

Late Arriving Documents

Documents arriving too late to be included with the received and compiled documents are the following:

Posted 6/20/2024

1. Treasurers: Updated Income Statement
2. Treasurers: Updated Meeting Support
3. Racial Equity and Education Committee and Peace Resources Committee: Updated report/proposed action

Posted 6/18/2024

1. Youth Oversight Report
2. Working Group of the Maintenance, Planning and Envisioning Committee: “On the Future of Illinois Yearly Meeting”
3. Bloomington-Normal Meeting State of Society Report
4. Property Use Ad-hoc Committee Packet (print only)
5. FCNL 2024 Report to Yearly Meetings

Income Statement (Profit and Loss)

Illinois Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends
For the year ended June 30, 2024

	1 GENERAL OPERATING	2 UNRESTRICTED RESERVES	5 FWCC WORLD MTGS	6 MAINT. RESERVE	8 PROPERTY IMPR.	TOTAL
Income						
Support from Meetings	88,875.00	-	-	-	-	88,875.00
Support from Individuals	37,930.45	297,115.56	-	-	-	335,046.01
Interest & Investment Income	5,272.24	-	-	-	724.57	5,996.81
Other Income	880.00	-	-	-	-	880.00
Gatherings-Retreats						
Annual Sessions Income						
AS Registrations	17,423.00	-	-	-	-	17,423.00
Gifts-Sessions	3,815.00	-	-	-	-	3,815.00
Total Annual Sessions Income	21,238.00	-	-	-	-	21,238.00
Other Gatherings Income						
Site Use Fees	190.00	-	-	-	-	190.00
Total Other Gatherings Income	190.00	-	-	-	-	190.00
Total Gatherings-Retreats	21,428.00	-	-	-	-	21,428.00
Total Income	154,385.69	297,115.56	-	-	724.57	452,225.82
Gross Income	154,385.69	297,115.56	-	-	724.57	452,225.82
Operating Expenses						
1 Personnel & Office						
1A Employee Direct-Indirect Expenses	57,792.21	-	-	-	-	57,792.21
1B Staff Travel	2,961.46	-	-	-	-	2,961.46
1C Office Expenses	1,746.40	-	-	-	-	1,746.40
Total 1 Personnel & Office	62,500.07	-	-	-	-	62,500.07
2 YM Travel Support						
2A ILYM Reps Travel	1,942.76	-	5,300.00	-	-	7,242.76
Total 2 YM Travel Support	1,942.76	-	5,300.00	-	-	7,242.76
3 Site & Property Expenses						
Annual services-Property Taxes	1,691.64	-	-	-	-	1,691.64
Mowing, Tree Trimming	3,520.00	-	-	6,350.00	-	9,870.00
Repairs & Maintenance	1,066.29	-	-	2,000.00	-	3,066.29
Site Insurance Expense	16,192.00	-	-	-	-	16,192.00
Utilities	1,731.95	-	-	-	-	1,731.95
Work Weekend	407.68	-	-	-	-	407.68
Total 3 Site & Property Expenses	24,609.56	-	-	8,350.00	-	32,959.56
4 Gatherings-Retreats Expenses						

