

## **Charlottesville Friends Meeting: Timeline 2022**

**The Meeting, as we know it now, has long been a deep well of spirituality as well as leadings and concerns toward activism for social justice both locally and in the world at large.**

### **1742:**

- The first appearance of Quakers in what became Albemarle County is definitively set forth in an article by Jay Worrell in Vol. 40, 1982, pages 25-44, of The Magazine of Albemarle County History. In this article Jay tells the story of the arrival in 1742 (the year before the birth of Thomas Jefferson and two years before the creation of Albemarle County by cutting it off from Goochland County) of Christopher and Penelope Clark and their family and dependents in the neighborhood of present-day Keswick.

### **1883:**

- In the early fall of 1980 Vivian D. Herbert, the Administer of the Unclaimed Property Division of the Virginia State Treasury, turned over a book with the title of Views of Christian Doctrine Held by The Religious Society of Friends, Being Passages Taken from Barclay's Apology, with the Desire on the Part of the Editor to Present in Smaller Compass, but Unchanged, the Truths Set forth in His Work, and Some of His Arguments in Their Support. Philadelphia, 1802. The interesting thing is that penned on the title page of the book is the following: Friends Circulating Library, Charlottesville, Va/Robert W. Lewis,/Librarian, /4.30.83" The clear implication of this inscription is that there was something of a Quaker presence in Charlottesville in the first half of the 1880s.

### **1938:**

- The third known Quaker Presence in the Charlottesville-Albemarle area began in the winter and spring of 1938. Werner Lutz Janney, a graduate student in English at the University of Virginia and a member of Goose Creek Meeting in Lincoln, Virginia met Chic Moran, also a graduate student, and the two began meeting for worship. They soon attracted a small worship group, but it disbanded when Chic and Werner left town to do alternative service during WWII.

### **1952:**

- The fourth Quaker Presence in this area, resulting in the Charlottesville Friends Meeting of today, goes back to 1952, after a gap of about nine years.

### **1962:**

- The family of Lothar and Ingeborg Belck learned of the Worship Group and began commuting on First Days over from Waynesboro. The three Belck daughters, Marianne, Helga and Sigrid, boosted the size of the First Day School, and very shortly the parents expressed the desire that the family become affiliated with the Religious Society of

Friends. They explicitly wanted to be associated with Charlottesville Friends. For them to become members of the Society, it was necessary for the Worship Group to seek establishment as a Monthly Meeting, and so approach was made to Baltimore Yearly Meeting which, in due course in the early fall of 1962, sent Edmund Cronin, Joseph Wetherald, and Asa Moore Janney as a Clearness Committee.

**1963:**

- The recommendation of the Clearness Committee to establish Charlottesville Monthly Meeting was minuted by the Potomac Quarterly Meeting at a 1963 session and by Baltimore Yearly Meeting the summer of that year

**1966:**

- The newly established Charlottesville Friends Meeting continued to gather in the relocated Board Room of the University of Virginia YMCA, Madison Hall, from 1962 until the next major member influx, that of the arrival of the Worrall family, all seven of them, from Petersburg in 1966. The impact of this event, both in numbers and in general community participation, led the Meeting to the conclusion that while it had been a university-attached entity up to that point, the need for larger quarters clearly dictated a move. Jay Worrall, as the Director of the Community Action Organization, was in a position to know of the weekend availability of a house on Sixth Street, SE, which his program was operating as Hope House, a neighborhood center.

**1967:**

- The move to Hope House was accomplished, and the Monthly Meeting minutes reflect the gathering for Third Month, 1967, to be in the new location.

**1968-69:**

- A contract was worked out with the Janey Porter Barrett Day Nursery on Ridge Street. The Barrett Center provided satisfactory facilities for a decade, until the numbers of both adults and children had outgrown it.

**1970-1980:**

- Reid Market protest – working for direct communication and for peace

**1981-82:**

- After a dozen years and much searching around in the latter two, Jay Worrall spotted 1104 Forest Street and way opened for its acquisition and remodeling for our uses. In May 1982, the building passed inspection for occupancy, and worship began inside. We announced the need for a caretaker on the first day of worship in the building, and a young man who was attending for the first time, expressed interest. He served for about the next decade.
- Tom Joseph sponsored a brother and sister from El Salvador, and the meeting gave him moral and financial support, establishing a pattern of meeting support for refugees.

