Pam Ferguson. It included the Recording of Gifts for Ministry of Ben Snyder (Carmel Friends.) This closing service reminded us that the Light of Hope shines onward to the future.

Please continue to pray for Western Yearly Meeting as we seek and share the Light of Christ with those around us.

Sarabeth Marcinko, WYM Clerk
Brenda Rodeheffer, WYM Recording Clerk
John Heshelman, WYM Assistant Recording Clerk

Thank you!

Thank you to all that helped make 2023 Western Yearly Meeting Annual Sessions a great success! Special thank you to our Program Committee: for planning this year's sessions:

Ben Snyder, Clerk
Sarabeth Marcinko
John Heshelman
Peggy Hollingsworth
Marilyn Tucker
Clark & Diana Hadley
Wayne Carter
Cathy Harris
Bill Clendening
Wanda Coffin Baker
Shawn McConaughy

YOUTH—YOUNG ADULT

ATTENTION ALL MILLENIALS AND GEN Z ADULTS

6398 Hendricks Co. Road, Mooresville

QUAKER FALL FEST
FOR FRIENDS WHO ARE MILLENIALS OR GENZ ADULTS

Gathering
SUNDAY OCTOBER 22

3-6pm / lingering welcome
FOOD (GF/VEG TOO)
KIDS WELCOME
GAMES
PUMPKIN CARVING
BON-FIRE
CIDER

ACCESSIBILITY NEEDS OR MORE INFO CONTACT:
SHAWN@WESTERNYEARLYMEETING.ORG

YOUTH INVASION

Date: October 15

Time: 5:00pm

Place: Farmland Friends
8311 IN-32
Farmland, IN 47340

For more information, contact
Shawn at
shawn@westernyearlymeeting.org



QUAKER HAVEN CAMP
PRESENTS

YOUNG ADULT RETREAT
FALL 2023

LEVEL
Up

FRIDAY-SUNDAY ~ NOVEMBER 10-12

(FIRST 25 PEOPLE) \$50 - COUPON CODE: EARLYBIRD
AFTERWARDS \$75 PER CAMPER

REGISTRATION 7PM FRIDAY
JOIN US FOR GREAT FOOD, FRIENDS, AND FELLOWSHIP!

FOR MORE INFO EMAIL US
youngadults@quakerhaven.com

SIGN UP AT
www.quakerhaven.com/youth-camps

Fall
Impact
Oasis

Quaker Haven Camp
November 3-5, 2023
Ages 7-12 grade
Cost is \$140



Register at:
<https://www.quakerhaven.com/youth-camps>

Administrative Council Meeting

November 11, 2023

9:30am Devotions

10am Program Boards meetings

12pm-1:30pm lunch on your own

1:30pm Admin Council

Plainfield Friends

Look for updates & zoom link in the

Western Update

CHRISTMAS

Plainfield Friends

105 S East St, Plainfield

will host a Christmas Concert on December 12,
2023 at 6:30pm.

Indianapolis 1st Friends

3030 Kessler Blvd E Dr, Indianapolis

Blue Christmas – Nov. 26, 10:15am

Vespers – Dec. 3, 5:30pm

Christmas Tea (after Meeting for Worship), Dec.
10, 11:15am

Children's Christmas Pageant – Dec. 17,
10:15am

Christmas Eve – December 24,

- Morning – -Christmas Carol Sing-along,
10:15am

- Evening - Special Christmas Eve Worship,
5:30pm

Unprogrammed Worship – Dec. 31, 10:15am

Valley Mills

6739 W Thompson Rd, Indianapolis

will have a sunset Christmas Eve service at
5:00pm by Candlelight. All are welcome!

Wheelchair accessible and children will lead the
facing bench. They are an affirming Quaker
meeting.



2023 Pastors' Conference

Earlham School of Religion

October 7

Check the Western Update for
more information.

Carmel Friends invites you to....

651 W Main St
Carmel, IN 46032



AROUND WYM

Mooreville Friends



Approximately 70 people helped celebrate the 200th Anniversary of the founding of White Lick Monthly Meeting of Friends in Mooreville. The Meeting had invited anyone who wanted to attend as well as members of the two Meetings that were a part of Blue River Quarterly Meeting in 1823 which

set off White Lick Monthly Meeting. In addition, the six Monthly Meetings (Bloomingdale, Bethel, Fairfield, Plainfield, West Union, and Union {currently Westfield}) and former pastors were also invited to attend the weekend festivities.

On Saturday, August 19, John Connell gave a lecture on the history of the Meeting which was followed by a cake and punch reception at the Friendship House.