	1 GENERAL OPERATING	2 UNRESTRICTED RESERVES	5 FWCC WORLD MTGS	6 MAINT. RESERVE	8 PROPERTY IMPR.	TOTAL
4A Annual Sessions Expenses						
AS Site Prep Expenses	145.31	-	-	-	-	145.31
AS Admin Coordination	5,468.97	-	-	-	-	5,468.97
Transaction Fees on Registrations	385.95	-	-	-	-	385.95
Total 4A Annual Sessions Expenses	6,000.23	-	-	-	-	6,000.23
Total 4 Gatherings-Retreats Expenses	6,000.23	-	-	-	-	6,000.23
5 Committee Expenses						
Development Committee	356.00	-	-	-	-	356.00
Personnel Committee	111.20	-	-	-	-	111.20
Publications & Distribution Committee	2,078.30	-	-	-	-	2,078.30
YO Committee	561.51	-	-	-	-	561.51
Total 5 Committee Expenses	3,107.01	-	-	-	-	3,107.01
6 Support to Others	12,650.00	12,000.00	-	-	-	24,650.00
Total Operating Expenses	110,809.63	12,000.00	5,300.00	8,350.00	-	136,459.63
Operating Income	43,576.06	285,115.56	(5,300.00)	(8,350.00)	724.57	315,766.19
Transfers						
Transfers - Budgeted						
Transfers - FWCC World Mtgs	(1,000.00)	-	1,000.00	-	-	-
Transfers - Maint Reserve	(15,850.00)	-	-	15,850.00	-	-
Total Transfers - Budgeted	(16,850.00)	-	1,000.00	15,850.00	-	-
Total Transfers	(16,850.00)	-	1,000.00	15,850.00	-	-
Net Income	26,726.06	285,115.56	(4,300.00)	7,500.00	724.57	315,766.19

Support from Meetings Transactions

Illinois Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends For the period July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024

FUND-CLASS is 1 General Operating, Unassigned.

CONTACT	DATE	DESCRIPTION	NET	ACCOUNT
Mtg Bloomington-Normal MM			2,520.00	
Mtg Columbia FM			2,030.00	
Mtg Downers Grove FM			8,800.00	
Mtg Duneland FM			2,320.00	
Mtg Evanston MM			17,125.00	
Mtg Fifty-Seventh Street MM			3,770.00	
Mtg Fox Valley QM			500.00	
Mtg Lake Forest FM			19,400.00	
Mtg Northside FM			5,510.00	
Mtg Oak Park FM			6,000.00	
Mtg Southern Illinois QM			580.00	
Mtg Spoon River QM			720.00	
Mtg St. Louis MM			9,600.00	
Mtg Urbana-Champaign FM			10,000.00	
Total			88,875.00	

ILYM Peace Resources & Racial Equity & Education Committees

Proposed action 1:

Illinois Yearly Meeting sign onto the statement: [A different future is possible: Quaker organizations share a vision for peace in Palestine and Israel](#)



UseQR Code to access statement

*The committees have already provided 30 printed copies of the statement to Friends attending Annual Sessions, and we will provide additional printed copies ASAP.

Proposed Action 2 - Approve the following minute:

As a Yearly Meeting, we have wrestled deeply in our discernment about joining the Apartheid-free Communities coalition. For some in ILYM, this initiative speaks clearly to their condition. Others hold deep concerns that the words of the pledge may be counterproductive to our efforts at peacebuilding. We are unable to reach unity as a Yearly Meeting at this time, but do not wish to stand in the way of those Committees who are clear to join this coalition.

Illinois Yearly Meeting approves the Peace Resources Committee and the Racial Equity & Education Committee to join the Apartheid-Free Communities coalition.

Peace Resources and Racial Equity & Education Committees are drawn to join this coalition based on our Quaker testimonies. The foundation of the peace testimony is for Friends to live “in the virtue of that life and power that [takes] away the occasion of all wars.” – George Fox, 1650. If a ceasefire were to happen in Gaza tomorrow, the peoples of Gaza, Palestine, and Israel would still be living under a system of laws which puts Israelis above Palestinians. This imbalance all but guarantees the “occasion” for more war as well as running directly contrary to our testimony of equality. We also bring this minute forward to honor our testimony of integrity and speaking truth to power. What’s happening to the Palestinians in Gaza, Palestine, and Israel is apartheid. Only by acknowledging that can it begin to be undone.

