

Sierra-Cascades Yearly Meeting of Friends  
Annual Sessions Minutes  
May 2019  
Canby Grove Retreat Center, Canby, OR

## **Opening Minute**

As this Yearly Meeting approaches its second birthday, the joy we feel at the opportunity to follow the Light in a new direction, joy which is both tender and reverent, exuberant and overflowing, has not diminished in the slightest.

## **Visiting Friends**

Visiting Friends were introduced and greeted. Several expressed their deep sympathy for the situation that formed our Yearly Meeting, and gave affirmation for the leadings we have felt:

- Mary Klein - Western Friend
- Lloyd Lee Wilson - Greensboro, North Carolina YM (Conservative)
- David Albert - Olympia, Washington, Friendly Water for the World
- Johanna MacNee & John Gotts - Lewiston, Idaho, North Pacific Yearly Meeting
- Benigno & Karen Sanchez-Eppler - Amherst, Massachusetts, New England Yearly Meeting
- Faith Kelly & Micah Bales - Oakland, California, Berkeley Friends Church
- Colin Saxton - Everence
- Lois Kieffaber - Spokane Friends, Spokane, Washington
- Susan Cozzens - American Friends Service Committee
- Jim Cason – Friends Committee for National Legislation

## **Business Minutes**

A) Internal Business  
- New Members

We wholeheartedly accept The following persons as individual members of our Yearly Meeting: Anna Knierim and Erin Wilson

- Nominations

The Following persons are welcomed into the service of the Yearly Meeting as part of our committees:

- Abuse Prevention Task Force:
  - Jade Souza, Camas Friends, 2021
  - Mark Pratt-Russum, West Hills Friends, 2022
- Clerks:

- Assistant Clerk: Gil George, West Hills Friends, 2021
- Co-Clerks: Cherice Bock, North Valley Friends, 2020; Sarah Katreen-Hoggatt, unaffiliated, 2022
- Recording Clerk: Matt Staples, Newberg Emerging Friends, 2022
- Coordinating Committee:
  - Joann Boswell, Camas Friends, 2020
  - Peggy Hanson, Newberg Emerging Friends, 2022
  - Terri Beardsley, West Hills Friends, 2020
  - Dorothy Day, West Hills Friends, 2020
- Equity and Inclusion Committee:
  - Eli Craig, North Seattle Friends, 2022
- Epistle Committee:
  - Julie Peyton, West Hills Friends, 2022
  - Gil George, West Hills Friends, 2021
  - James Hibbs, North Seattle Friends, 2020
- Faith and Practice Committee:
  - Julie Peyton, West Hills Friends, 2022
  - Anna Baker, North Valley Friends, 2020
  - Marie Matsen, Eugene Friends, 2022
  - John Price, Eugene Friends, 2022
- Finance Committee:
  - Beth Oppenlander, North Seattle Friends, 2020
  - Stanley Muhr, Silverton Friends, 2022
- Nominating Committee:
  - Rachel Hampton, West Hills Friends, 2022
- Nurture of Ministry Committee:
  - Anna Baker, North Valley Friends, 2022
  - Ruthie Tippin, Camas Friends, 2022
- People Care Committee:
  - Sue Scott, Eugene Friends, 2020
- Prayer Committee:
  - Kendra Purcell, Camas Friends, 2022
  - Julie Downs, Camas Friends, 2022
  - Tiffany Graham, Newberg Emerging Friends, 2022
- Quarterly Gathering Committee:
  - Rachel Hampton, West Hills Friends, 2021
  - Eli Craig, North Seattle, 2021
  - Sue Fairchild, Eugene Friends, 2020
  - Vicki Stave, Eugene Friends, 2022
  - Meg Rich, West Hills Friends, 2022
- Treasurer:
  - Robert Wade, West Hills Friends
- Youth Committee:
  - Braden Tricola, Camas Friends, 2022
  - Heather Tricola, Camas Friends, 2020

- Mark Pratt-Russum, West Hills Friends, 2022
- Vicki Stave, Eugene Friends, 2021

- Recordings

We are overjoyed to record our witness of the giftings of the following ministers:

- Cherice Bock: Call to prophetic ministry of education and activism for social justice.
- Matt Boswell: Call to both pastoral and academic ministries that create communities who are growing in their expressions of love for God and neighbor.
- Ruba Byrd: Call to pastoral care—counseling, chaplaincy, spiritual direction--with a heart for peace and justice.
- Patty Federigi: Call to quilting ministries of healing and mercy both in the Pacific Northwest and
- internationally in Burundi and Congo.
- Leann Williams: Calling to pastoral care and healing body work through massage therapy.

