

MIDCOAST FRIENDS MEETING
Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business
Minutes, January 25, 2026

Eleven Friends gathered in silent worship as Clerk Guy Marsden opened the session. MINUTES from the November Meeting for Business were approved.

SUE ROCKWOOD filled in for Diane Dicranian in reporting on UGANDA CONCERNS. Quakers there are associated with an orphanage in need of funds. An appeal may be made to the Obediah Brown Fund for support but a U.S.-based fiscal sponsor is needed. It was agreed that Bruce Rockwood could serve in that capacity representing Midcoast Meeting.

PEACE AND SOCIAL CONCERNS There has been sustained concern over the current crisis involving ICE raids against immigrants especially now that the surge of ICE activity has come to Maine. Members have tried to make available appropriate resources and actions in response.

A proposal to create a separate e-mail list for distribution of such materials was discussed.

In the end it was agreed that the Clerk will post documents forwarded from the committee on the website but with a caution about excessive requests. The Clerk will also highlight special information contained in the monthly Minutes from Meeting for Business when they are posted.

All members should then have timely access to relevant documents and notifications. It was also agreed that a list of “What To Do If ICE Comes to the Meeting House Door” will be reviewed each month by the designated opener/closer of Sunday worship.

CYNTHIA HARKLEROD circulated a text from Shepherdstown Friends Meeting in West Virginia entitled “Harms Caused by Actions of the Current Government” along with a list of proposed responses. This text is appended below. Friends will be encouraged to read and reflect on it with a view to possible full endorsement of the text at the February Meeting for Business.

Sue Rockwood reported that the Saturday Worship Sessions for LGBTQ attenders in the area are meeting a need and will continue at least through May.

FINANCE Bruce Rockwood said that a request has been sent to the Obediah Brown Fund for a Grant of \$7,800 to repay a comparable loan advanced from Quarterly Meeting to cover costs of repairs to the Meeting House porches. The fund manager has asked for an interim report from the Meeting. As a result, Bruce urges members to consider a designated donation toward the repair expenses so as to impress the funders that Midcoast Meeting is making a good faith effort.

Notice of this special appeal should accompany circulation of the MINUTES. If the Obediah Brown Fund declines support, meeting reserves can be drawn upon to make up any shortfall in repayment.

Shepherdstown Friends Meeting

Minute on Harms Caused by the Actions of our Current Government

The term "Friends of the Truth" was the original name used by members of The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers). Seeking and speaking truth motivates us to create the following statement of our deep concern with the current government's stark disregard of Constitutional principles and laws, and the harm being done to the people of our country.

We Quakers believe in the inherent value of every person, in fostering peaceful and supportive community relationships, and in equal rights for all. We recognize that the principles and laws laid out in the Constitution of the United States align with many of our deeply held spiritual beliefs: those of liberty and justice for all, fundamental rights, human equality, and opportunity for everyone.

The Constitution states that the President shall take the following oath:

"I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will faithfully execute the Office of President of the United States, and will to the best of my ability, preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States." (Article II, Section 1)

President Trump has actively failed to honor his oath of office and has thereby caused the following serious harms to the people of the United States:

Harms Caused by the Failure to Protect our First Amendment Rights:

Three of the fundamental freedoms granted by the First Amendment are the freedom of speech, the freedom of the press, and the right of the people to peaceably assemble. Examples of violations of these rights include:

- In an unprecedented encroachment on the freedom of speech in places of learning, the executive branch directs universities on what can be said and taught.
- Language supporting diversity, equity, and inclusion is banned from use in government agencies and educational systems.
- Press with a potentially critical point of view are denied access to press conferences and other sources of information. Support for publicly funded media such as PBS and NPR is withdrawn.
- The freedom to gather for peaceful protests is suppressed by the presence of armed military forces.

Harms From the Failure to Provide Due Process of Law for All People:

The Fourth and Fifth Amendments of the US Constitution provide protections for *all people living in the United States*. Due process requires that before depriving an individual of "... of life, liberty, or property..." (Fifth Amendment), the government must provide notice of charges, an opportunity to be heard and present a defense, and a decision by an impartial tribunal or neutral decision maker.

Examples of harms caused by the government's failure to honor due process include:

- Persons targeted by federal agents because of their race or ethnicity are seized and detained without access to representation, resources, or communications with family members. Families are often permanently separated by this practice, and the safety of children is compromised.
- Immigrants and refugees are deported without access to due process of law. Detention centers serve as camps where people endure cruel and inhumane treatment, including physical and psychological deprivation.

Harms From the Failure to Support Equal Rights for All People:

Laws and regulations designed to protect oppressed communities are being dismantled or ignored.

