

Friends Church of North Carolina
Sixth Annual Sessions
August 11-12, 2023
Quaker Lake Camp

Friday, August 11, 2023 – 3:00 Pm

The sixth Annual Sessions of Friends Church of North Carolina met on the beautiful campus of Quaker Lake Camp in Climax, NC. In spite of the excessive heat outside, we enjoyed a cool, comfortable meeting room in the Main Lodge. The theme for these sessions was “Being Stronger Workers in God’s Kingdom,” based on the text from Ephesians 2:10. “Where in your life could you become a stronger kingdom worker?”

Roger Holt, Presiding Clerk opened the session with prayer and welcomed everyone present. Roger presented the agenda of the business session with a few changes. This adjusted agenda was **approved**. The following Friends were presented to serve during these sessions: New Business Committee, David Briles and Brent McKinney; Edit Committee, Janet Robbins and Judy Ritter; and Reading Clerk, Erin Mintmier. All were **approved**.

Roll Call: Mary Anna McCullen, Recording Clerk, conducted the roll call. There were 51 Friends representing 20 Meetings and 9 visitors present at the Friday afternoon business session.

Minutes from March 18, 2023 Representative Body at Concord Meeting: Roger reported that a draft of the minutes were posted on line and a few minor corrections were identified. He asked Mary Anna to come and read the corrections. She read them and there were no other corrections or additions. These were **approved**.

Quaker Lake Board Rotation: Roger Holt, FCNC Clerk, presented a report from Tyler Surratt, Chairperson of the Quaker Lake Board on the QLC Board Rotation. Tommy Hylton (FCNC affiliate) rotates off at the end of 2023 and has agreed to serve another term. Martha Farlow (NCFE affiliate) rotates off at the end of 2023 and has agreed to serve another term. Brian Wooten (FCNC affiliate) is rotating off at the end of 2023 and his proposed replacement is Pete Jarvis (FCNC affiliate). Beth Joyce (at large appointee by QLC Board) has relocated and Travis Byrd is moving to the QLC Board to serve the remainder of her term at the end of 2025. The remainder of the Board is identical to what was previously approved by both associations. These FCNC appointments were **approved**.

Committee on Clerks: David Millikan reported that Roger Holt has agreed to serve as Presiding Clerk for the upcoming year, Erin Mintmier will serve as Assistant Clerk, and Cynthia Pierce from Asheboro Meeting has agreed to serve as Assistant Recording Clerk. We still need a Recording Clerk. He asked if anyone feels led to serve in this position or knows of someone who will serve to let the Committee on Clerks know. Many Friends have been asked. These were **approved**. These will begin their service at the rise of this meeting.

Ministry and Counsel: Mike Fulp presented the names of two individuals to be approved to be placed under the care of the Recording Committee. They are Rodney Kirby from Archdale and Dusty Ball from White Plains Friends Meetings. These were **approved** individually. Mike stated that the Pulpit Supply List has been updated and is available as a handout in the lobby. He also reported that the Handbook for Recording of Ministers has been approved for updating for use by the Recording Committee. Resource material on Conflict Resolution will be added to the Elders Handbook as well as questions for interviewing pastors and/or future recording candidates will be available. Mike announced that Asheboro Friends will host Budget Day/Representative Body on October 14, 2023. Following this Representative Meeting, Stephen Ackley will conduct workshops as requested. He stated that we need to encourage young adults to attend this workshop.

Superintendent's Report: Mike Wall, FCNC Superintendent, reported that some of our smaller churches are barely hanging on – we need to keep praying for them. The revitalization committee is ready and willing to help. We are losing old members faster than we are replacing them with younger members. We are short of pastors and noted openings at Harmony Grove, Center, Mountain View, Bethel, Science Hill, Hood Swamp and Pilot Mountain. Several pastors are in bad health and he admires their commitment. Some pastors are serving faithfully into the 80's; we need younger pastors. Two pastors retired recently and we have not started a new church since FCNC started – we need to think about that.

The good news is we have a good group of encouraging pastors. Mike reported that he visits one church each month, he is accepting invitations to speak, sends a weekly email to pastors and others and meetings with churches that might want to affiliate with FCNC. We need to consider how to change our culture, have parking area greeters, wheel chair help and implement some of the suggestions Stephen Ackley proposes in his workshops. The Baltimore African Friends and Odre Nuevo both would love to have visitors; they are willing to translate into English. Some of our pastors say their congregation is increasing and we need to encourage and work on that. We have a good group of pastors with Georgianne Hartline now at Winthrop, Dusty Ball at White Plains and John Voncannon from Back Creek. Georgianne and Dusty came and shared their testimonies and faith walk with the gathered group. Brandon Dockery will share about Faith in Action ministry later. Jeff Barnes will talk about the Ministers Association on Saturday afternoon.