- Spending Plan

The 2019-2020 Spending plan (see Appendix B) is approved.

- Investments

It is approved to invest \$100,000 in a diversified portfolio with Everence. It will be invested in a moderately conservative portfolio over the course of 5 months.

-Communications Committee:

Friends throughout history have given us numerous different visions of how we should organize together. My favorite is that of Margaret Fell, who as a hostess provided a place for people to come together, and as a letter-writer provided a communications hub to connect Friends. That's the function of the Communications Committee in a small way, though maybe a growing way.

This year we are working on continued development of the website, production of our newsletter, of print materials, and on managing conference calls through the Zoom app. For any of these, if you have any information you want to get out, for nearly any reason, contact us and we can make that happen.

-People Care Committee:

Our work in the past few years has been to listen and be healers to one another, and to foster connections among us. We have had special care for isolated individuals, and for young people that we recognize were hurt in a special way during our split from NWYM.

We've worked to set up a travel fund to encourage inter-visitation, both among members of our own Yearly Meeting, and to other Friends bodies or to whatever a member may be feeling led by the Spirit towards.

The travel fund proposal and its application form were APPROVED.

-Coordinating Committee:

We see ourselves as a sounding board and communication hub. We've been helping facilitate our last year's work of discerning the identity of this Yearly Meeting, and we're excited about the discussions we'll have in the year to come. In the bylaws, we have a lot of control, and we want to hold that with tenderness and care.

And if you are a coder, we are looking for coding help.

-Youth Committee:

We've gotten the sense that our teenagers are fairly centrally located in Camas and West Hills, so we're working on scheduling seasonal meetings to get those groups and other SCYMF youth together.

It was clear that LGBTQ youth were particularly impacted by the Yearly Meeting separation. As a youth pastor, I would often be uncomfortable sending youth to NWYM events, because I didn't know what messages they would receive. So we're working to make sure that it's abundantly clear that youth will be safe and advocated for at SCYMF events.

-Quarterly Gathering Committee:

We could use more members to spread the work out. We've provided feedback forms so that you can communicate to us how we would like to structure future meetings.

The clerks and the meeting extended their heartfelt thanks to the Quarterly Gathering Committee for their hard work in planning our meetings.

-Equity and Inclusion:

We've been working on education and action regarding the forming of right relations with indigenous people. At our last Quarterly Gathering, we held a workshop about the (often ugly) history of Friends and indigenous people, and we've drafted a letter of apology to indigenous tribes that local meetings may consider using. In the next year, we'll continue to work towards this concern. We will share our resource list, help local churches connect with local tribes, and facilitate conference calls to further explore these issues. Please hold these concerns in your local meetings.

At our next Quarterly Gathering, we'll have a threshing session to develop a second draft of the aforementioned letter, and we will hold a workshop with a professional facilitator to learn more about these concerns.

Question: Will there be a statement about accessibility in meetings? As it is now, I don't know whether I'll be able to enter the building until I arrive at a meeting. Yes, we want to ensure that our meetings are accessible to all. Statement from Quarterly Gathering Committee representative: This is exactly the sort of thing we want to see on your evaluation forms. Please fill them out. This is important.

In the future, the Equity and Inclusion Committee is preparing workshops on, "Neurodiversity 101" and, "Transgender 101."

## B) External Business

### - Affiliations

We approve affiliation with Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) and the Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC).

We feel called to learn and discern more about Friends General Conference (FGC) and the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), and the sending of representatives to help us determine whether we would like to affiliate with them.

We do not feel called to affiliate with Friends United Meeting (FUM) at this time due to their personnel policy which stands in contradiction to the minute we approved in 2017 as one of our foundational principles: "We are led by the Spirit to commit ourselves to recognizing the full participation of LGBTQ+ people in all aspects of the life of the new yearly meeting."

### - Official Representatives to the Annual Sessions of other Yearly Meetings:

Dove John, North Seattle Friends, to North Pacific Yearly Meeting  
Kendra Purcell, Camas Friends, to New England Yearly Meeting  
Bob Rader, Silverton Friends, to Alaska Yearly Meeting and to Alaska Friends  
Conference  
Johan Maurer, Camas Friends and Eugene Friends, to North Carolina Yearly Meeting  
Conservative

## **Closing Minute**

At the close of our second Annual Sessions, we feel renewed in our calling to follow the leadings of the Spirit, and take joy in finding other Friends throughout the world with whom we can share our work, our fellowship, and every aspect of the life of our Meeting.