- Organizations such as Planned Parenthood that support women's and LGBTQ health are defunded, making essential medical treatment harder to access and further increasing disparities in health care.
- The history of America is rewritten so that the complete history of oppressed communities is not told.
- Food (SNAP) and health care programs (Medicaid) are cut, thereby depriving children, the poor and the elderly of basic human services.

Harms Caused by the Failure to Preserve the Constitutional Limitation of Executive Powers through a System of Checks and Balances:

Our three branches of government- the executive, judicial, and legislative – are designed to protect our society from authoritarian rule and support a government "of the people, by the people, for the people". This constitutional system of checks and balances is being undermined by the abuse of executive power. Our democracy is harmed, when, for example:

- Judicial rulings directing the executive branch to cease certain deportations of immigrants are repeatedly disregarded.
- Federal employees are fired without regard to labor laws and union agreements.
- Executive orders abandon years of work promoting international peace, economic development, and humanitarian aid.
- Executive orders defund scientific and medical research approved by Congress, thereby robbing us of scientific knowledge and lifesaving medical advances.
- Cities are occupied by active military and National Guard troops despite laws that forbid military involvement in domestic law enforcement.

We, the members of the Shepherdstown Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, adopt this statement as our truth about the harm being done to the people of the United States in the name of a president who fails to uphold his oath of office. The United States was founded on the values stated in the *Preamble to the Declaration of Independence*:

“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.”

Without immediate action by the Congress and Judiciary to restore the checks on presidential power, the United States is at risk of losing the constitutional democracy created 250 years ago.

Adopted by the Shepherdstown Friends Meeting, WV, Sept 14, 2025

Endorsed by the Hopewell Centre Monthly Meeting, Winchester, VA, on Dec 14, 2025

Values into Action Document for Sharing

**Shepherdstown Friends Meeting
December, 2025**

Goals:	Specific Actions:	Timeline	People who are led to action
<p>1. Share the minute</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● With other Friends ● With BYM including the Friday Newsletter ● With AFSC and FCNL ● With meetings in WV, MD, VA, PA, OH, DC 		
<p>2. Contact other churches and religious organizations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Contact Church of the Brethren and Mennonite congregations and any others who are known for peace, non-violence and human rights efforts. ● Contact local religious and community organizations who offer support for people suffering harm due to these actions. ● Contact other religious leaders who are active in the resistance movement, including Islamic and Jewish leaders. 		
<p>3. Contact and express concern to leaders</p>	<p>Speak out in letters, calls, and protests</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● to express our concern about harmful changes to Veterans Administration, Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid. ● to express opposition to changes in federal taxes that benefit the wealthy over the middle class and poor people ● to support the efforts of the Poor Peoples' Campaign in WV and DC 		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● to leaders of agencies that are being illegally altered and pressured to comply with unconstitutional, illegal, and unjust government actions. ● to universities to share our concern about their important role in research that supports all people. Include institutions that Friends have attended or are sending their children to. Ask any local college officials for ways to support them. ● to support elected officials who <i>are</i> standing up to the pressure to comply with illegal and unconstitutional actions. ● to continue and expand our work with FCNL to lobby for change. 		
<p>4. Endorse, Support, attend and/or organize events.</p>	<p>Endorse, Support, and/or Attend:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Events led by organizations like the NAACP and Indivisible of Berkeley, Jefferson, and Washington Counties in their efforts to engage citizens in peaceful and non-violent resistance. ● planning meetings for these agencies. ● vigils and protests and share information about Quaker values and the work of the local meeting. ● Support and sponsor US history and constitutional law events <p>Organize:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● another Peace Week (as in 2024) in cooperation with local churches. ● Quaker history educational events 		

<p>5. Support media organizations, such as PBS and NPR, that focus on publishing the truth</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Write letters of support and make donations to Public Broadcasting organizations. ● Express our concern about their ability to publish the truth in an atmosphere of falsehoods and conspiracy theories. ● Continue to support PBS and NPR as they cover stories of the harms of the current administration. 		
<p>6. Find ways to work with others to help the current victims of harm.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ask local religious and community organizations for ways to participate in helping local victims through their programs. ● Plan to support programs for victims of harm with funds from individuals and the meeting. 		
<p>7. Continued discernment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Continue to discuss and discern ways to respond to ongoing and new harms in our region and beyond. ● Plan for a continuation of workshops for Alternatives to Violence. 		
<p>8. Health and welfare of members and attenders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Attend yearly and quarterly Meetings ● Attend regional Gatherings ● Form a reading group ● Include music as part of community practice 		
<p>9. Support and nurture Young Friends</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Address Quaker values in First Day School ● Support Quaker Camp for Young Friends 		