On the Future of Illinois Yearly Meeting

A booklet prepared by
members of the Envisioning Working Group of the
Maintenance Planning & Envisioning Committee (MP&E)

Introduction

Over the next year, it will be the task of the body of Illinois Yearly Meeting (ILYM) to sift ideas, discern, and come to unity on how to best spend our talent and treasure to ensure that ILYM continues as our spiritual home. A working group of the Maintenance Planning & Envisioning Committee (MP&E) was approved and assembled in the fall of 2023 to provide guidance in that endeavor. This booklet has been prepared by that working group. We ask that all Friends read it thoroughly, and contemplate how the information in these papers should inform our discernment.

This is a time of an exciting confluence for ILYM: our forthcoming 150th anniversary, a revisit of the results of the Visioning process that took place in 2019-2020, and the welcome news of Chris Jocius' bequest for the purpose of ensuring the sustainability of the Yearly Meeting. Thus far the working group has focused particularly on the sustainability of Yearly Meeting with regard to the ILYM campus. It has become clear to us that one of the Yearly Meeting's main tasks is to discern whether the future of ILYM lies on that campus or elsewhere. But that is not the only issue regarding the sustainability of ILYM, and we hope to explore all relevant issues in the coming year.

We intend our work to be as inclusive as possible given a number of constraints. To that end, we are hosting workshops on all three full days of the annual sessions in June. The query that we are asking Friends to address at the annual sessions is this: "What does it mean for ILYM to be 'sustainable,' and what do we need to do to get there?"

In preparation for participating in this project, Friends are asked to read this pamphlet, which includes the following:

- A brief summary of the responses to the 2019-2020 Visioning process, written in 2020
- A more extensive summary of those responses, "Ensuring a Sustainable ILYM Spiritual Home"
- An article on the purpose of the Yearly Meeting
- An account of attendance at ILYM annual sessions over the past 20 years
- Reflections on the connection between Clear Creek Meeting and Illinois Yearly Meeting

Once the 2024 annual sessions have concluded, the working group plans to use the 2024-2025 year for outreach to monthly meetings and individuals as needed and discernment as led, in hopes of helping ILYM to come to unity on the issues at hand. We intend for this process to conclude with proposals at the 150th anniversary ILYM gathering at Clear Creek in June 2025 for how ILYM may best continue, and thrive, as our spiritual home.

Envisioning queries summary/highlights
(Prepared by Marcia Nelson in early 2020)

This is based on more than 30 pages of documents received from monthly meetings, ILYM committees, and individuals in responding to envisioning queries. It is offered as a starting point for a seasoning session at Spring 2020 Continuing Committee. Friends interested in perspectives from the wider Quaker world are directed to *Friends Journal* issues June/July 2017 and August 2016.

Strengths

Youth program
Variety of spiritual development opportunities: friendship, workshops, etc
Sustained and loving community
Peaceful, natural and simple setting embodies Quaker values
Multigenerational
Embodies history
Part of the wider Quaker world
ILYM Faith & Practice
Spiritual diversity

Weaknesses

Accessibility issues/remote location
Aging population
Aging facility
No growth in Quakerism
Not demographically diverse
Underused campus
Variable summer weather affects outdoor location

Opportunities

Caretaker
Potential spiritual home for the spiritual but not religious
Bartering for service
Quaker summer camp for youth & varied multiple land use suggestions
Intentional development strategies
Regional retreats/intervisitation
Intentional seeking of new attenders by meetings

Challenges

Pay scale
Feeling connected to one another the other 11 months
MM folks who don't come
Defining relationship of YM to MMs: beyond annual sessions, what does YM do for MMs
Drop in YM attendance
Reaching spiritual seekers
Fewer volunteers

Ensuring a Sustainable ILYM Spiritual Home Applying our Treasure and our Talent

Prepared by Bruce Kanarek

----- x -----

You may remember.....

At Continuing Committee, Fall 2019, concerns were raised about the long-term viability, vitality, and vision of Illinois Yearly Meeting. To plan for the future, it was decided to ask ILYM committees, Monthly Meetings, and Working Groups:

- What do you see as ILYM's strengths and weaknesses?
- What are our opportunities and challenges?
- What are your hopes for the Yearly Meeting 5, 10, or 20 years from now?