Administrative Oversight Committee: Brenda McKinney, Clerk reported that Don Farlow and Judy Ritter have completed their service on the NCYM, Inc. Board. The names of Pat Hurley and Janet Robbins have been recommended to replace them. These were **approved**.

Brenda has received a letter from Rausie Hobson requesting that she serve as in-person representative to FWCC World Plenary in South Africa in August, 2024. This was **approved**. The AOC recommended that FCNC pays for \$1,300 for our North American representative and \$2,000 for travel allowance. Brenda McKinney will be our virtual representative. This was **approved**.

KALEO Academy and Barclay College: Katy Moran, Director of KALEO Academy Leadership Development reported on campus and online programs with FCNC participants in Bible as the major field. The KALEO emphasis is “to call” for evangelically minded in the Friends tradition with 67 cohorts from around USA and other countries. She called on Sterling Brown who shared about his experience with KALEO mentorees. There are service learning projects and scholarships available.

Quaker House: Wayne Finegar reported that he started as Director in March, 2022. He grew up in Sandy Spring Meeting, Baltimore Yearly Meeting. He explained that the Quaker House mission is taking care of people who have been hurt in the military, providing support and counseling for people who want to get out of the military, and helping with PTSD, substance abuse etc. They provide completely confidential, in-person and phone counseling. They have worked with the Camp Lejune drinking water situation and the next major project is to work with hurting people who have been damaged while connected with the military.

Announcements: Roger Holt reminded Friends about the workshops to be held on Saturday afternoon at 2:15. Workshops to be offered are Triennials in Kenya, Jay Marshall and Com Tech – Zooming Meetings.

He announced that dinner tonight will be at 5:30 pm.

Adjourned at 4:25 pm.

6:40 - Friday evening

Announcements: Roger reminded us of the signup sheet for Campus Ministries for college students in the lobby.

Ginger Holt led the group in the hymn, “Take My Life and Let It Be,” with David Hobson as pianist.

The Women’s Trio from Concord Friends made up of Brenda Inman, Gena Jones and Kim Seagroves shared four beautiful, worshipful songs.

Jay Marshall, key note speaker for the 2023 FCNC Annual Sessions was introduced by Clerk, Roger Holt. Jay Marshall is Dean Emeritus of the Earlham School of Religion in Richmond, IN, and a recorded Friends minister since 1985 (by NC Yearly Meeting-FUM). He served as a pastor in North Carolina Yearly Meeting and Indiana Yearly Meeting prior to his ministry as seminary dean. He regularly writes a blog (@jaymarshallonline.com) and recently published, “When the Spirit Calls,” a new book is scheduled to be released later this year. Born in NC and raised in the Plainfield Friends community of Chatham County, Jay now resides in Greens Fork, Indiana with his wife Judi, who is an ordained elder in the United Methodist Church.

Jay began by describing how he moved into his new office as Dean at ESR twenty-five plus years ago and found it in need of an update. It had a non-working fireplace, flat white walls

etc. He decided to have it painted with cream walls, golden mustard yellow fireplace, removed the pictures of dead Quakers replaced with new pictures that had significance to his life. After the first coat of paint was applied to the fireplace, his secretary called thinking he wouldn't like it. After viewing it he said perfect, put another coat on it. How heavenly or heavy the past can weigh on the present! Sometimes the past is helpful, at other times it should be left in the past. The challenge is to know when to hold the course or other times to go on a new course. We should seek commitment to *the source* of our faith that has brought us thus far. This kind of openness to the Holy Spirit that will move with it and not against it is called discernment.

At this point in FCNC, but by the grace of God, we still stand honing our skills in working in God's kingdom. Our future is to dream and plan. Sometimes we will have rough patches with things and become disoriented, but if we stand a little while, then get our bearings we can plan a course forward with openness. Understanding the core values of our faith helps us navigate in unfamiliar territory. He pointed to our theme text from Ephesians 2:10 and asked what does it mean to be God's handiwork? Our purpose was known for doing that inspired work. What on earth do we do now, maybe not the same as in the 1950's. Do we circle the wagons and keep sinners out, or roll up our sleeves and go out into the world and help. Being in Christ, we see Christ as our prime mover. Love may be the greatest motivator of all. George Fox called us to be patterns and examples, Paul told us to live a life worthy of our calling and we are created to be doing God's good work. How has God made us alive? How it is that we are to be? What do we have to say to this world in this time and place? What are we to do now? What does love look like in 2023 in NC now? Is our calling to be the handiwork of God? Are we ready for that?

