



2016 Minutes

of the Annual Sessions
of the New England Yearly Meeting of Friends

Three Hundred Fifty-Sixth Year

**Castleton State College
Castleton, Vermont
August 6–11, 2016**

NEYM 2016–17 Dates to Save!

November 2016

Nov 5	Living Faith Gathering
Nov 18–20	JYM Retreat
	Young Friends Retreat
Nov 19	Permanent Board

December 2016

Dec 2–4	JHYM Retreat
Dec 3	Clerking Basics Workshop
Dec 27–30	Young Friends Retreat

January 2017

Jan 5–8	YAF Retreat
Jan 13–15	JHYM Retreat
Jan 27–29	JYM Retreat

February 2017

Feb 10–12	Young Friends Retreat
Feb 18	Permanent Board

March 2017

Mar 3–5	JHYM Retreat
Mar 17–19	Young Friends Retreat
Mar 18	DayTreat with Ministry & Counsel
Mar 31–Apr 2	6 th & 7 th Grade Retreat

April 2017

Apr 8	Living Faith Gathering
Apr 28–30	JHYM Retreat

May 2017

May 12–14	Young Friends Retreat
May 13	Permanent Board
May 19–21	JYM Retreat

June 2017

Jun 16–18	8th Grade Retreat
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August 2017

Aug 5–10	NEYM Annual Sessions
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2016 Sessions Coordinators, Officers, Speakers & YM Staff

Access Needs Coordinator	Jana Noyes-Dakota
Accounts Manager	Frederick Martin*
Audio/Visual Coordinator	Peter Bishop
Bible Half Hour Speaker	Doug Gwyn
Bookstore	Dulany Bennett & Virginia Bainbridge
Children's Bookstore	Jean McCandless & Karen Sargent (managers), Christopher McCandless
Clerks	Fritz Weiss (presiding), Rachel Walker Cogbill & James Grace (recording), Jeremiah Dickinson & Katherine Fisher (reading)
Communications Technology Coordinator	Jeffrey Hipp*
Events Coordinator	Kathleen Wooten*
Events Coordinator Assistant	Kenneth Glover
Housing Coordinator	Leanna Kantt
Information Desk	Eric Edwards, Chris Jorgenson, Nancy Marstaller
Office Manager	Sara Hubner*
Registrar	Susan Woodrow
Religious Education Coordinator	Beth Collea*
Sessions Committee Clerk	John Humphries
Sessions Office Assistants	Muriel Farrar, Rachel Shields
Shuttle Coordinator	Barbara Dakota
Spanish Interpreters	Judy Goldberger, Benigno Sánchez-Eppler
Treasurer	Shearman Taber
Video Coordinator	Tom Jackson
Volunteer Coordinator	Mary Chenaille
YM News Editor	Liz Yeats
Yearly Meeting Secretary	Noah Baker Merrill*

* YM Staff

Child Care

Coord: Kimberly Walker-Gonçalves
Asst Coord: Karen Sánchez-Eppler
Eppchez
Holly Lapp
Abigail Matchette
Whitney Mikkelsen
Amanda Nadeau
Phillip Veatch
Zan Walker-Gonçalves
Greg Williams
Judy Williams

Junior High Yearly Meeting

Coord: Gretchen Baker-Smith*
Anne Anderson
Buddy Baker-Smith
Steve Ball
Merritt Bussiere-Nichols
Jerry Carson
Justice Erikson

Adam Kohrman
Doug Lippincott
Felice Lopez
Caleb Martin-Mooney

Junior Yearly Meeting

Coord: Betty Ann Lee
Carol Baker
David Baxter
Brad Bussiere-Nichols
Margy Carpenter
Steven Correia
Rebecca Edwards
June Goodband
Tyler Green
Janet Hamilton
Avery Johnson
Elizabeth Kantt
Amy Lee-Vieira
Cynthia Rankin
Laura Street
Jay Vieira

JYM Afternoon Choices

Cynthia Rankin
Rebecca Edwards
Avery Johnson

Young Friends

Coord NiaDwynwen Thomas*
Asst Coord: Sarah LaFleur
Peter Colby
Denny Dart
Allon Dubler
Katherine Eckenfels
Rocky Malin
Maggie Nelson
Wendy Schlotterbeck
Helen Marie Staab

Young Adult Friends

Coord: Hilary Burgin

Minutes of the Annual Sessions

Minutes of the Young Friends of New England Yearly Meeting

Saturday evening

2016-1 Following opening worship, Fritz Weiss (Hanover), presiding clerk, welcomed us to the 356th annual gathering of New England Yearly Meeting of Friends at Castleton University in Castleton, Vermont. He reminded us that today is Hiroshima Day and asked us to hold in our prayers a hope for peace. He introduced our theme, “Being The Hands of God, A Call to Radical Faithfulness.”

2016-2 Regrettably, reading clerk Andy Grannell (Portland) was not able to be present for Sessions. The clerk asked for approval of Jeremiah Dickinson (Wellesley) as reading clerk for this year’s Sessions. Friends approved. Fritz Weiss introduced the rest of the clerk’s table: reading clerk Katherine Fisher (Beacon Hill), recording clerks James “Jim” Grace (Beacon Hill) and Rachel Walker Cogbill (Plainfield).

2016-3 The reading clerks called out the names of monthly meetings and worship groups by quarter, and we rejoiced as each group stood. The clerk noted that we have six recently constituted worship groups: Hilltown Friends Meeting, Cummington, MA; Souhegan Friends Meeting (Allowed), Wilton, NH); Poultney (VT) Quaker Worship Group, West Brattleboro (VT) Worship Group, Nashoba Valley (MA) Worship Group, and Schoodic Friends Meeting, Winter Harbor, ME. We were excited to welcome many newcomers; more than 10 percent of attendees this year are attending for Sessions for their first time.

Throughout the week the following visitors were introduced and welcomed:

Sa’ed Atshan (Swarthmore MM, Philadelphia YM)
 Beverly Archibald (Manhattan MM, New York YM)
 Don Badgley (Poughkeepsie FM, New York YM)
 Sharon Frame (Gwynedd MM, Philadelphia YM)
 Kwame Gibbs-Hobgood (New York YM)
 Elizabeth Melanie Gifford (Adelphi MM, Baltimore YM)
 Danni Green (Chester MM, Philadelphia YM)
 Daniel Hall (Northside FM, Illinois YM),
 Savannah Hauge (Madison MM, Northern YM)
 Melissa Hernandez (Holguin Friends Church, Cuba YM)
 Odalys Hernandez Cruz (Holguin Friends Church, Cuba YM)
 Agneta Injairu (Shirugu MM, Malava YM, Kenya)
 Jeannine Laverty (New York YM)
 Margaret Musalia (Mbale MM, Vihiga YM, Kenya),
 Margaret Nelson (Brooklyn MM, New York YM)
 Candido Fernando Perez (Miami Friends Church, EFC Mid-America YM)
 David Peyton and Julie Peyton (West Hills FM, Northwest YM)
 Anne Pomeroy (New Paltz MM, New York YM)
 Emily Provance (Fifteenth Street Meeting, NYYM)
 Ian, Scott and Susan Rhodewalt (London Grove MM, Philadelphia YM)
 Jeannette Smith (Langley Hill FM, Baltimore YM)
 Terry SoRelle (FM of Austin, South Central YM)
 Elizabeth Yeats (FM of Austin, South Central YM)
 Leon Zealand (Alexandria FM, Baltimore YM).

Organizational Representatives

Holly Baldwin (Beacon Hill Friends House)
 Steve Chase (Pendle Hill)

Laura Everett (Massachusetts Council of Churches)
Harriet Heath (Quaker Parenting Initiative)
Barbara Monahan and Emily Wirzba (Friends Committee on National Legislation)
Stephen Newsom (Quaker House, Fayetteville, NC)
Richelle Ogle (American Friends Service Committee)
Elizabeth Piersol Schmidt (Friends General Conference)
Colin Saxton (Friends United Meeting)
Jacqueline Stillwell (Right Sharing of World Resources)
Gloria Thompson (FWCC Northeast Regional representative)
Galen Hamann (Moses Brown School)

2016-4 John Humphries (Hartford), Sessions Committee clerk, welcomed us. He thanked Sessions Committee for its work planning and preparing for Sessions. There is a new document called “Your Guide to Sessions” available to Friends. The *Yearly Meeting News* will be published daily and will be available as usual. Contributions to it are welcomed. Another new feature is that popcorn and lemonade will be served in the Campus Center in the afternoon. John reviewed the Sessions photography policy and named some Friends who will be taking photos. Friends who would rather not be photographed may put a red dot on their name-tag. The clerk expressed appreciation for the work of John Humphries as Sessions Committee clerk, who served an extra year as the committee clerk in order to provide continuity for the new presiding clerk.