At 3:30 PM several attendees journeyed to the Mooreville Consolidated School Corporation Newby Campus (just north of the Meetinghouse) to visit the Academy Building. This building was originally founded by White Lick Meeting as a high school and was the first high school in Central Indiana.

On Sunday, August 20, at worship the original minute for the formation of the Monthly Meeting was read by clerk, John Heshelman. Jeff Wells of Blue River Meeting gave the message. Following worship, attendees were invited to have cake and punch again at the Friendship House.

All attendees on both Saturday and Sunday were asked to sign a piece of fabric to be made into a quilt later this year.



A Note from Peggy Hollingsworth.....

As the 2023 edition of the Indiana State Fair winds down, Friends at Russiaville were provided with a familiar "Quaker taste" of the Fair during their Sunday, August 13 meal following monthly meeting for business. Pastor Jamie Lyon had resurrected the tried-and-true recipe for Valley Mills barbeque chicken, and everyone seemed to enjoy it. For many years, Valley Mills Friends Meeting had a food booth near the heart of the State Fairgrounds.

As times changed and Friends aged and had other demands on their time, the annual appearance at the Fair

changed into a Friday and Saturday evening chicken dinner on the shaded grounds of the historic Meetinghouse during one weekend in late summer. As Friends and neighbors were wont to do, they "flocked" to share in the homemade fare, prepared and served by generations of the community's families. Just one block off of busy Kentucky Avenue as it bisected Decatur Township of Marion County, monies for the support of various outreach projects, both near and far, were raised by the cooperative efforts of members and their helpers. Happy Memories of times gone by, and of the tastes and smells of good food for a good cause.

FLOURISHING FRIENDS

Friends United Meeting ~ North American Ministries



Flourishing Friends is one program aimed at resourcing and supporting local congregations to focus on deepening their spiritual life (formation), clearly discerning their sense of mission (faithfulness), establishing a renewed sense of integrity to their structures/systems (function), assessing their calling within the community/world (fruitfulness), and move toward overall health and vitality (flourishing). Flourishing Friends fosters mutual learning and experimentation aimed at resourcing and supporting congregations who seek to thrive.

There are six meetings in Western Yearly Meeting that have committed to this year long journey: **Noblesville, Mooresville, Sandcreek-Azalia, Carmel, Hadley and Plainfield**, with a total of thirty people who gathered on Saturday September 23 for the day long retreat at Plainfield Friends.

Time was spent in worship, sharing of ideas and significant conversation around how to allow God to speak to each individual and their meetings. Each cohort/meeting spent time together to discuss ideas, possibilities, and what it might look like for the individual meetings to flourish.

Scott Wagoner, Pastoral Minister at High Point Friends Meeting in High Point NC and **Colin Saxton**, Stewardship Theologian/Director of Church Relations for Everence are serving as the facilitators.

- Formative Community**
Renewed into the image of Christ individually and corporately.
- Faithful Innovations**
Clarifying and refocusing on essential sense of mission and vision.
- Fruitful Environment**
Assessing the calling with the larger community/world.
- Functional Structures**
Innovate to insure that structures, staff, budget, etc., have integrity and are aligned with mission and calling.



REFLECTIONS

WESTERN YEARLY MEETING SESSIONS



Western Yearly Meeting recognizes Ben Snyder, Pastor at Carmel, as a newly Recorded Minister



Western Work

Western Yearly Meeting
203 S. East Street
P.O. Box 70
Plainfield, IN 46168

Phone: 317-839-2789
Toll Free: 1-800-909-3452

OFFICE HOURS

Monday through Thursday

8 a.m. – 12 noon ~ 1 p.m. – 4 p.m.

Friday—Office is closed

Friends are welcome to contact staff via email or phone with the understanding that we will get back to you as soon as we can.

STAFF

GENERAL SUPERINTENDENT

Shawn McConaughey
shawn@westernyearlymeeting.org
971-281-0979

ASSOCIATE SUPERINTENDENT

Thomas Rockwell
tom.s@westernyearlymeeting.org
989-307-9847

YEARLY MEETING CLERK

Sarahbeth Marcinko
marcinko@marcinko.net
765-366-4858

OFFICE MANAGER

Amy Eitel
office@westernyearlymeeting.org
317-839-2789
800-909-3452

SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGER

Maggie Crawford
maggie@westernyearlymeeting.org



YOU ARE INVITED TO OUR
WYM SUPERINTENDENTS

Christmas
OPEN HOUSE

DROP BY TO ENJOY FOOD AND LOTS
OF CHRISTMAS CHEER

DECEMBER

SATURDAY | 9 | 1 PM - 4 PM

6398 E. HENDRICKS COUNTY RD.
MOORESVILLE, IN 46168