Roger asked us to think about the challenge Jay brought us.

7:35 pm – Roger adjourned the Friday evening session with prayer after noting the schedule for Saturday, August 12th.

Saturday, August, 12, 2023

8:30 AM - Morning Praise on the Porch led by Valli Chilton

9:00 - Business Session opened with prayer by Roger Holt, Presiding Clerk

Roll Call: by Mary Anna McCullen. There were 62 members of FCNC present representing 20 meetings along with 11 visitors.

Roger began the business session by recognizing those who are visiting with us, but not presenting reports during the sessions. Bob and Hope Carter and Wayne and Kay Carter Friends from Indiana were welcomed.

Announcements: Roger reminded Friends again to see the FCM sign up sheet for college student information in the lobby. Dr. Gary Chapman will speak at Deep Creek Friends Meeting on September 10, 2023. All are invited to attend.

Quaker Archives at Guilford College: Beth Saunders provided a report submitted by Gwyn Gosney Erickson, Quaker Archivist and Special Collections Librarian. Copy is attached to these minutes.

Annual Sessions Program Committee: Roger offered appreciation to Monica Williams and the Program Committee for their work to plan this weekend. In addition to Monica, they are Jan Dough, meal coordinator and Paul Routh, video and sound technician.

Roger also announced that there are offering baskets on the table next to the wall as you enter the meeting room. Offerings are for Quaker Lake Camp, FUM Sustainability Project and Baltimore Kenyan Friends Church.

He also recognized that he and Ginger are wearing their Kenyan outfits to recognize the FUM Triennials they attended this summer.

FUM Triennial Report: Erin Mintmier, who attended the FUM Triennials in Kenya this summer read the FUM Triennial Epistle 2023. A copy is attached to the minutes.

FUM General Secretary: Kelly Kellum began his report stating that he is glad to be “back home again” and expressed his love for NC, since he spent so many years here. Kelly also said he was glad to see the Carter family here; he is glad they are following him to various yearly meetings. It has been a busy time for the FUM staff in supporting FUM/USFWI/QMI triennials in Kenya. Yes, there were problems behind the scenes as he noted, but Friends were blessed and came away feeling happy and glad that God gathered Friends at Kabarak University. The joint triennial was an experiment and we will meet again in Western Yearly Meeting in 2026. He asked that we pray for that event. There is a 2 to 3 year waiting time for US visa approval for Friends coming from some countries.

The Samburu Friends Mission’s FUM goal is \$24,000 and they have experienced incredible drought in that region. Felix Lekuyie is now Director of Samburu Friends Mission. There are 14 dedicated pastors serving in this remote area with plans to expand the work. Funds from NC were originally sent for a well; that need changed, and a building was completed with those funds. Rental income from that building supports about 50% of Samburu pastor’s salaries. This is greatly appreciated.

FUM Living Letter Missionaries, Dorcus and Nicholas Otieno are working in Tanzania and fully funded by Kenyan Quakers. There are five regions that focus on FUM work with 240 different languages groups in Tanzania. (See slides to show these churches by region.) Funds left by Mary Glenn Hadley’s estate, at her request, to be used to start new churches, were used to build a new structure replacing a church meeting in a tin shack in one area. Western Yearly Meeting adopted Dar es Salaam as their 2023 mission project to purchase land in the city for a church. Would FCNC help this fund? When Nicholas and Dorcus moved to the area there were 6 churches in Tanzania, today there are 67 churches and 10 new congregations asking to affiliate with Quakers.

Nikki Holland and Oscar Mabali have experienced a year of change and staff transition in Belize and they still need our support. This will be Nikki's last year there.

Kelly reported that the FUM Sustainability Project, Ambwere Farm Lease, has been very successful. He thanked FCNC for their support. One thousand acres was leased, 850 acres was planted, the rains came and the corn is growing tall with a good harvest expected for food due to the crisis due to drought and war in Ukraine. They even had to hire a new FUM employee to chase away the monkeys. Over \$80,000 in income profit is anticipated for 2023.

Missions Committee: Scot Carter, Clerk, reported that our missions budget is growing. He emphasized a budget sheet that is found in your packet detailing how the funds are budgeted and have been spent so far this year. A copy is attached to these minutes. Scot also reminded us about the Missions Silent Auction that is going on in the back of the meeting room. All proceeds will be used for our missions projects. He said if you don't see anything you like, buy something anyway.