2016-5 Noah Baker Merrill (Putney), Yearly Meeting secretary, welcomed us to Castleton in English and Spanish. He gave us a short nametag tour, including an invitation to write our preferred pronouns on our nametag. He also announced that our pastoral counselor, Kevin Lee (Westport), is unable to be with us this year, but others are prepared to respond to pastoral care requests.

Noah introduced the Yearly Meeting staff: Jeffrey Hipp (Souhegan), Communications Technology Coordinator; Sara Hubner (Gonic), Office Manager; Kathleen Wooten (Fresh Pond), Events Coordinator; Gretchen Baker-Smith (Westport), Junior High/Junior Yearly Meeting Coordinator; NiaDwynwen Thomas (Beacon Hill), Young Friends/Young Adult Friends Coordinator; Frederick Martin (Monadnock), Accounts Manager; Beth Collea (Wellesley), Religious Education and Outreach Coordinator; Hilary Burgin (Beacon Hill), Young Adult Engagement Coordinator; and Nat Shed (Vassalboro), Friends Camp Director.

2016-6 NiaDwynwen Thomas, the Young Friends/Young Adult Friends Coordinator; Xinef Afriam (Mt. Toby), Chloe Grubbs-Saleem (Mt. Toby), and Laura Hoskins (Putney) presented the work of the Sessions Racial Inclusivity Task Force. Committee members James Varner (Orono) and Rachel Carey-Harper (Barnstable) could not be present. They shared that we all have the same dream: We want each person to be able to bring his/her whole self to the meeting community. We want to be able to live into this shared vision of God’s beloved community. We must learn to fight racism and the culture of white supremacy. The first step to curing white supremacy is to notice it. Friends are asked to put this noticing into practice this Sessions. An anonymous online forum is being set up. Each of us is asked to make one announcement on this forum to educate all of us. What do we notice about ourselves and race? What do we notice about the bigger picture in Yearly Meeting? How do race, racism and the patterns of race show up in our time together? Reflection queries are available at the Information Desk to use at Sessions and beyond. There will be a chance to reflect jointly in a small group, online, at meals, and at the Campus Center.

2016-7 Before the youth left the gathered body, the clerk shared that each year at Sessions there are four Yearly Meetings occurring, each with its own business and program. When the youth leave us, the Junior Yearly Meeting, the Junior High Yearly Meeting and the Young Friends Yearly Meeting commence. We all gather again as one body at closing worship on Thursday.

Betty Ann Lee (Westport), Junior Yearly Meeting coordinator, introduced her staff of 15 who will work with 48 children. Gretchen Baker-Smith, Junior High Yearly Meeting coordinator, introduced her staff. NiaDwynwen Thomas, Young Friends coordinator, introduced her staff. Each of these age groups departed following introductions. Parents of young children were reminded of the Family Neighborhood. There is also a preschool program, co-coordinated by Kimberly Walker-Gonçalves (Northampton) and Karen Sánchez-Eppler (Northampton).

Sunday afternoon

2016-8 Rachel Guaraldi (Beacon Hill) introduced a panel of three Friends to share their experience of radical faithfulness. She sang “Christ has no body here but ours, no hands, no feet on earth but ours.” Our times are troubling times, fraught with violence, confusion, apathy, and terror. There is death, but also life—life in the embodiment of the living God that is evident in each of us.

In May 2013 Jay O’Hara (West Falmouth) and Ken Ward anchored a 32-foot wooden lobster boat in front of a pier at a coal-fired power plant in Somerset, Massachusetts, and prevented a 40,000-ton shipment of coal from being unloaded for a day. The decision to take this action, Jay found, was easy. The hard part was what came before, when he made himself available to the movement of the Spirit. In order to be the hands of God, we have to be *in* the hands of God. That is the real act of radical faithfulness.

For Jay, this was a transformative process of giving up some things that we all conventionally think are important, including a career, attachment to family, and his sense of respectability, especially in the eyes of his colleagues, as he gave up the successful activist leadership training program he had started. Are we Friends really a “a peculiar people”? Are we “transformed, not conformed”? What are we willing to give up? Our careers? Our retirement? Our respectability? Our identity? Our family? Our houses? Our lives? If we can’t contemplate selling our houses, or whatever else it is that might get in the way and cloud our vision of how to be faithful in these times, then we, and our Religious Society, and our planet, are in dire straits indeed.

Our religious heritage points exactly to this pattern of the faithful life. Jesus implores us to get rid of “that stuff” first, and then faithfulness becomes easy. Put the Kingdom of God first, and all else will be given unto you. Sell your stuff, give to the poor, and follow me.

Before Jay quit his non-profit job, he had to force himself to continue working. He found himself angry, harsh, and judgmental. By leaving his work behind and being faithful, he found the fruits to be peace, joy and love. When early Christians were faithful in this radical way, they expressed it as having been given a new life.

“Barn burned down, now I can see the moon.” Once we clear society’s expectations away, we find that God is there, waiting for us. All we have to do is make ourselves available.

Angela Hopkins (Northampton) asked, “What does it mean, being the hands of God?” You can be the mother who cares for a family, or the man who holds up the stop sign for our children to cross the street, or the woman who sharpens the pencils in church, which nobody notices until she dies. Who are we not seeing in our community? How do we nurture and support everyone, *everyone*, that God sends to us? There are many calls in our lives that lead to one, we all have the same call. For those of us who consider ourselves to be followers of Jesus, we know what that call is. We were called to go out to all the earth, but what about that neighbor who lives next door? Who are we not seeing?

Angela finds her primary calling these days to be in the area of racial justice and racism. There are lots of ways to work on the issue of racism, but you can’t do it if you don’t start building relationships.

Radical faithfulness: what’s the who, what, where, and when of that? We all have our gifts, and we all have our challenges. We are all the beloved community. We are all loved for our gifts and our challenges. Our work, as she understands it, is to live into who we are authentically, day by day, and share that which speaks to our condition. There is only one way, and that is radical love. There is no radical faithfulness without radical love. And radical love means you don’t get to quit.

Judy Goldberger (Beacon Hill) asked, “What would you do to gain your freedom?” Would you wade into the Sea? We stand together on the shore of the Red Sea, every First Day morning. Behind us, pressing upon us, the thunder of a terrible, familiar, everyday reality, a world which rewards brute power and wealth, a world where many are enslaved and a few stand on their necks. Ahead, the waters. Ahead, God’s promise of freedom.

She spoke of meeting with an undocumented immigrant who was cordial, but had learned to be distrustful and not forthcoming about himself. She later visited him in prison after he had been picked up. What could she do or say? Later, she could read, attend vigils, help find him a lawyer. In the moment, she could sit on the other side of the visitors’ window and press her hand up to the glass. Her heart had not been shattered, but it had been broken open. Once the heart is broken open, God can enter in. God doesn’t call the perfect. God perfects the called. And so she glimpsed that the ocean of Love overpowers the ocean of death. What would the Society of Friends look like if we lived as if that Truth were true?

Today feels a lot like the 1980s. Men, women, and children are fleeing bloodbath and terror in El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala. The authorities in their countries are corrupt and can't be trusted to protect them. Our country's authorities say that, except in certain limited circumstances, they do not qualify for asylum and turn them back, too often to their deaths. Houses of worship are springing up to offer them sanctuary.

God's work comes most fully alive when we come together to listen, when we live out together what we hear. Only in covenant community can we leave a life which rewards brute power and wealth, which brutalizes many for the benefit of a few. Only in covenant community can we risk unlearning all we've ever known. Only in covenant community can we cross the Sea to live into the unknown, to live into God's peaceable Kingdom. Let us cross the Sea, together.

As we received and pondered the Truth shared by these Friends, our hearts were opened, and we entered into a deep period of waiting worship.

Sunday evening

2016-9 Our clerk reminded us of our practice of staying in worship through the Meeting for Worship for Business. He has invited pastors of the Yearly Meeting to introduce each evening session with a prayer, to help us sustain the sense of worship, and to take advantage of the long, rich, and living tradition of pastored meetings within our Yearly Meeting. Maggie Edmondson, pastor of the Winthrop Center Friends Church, opened our Meeting for Worship for Business tonight.

2016-10 We heard the summer 2016 epistle from Ramallah Friends Meeting. Friends wrote of their very dire circumstances but also of their transcendent belief that there is strength when we join together with God accompanying us.

2016-11 Ben Guaraldi (Beacon Hill), Jackie Stillwell (Monadnock), and Noah Baker Merrill reported on their experience as our representatives to the Friends World Committee for Consultation World Plenary in Pisac, Peru. Elias Sánchez-Eppler (Northampton) joined them, representing our fourth representative, Rachel Guaraldi (Beacon Hill), who was unable to be present. Others from NEYM were also present. We watched with deep appreciation a video from the plenary made by Rachel Guaraldi.

Elias Sánchez-Eppler talked about ideas from one of the plenary working groups focusing on increasing meetings' viability and members' engagement.