The pandemic interrupted that work.....

Now that we are together, once again, it's time to review and sift the responses, with an eye to discerning how to best apply our talents and treasure, taking into account the realities surrounding the futures of both ILYM and our beloved McNabb Campus. For, though inextricably linked for many of us, they are two separate entities.

----- x -----

Compiled on the next pages are the suggestions, the opportunities, lifted by respondents - in essence answering the question: What, specifically, can we DO to sustain ILYM in the future? You will note some of the opportunities envisioned were blue-sky – hope springs eternal!

Then, listed at the end of the Opportunities is a section labeled Realities. These are the items respondents lifted as concerns, items for us to consider as we plan for ILYM's and the McNabb Campus' future.

Perusing the Opportunities and the Realities, you are likely to come to the conclusion that there is no one magic fix! Graveling the paths OR offering spiritual retreats OR developing inter-visitation programs OR hiring a youth or children's coordinator, all may be worthwhile – but, won't solve the challenge: how do we sustain our ILYM community!

Over the next year or so, it is the ILYM body's job to consider possibilities, come to unity, discern: How to best spend our talent and treasure to ensure ILYM is available as our spiritual home.

Opportunities

Enhance our Community

- Develop and provide more online options for fellowship, educational and spiritual engagement
- Have ILYM Reps (or named ILYM ‘ambassadors’) reach out to those who don’t connect with ILYM
- Teach ILYM Faith and Practice to all
- Develop and staff summer camps for teens
- Develop and staff summer camps for pre-teens
- Develop and offer Campus retreats, with a few hours devoted to ‘property care’ an expectation
- Orchestrate video calls for specific audiences (ie: aging, youth, parents)
- Examine ILYM’s welcoming practices to ensure the message sent is, indeed, the message received
- Request counsel from FGC regarding our dilemmas
- Develop an inter-visitation program among MMs and WGs
- Examine, perhaps re-vamp, ILYM committee structures to better align with available people resources

Encourage Spiritual Connection

- Develop and offer spiritual retreats
- Develop and offer programs that fill the gaps between programs that FGC doesn’t offer.
- Coordinate FGC programming opportunities inter-meeting

Build People Resources

- Hire a Religious Education Coordinator
- Allocate increased hours for Field Secretaries, for outreach
- Hire a Youth and Children Coordinator
- Allocate increased hours for the ILYM Administrative Coordinator
- Hire a Campus Caretaker
- Rely less on volunteers, more on compensated workers
- Ensure increased job oversight so volunteers are provided direction and support
- Create a standing committee of folks who visit MMs and WGs, ‘ambassadors’ who offer support
- Move away from the framework of compensating with a ‘salary,’ and towards offering a stipend for spiritually-led service, to release Friends from worldly obligations to seek employment

Enhance Annual Sessions

- Offer pay-as-you-can along
- Offer increased sizable scholarships
- Hold Annual Sessions on-line and/or elsewhere so less volunteer effort is required
- Employ a consent agenda to better focus meeting for business
- Engage Annual Sessions non-attenders in budget creation
- Hold Annual Sessions over a Friday-Sunday
- Alternate Annual Sessions, one year on-line, the next in-person

Manage the Campus

Gravel the paths. lay firm path materials
Buy more golf carts
Build a dining hall
Create a wildlife habitat to increase biodiversity and bee-friendly habitat
Install birdhouses
Repurpose existing buildings
Sell the barn for lumber
Install ladders for Bunkhouse bunks
Document all basic maintenance needs on the entire Campus, ensuring transfer of knowledge
Develop unused campus areas (i.e.: orchard, prairie)
AirBnB Clear Creek House
Evaluate, perhaps employ, a land-trust strategy
Site a few small houses, as rental potential
Sell land and buildings: use funds to promote and grow Quakers
Simply enjoy the Campus until we can't maintain it anymore
Offer the campus as a retreat center
Promote the Campus as an historical site for weddings, etc.