Jamaica Work: Brent McKinney reported that 4 NC Friends went to Jamaica to conduct VBS in July, 2023. They divided into 2 teams, worked in 2 locations with 5 lessons each day. They did the photo project with each child, distributed goody bags and had 147 students participate. By going to the individual locations, they reached more students with less cost over 8 days.

Brent stated that Jamaica meetings are small in attendance and struggling to secure pastors. In 2014 they trained and recorded 14 new pastors; 5 pastors have died and others have aged and in poor health and some want to retire. Jamaican Friends have asked about Quaker pastors from Africa who are FTC graduates coming to Jamaica. While in Africa Brent interviewed pastors who are willing to go to Jamaica and they are well qualified. How do we do this? This is doable, but we need \$7200 each year for salaries and transportation. We need to think about what we can do to help them as we have been involved with them for many years and we need to continue. Will we rise to the challenge?

Belize Work: Nikki Holland shared her report along with a video. They have a small staff of 9 people. School is back to normal since COVID with seven students graduated this year. The church is growing with attendance of around 30 youth and 3 adults with 20 kids in Sunday School. This is very exciting. The Living Letters teams visited with plans to support future dreams of Belize Friends Center Feeding program, after school homework drop-in program, and others. Nikki will be completing her Belize service in one year.

Mike Wall: Mike introduced the third new pastor, John Voncannon from Back Creek Friends, a former math teacher, who came and shared his call to the ministry and what God has done in his life. He and his wife have 6 children, one a daughter whom they adopted from Uganda, so they have a significant interest in the area of Kenya and Uganda.

Mike introduced Niva Muchuma, who is associated with the Baltimore group but is from Vermont. He picked him up at the Charlotte airport before arriving this morning.

Young Friends Activity Committee: Sterling Brown shared that YFAC will have an activity the first weekend in November at QLC. They will have a Youth Pastor's Retreat at Ridgecrest in March or April, 2024. There will be another YFAC activity weekend at Quaker Lake or other location in the spring. He encouraged all youth to look for registration information on these events. This summer youth from several meetings went on a mission trip to Pittsburg, PA and had a great time performing service opportunities. On their way home they visited The ARK, in Kentucky. This committee has a planning meeting each month. Helpers and transportation are needed.

FWCC: David Shiner, representative from FWCC, gave greetings from Illinois Yearly Meeting and FWCC. He showed a Quaker Speak video with Gretchen Castle about FWCC. David emphasized World Quaker Day on the first Sunday in October. "Ubuntu in 2023" is the theme. This will also be the theme for the FWCC World Plenary 2024 in Johannesburg, SA, the 400th anniversary of George Fox's birth. He showed a map, now available on line about locations of Quakers in the world.

Friends Campus Ministries: Eric Morrison, gave an update on Thomasville Friends where he is pastor. He said they are continuing to meet and thanked FCNC for their support. They had an Easter Egg Hunt that was well attended even in the rain. They had VBS this summer with plans to do it again and volunteers from Asheboro were appreciated. A prayer group for Thomasville is open to new members for this revitalization.

Eric reported on FCM for Beulah Gullion who has the flu. They are continuing to operate in Raleigh, Greensboro, Boone and Wilmington with college students having Bible studies and making connections with students. They need 4 new interns as some have graduated or leaving for various reasons. Kristen at NCSU graduated and is getting married, so she has asked to be replaced. They try to have a fall and spring event each year and the combined event with Young Adult Friends they had in last February was a success. This group is trying to form a community of believers on college campuses via FCM.

Sterling Brown presented Jordan Franklin and Brook Parrish from Cedar Square Friends who shared their experiences at KALEO Academy at Barclay College this summer. Both said that this experience opened their eyes to see the paths they want to take to become a youth minister or to be equipped to minister in all helping situations. They had a positive experience.

Brandon Dockery, who now works for Faith Action International founded by Mark Sills in the Piedmont Triad area shared, about this ministry. One out 10 people in the population have been born elsewhere and they are in need of support with immigration documents and other basic needs. They need to know that God has not forgotten them. It is projected that they will serve 5,000 clients in 2023 and are seeking help from churches of all faiths, with ID's, schools, medical needs etc. Churches need to change whom we target and how to minister to immigrants.

FCNC Ministers Association: Jeff Barnes, expressed thanks for the support by meetings for the Pastor's Retreat. They had a time of prayer, learning to lean on each other and having some fun. The 2024 Pastors Retreat information should be coming out soon. They are looking at having 2 events for bi-vocational ministers, possibly at Bethel and Deep Creek meetings. They are looking for ways to support the ministers association programs and donations are welcomed. Retreat cost totaled about \$6,000 and they have \$3,000 on hand.

