

Minutes of Illinois Yearly Meeting

151st Annual Sessions
Sixth Month 18-22, 2025

Minutes of the First Session, Fourth Day, Sixth Month 18, 2025

Minute 1: The meeting opened in waiting worship. With this, our 151st annual session, we mark 150 years since the opening of Illinois Yearly Meeting in 1875.

Minute 2: Clerk Kevin Brubaker welcomed Friends.

Minute 3: A selected portion of the epistle from Netherlands Yearly Meeting was read.

Minute 4: Visiting Friends were introduced, including Tom Rockwell, Associate Superintendent of Western Yearly Meeting, and Nathan Kleban from Right Sharing of World Resources. First-time attenders from within Illinois Yearly Meeting were also introduced and welcomed.

Minute 5: Val Lester reported for the Naming Committee. They propose Margie Haworth-Davis as clerk of the Nominating Committee, and Alex Lippett as a member, both for one-year terms. Friends approve both nominations.

Minute 6: Ted Kuhn presented the Treasurer's report. Income and expenses are expected to be roughly equal at the end of the fiscal year. Insurance expenses are dramatically higher than they have been. Friends accept the report.

Minute 7: Val Lester presented the Finance Committee report, including the proposed budget. Less is budgeted for insurance than we paid this year; the cost will be brought down by increasing the deductible. It is also hoped that we can bring down insurance costs by making fewer claims. The committee asks meetings and individuals to increase their annual contributions to the yearly meeting by 5%. Friends accept the report.

Minute 8: The Finance Committee proposed a minute clarifying the uses of the Donor Restricted Property Use Fund. Friends approve the minute with changes as follows:

The Property Improvement Fund is a Donor Restricted Fund to be used for significant improvements to the ILYM Campus in McNabb, including new buildings and existing buildings. It may not be used for maintenance of the existing campus. Any use of this fund should be approved at Annual Sessions (requests should be brought by Maintenance, Planning & Envisioning Committee). This fund is intended to improve the facilities to better serve ILYM needs.

The project priorities come from ILYM with input from MP&E Committee. Donors wishing to underwrite any specific project should work through the Development Committee.

Minute 9: Minutes 1–8 were read and approved.

Minute 10: Marcia Nelson presented the Field Secretaries' report. She recently visited Columbia Meeting, and reports that their new meetinghouse is very nice, and that their First Day School is

active and healthy. She reported that Northside Meeting is also moving into new space and has a very energetic business meeting. Clear Creek Meeting held a meditation workshop, which brought in a number of people from the larger community. Friends accept the report.

Minute 11: Janice Domanik reported for the Ministry and Advancement Committee. They propose a minute of support for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and non-binary Friends:

Illinois Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends believes there is that of the Light of God in every person. We affirm and celebrate our lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and non-binary members and attenders. Any person who is led to faithfully love whom they love and express in integrity who they are, including through their gender expression, is ministering to the world and showing who God is. When members and attenders do this, their faithfulness blesses us all.

Illinois Yearly Meeting will continue to support all our members and attenders as they live lives of faith and integrity—including respecting, affirming, and celebrating their uniqueness, supporting them in the choice to come out, caring for them as they live and form relationships (including marriages under the care of our meetings), and caring for them in the face of any test or rebuke they are subjected to by the world and society. As with other health care choices, we support the decisions our members and attenders make regarding gender-affirming care.

Friends approve the minute and accept the report as printed in the Advance Documents.

Minute 12: Beth Carpenter reported for Blue River Quarterly Meeting as follows:

At its April 12, 2025, Blue River Quarterly Meeting received a request from Spoon River Quaker Meeting that it be laid down. At that meeting, we approved the following minute:

“Blue River Quarterly Meeting regretfully 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.”