**1985-86:**

- committee structure began
- Expanded First Day School space by building an Annex – for many years called ‘the new addition’ by Meeting’s Children. We hosted Freedom School, to serve local children for several years, then Head Start for several after that, and finally a small independent school for teaching young children French -La Petit Ecole. Several Meeting members volunteered in the first two. All of this was in response to the desire to have the buildings used during the week, as well as on Sundays

**1990:**

- Established two Meetings for Worship each Sunday morning.
- “Connections” hour (adult education) begun between the two sittings of worship, in an attempt to continue having Friends from each group interact

**1991:**

- Meeting Room addition was made to the property

**1995:**

- Tandem School joined the Friends Council on Education, adopting the educational beliefs and practices of the Quakers. Our Meeting was very supportive, and over the years we have supported the Tandem worship with our presence, taught Quakerism 101 for parents, and provided scholarship funds so our Quaker youth are able to attend Tandem. We’ve also had an active presence on the board.

**1987-2004:**

- Meeting hosted at least 3 iterations of participation in the BYM Spiritual Formation Program, sometimes joining with Friends from neighboring Meetings
- Harrisonburg [Valley], Farmville [Quaker Lake] and Maury River Preparative Meetings established under CFM care, and ultimately released from our care with our recommendation to BYM that they be accepted into full Monthly Meeting status.
- property was renovated to establish caretaker space in basement
- Meeting struggled at length for clarity on the issue of equality of marriage rights. Once we reached that clarity in favor of equality for all, we established a minute stating that any couple coming to the meeting will be treated with the same process and took the issue to the Yearly Meeting through Virginia Half Years Meeting.
- We have struggled with being a mostly white community in an historically African American neighborhood and, looking at this in the light of events and understanding of the 2020s, some have observed inadvertent racism and paternalistic attitudes. In many direct and indirect ways, we have reached out to connect to the neighborhood over the years but have observed limited success.

- For many years Charlottesville hosted Virginia Half Years Meeting, as we were the most central location amongst the meetings in Virginia. This Meeting was laid down in 1991.
- We sponsored a Bosnian family of 6 individuals in 3 generations beginning in the fall of 1993, and several Friends have kept in touch with them over the ensuing years.
- Another big issue was accepting an inmate on death row into membership. Farmville Friends were active in prison ministry and came to us with this request when they were still a worship group. There was a clearness committee made up of folks from Cville and Farmville.

#### **2004:**

- The Meeting worked with PACEM from its inception to feed and house the homeless, first cooking for the men and later housing women at the meetinghouse.

#### **2005:**

- The Community Room was added to the building. The process revealed that the definition of community, the definition of simplicity, and the definition of stewardship were different for different people. It changed lives; people left; the process was painful. Many Meetings for Healing were needed, but the large accessible space has made it possible to increase our outreach to the community. The Neighborhood Association uses the space; we were able to start housing the women of PACEM, which has been an important ministry to us over the years. We also host multiple AA groups; there are now almost daily meetings in the Community Room

#### **1997-2016:**

- Friends struggled with the loss felt when one Sunday worship session became two. Efforts to maintain relationships with former seat mates in Worship and to get to know new people who quietly slipped into our community were challenging.
- Madison Indulged Meeting and Louisa Worship Group started
- We struggled with how to balance between the needs of Friends with severe mental-health issues while supporting families who feared for the physical safety of their children, as well as several vulnerable adults with similar concerns. This extended into how transfer of membership should be handled

#### **2017:**

- CFM Quakers provided a calming and peaceful presence during the Unite the Right rally in downtown Charlottesville, August 11/12, with a public Meeting for Worship, medical aid to the injured, and a safe haven at the meetinghouse. CFM had representatives on the Clergy Collective who worked to provide a positive response to the racist and anti-Semitic messages of the rally. Public Meetings for Worship were held at the former Lee Park on several occasions afterwards.

**2020:**

- The meetinghouse closed down in March because of Covid, and online meetings for worship as well as Connections began
- An attempt was made to establish small, local communities of concern for worship and support. This met with very limited success. Care and Clearness also 'sponsored' an online mid-week informal 'check-in' time, with occasional brief worshipful silence. This seemed to fill the needs of a small group of Friends but was laid down after just over a year for lack of a volunteer host.
- In September, the Meeting worked with International Neighbors to set up two pods of students in the meetinghouse for supervised online schooling.

**2021:**

- The Meeting worked with the International Rescue Committee to welcome an immigrant family from the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We helped with initial settlement of these two parents and five children in Charlottesville and continue to mentor the family now including an infant as they acclimate to a new language and a new way of life.
- Use of the meetinghouse began again in the fall with Covid precautions in place, but one online Meeting for Worship continued for those who could not attend in person or who did not feel safe doing so.