Enhance Outreach

Develop a 'marketing' plan to 'sell' the advantages/benefits of ILYM
Build out the ILYM website to increase usefulness, encouraging increased connections to ILYM
Survey all MM and WG to better understand the makeup and needs of our members/attenders
Provide frequent useful communications, like newsletters
Promote use of Campus to: Chicago Friends School, Scattergood, Boy and Girl Scouts, MM/WG
Provide personal invitations to attend ILYM events

----- X -----

Realities

On-line opportunities for engagement are very sparsely attended
ILYM members and attenders rarely engage as a body in inter-meeting social justice action efforts
Only three yearly meetings in the US have their own meetinghouse
ILYM community growth is entirely dependent on MM and WG attender and member growth
Increasingly, there are fewer volunteers: those that do volunteer often wear several hats
Maintain community and fellowship is tough when we only see one another once yearly
If nothing changes, we will be unable, over time, to keep our well-loved Campus

The Purpose of a Yearly Meeting

(This is an updated and abbreviated version of an article by David Shiner which appeared in the Winter 2015 issue of *Among Friends*.)

Every so often, organizations are well advised to step back from their ongoing activities so they can contemplate what they are doing, why they exist. Illinois Yearly Meeting is no exception. After all, the heart of Quaker worship lies in its monthly meetings and worship groups. What, then, is the purpose of ILYM, or of any yearly meeting?

One such purpose is to further connections between Friends. This is especially important for small meetings and worship groups, of which there are many in our region. ILYM is able to offer direct if modest support to such meetings, especially in the form of visits and encouragement from the Field Secretaries, members of the Ministry and Advancement Committee, and others. Such connections provide a fuller sense of Quaker community than any of us can attain from our meetings alone.

The annual sessions of ILYM help nurture a broader sense of community that we get from our local meetings. They provide a time and space for us to come together in support of what we do in our monthly meetings and worship groups, as well as to further the work of the yearly meeting. They feature opportunities for worship, workshops, lectures, worship sharing, and much more.

With respect to younger Friends, ILYM has for decades hosted events that bring together young people from across the yearly meeting. This helps them overcome any sense of isolation from other young Friends, and offers them a broader perspective on what it means to be a Quaker. Many of the youth who have attended those events have testified to their significance for their personal spiritual journeys.

Like most yearly meetings, ILYM has developed and published its own *Faith & Practice*. That volume codifies articulates the guiding principles, organizational processes, and collected expressions of faith of Friends in our geographical area. It includes queries, quotations, a brief history of ILYM, and much more. It is an invaluable resource for ILYM meetings, as well as for individual members and attenders.

The yearly meeting fosters the involvement of area Friends in the wider Quaker world. This is done through representatives to organizations such as the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), the Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL), Friends General Conference (FGC), and the Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC). Many monthly meetings are involved with these organizations, but only the yearly meeting provides membership in them.

Much of the work of ILYM is invisible. So too are many of its effects. Like much else about Quaker faith and practice, including our meetings for worship, efforts to articulate those effects are bound to be insufficient. But as longtime ILYM stalwarts are well aware, our monthly meetings and worship groups are enriched by involvement in the yearly meeting. So are the individuals who participate, and whose participation is rewarded by the increased depth of spiritual awareness and understanding in our lives.