At that meeting, Grayce Mesner and Beth Carpenter agreed to work with Spoon River Friends to work out the details of laying down the meeting. They have no treasury. Their records have been deposited with the Illinois Yearly Meeting collection at the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign library. There are eight members. Three either have been, or are in the process of being, transferred to Clear Creek Monthly. Two have been transferred to Urbana Champaign. The remaining three hope to decide where they would like their memberships transferred within the next week.

At Clear Creek’s May business meeting, we approved taking Spoon River Worship Group under our care.

On behalf of Blue River Quarterly, I would ask that the yearly meeting minute their approval to lay down Spoon River Quaker Meeting.

Also at Clear Creek’s May meeting for business, we approved a request that the Macomb Worship Group officially be laid down. It has been inactive for several years.

Friends accept the report. With deep sorrow and much regret at the end of one of our oldest meetings, we lay down Spoon River Monthly Meeting as recommended.

Minute 13: Minutes 9–12 were read and approved.

Minute 14: The clerk explained that in order to make time for commemorations of our 150th anniversary, some reports not proposing decisions for action would not be read aloud. Friends accept the reports from the Development Committee and the Personnel Committee as printed in the Advance Documents.

Minute 15: Tom Rockwell, Associate Superintendent of Western Yearly Meeting spoke to us, noting that many meetings are declining in active membership. He hopes greater contact between the divided branches of Friends may strengthen us all. He described several planned programs and activities which Western Yearly Meeting is engaged in, with the hope that Friends, especially young Friends, from Illinois Yearly Meeting and other yearly meetings in the region might become involved.

Minute 16: Minutes 13–15 were read and approved.

Minute 17: The meeting closed in waiting worship.

Minutes of the Second Session, Fifth Day, Sixth Month 19, 2025

Minute 18: The meeting opened in waiting worship.

Minute 19: Sections were read from the epistles from New England Yearly Meeting and from Alaska Friends Conference, both dealing with Friends efforts to address the harms done by historic Quaker involvement in Indian Boarding Schools.

Minute 20: Visiting Friends were introduced, including Zoe Jannuzi, representing the American Friends Service Committee; Windy Cooler from Baltimore Yearly Meeting, traveling under minute; and Shahin Samiei of Memphis Friends Meeting. First time attenders were also introduced and welcomed.

Minute 21: Dawn Crimson reported for the Publications and Technology Committee. They propose the creation of an *ad hoc* committee to review and gather thoughts on possible revisions to Faith and Practice. Friends approve, and ask the Nominating Committee to propose members for the *ad hoc* committee at next annual sessions.

Minute 22: Mark McGinnis reported for the Peace Resources Committee. The committee has engaged in various activities over the past year, as outlined in the written report. They propose a revision to the Handbook description of the Peace Resources Committee, which was approved as follows:

The Peace Resources Committee's purpose is to help Friends live up to our Peace Testimony, to be opposed to the aggression of nations, to work towards a more peaceful world, to speak out against oppression, injustice, and gun violence, and to be a resource for monthly meetings, worship groups, the quarterly meeting, peace committees, and individuals within the Illinois Yearly Meeting community.

Membership: Six to twelve members nominated by the Nominating Committee. The Committee's objectives include:

- a. At the request of ILYM youth leaders, providing information to young Friends regarding conscientious objection, the draft system, and military recruitment. Assisting young people in developing their own Peace Testimony.*
- b. Working with existing peace-building organizations such as the Quaker Voluntary Service and Project Lakota to enhance peace building with a spiritual and service-oriented basis for young Friends.*
- c. Encouraging Friends to examine and reexamine the meaning of the Peace Testimony in the context of our response to modern terrorism, war, and gun violence which has made it possible to wreak major devastation on people and their environment.*
- d. Serving as a resource for monthly meetings, quarterly meetings, regional meetings and ILYM's program committee in identifying knowledgeable speakers and workshop leaders on the above topics.*
- e. To speak out and encourage others to speak out against war, violence, oppression, and other items that may lead to the occasion of war.*

Friends accept the committee's report.

