

To Friends near and far:

The ongoing pandemic compelled Sierra-Cascades Yearly Meeting of Friends to gather via videoconference between June 18th and June 20th, 2021. Our technical difficulties were negligible but we look forward to meeting in person. It is harder to discern God's will from our separate boxes than when we are physically present to each other. Many members and visitors came who would not have otherwise been able to attend. Friends from California, the District of Columbia, North Pacific Yearly Meeting, Baltimore Yearly Meeting, New England Yearly Meeting, and Conservative Yearly Meetings in Ohio and North Carolina joined us. We are especially grateful to Friend Dorene Cornwell of NPYM for her tech support and reminders to continue the work of including Friends with disabilities. We hope to exchange visiting Friends with other Yearly Meetings next year.

Our business was minimal, with a fun family trivia time the evening of the 18th leading to corporate worship on the 19th and 20th. Ministers spoke on the Parable of the Mustard Seed and a version of the Parable of the Sower in Mark 4:26-32. and 1 John 4:7, 11-2, about God's Love and how that love can dwell in us.

Acceptance of God's love for us is a covenant to love God and seek the Beloved in others. To abet or ignore the abuse of those who bear God's image is to deny Christ. Friends Jade Souza, Mark Pratt-Russum, & Erin Wilson continue their ministry to prevent the abuse of children and other vulnerable people in the church by creating policies and procedures for us to follow. Creating a culture which prevents abuse is part of our witness to peace and justice as Friends. How can we claim to be a Peace Church and preach nonviolence when we leave room for violence in our systems? Nonviolence in daily life informs and nourishes our ministry to worldly powers.

We also considered a proposal from Friend Gil George to record and compile a history of the Yearly Meeting's origins before our stories are forgotten. Others expressed a call to accompany Gil in this project. This is an important witness for the Church/Yearly Meeting as we reflect on the schism that brought us into being and how the Spirit is already active among us. Our hope is twofold: First, that we may discern the pattern of the Spirit's movement so that we can better attune our actions to the work already active among us. Second, that any document produced would be useful to other congregations and Yearly Meetings facing, or who have been through, similar division. While the path we walk has had its share of difficulties, it is a worthwhile path.

This year we recognized the loss of many dear Friends to COVID and other causes. In our time to pause and reflect we remembered their gifts and held space for all affected by their loss.

We recorded the ministry of Jazmin Miller-Price, ordained by God as a person called and equipped to minister among us.

Underneath our meeting was a longing to be present to each other in person, and it is our hope that we do not forget these years of separation but let them serve as a reminder of just how deeply we love each other.

May that love be felt by all who read these words,

Mike Huber, co-clerk
Sarah Katreen Hoggatt, co-clerk
Sierra Cascades Yearly Meeting of Friends

Epistle Committee:

Gil George

James Hibbs

Julie Peyton

June 2021