## **Appendix**

### A) Expanded Affiliation Discussion

“As we all know, God’s timing is God’s own. We are here to follow what Jesus is calling us to do and to listen to God. Above all, this time together is all about love and the relationships between us and God. No matter what we are led to do, we will do it with great love, deep respect, and courageous trust and grace.”

“I think it’s important that before we discuss affiliation, we name the trauma that’s on the table. We name the pain. We recognize that some of the conversations we may have will be triggering.

We, here together, can act as amazing healing balms to each other when the pain raises its head among us. I’ve already seen us do this wonderfully well, and I want to commend us to keep up the good work.”

”We are told in the Bible to judge a tree by its fruit. What we are doing today is looking not only at the words of these organizations, but their actions and choices. We will include both those things in our discernment process, just as I hope others look at us, to not only heed our words, but look at the fruit of our tree, that I pray not only matches our words, but surpasses them.

This is a beautiful thing, to listen and feel led by God. As a young community, we are learning what that means. This is Sierra Cascades Friends in action, where we get to put action behind our words.

No decision has to be made today. There is no due date. If all we do for three hours is listen to God, then we have done our work well.”

## **Friends General Conference:**

FGC is an umbrella organization, bringing together many Yearly Meetings to achieve things that one Yearly Meeting alone could not. Representing, advocating, curriculum, publication and distribution; there is a desire for FGC to support and nurture your Monthly Meetings and individuals in the deepening and growth of their Quaker-ness. We are an organization through which other organizations can speak to Quakers, and a place for Quakers to connect.

Question: Christ-centered-ness is an important aspect of SCYMF. I don't have any personal experience, but I've heard talk of a hostility towards Christ-centered groups in FGC. I hope that is not true. I want to make sure we have a sense of how welcome we would be if we join. Diversity is a very important aspect of FGC, and this includes theological diversity. In my FGC experience, I've met some of the most intense Christians, and some of the people most damaged by Christians. It is not an institutional position in any way, shape, or form. Any individual member would give you a different position on what Christ is. It's generally in the middle. Clerk: "I've spoken directly with the superintendent of FGC, that this is who we are, would we be welcome to partner with you? He heartily said Yes."

A Friend from Olympia Monthly Meetings gave an affirmation of FGC and how it shaped their growth as a Christian.

"We have many Christian Quakers, and a few Jewish Quakers, atheist Quakers, and so on. Here's how it works: everyone speaks their truth, and no one is free to disparage others' truth. That's what makes my home FGC meeting work well, for the Christians and for everyone else."

Comment: We should examine the difference between affiliation and participation. We are Christ-centered Quakers, that is something we've decided to hold that together. We come out of the evangelical Quaker tradition, whether we were a full-hearted participant in that, or just there. It is my experience that evangelicals have the tendency to fearmonger and demonize interactions with non-Christians, as if it will rub off on us. If we simply meet from the perspective that we are theologically different, we can discern where that difference really matters, and where we can worship and be together. We can hold that tension today.

Comment: To speak as someone who joined FGC from a liberal unprogrammed background, and as a Christian Quaker in that space: I really needed you. We needed to feel whole in naming Jesus as our truth, and naming scripture as a foundation for gathering together. I could not do that there. I don't know what that means for our relationship with FGC. But I don't want to compromise that part of who we are. We need more time to talk to other Yearly Meetings that are members of FGC. It's also important to bring up what it asks of us: "people power," representatives with energy to give.

Comment: On the one hand it feels uncomfortable to be a part of a community with these ideas, on the other it would probably be good for our organization.

The meeting took a time of silence to re-center.

“The sense of the meeting as I am receiving it: We are interested in learning about FGC experientially, and talking with other meetings like ourselves, that are Christ-centered and members of FGC, to learn about their experiences.”

Comment: Yes, and yes about actually going and feeling that sense, that’s what I’m hearing. I’ve had incredible experiences from people of very different faith experiences, and my deep need is to continue with those experiences.