Annual Session Attendance, 2004-2023

Compiled by Wil Brant, ILYM Administrative Coordinator

Year	Date	Week	Annual Session Attendance					Area Annual Session Attendance							
			Total YM Membership	% Attended AS	Total Attended AS	Adults	Children	BRQ Adult	BRQ Child	ChiNo Adult	ChiNo Child	ChiSo Adult	ChiSo Child	Other Adult	Other Child
2023			838	18.97%	159	132	27	51	19	35	1	32	7	14	0
2022			830	18.07%	150	120	30	38	15	33	10	30	5	19	0
2021			861	13.36%	115	102	13	28	4	31	7	30	2	13	0
2020			861	19.28%	166	138	28	36	10	48	12	38	6	16	0
2019			865	18.50%	160	123	37	35	15	38	11	30	7	20	4
2018			859	20.61%	177	137	40	37	14	46	15	36	7	18	4
2017			919	22.31%	205	155	50	50	24	42	13	44	10	19	3
2016			933	19.51%	182	136	46	47	21	37	11	38	10	14	4
2015	June 24-28	4 th June	933	19.72%	184	141	43	35	19	43	7	50	15	13	2
2014	June 18-22	3 rd June	961	18.73%	180	141	39	35	18	43	4	41	12	22	5
2013	June 19-23	3 rd June	985	20.61%	203	160	53	42	19	29	6	53	15	36	13
2012	June 20-24	3 rd June	1016	20.57%	209	156	53	52	26	40	5	50	18	14	4
2011	June 15-19	3 rd June	1000	18.50%	185	148	37	48	19	51	5	37	10	12	3
2010	June 16-20	3 rd June	1056	19.32%	204	155	49	55	20	53	14	36	15	11	0
2009	June 17-21	3 rd June	1116	17.38%	194	155	39	51	15	50	9	38	14	16	1
2008	June 18-22	3 rd June	1114	17.68%	197	155	42	54	21	39	11	45	10	17	0
2007	July 25-29	4 th July	1202	12.81%	154	116	38	38	13	43	15	29	10	6	0
2006	July 26-30	4 th July	1199	19.35%	232	163	69	48	16	52	12	49	15	14	26
2005	July 27-31	4 th July	1185	17.38%	206	164	42	52	21	61	15	42	6	9	0
2004	July 28-Aug 1	4 th July	1138	17.84%	203	159	44	46	20	56	12	44	11	13	1
			Average:	18.50%	186	145	42								

2023: 9 fully virtual, 5 mixed virtual & in person
 2022: 9 fully virtual, 9 mixed virtual & in person
 2021: all virtual
 2020: all virtual

The Clear Creek Connection to ILYM

Beth Carpenter, Clear Creek Monthly Meeting

The connection between Clear Creek Monthly Meeting and Illinois Yearly Meeting goes back almost 150 years. On April 3, 1875, land donated by Pusey Mills of Clear Creek was deeded to the Yearly Meeting as the site for the “new” Yearly Meetinghouse. A few years later, Clear Creek Friends were asked by the Yearly Meeting to meet in the Yearly Meetinghouse so it would be used year around, and also to help maintain the building. Clear Creek minutes in subsequent years reveal that Clear Creek Friends paid to replace the roof, installed a furnace, built a coal shed, and replaced a storm door. A member of Clear Creek was often designated as the caretaker, overseeing the maintenance of the building. Additionally, prior to the construction of a dormitory in the 1960s, Clear Creek Friends provided housing for Yearly Meeting attenders and also cooked the meals. During these years, Clear Creek was a sometimes large (boasting 150+ members in the 1890s) and thriving meeting.

Fast forward several decades. Clear Creek Meeting’s numbers declined precipitously, but until recently we were still able to oversee things like mowing, simple repairs, arranging for winterizing and de-winterizing, critter control, and the endless task of picking up the sticks and branches that fall from our many trees on the campus. As recently as 2017, when we were asked to give a presentation at ILYM on the life of a rural meeting, we shared that we were able to hold what we called “pre-site prep site prep,” getting the grounds ready for annual sessions, as well as other workdays during the year in order to keep the campus in good order.