Noah Baker Merrill told a story of two Friends from different yearly meetings who had both attended the previous world plenary in Kabarak, Kenya, and who had wrestled together at that time with their different understandings about homosexuality. One of the Friends had proclaimed that homosexuality was against the will of God. The other Friend came out during the conference as gay. At the end of that conference, the first Friend said he was no longer sure what God thinks about homosexuality but he knew that God calls us to love. At the plenary in Pisac, Peru, the two Friends met again. The one who had previously spoken against homosexuality said that he has prayed over this for years, that he is now feeling called to work within his yearly meeting on a change of heart regarding homosexuality, and asked the gay friend for help. The love of God works through relationships.

Jackie Stillwell expressed her thanks that she could represent this Yearly Meeting at the gathering. She shared the preamble from the sustainability minute approved by the plenary. Jackie Stillwell and Ben Guaraldi read several suggestions from the minute for promoting sustainability. The full minute is available in the Advance Documents.

The minute requests that all Yearly Meetings:

1. Initiate at least two concrete actions on sustainability within the next 12 months. These may build on existing projects of individuals or monthly meetings or they may be new initiatives. We ask that they encourage Young Friends to play key roles. We ask that meetings minute the progress and results, so as to share them with FWCC and Quaker meetings.
2. Support individuals and groups in their meetings who feel called to take action on sustainability.

3. Support the work done by Quaker organizations such as the Quaker United Nations Office and the Quaker Council for European Affairs to ensure that international agreements and their implementation support sustainability.

We will return to these requests in a future business session to see how the Yearly Meeting wishes to respond.

It was noted that Friends in New England are already doing many of the items listed as examples in the FWCC minute. We are invited to take further steps in our witness.

A Friend shared that the Rwanda Yearly Meeting has responded to this challenge from FWCC by applying for and receiving a grant to support planting trees and educating their membership around sustainability issues.

2016-12 Five quarterly meeting clerks shared reflections on the States of Society in their quarters.

Kenneth Glover (North Shore), clerk of Ministry and Counsel in Salem Quarter, expressed that our work this week is to love and to see one another. This has been a year for pruning some of the activities for Salem Quarter. One example was the Quarter's decision to no longer sponsor the Quaker Studies Program at Beacon Hill. This leaves the Beacon Hill Friends House as the only sponsor of this program. Acton Monthly Meeting is determining its future. Kenneth shared stories from the Family Fair held by Framingham Monthly Meeting and encouraged other meetings to consider holding similar events. The Quarter is providing some of the funding for Greg Williams's ministry, "Stone of Hope," which is addressing racial justice.

Eleanor Godway (Hartford), co-recording clerk of Connecticut Valley Quarter, reported that not all its constituent meetings participate in quarterly activities and business meetings. Their best attendance is at programs. This year there were several: one on possible actions on Palestine, a discussion with Hal Weaver and Anne Nash about Hal's new book *Black Fire*, a consultation on the minute on climate change, a program on the Journey of Healing in the work of repudiating the Doctrine of Discovery, and the Alternatives to Violence Project.

Janet Hough (Cobscook) is clerk of Vassalboro Quarterly Meeting Ministry and Counsel, which has shepherded work in the absence of a clerk of the Quarter. As a rural group, gathering in Quarter is a cherished time for their small meetings to connect. Their Quarter is old and they remember a complicated and honored past continuing into the present. Members of the Quarter founded Ramallah Friends School, and Rufus Jones was instrumental in founding Five Years Meeting (now FUM) and the AFSC. Diane Dicranian (Winthrop Center Friends Church) has traveled through the Yearly Meeting for the last 2 years with a minute from Vassalboro Quarter, under a concern to support LGBT friends and their allies. Last year the Quarter presented a minute for information. This year they bring it for action. Diane Dicranian read the "Minute of Concern on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered (LGBT) Ugandans" from Vassalboro Quarterly Meeting:

Vassalboro Quarterly Meeting holds a deep concern over the Ugandan government's continued targeting of the lesbian-gay-bisexual-transgender-queer (LGBTQ) population in Uganda. The Ugandan government has created a climate where the life, freedom, and human dignity of all LGBTQ Ugandans, and those who support and assist them, are at immediate risk. We are distressed by the plight of LGBTQ citizens who have been forced to leave their homes, denied basic rights, been beaten, imprisoned or killed, and who live in constant fear of further reprisals. We abhor and are appalled by the violent, unjust, and inhumane actions of the Ugandan government as it terrorizes its own citizens.

Washington State's Olympia Monthly Meeting has created the "Friends Ugandan Safe Transport Fund" (FUSTF) to aid LGBTQ Ugandans and their allies who are fleeing their homeland for their lives and safety. The purpose of the FUSTF initiative is to financially support Ugandans helping to save Ugandans.

We ask that New England Yearly Meeting Friends, both individually and through their monthly meetings, learn more about the plight of LGBTQ Ugandans by visiting Olympia Meeting's site, friendsugandansafetransport.org. The website contains background information and reports on current activities. We also ask that individuals and monthly meetings prayerfully consider if they are led to financially support the work of Olympia Monthly Meeting and FUSTF and to take action in accordance with their leading.

Diane has spoken at Vassalboro and Northwest Quarterly Meetings; Midcoast, Hartford, Northampton, and Wellesley Monthly Meetings; Beacon Hill Friends House; and the Maine Council of Churches. Diane has reported regularly to her monthly meeting and to Vassalboro Quarterly Meeting. In addition to many individ-

ual Friends, the meetings that we know of within NEYM that have supported the FUSTF, a project of the Olympia Friends Meeting in Washington, are Eggmoggin Reach, Middlebury, Mt. Toby, Northwest Quarter, Orono, Vassalboro Monthly and Quarterly Meetings, and Winthrop Center Friends Church. The minute asks Yearly Meeting to support the Friends Ugandan Safe Transport Fund through a minute of support and/or a contribution to the fund (See Minute 2016-13).

JJ Smith (Concord) is leaving as clerk of the Dover Quarterly Meeting. She finds it is a small quarter in which it has been difficult to have a ministry and counsel meeting for many years. It has few meetings in it, and she is not sure that the quarter is being helpful to its constituent meetings. A nominating committee has been formed and a new clerk may be named.

Penny Wright (Hanover), clerk of Northwest Quarterly Meeting, reported about that quarter. In addition to the written report about the rejuvenation of the quarter, orally she lifted up a concern that has evolved around supporting Syrian refugees coming to Rutland. The status of that move is not clear at this point. We pray we can support such refugees as a quarter.

2016-13 Friends were asked to consider whether we might support the Friends Ugandan Safe Transport Fund by endorsing and/or contributing to it.

Friends are in solidarity with LGBT Ugandans who are being persecuted. However Friends had concerns about understanding the subtleties of western Friends minuting and acting on concerns of African Friends. We asked Diane Dicranian to convene a session to address this concern and then bring the issue back for discussion at a future business session.

2016-14 Phebe McCosker (Hanover), clerk of the Faith and Practice Revision Committee, thanked Jan Hoffman for the foundation that she laid in the first years of the committee's work: for her grasp of the scope of the work and how best to approach it, for her spiritual insights, and for her ability to pull the committee together into a cohesive working group. Jan does not feel a "rising of the Life" to continue on the revision committee, but has bequeathed them with an incredible set of documentation including all the concerns and correspondence which have informed the committee's work. The major undertaking of this year has been a working paper on membership which is coming back to us now for dialogue. A listening session will provide the opportunity for engagement with the committee. In September they will be sending the clerks of all the monthly meetings and worship groups a copy of the document, encouraging our spiritual communities to engage with the work done so far and to respond to them with our thoughts. The committee suggests listening to each other about where each of us is on our experiences with membership.

2016-15 We reviewed our accomplishments of this evening, our work for tomorrow, and then settled into closing worship.

Monday morning

2016-16 We opened in worship, hearing the April 2016 epistle from Ireland Yearly Meeting, with the theme "Who is my Neighbour?", sharing their discernment about how their relatively small group could be faithful in addressing issues such as immigration, poverty, climate change, and social exclusion.

2016-17 The clerk asked for names of people who usually attend Sessions but are unable to attend this year, so that we may prepare and send cards of greeting to them. As we heard the names spoken, we sensed their spirit among us.

2016-18 The clerk of Permanent Board, Sarah Gant (Beacon Hill), expressed her deep love for the engaged minds and brave hearts of the Permanent Board members who keep her on track and centered, for the God who is present when they discern together, for the strong backs who carry Yearly Meeting through Sessions and throughout the year, for those who care for children in retreats and make the Camp a safe haven, and for all who discern God's will and act as the hands of God.

She gave an overview of the work of Permanent Board.

She then reviewed what has happened since last year when Permanent Board laid down the ad-hoc Structural Review Committee after Sessions. This committee had drawn on decades of previous work by numerous

Yearly Meeting committees and had engaged in an extensive process of listening to our current condition throughout the Yearly Meeting. Informed by this work, Permanent Board is working on organic structural changes in the Yearly meeting to better support our work, to better support communication across NEYM, and to support additional gatherings for worship and renewal.