Comment: I am struggling with my own reticence, but I’m willing to listen to others’ current experiences. But I attended the Earlham FGC meeting when I was in college, and based on my experiences back then regarding their attitudes towards Christ-centered-ness, it would be difficult for me to feel comfortable affiliating with FGC. I will try to be open to the possibility. I understand that not everything is the same, but also that not everything has changed. I have a strong pull to not rush in at all, even in the next few years. To me the advantage and blessing of SCYMF has been to feel that others’ boundaries are similar to mine. I don’t have a problem with meeting and fellowshiping with others who have different boundaries. I have a problem meeting under the same name as them. Could we be in fellowship with FGC without being affiliated?

Comment, a Query: Are we being called to be part of FGC to demonstrate the ways in which our commitment to Christ is central to our experience of Quakerism?

Comment: I agree with the call of the clerk. We should go to fellowship with them, with the concern of listening and sharing who we are as SCYMF: a Christ-following meeting. We should go with a purpose, as an intervisiting group, with a minute.

“We feel God is calling us to be with FGC experientially, share who we are as SCYMF, and experience who FGC is, to see the fruit of their tree more than just their words.”

The group APPROVED sending official representatives to FGC for this purpose. Any feeling called to this are asked to contact the clerks.

FGC is one of a few umbrella organizations. Most Yearly Meetings affiliate with one of four. Evangelical Friends International would not accept us because of our inclusive stance. Another is unprogrammed, and would not accept us. The third is FGC, the fourth is Friends United Meeting (FUM). So our options is to affiliate with one, the other, both, or remain independent. To reiterate, this is not a decision we must make today.

**Friends United Meeting:**

Cherice: “FUM is a challenging one for us because in many ways it seems like it would be a natural fit: it’s Christ centered, many are pastoral. It’s a global network that has been involved in mission work over the last century, spreading the message of Friends. They are somewhat more inclusive than evangelical friends, and would be more welcome to us joining.

However, as you can see in the information and as we had discussed before, they have a statement as to who can serve in ministry: they do not allow LGBTQ persons with partners to serve in ministry.

We as clerks want to bring this to your consideration carefully. We have been wrestling with how to go about this. We have a lot of connections: Colin Saxton, Johann Maurer, Shawn and Katrina McConaughy, many other connections we could name. And yet, our founding YM session, we created the statement that said, “We are led by the Spirit to commit ourselves to recognizing the full participation of LGBTQ+ people in all aspects of the life of the new Yearly Meeting.”

To join with FUM at this time would be to fail to live up to our statement. I want to be clear that this is not just a statement about being inclusive because it’s a nice thing, but that this is our leading from the Spirit, the way we heard God, the God of Jesus Christ, in that time and place, and presumably also in this time and place: to make sure all the levels of our YM are open and inclusive of the ministry of all people among us.

Because FUM might exclude our LGBTQ friends from ministry, we do not want to put it forward as an organization with whom we might connect. However, we do not feel like we have the authority to make that decision ourselves.

FUM is doing some good work. They are not currently open to changing this policy, mostly because of the Friends from Latin America and Africa, who have a different leading than we do. So there’s the question of wanting to connect with friends around the world, while still being faithful to our own calling.

At the same time, FWCC will allow us to make those connections.”

Sarah: “Many of you saw our statement on this posted in the newsletter. I want to take this as a teaching moment. We come from a YM that dictated some decisions. That is not the job of the clerks, of any clerk. Our job is to create sacred space and to discern what God is speaking to the community. Although we as the clerks have the microphone, we are the servants of all. We are here for you, you are not here for us. It is our goal and passion to do what we can to support you.

This decision is the decision of the meeting. It’s yours. I know how passionately inclusive we are, so we want to make sure that the LGBTQ+ community has a voice today. So we especially want to tell you that we know how hard this conversation is,

how vulnerable this is. I was there, and it felt like being ripped apart. We want to practice being a community that can touch on the hard topics and come out whole. This is our time to practice what we preach.”

Clarifying Question: I understood this policy of FUM’s to be not around ministers, but around internal paid staff. Any staff or volunteers sent by FUM: missionaries, peace workers, social justice people, anyone sent by FUM is under this policy: You can’t be LGBTQ and in a relationship. But what about our own Yearly Meeting? Wouldn’t there be autonomy there? Each Yearly Meeting can make their own policy, hiring decisions, Faith and Practice around this, yes. And at the FUM level, we could send any representative we wanted, and they could serve on committees. But for anyone being sent out by FUM, they would have to abide by their policy around marriage.