Today, Clear Creek has 3-5 regular attenders, and not always the same 3-5. Our “youngsters” are in their mid-60s to early 70s, with the rest being in their 80s and 90s. Most of us live at a distance from the meeting, and are able to attend only once or twice a month. While three of us are ILYM stewards, it is often weeks between times when we are able to walk the grounds and do a thorough check for storm damage, critter invasion and other problems. We simply lack the energy and people power to any longer do the work of taking care of the campus. And, based on the steady decline in our numbers over many years, we see no likelihood that that situation will change for the better.

State of Society 2024, Bloomington-Normal Friends

We continue to rebuild the spiritual life of our meeting community after some major disruptions of the past few years. During 2023-24, a few core members have also been frequently absent from our presence due to family needs out of state, leaving fewer Friends in Bloomington-Normal to give the meeting stability, vitality and leadership.

We have a shared concern within the meeting that it will be very difficult to grow a group that may not appear well-supported or vibrant to a new attender. Our core of members and attenders present at weekly worship is often less than five. We have been unsure what to do regarding a loss of participation by some former members and by adult children who grew up as part of the meeting and still live in the area. We have several individuals involved in justice actions around our area, but no ongoing sustained volunteering as a whole group in one endeavor. We have some generous donations from attenders that we will consider with care how to put to the best use to further shared goals.

One way of continued connection with area Friends has been the Women's Meeting for Eating, a monthly potluck dinner hosted at Friends' homes. The participants include local Friends who are not regular worship attenders, Clear Creek Friends who live in the Bloomington-Normal area, and a few Urbana-Champaign Friends able and willing to travel.

In the past year, our meeting has fostered a revival of First Day School. It is a joy that we have been able to offer two First Day School program days per month starting in 2024. We have a solid group of regularly-attending students who are active participants, and adults to volunteer. This is an area of spiritual nurturance that has been a long-time concern for us, and we have struggled for several years to make First Day School a living, active part of our local meeting. Children from our meeting have also been participating in activities at Blue River Quarterly and Illinois Yearly Meeting sessions.

We are grateful for the service of attender Peter Roth in leading monthly Adult Education hour. Over the past year, we have been reading and discussing sections of Illinois Yearly Meeting Faith and Practice. Newcomers and long-time Friends alike are finding passages that inspire new ways of conceiving of our faith and how we enact Quaker process.

With the donation of books and shelves from Chris Jocius of Urbana-Champaign Friends, our meeting was able to start the Bloomington-Normal Friends Jocius Library, which resides in our meeting space at Normandy Village in Normal. We have also added resources from B-N Friends' personal libraries to share them with each other more freely. The most-used sections so far have been children's books and religious education resources. The library is also available to non-Friends who work in and visit the building during the week, raising the visibility of the Friends meeting that shares their space and letting Friends share our materials with a slightly wider community.

2024 Report to Yearly Meetings

Dear Friends,

Our Quaker faith and practice call us to bring into being the world we seek. Since 1943, the Friends Committee on National Legislation has carried on this witness of the Spirit through national advocacy. Your engagement, financial contributions, and spiritual support make this work possible.

Pursuing Peace with Justice in an Uncertain World

FCNL seeks peace, justice, and an earth restored by advocating for federal policy change in the areas identified by Friends through our bi-annual priorities setting process. Priorities for the 118th Congress are at fcnl.org/priorities. Updates on these, and other issues are at fcnl.org/issues.

Ceasefire Now in Israel and Palestine. FCNL has been advocating for a ceasefire since the October 7, 2023, Hamas attacks, condemning both Hamas's violence and Israel's indiscriminate response. Working in concert with more than 80 other organizations, our network has taken more than 500,000 actions to lobby, demonstrate, and minute their concerns. A February 2024 New York Times article highlighted FCNL's efforts to counter political spending with "people power" to support a ceasefire, de-escalation, and humanitarian aid in Gaza.

Help Millions of Children Escape Poverty. At the height of the pandemic, Congress expanded the Child Tax Credit, reducing child poverty by more than 40 percent. Since that legislation expired, child poverty in the U.S. has rebounded to high levels. FCNL is integral to lobbying efforts to revive the expanded Child Tax Credit, with the potential to help 16 million children. The Tax Relief for American Families and Workers Act (H.R. 7024) passed the House in early 2024 and moves to the Senate, where our advocacy continues.