- Permanent Board is working more closely with Ministry and Counsel. These two committees meet jointly in September. This year they jointly discerned how memorial minutes would be received at Sessions. This year they intend to consider the process for travel minutes.
- Permanent Board approved the laying down of Committee Days so that staff time and other resources are available to support our committees in other ways, such as setting up conference calls, coordinating in-person meetings, better sharing of information with committees and the wider Yearly Meeting, and creating a new electronic newsletter.
- The Youth Ministries Committee, which was re-purposed in 2014, has begun their work. This committee has done the work necessary so that Permanent Board has approved a Child Safety Policy for the Yearly Meeting programs.
- The Quaker Youth Education Committee has asked to be laid down, so that a new, networking model can be raised up that is nimble, responsive, accessible, and inviting to Friends to participate in the work of youth education. Permanent Board endorses this proposal.
- There have been three consultations during the past two years, including one on Emerging Practices in Quaker Outreach; one on Young Adult engagement and outreach, which led to the joint application with NYYM for the Shoemaker grant; and one on the pastoral care needs of the Yearly Meeting which has enriched the conversation about how we do pastoral care. This is a new form for discernment that supports engagement in a concern across committees and invites participation from Friends involved in the concern in their monthly and quarterly meetings.
- We are planning two Living Faith Gatherings in the coming year, November 5 at Friends School of Portland and April 8 at Moses Brown School. They will be family-friendly and accessible to those who don't come to Annual Sessions.

2016-19 We accepted the recommendation of the Quaker Youth Education Committee and Permanent Board and approved laying down the Quaker Youth Education Committee, with appreciation for their many contributions over the years.

2016-20 The clerk of the Legacy Gift Committee, Suzanna Schell (Beacon Hill), introduced the committee: Jean McCandless (Burlington), Pat Wallace (Northampton), Edward Mair (Amesbury), Sarah Gant (Beacon Hill), Shearman Taber (Beacon Hill), and Fritz Weiss (Hanover). The committee received applications from Friends in most quarters and has awarded 24 grants, which are listed in the Advance Documents. Suzanna shared how the committee receives and considers applications. A review team is assigned to each application. This team explores concerns and questions about the application and organizes a presentation to the whole committee. Applications are expected to be under the care and support of a meeting. We are reminded that these funds support the life and ministries of Friends in New England. When a grant is awarded, the recipient is encouraged to share information about his/her ministry and the project at Sessions. The committee, with the Ministry and Council and Finance committees, will be presenting a workshop in October 2016 called "Leadings, Meetings and Money."

The committee has learned some lessons and has some questions after this first year of work. A small amount of money can do a lot. Many requests on climate change were received but very few addressing racism. What should our role be in encouraging certain types of requests? There were many requests for assistance on meetinghouse upkeep and repair/maintenance. There is more needed for our buildings than is available through the Legacy Gift project. Are there other ways this could be addressed? There was one request to provide funds for the *Wôpanâak* language reclamation project as an action consistent with our repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery. The application indicated that no Friends were actively involved in this project. Does the Legacy Gift have a responsibility to support projects connected to the repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery, in addition to supporting the ministry of Friends in New England?

We appreciated the hard work of Suzanna Schell who guided the three-year discernment of how to use the Legacy Gift and has clerked the committee during its first year.

2016-21 The clerk of the Nominating Committee, Constance Kincaid-Brown (Hanover), reported on the work done by that committee. Many opportunities still abound for service to the Yearly Meeting.

Nominating Committee is a microcosm of the Yearly Meeting. They are graying and in transition. They have low numbers. They do not have the depth to keep going when key members are not at the top of their game. They are transitioning to a focus of finding opportunities for people with gifts rather than just filling slots.

All meetings are invited to appoint representatives to Nominating Committee but only two have. The committee requests that more meetings appoint representatives.

If you feel a tug to serve on a committee, talk to someone. If you have an idea of a person who might serve in a certain way, talk to them. There are many opportunities for service in the Yearly Meeting, in your monthly meeting, and at Friends Camp.

Constance Kincaid-Brown introduced the members of the committee.

2016-22 Noah Baker Merrill, Yearly Meeting secretary, reported on the first year's experience issuing time-sensitive public statements as approved at last year's Sessions (Minute 2015-57). When in unity, using discernment and restraint, the clerk and the secretary are authorized to issue statements for the Yearly Meeting consistent with our testimonies and witnesses.

There have been seven statements issued this year:

September 2015: A public statement on Climate Change in response to the visit to the United States by Pope Francis

October 2015: Facing the Challenge of Climate Change—A shared statement by Quaker groups

November 2015: "Choosing Love in a Season of Fear," in response to the terrorist attacks in Paris.

March 2016: A letter in support of the amicus curiae brief in "Shrine of our Lady of LaSalette vs. Assessors," a case before the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court.

April 2016: Endorsement of a letter asking for a Marine Monument off the coast of New England.

May 2016: Epistle to the United Methodist Church

June 2016: A prayer in response to the shootings at the Pulse nightclub in Orlando

The full statements are on the NEYM website. The charge has been carried as a weighty one, and has always been in collaboration with suggestions from the body and with discernment shared among with other Friends. Friends were asked to respond and share advice or concerns about this practice based on our experience during this year.

Noah asked for advice and feedback concerning this new practice from those gathered.

Friends responded in appreciation for the care and eloquence of the statements, and in joy at finally having a voice as Quakers on current issues. It is good to stand together with others. The discernment process has been very careful. The statements have been helpful to bring to ecumenical gatherings. Sometimes they have been a seed for monthly meeting statements. Humility in speech has been appreciated, but we should not err on the side of silence. Leadership when the moment calls is important, even if an issue may not be as deeply seasoned within the Yearly Meeting. Sometimes the statements are magnified by social media. As a body we are asked to continue to be a part of this ongoing discernment in the next year.

2016-23 Sarah Gant (Beacon Hill), clerk of Permanent Board, spoke to the hiring process for the new director for Friends Camp. The ad-hoc search committee, clerked by Edward Baker (Westerly), worked very hard. The application process was extensive, and the person who fit best, Anna Hopkins, is one who already has long experience (six years) with the Camp. She is also well connected to other youth programs in the Yearly Meeting. Anna comes to us after teaching at Moses Brown Friends School. Sarah Gant introduced Anna and asked our approval of her appointment as the director of Friends Camp. We heartily approved her appointment.

Monday evening

2016-24 We were prayed into worship by Odalys Hernandez Cruz (Holguín Friends Church), the presiding clerk of Cuba Yearly Meeting. She then shared the 2016 epistle from Cuba Yearly Meeting, with a translation following. The epistle reminds us that in relationship we become workers for peace, and that reconciliation is everyone's ministry. The harvest is abundant, but the workers are few. Let us seek the meanings of Christ's teachings, serving God and our neighbor.

2016-25 Friends appointed visitors to the youth programs, who will report back Thursday morning:

Childcare	Colleen Crowley (Portland), Martha Schwoppe (Wellesley)
Junior YM K-1	Edward Mair (Amesbury), Dan Hoskins (Putney)
Junior YM 2-4	Melanie Gifford (Adelphi MM, Baltimore YM), Thayer Quoos (New Haven)
Junior YM 5-6	Ada Kerman (Monadnock), Darcy Drayton (Souhegan)
Junior High YM	Wendyl Ross (Wellesley), Marion Athearn (Westport)
Young Friends	Galen Hamann (Providence), Bob Fisher (Plainfield)
Young Adult Friends	Will Jennings (Beacon Hill), Mary Gilbert (Cambridge)

2016-26 Agneta Injairu brought greetings from Malava Yearly Meeting and Friends Theological College in Kaimosi, Kenya. She appreciates NEYM's support in enabling her and Margaret Musalia to come to this country, where they have done much visiting with Quakers. They look forward to going back home to continue to train and encourage the women there through teamwork with Marian Baker of our Yearly Meeting. They need prayer and financial support to meet the challenges in Uganda.

Margaret Musalia, visiting from Vihiga Yearly Meeting, and from United Society of Friends Women, Kenya, taught us a call-and-response greeting: "God is good all the time and all the time God is good." She acknowledged the support and deep friendship from Marian Baker, the support group in Kenya, and this Yearly Meeting. She noted here we have all ages together at Sessions. In Kenya there must be separate yearly meetings just because of space; they have 500 children alone. She tells us, "You are doing something good, and don't be tired. Hold on to the good things you are doing. You have touched many people without knowing. You have touched us. We are part of one family. Be the light of the world wherever you are. May God bless you and encourage you all."

2016-27 The Connecticut Valley Quarter climate change minute was presented for our consideration by Peter Blood Patterson (Mt. Toby) and Alan Eccleston (Mt. Toby) of Connecticut Valley Quarter, and Ruah Swennerfelt (Burlington), clerk of NEYM Earthcare Ministry Committee.