Comment: I’m about to say things that will break my heart. I’m wearing a Ramallah Friends jacket. I didn’t intend it to be a symbol of the fruit of FUM, but it is. I could not, in good conscience, ask this community to affiliate with FUM, who has been my beloved community. I poured my heart into that organization, but at its theological center is [didn’t catch it] When I was on staff I tried to minister to that. I had to respect the process when I was there. I would earnestly beseech us to develop connections with both communities (FUM and FGC) without getting involved in their theological battles.

Comment: This Friend speaks my mind. When I was ministering in an FUM Yearly Meeting under this policy (which in the span of time hasn’t been in place all that long), one of my colleagues was a lesbian pastor. She served just a few miles from where I was serving. It is true that Yearly Meetings have the responsibility and right to choose whom they will, but it is the responsibility of FUM to hire their own staff.

Comment: I know there are inclusive meetings that are part of FUM, who may have been inclusive even before FUM made this statement. They have chosen to remain a part of FUM for the fellowship. I agree that we probably should not affiliate at this time. I am glad to know that FUM does not dictate to their Yearly Meetings who they can have as pastors. But just as I don’t feel clear to be affiliated with FGC, I cannot at this point see us affiliating with FUM.

Comment: I would want to say unequivocally that we stand with the leading of the Holy Spirit, that we are inclusive, and it is non-negotiable that we would endanger any aspect of inclusion for our LGBTQ community. I participated heavily in FUM, and like the other Friend this breaks my heart. I love FUM. But this is not something we can waver on. FUM is in the middle of this conflict that we have just stepped out of. As I sat in FUM business meetings, I could feel that it is a dangerous place. This is not the time to enter the fray. Theologically speaking, we have to take our stand, with no wiggle room. This breaks my heart.

Comment: I also participated in FUM, and I love dialogue. Yet we’ve heard that it’s not even clear that we could send a representative to an FUM gathering with the joy that is

the hallmark of our meeting. The next tri-annual is in mid-July 2020, so there's time. If we even send a representative, we should know they are being sent into an emotionally difficult and dangerous circumstance. We should send more than one and wrap them in one [that's what I wrote, but I have no idea what it's supposed to be]. Yet even that may not be possible, and that's okay.

Comment: I believe that change comes in the fire of the crucible. That makes me an uncomfortable person to know, and I don't expect this YM to follow me down that path. There are many aspects to FUM, and many aspects to inclusivity. While we don't necessarily have to join it, I think that there are many things we can learn from FUM, and their struggle of self-education around matters of colonialism, racism, and ways of doing missions, and how to properly respect the fact that they are an international body, made up of varying nationalities that are former colonies. Of all the Quakers in the United States, I have found FUM the most diverse.

Sarah: "It is my sense of the meeting that we do not feel called to affiliate with FUM, we do not feel called to send representatives. We do feel called to celebrate and honor the work of individuals in our YM in FUM. While you consider that, there's another implication:"

Cherice: "When we named ourselves at our initial gathering, it was with the thought that the Western Association of the Religious Society of Friends (WARSF) might join us. They are Friends from California, three Quaker meetings and a ministry point. They separated from SouthWest Yearly Meeting a while ago when SWYM joined EFI, while they wanted to stay with FUM. The WARSF folks are fully inclusive and do feel called to be connected to FUM. While we at SCYMF are feeling led to not join FUM, are we still feeling free to invite participation from WARSF folks to join SCYMF? I don't think we have people from them with us at the moment. Keith has been journeying with us at most of our gathering, Micah Bales and Faith Kelly just joined us and have family and relational connections with us.

This might not be a question for today. A lot of the people in their own gatherings that are most passionate about FUM are themselves LGBTQ."

Sarah: "If this is the sense of this meeting, then our decision is something they will have to wrestle with. That also is not a decision for today."

Comment: I feel just as strongly about this issue for FUM as I did for FGC, which is that we need to be in the crucible, listening and making ourselves known to FUM. It does FUM no good just to know that there is a new YM that is very concerned about their stance. We need to send representatives to say, "We are here, we are interested and caring. You are wrong in your stance, and we would join you but for this." We need to challenge them on this. It seems like holding back participation to the point of not even bringing it to their attention is a waste.

Gil: "While we were considering our affiliation, I began to get an image of a tender sapling uprooted from toxic soil and planted in good soil. That is us. At our stage, I feel a sense that we are being called to put down our roots. We are being called to grow where we've been planted, to develop a bit more bark around our trunk and let it thicken.