Minute 23: Daniel Lakemacher reported for the Racial Equity and Education Committee. The committee proposes text for a letter to the State Treasurer of Illinois, urging divestment from Israel Bonds. There was some discussion regarding the content and focus of the letter. Friends approve Illinois Yearly Meeting sending a letter to midwest state officials representing meetings in ILYM opposing investment in countries, companies and policies that violate the conscience of Friends. Friends request that the committee draft a revision to bring back to Meeting for Business later in these sessions.

Minute 24: Minutes 18–23 were read and approved.

Minute 25: The Clerk announced that we are in need of Friends to serve on the Epistles and Exercises committees. Please speak to him if you are interested in serving on one of these committees.

Minute 26: Daniel Lakemacher continued the report of the Racial Equity and Education Committee. The committee seeks approval of the following minute:

Illinois Yearly Meeting repudiates the Doctrine of Discovery which led to genocide, forced displacement, theft of land and resources, loss of identity, and economic hardship to Indigenous People. We benefit from support of the Doctrine of Discovery which led to Friends' historic westward movement and colonization.

ILYM currently is on land which was forcibly taken by the United States through war and coercive treaties which allowed settlers to own land.

Our ILYM forebearers held an erroneous belief in the superiority of European colonial values promoted by the Doctrine of Discovery. ILYM promoted the assimilation of Indigenous People into Western culture and compelled their conversion to colonial ways. The doctrine has not disappeared or been revoked. It has the force of law globally and serves as a framework of oppression fully intact in US Federal Indian law today.

ILYM needs to engage in spiritual discernment about how the Doctrine of Discovery has benefited and harmed us. To do this we need to seek right relationship with Indigenous Peoples who live(d) in the boundaries that currently comprise our Yearly Meeting.

ILYM in keeping with Friends testimonies commits to the following:

- Acknowledge that this doctrine has had and continues to have devastating consequences for Indigenous People.*
- Recognize the role ILYM has had in the consequences resulting from the Doctrine of Discovery.*
- Learn about treaties in our region (ILYM) so we understand their impact on the indigenous nations that occupied these lands.*
- Seek relationships with Native People in our areas and follow their lead toward reconciliation and support.*
- Recognize our need to approach these relationships as learners willing to restore our own health and that of our planet.*
- Support Tribal sovereignty*
- Join the Coalition to Dismantle the Doctrine of Discovery. This organization, founded by Mennonites and other Anabaptists, is an organization that "invites anyone to join us who seeks to support Indigenous self-determination and efforts to protect the earth from ongoing colonization". Here is the link to their website: dismantleddiscovery.org/get-involved/repair-network/.*

ILYM is committed to creating right relationship with Native Americans and appreciates the proposed minute brought today. Friends thank the committee for bringing this to Meeting and request that the committee revise this minute and bring this back at a later time.

Minute 27: Daniel Lakemacher brought the following proposed minute from the Racial Equity and Education Committee. Friends approve the following minute:

Illinois Yearly Meeting recognizes the specific role that Quakers played in operating 'Indian Boarding Schools' and commits to supporting the efforts of the Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition in their work by applying for an Affiliate membership in NABS and working toward right relationship with Native peoples.

Friends accept the report from the Racial Equity and Education Committee with thanks.

Minute 28: Friends accept the reports from:
American Friends Service Committee
Friends General Conference
Friends Committee on World Consultation
Friends Peace Teams

Minute 29: The meeting then concluded.

Minutes of the Third Session, Sixth Day, Sixth Month 20, 2025

Minute 30: The meeting opened in waiting worship.

Minute 31: First-time attenders were introduced and welcomed.

Minute 32: Selections were read from the epistles from Ireland Yearly Meeting, from Oxford Young Adult Friends, and from Pacific Yearly Meeting.

Minute 33: Val Lester reported for the Naming Committee. They propose Brendan Harrington for the Nominating Committee. Friends approve and appoint Brendan for a term of two years.