Heal the Harms of Nuclear Testing. FCNL has partnered with communities most affected by U.S. nuclear testing to advocate for an extended and expanded Radiation Exposure Compensation Act (RECA). Congress needs to act before the RECA program expires in 2024.

Support Truth and Healing on Indian Boarding Schools. FCNL is supporting the formation of a formal commission to investigate the horrific past and impact of the 367 federally sponsored institutions run by religious groups that existed until the 1960s. At our 2024 Spring Lobby Weekend, more than 300 young adults lobbied for passage of the Truth and Healing Commission on Indian Boarding School Policies Act..



▲ A Spring Lobby Weekend participant poses with her hand-drawn poster, made during the Art and Advocacy workshop, taught by staff from Friends Place. Photo by DAGFOTO/FCNL.



◀ West Wing's Bradley Whitford, center, joined FCNL's Bridget Moix and Odeliya Mater on the Hill, lobbying the offices of Senator Van Hollen and Murphy for a ceasefire in Gaza and to resume funding of UNRWA. Photo by Eric Bond/FCNL.

Nationwide Advocacy & Radical Hospitality

Our conviction that there is that of God in every person leads us to advance this work through a focus on relationship: among advocates, Friends, and FCNL staff and with decision-makers. We foster a community that can engage amid conflict, uplift each other, and find creative ways to make change in the face of the many crises in our world.

The knowledgeable, passionate advocates in our network live in all corners of the country. We now have more than 130 **Advocacy Teams** across 47 states. Our 2023 campaign focused on investing in conflict and atrocities prevention programs. The Teams' efforts culminated at November's Quaker Public Policy Institute, where participants logged more than 120 lobby visits in two days. In 2024, Teams are lobbying for reductions in Pentagon spending. See fcnl.org/teams.

Friends Place on Capitol Hill. This guest house and hospitality center on Capitol Hill hosted 94 groups, totaling 1,758 guests, between July 2022 and June 2023. This total includes more than 400 migrants bussed from the southern border, whom FCNL hosted as a partner of the Migrant Solidarity Mutual Aid Network. Friends Place also anchors FCNL's engagement with the D.C. community and offers advocacy programming. More at friendsplacedc.org.

Charting a Course Toward the World We Seek

Creating the world we seek begins with our own transformation. As FCNL builds its influence on national policy, we also focus on the patterns and practices of our own community. Our new **strategic plan** for 2024–2028 focuses on both areas. It calls on FCNL to strengthen its nonpartisan influence as a leading faith advocacy organization, foster beloved community, engage new people in advocacy work, and become better equipped to meet the challenges ahead. More at fcnl.org/strategicplan.

A key part of this plan is the continued **integration of anti-racism, anti-bias, justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion** (AJEDI) into our work. We are building skills and structures for listening, clearness, and restorative practices to embed these principles throughout FCNL. This work allows us to better align the experience of people in our community with the values we hold.

These efforts are, as always, guided by Spirit and by the leadings of you and others who give of their time, resources, and talent. The spiritual depth of this work was evident in the year-long process of developing new policy guidance around reproductive health care and abortion (see fcnl.org/ReproductiveHealthPolicy).

Abortion had been named as a “challenge” to Friends that FCNL took no position on. More than 300 Friends meetings, churches, and other groups gave input, representing many perspectives. The revised statement names differences among Quakers, supports individual choice and equitable access for healthcare decisions, recognizes the sanctity of human life, and opposes the criminalization of abortion services.

Thank you, Friends, for all the ways that you participate in this work to build a better world.

In peace,

Michael Fuson

Clerk, FCNL General Committee
Granville Friends Meeting
Lake Erie Yearly Meeting