Sarah: "The LGBTQ community is at this very moment being very vulnerable to just be here. It is a very hard place considering what we've been here. Part of our decision is protecting them and putting them first. Keep in mind the places that they're in."

A quick clarification: Does FUM allow individual Monthly Meetings to join? No. WARSF got grandfathered in because their whole yearly meeting was part of FUM and left, while they left their yearly meeting and stayed.

Comment: I am not at all interested in joining at this moment. But the statement was a little too strong, it sounded like cutting off all ties. We are not interested right now. I would like us to reach out to WARSF and find out why their people want to be part of that.

Sarah: "If you feel called to write something to FUM, we would very much welcome that. But it would not be coming from SCYMF at this time. At our next Quarterly Gathering, if someone has written a rough draft, we can consider it then. But as long as this policy is in place, we will not affiliate. The LGBTQ here, and everyone here in this room, is our first priority."

We approve not affiliating with FUM at this time. APPROVED

### **Friends Committee for National Legislation (FCNL)**

"We seek a world free of war and the threat of war. We seek a society with equity and justice for all. We seek a community where every person's potential may be fulfilled. We seek an earth restored." In these lines, FCNL states concisely how the Friends engaged with FCNL, not all of whom are Christians, understand Jesus' message in a way applicable to the governance of our nation. Faithfulness, including love of God, neighbor, and ourselves, is central to our work. FCNL advocates for ways to love enemies and advocate for the poor, the dispossessed, the despised of the earth.

The 'committee' in the name is not any leadership body that meets in Washington, it is you. Our policy is set entirely by the worshipful discernment of Friends.

Clarifying question: "Are LGBTQ people fully welcomed onto the staff without discrimination at any level?"

-Yes.

Do we (in SCYMF) have people called to this work?

-Some Friends shared that this is one of the strongest calls they feel, and that this feels like one of the best ways they can live in a manner that is fully Christlike and aligned with our Quaker values.

Comment: this feels like one of the best ways we can use both our faith and values to make change in our country.

The clerk clarified that affiliation with FCNL would entail the sending of representatives to their meetings, and an annual financial contribution. The clerk asked if any had a reservation or check on joining.

Comment: as a Yearly Meeting, and as individuals who are active citizens, in this current place in our nation, it is very important that we make clear, active, visible, and loud opposition to policies which are against the heart of God. If FCNL is a vehicle for us to do that, I would like to do it.

Clarification: FCNL is not a partisan organization. It does not lobby for a particular party's policies. In the work related to environmental concerns, FCNL is trying to reach across the aisle to create bipartisan bills. That's another important message to take home. We're trying to listen to the spirit in our time of how we are called to be a community together.

Comment: This is the work of the Kingdom. This is home.

Comment: FCNL is careful to base their advocacy on fact, and to do the research necessary to confirm that their stances are well-informed. To know there's somewhere we can go to find that gives me a strong sense of peace.

Comment: FCNL seems to be an organization to which everyone can contribute in their own way. I like this idea of not everyone taking identical actions, but everyone in unity doing something.

Comment: I've been embarrassed of what our culture has come to call, "Christian values." They don't speak for me and don't say things I feel are very Christian. FCNL, on the other hand, is working from a basis of real Christ-like convictions: not tearing down or excluding, but building up and standing for one another, doing what Christ calls us to do.

The clerk observed that we have great enthusiasm, resources we are willing to contribute, and people who want to joyfully go. SCYMF's joining of FCNL was APPROVED.

Comment: We've heard that there are those with young families who feel called to serve, but may find it difficult. Perhaps one way that some of us can serve is by providing childcare?

Comment: The early Friends had the “Valiant Sixty,” but I bet there were also the “Boring Six-Hundred.” We need those who will go out as traveling ministers, but we also need those who stay behind and do the good work of the boring things that make all of our other work possible.

### **Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC):**

FWCC is the only worldwide body of Quakers. Before you ask, they have no policies whatsoever that might prevent us from joining. They don't deal in prescribing doctrines and practices, their whole point is to bring those different people together.

My first meeting, I was nervous, because I was going from NWYM, knowing I was wearing the label Evangelical on my forehead. They keep you in small groups, so I was the only evangelical in mine. At one point I tried to tiptoe out, and got chased down by a woman who asked, “you're Evangelical, right? I want to talk to you about missions, I used to think they were awful, but then I read this pamphlet from a woman from Africa that said you could tell which villages had been visited by Quaker ministries because the men had stopped beating their wives.”