Alan Eccleston shared how he came to realize that he could do a voluntary carbon tax. This is a systemic response to the complexities of living embedded in a carbon economy. This has expanded to seven meetings. More information can be found on voluntarycarbontax.org. Can we in this Session, gathered in radical faithfulness, approve a landmark carbon minute? Save a livable planet, listen to creation's call. Listen, listen, listen: "Here am I, Lord, choose me."

Peter Blood Patterson noted that each generation has a unique challenge. There is a growing threat from climate change. The sixth mass extinction may be underway. As largely white, middle-class Americans, we live in the epicenter of this great crime. He read from the epistle from the second New England Climate Spring (text included in our minute below). Can we call on all our meetings to see what they might do, to hold each other accountable, to live out the changes that are required?

Ruah Swennerfelt called us to act toward sustainability, even while holding ambiguity and grief for the state of the planet, for our complicity in that. She spoke of gratitude for good people who are working to make a difference in the climate chaos that is upon us. It is up to this body to decide how we respond. Approving a minute is not the most important thing, but embracing the issue and taking it home with us is. She led us in singing "The tide is rising, and so are we. This is where we are called to be."

We accepted the following minute from Connecticut Valley Quarterly Meeting:

Climate Minute Approved by Connecticut Valley Quarterly Meeting

5/4/14, 2/7/16

Quaker testimony urges Friends to be good stewards “so that future generations may inherit an earth on which they can live in hope and dignity” (NEYM *Faith and Practice*, 1985, p. 189). It is time to urgently affirm the overwhelming scientific consensus that greenhouse gases released by human activity are causing climate change, that these changes threaten life on our planet as we know it, and that we have a responsibility to address the very real threats that will impact both rich and poor. Those on earth who have contributed least to this crisis are likely to suffer most from it. While systemic change is necessary, we cannot wait for governing bodies to do what is needed: change must begin with individuals and groups of people acting together. As Friends living in a high-carbon society we have a special responsibility and opportunity to live up to our testimony of stewardship.

We believe that although the problems we face are large, complex, and overwhelming, following our faith can lead us to unity and hope. Friends are encouraged to move from this affirmation to specific action as led.

2016-28 Friends were clear that while we could accept the minute from Connecticut Valley Quarter, we were prepared to go further. The recording clerks brought a minute forward from our discussion. Friends approved the spirit of the minute but asked the recording clerks to work on the language. The final minute was received later in the week (Minute 2016-67).

2016-29 We returned to the Friends World Committee for Consultation sustainability minute and the three actions they asked yearly meetings to take.

The minute requests that all Yearly Meetings:

1. Initiate at least two concrete actions on sustainability within the next 12 months. These may build on existing projects of individuals or monthly meetings or they may be new initiatives. We ask that they encourage Young Friends to play key roles. We ask that meetings minute the progress and results, so as to share them with FWCC and Quaker meetings.
2. Support individuals and groups in their meetings who feel called to take action on sustainability.
3. Support the work done by Quaker organizations such as the Quaker United Nations Office and the Quaker Council for European Affairs to ensure that international agreements and their implementation support sustainability.

Friends approved all three of these action requests.

The clerk asked if the body would support directing Katherine Fisher of the clerks' table, who is also a member of the Young Adult Friends Climate Working Group, to lead a threshing session to attempt to name the two or three concrete actions on sustainability we would take. We approved this discernment process.

2016-30 Elias Sánchez-Eppler, clerk of Finance Committee, introduced the Friends Camp budget and the Yearly Meeting budget. These budgets and a full discussion of them are in his report. This is the first time the Friends Camp budget has been presented for explanation and approval, but there is an endeavor to make our process more transparent. For this presentation he gave us the top-line numbers in graphic form. Friends Camp was thanked for moving their budgeting process up by nine months. Friends Camp budgeted income and expenses for FY17 match, at \$404,860.

Since 2014 the Yearly Meeting has been operating with a deficit budget, and the budget we present this year is no different. Actual income is a little below expenses, but the gap is relatively tiny. We have developed a full budget which will reduce the deficit in 2018 by another \$10,000. To trim the budget, we cut many of the buffers in each category of spending. In consultation with the Ad Hoc Long-term Financial Planning Committee, we also project contributions to the general fund to go up by 3% for both individual and monthly meeting contributions this year.

There are three big things to celebrate:

1. We are developing multi-year financial plans.
2. We are on course to close the gap between income and expenses in the next two years.

3. New federal overtime policies will move our society towards economic justice, but it does mean we need to pay some staff more. We are underpaying and overworking our staff, and the federal government is calling us to moral account. Personnel is working out details as these regulations are recent. New costs may range from \$15,000–\$37,000. We want this to be equitable among all the staff pursuant to their responsibilities. We have the resources to cover this additional cost many times over. Do we have the courage and integrity to do so?

The committee has begun visiting with monthly meetings to share news about the Yearly Meeting and to talk about monthly meeting contributions. Volunteers are welcome to join in this effort.

2016-31 Sara Smith (Concord), clerk of the Development Committee, talked about why she gives to NEYM. Her son grew up in NEYM, and the youth program was life-changing for him. He developed an understanding of the Quaker testimonies as he lived them in the JYM community. He learned about integrity and equality. The activities were the essence of simplicity but done with spirituality. She realizes now that the fees she paid did not cover all the costs. Young families often do not have the income to pay all the fees, but we need those young families, so we subsidize them in our budget. We help each other in so many ways, not only financially, in donating to make these programs possible.

We have increased the number of households who give and the number of monthly donors. This financial year we have so far reached 66% of our goal. We still need to raise \$46,432 by the end of the fiscal year.

NEYM supports youth programs. NEYM supports monthly meetings in many ways. NEYM supports work in outreach, welcoming and inclusion. We support Quakers who witness in the wider world. The Development Committee has initiated the deployment of an electronic monthly newsletter to connect Friends in New England. Friends are encouraged to sign up for this on the Yearly Meeting website and to encourage others to do so.

When you give to NEYM, it is a spiritual gift of hope. You can see the work of the Yearly Meeting in all the reports in the Advance Documents.

2016-32 Shearman Taber (Beacon Hill), Yearly Meeting treasurer, presented his report. “In theory, theory and practice are the same thing. But in practice, not so much.” The Finance Committee approved two job descriptions, one for a treasurer and one for an assistant treasurer. The assistant treasurer position is open.

Shearman Taber encourages all meetings to have an outsider do an annual review of their books. He offers to do that for local meetings.

There are several changes coming to our financial reports, including combining the financial reports of the operating division (us) with that of Friends Camp in a single report.

Secondly, grant funding will be included in our regular figures. There is an increased use of grant funding for special projects in the Yearly Meeting. For example, some of our staff expenses are being covered by money from the Shoemaker Fund.

As of May 31, 2016, it appeared that the Yearly Meeting would be running a deficit at the end of this fiscal year of \$36,499, assuming that contributions continue as they did last year. This is a big assumption, because last September we received contributions of \$129,000. That’s 29 percent of the amount budgeted for the entire year received in one month! We need to work hard to match last year’s accomplishment.

Intentional deficit spending is only in its third year. We need both individuals and monthly meetings to increase the amount they contribute. Individuals can change their spending more quickly than monthly meetings. It is important to know there has never been a set relationship between the proportion of individual and meeting contributions.

2016-33 We reviewed our progress on the agenda, closing in worshipful silence.

Tuesday morning

2016-34 We opened in worship, hearing the New York Yearly Meeting Epistle in which they shared their knowing that “we can nurture the blessed community with faithful listening and a readiness to grow and change, even—perhaps especially—when growth and change are hard.” They also shared their yearning for a more economically and racially diverse body and the need to “trust in one another and trust in The Source.”

Tendered by the awareness of the persistence of racism and the difficult legacy of white privilege, they rededicated themselves to “advancing a more equal society that recognizes that of God in every person.”

2016-35 Candido Fernando Perez brought warm greetings to us from the Miami Friends Church. They invited us to visit, and have both open doors and open windows in welcome. Miami Friends feel blessed to be part of the bridge between Cuba and NEYM and believe it to be a God-given ministry for them.

2016-36 Noah Baker Merrill, Yearly Meeting secretary, introduced the Yearly Meeting staff. There are no hireling ministers here. George Fox decried the hireling ministers as those who cared for others only for money, and not from a calling. Here, there are people with a calling who are paid for some of their time to carry their leading, and to liberate the ministry that we all share.

Frederick Martin, Accounts Manager, said that he serves in what he sometimes calls the back office, and it's an enabling ministry. Money has curious spiritual qualities if you are careful with it. Frederick has always said that truth is integrity about money, but he recently has realized that the love side is equally important. Money accomplishes the motions of love.

Beth Collea, Religious Education and Outreach Coordinator, shared that she tries to live by the adage “Meet people where they are, but don't leave them where you found them.”

Be on the Quaker path and help each other to move forward and deeper on that path.