Minute 34: Brad Laird reported for the Nominating Committee. Several additions have been made to the nominations in the committee's report in the Advance Documents. Some positions still remain open. Friends accept the report.

Minute 35: Chris Goode reported for the Stewards, and the Maintenance, Planning and Envisioning Committee. At last year's sessions, the Property Use Ad Hoc Committee stated in its report that firearms should be prohibited on our campus and in our buildings. In order to legally enforce this prohibition, signs of a specific state-approved design would need to be posted at specific locations. The Maintenance, Planning and Envisioning Committee now asks the meeting whether to proceed with a plan to post such signs, or if instead we should maintain an informal but probably unenforceable prohibition without posted signs. In free and full discussion, no unity emerged that the meeting should post the signs at this time as required for a legal prohibition. However, Friends do feel that some way of communicating that weapons are not welcome on our campus would be desirable. The matter is referred to the Peace Resources Committee for further discernment and investigation as to the details of the relevant laws.

Minute 36: The Maintenance, Planning and Envisioning Committee notes that the High School Bunkhouse is in badly deteriorating condition. The bunkhouse was constructed in 1885 as a dining hall at a cost of less than \$200. The committee recommends replacing the building, and has done some initial investigation about possible options for new construction, including a prebuilt structure to be transported to the site. The cost might be in the vicinity of \$90,000, of which it is hoped that approximately half would be gathered in a dedicated fundraising effort. The committee now asks the meeting for approval to continue investigations, make decisions, and proceed with replacing the building as way opens. Friends accept the report and authorize the committee to proceed, with the understanding that specific plans will be proposed to the Continuing Committee for final approval. The Development Committee is asked to begin fundraising efforts.

Minute 37: The Racial Equity and Education Committee proposed revised text for a minute on the Doctrine of Discovery as follows:

Illinois Yearly Meeting repudiates the Doctrine of Discovery which led to genocide, forced displacement, theft of land and resources, loss of identity, and economic hardship to Indigenous People. ILYM commits to engage in spiritual discernment about how the Doctrine of Discovery has benefited and harmed us. To do this we need to seek right relationship with Indigenous Peoples who live(d) in the areas of our affiliated meetings. ILYM in keeping with Friends testimonies commits to the following:

- *Acknowledge that this doctrine has had and continues to have devastating*

- consequences for Indigenous People.*
- *Recognize the role ILYM has had in the consequences resulting from the Doctrine of Discovery.*
 - *Learn about treaties in our region (ILYM) so we understand their impact on the indigenous nations that occupied these lands.*
 - *Seek relationships with Native People in our areas and follow their lead toward reconciliation and support.*
 - *Recognize our need to approach these relationships as learners willing to restore our own health and that of our planet.*
 - *Support Tribal sovereignty*
 - *Join the Coalition to Dismantle the Doctrine of Discovery. This organization, founded by Mennonites and other Anabaptists, is an organization that "invites anyone to join us who seeks to support Indigenous self-determination and efforts to protect the earth from ongoing colonization". Here is the link to their website: dismantleddiscovery.org/get-involved/repair-network/.*

Friends approve the minute as revised.

Minute 38: Minutes 30–37 were read and approved.

Minute 39: Friends accept the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Discerning the Future of ILYM.

Minute 40: Mike Dennis reported for the Youth Oversight Committee. There have been several well-attended teen gatherings during the year. The teens have been selling T-shirts to raise funds for Gaza relief. More gatherings are planned for the coming year. Friends accept the report.

Minute 41: The reports from the following committees and representatives were accepted:

- Children’s Religious Education
- Olney School
- Scattergood School
- Chicago Friends School

Minute 42: Barry Crossno, General Secretary of Friends General Conference, was introduced and welcomed.

Minute 43: Minutes 38–42 were read and approved.

Minute 44: The meeting then concluded.