Somebody out there wants to hear your story, from every single walk of life.

Comment: FWCC has become much more ecumenical in the last twenty-five years. This would be a great place for us to share our Christian perspective on Quakerism. It would be especially great to have some of our younger folks get involved.

Comment: It is important to witness to one another, even in situations in which others don't hold the same core convictions as us. To those who are equipped for this, this is something we should do.

Comment: In a situation in which we were nervous to go into a setting in which we were different from everyone else, we found that all of us were wrestling with the same questions.

The clerk stated that her sense of the meeting was towards joining FWCC. This was APPROVED.

“It has been a gift to be here in a time when you are stepping onto the Quaker stage. I hear the carefulness of your steps. I feel good work and right order in all your decisions and visitations. As you enter that broader stage, there is one more skill that will be necessary: to listen in tongues, to hear the truth behind the words used, and to understand that all our words are inadequate. When we can listen like this, we can build the fellowship that is the aspiration of the work you've undertaken.”

## **American Friends Service Committee:**

Practicality: we are welcome to send them representatives regardless of affiliation. If we affiliate, we would contribute financially however we feel led.

Susan Cozzens: I feel so blessed at having had the opportunity to make this connection. I first heard about your YM at our corporation meeting two years ago when NPYM said "don't forget them, they're out there, they're wonderful." So regardless of what you decide today, there are various ways you can participate.

AFSC accompanies communities that are challenging violence and oppression in their own lives. So we are supporting them, helping leadership develop in those communities.

The issues with which we are concerned:

- Global migration: defending immigrant rights here in the US is a big part of our current work.
- Demilitarization: we are working on this from the Israel-Palestine conflict, all the way to issues around the police force in Portland.
- Economic justice: we are working in the struggle against racism and poverty, and mass incarceration.

We are fully inclusive as an organization, and have been for some time. On a religious dimension, I've never heard in AFSC the kind of objection to strong Christianity that was mentioned to exist in other organizations, but it does need to be a multi-religious organization.

I hope that there are people here in the SCYMF community that are able and willing to become involved in our work in accompaniment. Work in that sort of environment may be a challenge for some of you. You won't be out with only Quakers, but you'll be out in the world doing what Jesus called us to.

Practicality: we are welcome to send them representatives regardless of affiliation. If we affiliate, we would contribute financially however we feel led.

Concern: I value AFSC's work, but I have seen organizational instability over time create a really difficult situation for some of the organizers, particularly organizers of color. How does AFSC plan to address this?

- That is not easy to answer. When I first joined governance in the organization fifteen years ago, I was very involved in addressing racism in my local area. When I spoke up on racial issues, I didn't know if there would be anyone behind me besides a person of color. That has changed. We have recognition that we are institutionally racist, and we are working harder than any other organization I'm aware of in the Quaker world (with the possible exception of FGC) on dealing with this at every level of our organization. So we're in the middle of this.

In terms of stability: we've had definite financial challenges since the collapse of 08. Our income has basically been flat, but salaries keep going up. We can't stay the same organization without an increase. We have some steady sources of income, but steady isn't what we need, we need growing. We are working as hard as we can on this.

Concern: It's my understanding from speaking with unprogrammed Friends that they feel alienated from AFSC. I don't know why they feel that way. Is that your experience, or am I way off?

-In my view, that's connected to the last question. If we're not growing, then we've had to close local programs, including ones that Quakers have felt connected to. Our committees have great vision for how to address this over the coming years. I think we need to form larger networks of support for each other's work.

Question: Does AFSC work with other organizations that are already doing this work?

-Yes. Programs at this point are quite small, with just one or two staff members for each. Nearly everyone is working with coalitions. They are often religiously based. You're asking what we're asking ourselves: "What's the unique Quaker contribution here?" Sometimes it's just "we've got the energy for this here and now," but sometimes it's a specific focus on nonviolence.

Question: How are Quaker young adults currently involved?

-There isn't anything that's specifically oriented towards Quaker young people, but we had a large number of internships across our organization. Many Quaker young adults that are led into this work through this.

A centering silence was taken. The clerk observed that we have many questions about AFSC before we affiliate. She asked the group to approve staying in communication with AFSC, possibly sending representatives to learn more, but not affiliating with them at this time. APPROVED.