Concord Monthly Meeting is part of the new pilot outreach project. A recent visitor there said there are three pieces that attract her to this meeting: 1) Concord Friends believe there is something beyond us; 2) when we're in Quaker worship, we're interacting with that beyond; and 3) when we're connected with the divine source, we're connected to the world where we go and feel compelled to serve. Wellesley, another meeting where there has been work, has outlined a whole curriculum using a journey model, with members of meeting speaking to their lives of faith as examples of each stage of this journey.

Hilary Burgin, Young Adult Engagement Coordinator, was introduced by Noah Baker Merrill. She is the second newest staff member, hired out of funds entirely provided by the Shoemaker grant. Hilary grew up in Acton Meeting and is currently a member of Beacon Hill. She also serves as the Coordinator of Quaker Voluntary Service in Boston. She will be working intensively with meetings to help engage their young adults, and to do the most important work—to work with God in one another. We welcomed Hilary to the staff.

Nia Thomas, Young Friends/Young Adult Friends Coordinator, shared some of her vision for the future of her work. She sees the Young Friends and Young Adult Friends programs as an open door into the Quaker faith, into our meetings, to whomever passes by. We have a lot of open doors such as Friends Camp, Quaker schools, and local youth groups like the Western Mass and Boston Area Youth Groups. Many youth participate in these programs who are new to Friends. When our gifts are affirmed, we can become part of something larger and more meaningful. We all see this in a concrete way as Young Friends and Young Adult Friends take on significant roles in our annual sessions.

She believes that each Young Friend is going somewhere where she cannot imagine. Loving adults are essential to support Young Friends on these spiritual journeys.

Sara Hubner, Office Manager, has spoken previously about seeing her job as a switchboard operator and that image still speaks to her. She apologizes to any of you who she forgot were on hold. Her job is connecting Friends with one another who have similar concerns, connecting Friends with the Yearly Meeting office, and connecting them with the information they want.

When she looks ahead, she sees working with the Archives Committee, getting more training in our database software, helping to develop the monthly newsletter, and helping to get the news out about how the staff can help the local meetings. The connections she wants to make are not about getting people involved in the Yearly Meeting so we can staff committees or improve our fundraising, but she wants to get us to know each other in that which is eternal.

Jeffrey Hipp, Communications Technology Coordinator, shared with the body that he is resigning from this position next month. He came into this position from a clear leading to this work that was affirmed by the unity of the search committee, and by a clear sense that we are his community and have been instrumental in shaping who he is as a Friend. Through Friends Jeff has found access to the ultimate spiritual authority that can transform and gives us the power to embody our testimonies. He felt loved and welcomed; his gifts were drawn out and put to good use.

Serving us has been a joy in so many ways, and in so many ways it's been a challenge. He is resigning because he does not feel a clear leading to continue. He does feel other leadings in which he wants to be faith-

ful, especially the awe-filled work of parenting, where he finds holy moments in which he feels the warming fire of the Spirit.

Jeff feels deeply loved and deeply valued by us, epitomized by the words of one Friend: “I don’t understand what the heck you do, but I see there are some good fruits coming out of it. Keep it up.” He particularly appreciated loving support from his supervisor Noah Baker Merrill, his fellow staff, and all Friends in the body of New England Yearly Meeting. He counseled us to find someone who is filled with the God’s fire and stand with them to kindle the fire within us.

We will have the opportunity to express our gratitude and love back to Jeff.

Gretchen Baker-Smith, Junior High/Junior Yearly Meeting Coordinator, and Kathleen Wooten, Events Coordinator, were each too busy in their work to come and report to us.

2016-37 The clerk of Friends General Conference Committee, David Haines (Wellesley), reported about the challenges that FGC is facing and its response to those challenges. FGC has been funding programs from its endowment. When they began planning for a major fundraising campaign, they recognized that there was necessary work to do to clarify the mission of the organization and its relationship with constituent yearly meetings. The decision not to proceed with the fundraising campaign has resulted in some difficult decisions to reduce programs and expenses. FGC desires a stable financial picture, with matching income. The first step has been to define the purpose of FGC, which is: to foster and nurture collaboration among yearly and monthly meetings, to grow and strengthen the Religious Society of Friends, and to foster a more-inclusive community.

David reviewed some of the recent changes at FGC. The bookstore has been moved to Pendle Hill from downtown Philadelphia and the inventory of books and the staff have been reduced, but the online presence is improving. Publishing has been reduced. The Quaker Quest Program has been laid down, although it’s still available online. The Stewardship Program and the New Meetings Program (funded by grants) have been laid down, although learnings from the latter will be useful in the future. From this work, much has been learned about the fertile boundaries of our world. Staff has decreased; reliance on volunteers is increasing and the organization is discovering new ways to integrate them into the organization. The FGC Gathering is relatively unaffected, as it is self-supporting. The Quaker Cloud will continue, but is being adjusted to meet the needs of the community.

Even in the context of diminished resources, we find FGC at its core is about developing the relationship between its constituent parts (both monthly and yearly meetings) and supporting collaborations between them. Here are some examples. The Quaker Religious Education Collaborative has received support from FGC. Different yearly meetings and monthly meetings are offering programs at FGC Gathering, such as programs about racism and about serving as treasurer or clerk, as well as ones on families or welcoming newcomers. All are important topics for that cross-fertilization. NEYM has contributed much. One example is the many documents from the NEYM Young Friends program that have been provided to other YF and YAF training programs. A new program, the Spiritual Deepening Program, is still supported in its work of increasing the depth and fire in our lives and our meetings. FGC has maintained structure and support for a ministry on racism, including participation in the White Privilege Conference. FGC continues to discern its way forward, and sees much more important work in the future. Important work is rarely easy, but we can approach it with honesty and humility, and support each other in community and spirit. All are invited to the next FGC gathering, July 2–8, 2017, in Niagara, NY.

David also shared some of the challenges experienced at the FGC gathering this year. This summer’s Gathering theme was: “be humble, Be Faithful, BE BOLD.” The Gathering was held at a college in Minnesota. When choosing the gathering site, it was noted that the college had an African-American president, a student body with a significant proportion of people of color, and an acknowledged LGBTQ group. Unfortunately we learned that these factors did not translate into this being a safe place for Friends of color. Friends reported experiencing micro-aggressions during the pre-conference for Friends of color before the Gathering, and during the Gathering itself. FGC and the Gathering planning committee recognize they have lessons to learn and difficult conversations before them. It is work that must be done by the whole community. It is hard, but we have the faith, the love, and if we make mistakes the community will hold us.

2016-38 Sheila Garrett (Putney) reported that in April many Friends, including many from New England, attended the 17th annual White Privilege Conference in Philadelphia. There are many perspectives on this

work and on the conference. There are many hopes and there is much to learn. The following Friends reported on their experience.

Lizzie Szanton and Drew Chasse spoke about conference speakers who talked about such things as counseling a son about racism and safety in public, and losing a son to a police bullet. For those of us who are white people, it is easy to become paralyzed with a shame that blocks our ability to speak. It is not the job of white people to lead a movement speaking for people of color. Instead, white people must focus our efforts on confronting white supremacy. There can be no more protecting white people from feeling shame or guilt; these are feelings that have to be confronted. The White Privilege Conference has enabled Lizzie and Drew to conduct conversations with others about white privilege. They hope to use this conference further as a springboard into concrete action.

LVM Shelton (Plainfield) spoke of her second participation in the White Privilege Conference. White supremacy can be found within each of us in this culture. It is an addiction. The tools this conference put in our hands are mammoth. They change guilt and frustration into hope. Community is at the heart of this recovery. Whenever we point our fingers at others who are engaging in acts and thoughts that are contrary to spirit, three fingers are pointing back at us.

How can we apply what was learned in the White Privilege Conference in our lives as Quakers? LVM Shelton reported an opportunity at this year's FGC Gathering and pre-conference which led her to join with other Friends to dismantle further the institutional white supremacy that is found in FGC. The choice of site for this year's pre-conference and Gathering became an issue. The events were riddled with racial wounding. Friends were told to go in threes when going to town, because if they were accosted by police, there would be a second person who could record what's happening, and a third who could go for help. Further, there were a number of micro-aggressions from campus security, such as following people going to their cars. Friends of color have lifted up for a decade that there is a systemic failure of FGC to address white privilege. The FGC staff and clerks were all white, and in a parody of tokenism they asked Friends of color to sit on the stage. They refused. Friends of color should not be seen as representatives of their race, because they are not. They are people. There were efforts of friendly persuasion during the course of the week. Two specific requests were made of FGC: for the site selection committee to have a majority of Friends of color, and for an external cultural competency audit of FGC.

FGC has acted on the first request; the site selection committee now has a majority of Friends of color. The second request is more complex and more difficult for FGC to follow through. Just as our organizations receive external audits on our finances, we should receive an external audit on our cultural competence. Are not people as valuable as money? The process has begun. The staff is embarking on the process of learning more about what is required to complete such an audit. When they better understand what the audit would entail and what resources it would require, they will bring this information to the FGC Central Committee. What we need now is to support this effort and stand in solidarity with it. Lake Erie Yearly Meeting minuted that it would earmark a portion of its donation to FGC for the audit. Will NEYM do the same? What is our response?