Quaker Lake Camp: Heather Varner, Director provided a video presentation as she is away with her family for a short vacation. They have just wrapped up a wonderful camp summer with Christ as the foundation. It is unique being a Christian camp with mission specific task. They had 607 campers, 46 volunteers, and 30 part-time and 29 full-time staff members. She showed the 2023 Lip Dub, which never gets old and the 10th Anniversary version of Lip-Dub, "One Day More." These can be viewed on the QLC website. Upcoming events are: Pumpkin Festival – October 21, 2023 and Christmas Candelight Service – December 9, 2023. At the QLC staff closing session it was expressed that there is nothing better to prepare for life than working on the QLC staff.

Junior Young Friends: This group joined us with their leader, Sydney Matthews, sharing what they learned and their favorite thing during their session this morning. What a blessing.

Roger Holt, Clerk, gave the blessing for lunch.

1:00 pm - FCNC Memorial Service: Led by Western Quarter. See the program attached to these minutes.

Retirement Recognition: Recognition was given by Judy Ritter for the retirement of Harold Salmons as a pastor with 50 years of service. A reception, and time of greeting him followed in the Main Lodge hosted by Winthrop Friends.

2:30 pm Workshops: Choice of three workshops included:
Jay Marshall, based on his book, "When the Spirit Calls"
How to do Zoom meetings – Communications/Technology Committee
FUM/USFWI/QMI Triennials, July 2023 in Kenya by Ginger Holt

4:30 pm: Baltimore Friends shared music and worship.

5:30 pm: Dinner

Saturday Evening 6:30 pm: David Millikan from the Committee on Clerks brought a recommendation to the body to name Christine Blamer from Connection Church as Recording Clerk of FCNC. The body hardily **approved!** Mike Fulp, Clerk of Ministry & Counsel brought a recommendation to name Scot Carter as the Assistant Recording Clerk of Ministry & Counsel. This was **approved.**

Ginger Holt, song leader and David Hobson, pianist, led the group in the theme song, "Take My Life and Let It Be." Daniel Crews from Forbush Friends sang and played guitar presenting songs, "The Old Rugged Cross, Amazing Grace, Will the Circle Be Unbroken, I Can Sing of Your Love Forever and Oh, How He Loves Us" (two QLC songs).

Jay Marshal, key note speaker, continued with the evening message using our theme verse, "For we are God's handiwork." He began with his favorite story from the novel, John Owen's, "A Prayer for Owen Meany." Owen had a high-pitched voice, was teased unmercifully, was small in stature and had a fixation on dunking a basketball. He dreamed of jumping into the arms of another player then dunking the ball into the hoop. He dreamed and practiced this over and over in his mind. Later he entered the Army, drove a transport and the dunk he dreamed actually happened, per the movie, for him to take down a grenade and to save children at the cost of his own life. That was his calling.

Jay asked the question, are you personally, is FCNC, driven by a sense of mission? Moving forward, if without a sense of mission, the church may only be a good club. How do we discern what is from God or what is simply chatter? What is God calling us to be or do? Prophet Habbakuk climbed a watchtower and waited to find needed answers. Write it down, make it plain, then be patient and carry it out. Elijah sought out an isolated place on a mountain when not sure of his call. In the silence he heard God's voice for the next steps to take. Get to wherever it is you can hear God and listen!

Quakers – God calls us all to something; if we are playing church, it is easy to forget the call. Jay asked all present to say, "God has gifted me for ministry!!" Say and believe that. All life has a sacramental quality and God's voice can be heard and recognized. Forms of service and God's purpose can be found and done. Listen, prepare, respond; even when we don't understand all of the call. At the age of 54, Jay, at his father's death age, picked up his father's building/repair skills. At different ages we have different skills to share. Recreating the past is a good work for making a museum. Ministry sometimes needs to go where needed. Pay attention to the most meaningful moments of your faith life! Experiences that come from those moments, such as new skills, new opportunities; you never know where the spirit will lead us.

His closing thoughts were – You are a reflection of the five closest people in your life. There is importance of the influence of the company we keep! What is the "doing" that our values/dreams influences? Micah 6:8.

After a period of open worship and reflection, Roger Holt lead in the closing prayer.

The 2023 Annual Sessions of Friends Church of North Carolina **closed at 7:30 pm.**

Respectfully submitted,

Roger Holt, Presiding Clerk
Mary Anna McCullen, Recording Clerk