Another organization that has been mentioned is the Quaker Voluntary Service. That is an option for an organization to join in the future, but we are not discussing it at this time.

"We have great enthusiasm for those with whom we want to affiliate. We have curiosity for those that are less familiar to us. We have done a great job of loving and honoring one another through this discernment process. But if you don't feel this has been the case for you personally, or you don't want to voice your concerns in this space, please meet with or message the clerks privately."

B) Epistle

To All Friends Near and Far:

Greetings from the second annual sessions of the Sierra Cascades Yearly Meeting of Friends. We met in Canby, Oregon near the overlap of the Molalla and Atfalati Kalapuya native lands. Thank you to all who have been holding our ongoing formation in the Light of Love. We deeply appreciate the encouragement and visitors you have sent our way.

Our times of worship preparation were facilitated by Matt Boswell of Camas Friends and focused on three times of sitting with queries and scripture. In our opening night we sat with the queries “To whom do I need to pay attention?” And “To whom do we need to pay attention?” This we heard in conjunction with Mark 10:46-52. On our second day we prepared for our first business session with the queries “Who is our responsibility? What is our responsibility to them?” and the scripture (Matthew 15:21-28). On our last day we sat with the queries “What do I need to learn to more faithfully and effectively care for others? What do we need to learn to more faithfully and effectively care for others?” and the scripture (Luke 4:38-40) These queries and scriptures helped focus us on our call as we looked at the possibilities of connecting to other Friends organizations.

In our business and committees, we are working on establishing our organizational DNA and on holding space for healing from the traumas of the past. Our speaker for the weekend, Benigno Sanchez-Eppler, under the care of New England Yearly Meeting, shared with us in a way that spoke to our condition of bravely facing into the work of healing. His words were a balm to our souls, reminding us of the ways in which we can draw upon our experiences of wounding to better carry the healing light to others among us.

Benigno shared the image of quilts he had seen, made by North Seattle Friends Church from scraps and rejects to show how beauty can come from a place of feeling or being cast-off. We are indeed experiencing the pains of our birth. At times, we feel fear and pain when we long for hope and joy. We are like a collection of tattered remnants, and we cannot imagine how we could be made into a beautiful whole. Some worry that essential pieces will be thrown out and beloved individuals fear they won't fit our new shape knowing personally the deep pain of exclusion. We sometimes fear the loss of connections to our past traditions that have given life. Benigno reminded us that our crisis is not over, because crises are a part of life that will continue into our future. Yet as we choose to trust in the master quilter, we find hope. We are indeed being made into a beautiful whole. Our rough edges are being knit together and nothing is wasted. We lift up our hearts and trust, knowing that the destination is not yet clear, and are learning that trust is all the Lord requires of us. We pray that this alone will be a witness in this broken world.

We are also doing the difficult work of considering how to be affiliated with Friends organizations in the wider world. Our ministries have been grown and nurtured through life-giving relationships with other Friends' bodies and this is a source of joy and love for our Friends globally. Yet we are clear in our commitment to be fully Christ-centered, fully Quaker, and fully inclusive (of all people including LGBTQ+), and any organizational affiliation must not hinder our call. In our times of listening about whom we may be called to affiliate with we are trying to be attentive to the voice of the Spirit without allowing that voice of the Light of Love to be filtered through the distorting effects of our birthing pain. During our time of

listening we found clarity to join with the work of Friends World Committee for Consultation and Friends Committee for National Legislation.

As Benigno shared about the ragged scraps, we consider that maybe the best church is a quilt.

Wishing you Light and Love on Your Journey

Cherice Bock Co-clerk

Sarah Katreen Hoggatt Co-clerk

Sierra Cascades Yearly Meeting of Friends

*Epistle Committee:*

*Gil George (Clerk)*

*Jade Souza*

*James Hibbs*

*Ministers Recorded:*

We are overjoyed to record our witness of the giftings of the following ministers:

Cherice Bock: Call to prophetic ministry of education and activism for social justice.

Matt Boswell: Call to both pastoral and academic ministries that create communities who are growing in their expressions of love for God and neighbor.

Ruba Byrd: Call to pastoral care—counseling, chaplaincy, spiritual direction-- with a heart for peace and justice.

Patty Federigi: Call to quilting ministries of healing and mercy both in the Pacific Northwest and internationally in Burundi and Congo.

Leann Williams: Calling to pastoral care and healing body work through massage therapy.