The clerk noted that this is the first time that many of us have heard of this issue, that it is an important conversation, and that we *will* have a conversation about it, but not at this moment in our agenda. We need to learn more about this issue, and to seek guidance on how we can best respond. He proposed that LVM Shelton and David Haines lead a session for all interested Friends to help us better engage in this question and to discern a proposal to bring back to our business process. Friends approved.

Later in the business session, the clerk realized that two Friends had brought a concern to us, and that the clerk had made the mistake of giving them more work. He proposed instead that Friends permit him to select some wise Friends from among the body to facilitate this session for all Friends who wish to discern with them. Friends approved.

2016-39 Gretchen Baker-Smith spoke for the Yearly Meeting leading us in a celebration of Nat Shed's tenure and contributions during his twelve years as Friends Camp Director.

We celebrate Nat Shed! Nat transformed the Camp. Campers were asked: What do you think of when you think of Nat Shed? The answers were: his Hawaiian shirts, Nat's shed (his office cabin), Friends Camp, and fun. For them it is a place of magic, friendships, freedom, and joy. His legacy is so much more, including his vision and understanding of the Yearly Meeting ministry, openings to the Spirit, his availability around the

clock, his creation of a space where campers can connect to nature and each other and find simple joy, a place where a relationship to God has room to grow, and a place where campers remember spiritual relationship has wonder. Our numbers have been expanded because of him. His leadership involves true delight in youth and teens, and finding what they need. His knowledge of child safety and hiring, training, and supporting top notch counselors is a model. He has been a source of inspiration and knowledge to this Yearly Meeting's child safety group. He has focused on practical matters such as facilities and land that ensure the camp will go on, but he has also kept campers' signatures on the wall, where children can find the place where their parents signed and add their names below. He has collaborated with other staff in bringing in children who could not otherwise afford to come, all behind the scenes. He has projected ease and hospitality, as if running a camp were no harder than setting an extra place at dinner. With thanks and spiritual compassion and love, we send him on his way, but glad to have him accompanying Friends Camp in an auxiliary capacity for a little longer.

Young Friends prepared and shared their version of the George Fox song for Nat: "There's a light that is shining in the heart of a man..."

2016-40 Nat Shed spoke to the Yearly Meeting, stating that he is full of thanks, just thanks: thanks to the people and the ideas that shaped him, that gave him the skills, and the wisdom for what he does best, including Maria Montessori, who teaches systems can right themselves if designed in the right way; to his cousin Betty Van Wyke, an expert on child development and a Quaker; to his wife Julie de Sherbinin for the ongoing awareness for making Friends Camp more inclusive for campers and staff, and for seeing how much institutional white privilege has been built into our culture. Also she supports him, and has helped him with writing. Thanks for Bob Philbrook, for giving him a concept of the preference for the poor, and making that a priority; and the Marriott Hotel for anticipating the needs of others: good customer service, but also living out the golden rule, treating others as we would be treated. Thanks to Erica Shed, his daughter, from whom he learned so much when she was a child, and now when she is a cook and counselor, and he is thankful for the yearly meeting that has helped raise her. There have been lots of people on the Camp committee, but two in particular: David Marstaller for building and grounds, and Betsy Muench, a longstanding committee member and treasurer, with whom he could share his biggest worries, and mistakes, and times it wouldn't pull together, and the frustrations of running the Camp as a small business. She was always a rock and he is thankful for her ministry in the world of finance. The staff he has worked with have been wonderful, worshipping and sharing with him, with especially a shout-out to Jonathan, Noah, and Beth Collea, all the Quakers from Portland and Vassalboro, for wonderful messages and support, and the blessing of a chance to develop his own spiritual growth.

There are many things to do in the future: step up to trans and gender fluid children who come to Camp, support the infrastructure, and provide for children who don't have the means to come without financial support in order for the Camp to be diverse so that we look like the rest of America. America is diverse, and for the most part we are not.

2016-41 Nat Shed introduced Anna Hopkins as the next Friends Camp Director. Anna comes to us from the faculty of the Moses Brown School, where she has been the Lower School science teacher. She was raised as a member of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting and has ably served Friends Camp for five years, the last two as assistant director.

Anna talked about an email she received from a camper mom, saying that Friends Camp is just magic. Part of that has been the leadership from Nat. It's also from God who is speaking to us. We are incredibly blessed from the 12 years that Nat has spent with us. Fortunately, Nat will be remaining in a capacity to consult with Anna and the camp.

Friends felt joy for Anna's appointment and for the continuity between Nat's and Anna's leadership of Friends Camp.

2016-42 Christopher Gant (Beacon Hill), clerk of the ad hoc Long-Term Financial Planning Committee, gave a presentation of who the committee is, where it has been, and where it is going. In his written report he talked about the steps that have been taken to make the Yearly Meeting a financially sustainable organization, including the development of a statement of purpose approved last year at Sessions, setting priorities, and ongoing discussions with committees about their purposes and how they align with the Yearly Meeting's. We were walked through our current financial status and one potential pathway for retiring our deficit.

Chris reminded us that although many of us volunteer hours, our organization needs the expertise, skills, and continuity of paid staff, and we need to pay real money for it, including normal costs of inflation and including overtime as now defined by the U.S. government. The goal is to be able to approve budgets without deficits by 2019. This will require increased giving by individuals and monthly meetings.

In subsequent discussion our body also heard this question: As we try to make ourselves financially sustainable, how do we also take into consideration the amount we budget for the organizations of which we are an integral part, FGC, FUM, and FWCC, which also need financial stability?

Wednesday morning

2016-43 We opened in worship, hearing the 2015 epistle from Baltimore Yearly Meeting. As Baltimore Friends gathered to work with the theme “Living Into Right Relationship,” they gave their attention to restoring relationships that have been distorted by racism, over-consumption, and exploitation.

2016-44 Debbie Humphries (Hartford), clerk of Ministry and Counsel, shared the committee’s responsibilities of holding Meeting for Worship at Sessions and also working on the State of Society report. They have received monthly meeting State of Society reports for the Yearly Meeting that are now online. They note the centrality of worship in every monthly meeting. They notice the threads of hope and of resilience in the face of challenges. They hear a growing call to become engaged in the spirit-led movements of activism. The committee has discerned several pieces of the Yearly Meeting State of Society as follows:

1. We are trying to learn how to faithfully support and nurture gifts of ministry that are coming forth in our meetings, and we have conflicting feelings and different ideas about what ministry is.
2. We are working to keep our hearts open to the pain and suffering in our meetings, in our communities, and in the wider world, while also embracing the joy and beauty around us.
3. We hear a growing call to become engaged in the movements of spirit-led activism, holding our deep complicity in the historical structures of oppression that these movements are struggling to change.

Friends in the Session were then invited to respond to the following queries out of worship:

- Where have I seen others being the hands of God?
- What is my spiritual experience of being the hands of the Divine?

Friends responded to the queries. Honor Woodrow, recording clerk for Ministry and Counsel, participated with the clerks to help record a sense of these responses.

One Friend lifted up the importance of the small, hands-on actions, using the example of how Friends in her meeting have made quilts for babies and for Friends who are ill. Another Friend spoke of the importance of the daily activities of feeding the birds, shoveling snow, feeling part of the land, and loving it.

When people in the community do small things for each other, it can release them for the ministry to which they are called. We heard a Friend share her capacity to lead a racial justice and healing workshop because of the gift of a Friend from another meeting who cared for her child. Sometimes the power and fuel we gain is from the things that go unseen.

When elders are empowered to exert their gifts of listening, we can feel heard, and receive the gift of peace and freedom. When we trust that our elders are listening to the Spirit and not their own ego, we can be released from our agitation.

We are deeply grateful for those in the Yearly Meeting who work with our children.

The beloved community is both right now and not yet. It’s hard to think of the not-yet, but it is within, and it is now.

Sometimes we are not the hands of God, sometimes we are other parts of the body. We are no less a part of the body when we are not the hands. We are part of the whole.

When we are open to God’s guidance, Truth is revealed and healing happens.

We were encouraged to share what remains on our hearts with the person who walks towards us and is meant to hear it.

2016-45 Laura Everett, executive director of the Massachusetts Council of Churches, greeted us. The Massachusetts Council of Churches is building a network of congregations and people convinced that what unites us in Christ is stronger than what divides us. Through the statements of NEYM during the year, our voice has joined others. We are invited to work together with other churches in the body of Christ.

Other parts of the Church can learn from Friends an attentive and intentional listening to God and one another, prioritized above efficiency. We can learn from others about outreach and evangelism.

2016-46 Mary Frances Angelini (Framingham), clerk of the Archives and Historical Records Committee, reported on a very busy, successful, and eventful year. She expressed gratitude to Karen Sánchez-Eppler, who joined the work of the committee this year, and to Sara Hubner for facilitating the committee meetings. The New England Yearly Meeting archives were transferred on April 24, 2016, to the Special Collections and University Archives (SCUA) at the W.E.B. Du Bois Library of the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, as the Yearly Meeting had authorized at our sessions last year. Also as authorized at our Sessions last year, Permanent Board has been negotiating and finalizing the terms of this relationship between Yearly Meeting and the SCUA. The relationship consists of two parts: the Deed of Gift that has already been completed, and a Memorandum of Understanding that is still being worked on, to define how materials will be transferred to the SCUA. The Archives Committee is also working with the Yearly Meeting secretary to define the position of NEYM archivist, and expects to work with whoever fills the position in any capacity that the committee, the Yearly Meeting, and all its constituent members require.

The materials are being catalogued and made available online by SCUA in exciting new ways that will enrich us beyond our expectations.

The clerk expressed appreciation for Mary Frances Angelini and the entire committee for extending their time on the committee in order to complete this work.

2016-47 Sarah Gant, clerk of Permanent Board, presented more of the work approved by that body since last Sessions. Details about these items are in the written Permanent Board report to Sessions.

In partnership with New York Yearly Meeting, New England Friends were awarded a substantial three-year grant from the Shoemaker Fund of Philadelphia. The focus of this project, “Fostering Vibrant Multigenerational Meetings,” is to develop approaches for outreach, welcoming, and inclusion across the Northeast and beyond. In New England a key focus is working alongside meetings to increase our capacity to welcome and include young adults and families. With this grant we were able to create the position of Young Adult Engagement Coordinator, and hired Hilary Burgin (Beacon Hill) to fill this position. We were also able to add one more day to the work week of our Religious Education and Outreach Coordinator, Beth Collea.

Permanent Board also approved the final Friends Camp Good Governance Report and is supporting and assisting the Friends Camp Committee to grow into new practices to ensure the sound management of Friend’s Camp. This work is a necessary way for us as an organization to support the Camp, which is a central ministry of the Yearly Meeting.

The Personnel Policies of NEYM were carefully and comprehensively revised. This was a major task in which we addressed existing gaps, such as the absence of a harassment policy, and changed old structures which we have outgrown. One important change is that the policy changed the employment status of the secretary and the Camp director to regular employees so that we do not need to reappoint them at Sessions every year.

For 12 years the Yearly Meeting has been operating with a draft child safety policy. The newly reformed and repurposed Youth Ministry Committee has worked with this draft and brought it up to date. The Permanent Board approved an official child safety policy at their meeting on August 6, 2016.

2016-48 Sarah Gant proposed the following names to serve as our clerks for the coming year, beginning their service at the close of Sessions 2016:

Presiding Clerk: Fritz Weiss (Hanover)

Recording Clerks: James Grace (Beacon Hill) and Rachel Walker Cogbill (Plainfield)

Reading Clerks: Jeremiah Dickinson (Wellesley) and Katherine Fisher (Beacon Hill)

One Friend pointed out that all individuals on the clerks table and all the paid staff are white. This does not feel welcoming, nor consistent with our testimony on equality, nor with our deeply felt concerns on racism and white privilege.

Friends approved these appointments.

2016-49 The clerk expressed his appreciation to Andy Grannell, who is completing his term as reading clerk, for being a wise mentor, for helping to shape the agenda for these Sessions, and for helping him better understand his new role as clerk.

2016-50 Elias Sánchez-Eppler, clerk of Finance Committee, reminded us of our interlinked responsibilities. If we approve the budgets for Friends Camp and for NEYM, we need to support them. We also need to volunteer to serve, where needed, such as on the Friends Camp Committee.

2016-51 Friends approved the proposed Friends Camp budget.

2016-52 Elias addressed some questions about the budget for the operating division of the Yearly Meeting. Friends approved the proposed budget for the operating division of the Yearly Meeting, expressing some “fear and trembling” as we continue to approve budgets with projected deficits, with the intention of growing into sustainable financial condition.

2016-53 Louis Cox (Burlington), Bonnie Norton (Wellesley), and Lisa Appleton (Mt. Toby) from the Correspondence Committee read the draft 2016 epistle. Friends expressed gratitude for the work of the committee so far and suggested further revisions. Friends were invited to direct suggestions in writing to the Correspondence Committee as it continues its work.

Wednesday evening

2016-54 Kristina Keefe-Perry (Fresh Pond), Minister for Earth Community for the American Baptist Churches of Massachusetts, prayed us into worship.

2016-55 We heard the 2015 epistle from Northern Yearly Meeting, which focused its sessions on climate change and chose to “take steps, even if they are not perfect.”

2016-56 The clerk noted that during these Sessions we have explicitly thanked some of the staff members and volunteers who have worked on our behalf. There are also other volunteers that have served in a number of capacities all during the year. We would like to honor and thank all the volunteers, all the committee members, and everyone who has contributed during the year to the life of the body.

2016-57 We approved the Unity Agenda which includes:

- Accepting all staff reports
- Accepting board, committee and representative reports
- Accepting memorial minutes for James Ellingboe, Cynthia Fisk, John Foster, David Hall, Nancy Isaacs, Peter Keenan, Annette (Anne) Kriebel, and Ishmael Rosas.
- Approving the clerks’ authorization to make edits and corrections.

2016-58 We approved the following bank resolutions:

1. That Shearman Taber be appointed New England Yearly Meeting treasurer for the ensuing year or until a successor is appointed and qualified.
2. That Elizabeth Muench be appointed Friends Camp treasurer and Robb Spivey be appointed assistant Friends Camp treasurer for the ensuing year or until successors are appointed and qualified. The Friends Camp treasurer and assistant treasurer will work under the oversight of the NEYM treasurer and the Friends Camp director.
3. That Shearman Taber, Yearly Meeting treasurer, be authorized to open and close bank accounts in the name of New England Yearly Meeting as needed.
4. That Elizabeth Muench, Friends Camp treasurer, and Robb Spivey, assistant Friends Camp treasurer, be authorized to open and close bank accounts in the name of Friends Camp as needed.
5. That Shearman Taber, NEYM treasurer; Ben Guaraldi, immediate past treasurer; Sarah Gant, Permanent Board clerk; and Noah Baker Merrill, Yearly Meeting secretary, be designated as alternate signers, individually, of all bank accounts of New England Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of

Friends, except those checks for greater than \$5,000, which shall require the signatures of two signers from the list above.

6. That Anna Hopkins, Friends Camp director; Jeffrey D. Adelberg, assistant director; Elizabeth Muench, Friends Camp treasurer; Robb Spivey, assistant Friends Camp treasurer; and a designated member of the Friends Camp Committee be authorized, individually, as signers of the Friends Camp bank accounts, except those checks for greater than \$5,000, which shall require the signatures of two signers from the list above.
7. That Anna Hopkins, Friends Camp director, be authorized to open credit and vendor accounts in the name of Friends Camp as needed, subject to review by the Friends Camp treasurer.

2016-59 We approved the names brought forward for committee service by Nominating Committee clerk, Constance Kincaid-Brown. (*See page 75*)

2016-60 Fran Brokaw (Hanover), who along with Lori Martin (New Haven) coordinates SAGE (Support Across Generations for Elders), told us about the first year of the program, modeled after a successful program in NYYM. We were reminded of how close grief is to all of us, which means that we all have deep love. The vision of the program is to train people to be resources for their meetings and Quarterly Meetings to work with people across generations, not only elders but everyone.

2016-61 Noah Baker Merrill, Yearly Meeting secretary, sang: “We have no time but this present time, ye have no time but this present time, therefore prize your time for your soul’s sake.” The message he has for us has been given in every activity of this Yearly Meeting so far, even in the coffee house: “I am just one more voice, trying to testify to the Life.”

He told a story of a people who were seeking for a place of lost glory and transformation, a city, a castle in the sky. Then just as they were landing at the entrance, the city began to collapse. At a moment of crisis, they fled to safety, to what they are familiar with. They abandoned the city, but two children turned around and looked back. Within the shell of the structure there was an ancient, living tree with leaves spreading across the heavens and roots going down deep into the ground. It was never the structure of the castle that had been holding up that place. The power was the brilliant, radiant light shining in the heart of the tree. Who are we in the story? Are we the people running for cover, or clinging to the stones as they fall from the sky? Are we the children? He wonders.

This year he’s been drawn to the tides of loss and waves of grief in our lives and in our society, the sense that the whole world that people were told they could look for is crumbling. There is a sense of loss of poor white people—that they have been at least the second lowest class in this country, but even that may be taken away from them. This empowers hatred in our country. There is the greater grief of black people who lose family members to violence. Loss and grief don’t know morality. In Black Lives Matter we understand that hearts are breaking and we feel that suffering.

Can we feel and embrace loss, and also feel and embrace hope, neither of them negating the other? He believes we can do that tonight.

What has been said before is still important to say again. We still have the opportunity to be faithful. In fact right now is the only time we ever have to be faithful. We are, even now, thriving, mourning, celebrating, rejoicing, whole, imperfect, perfect. We’re the ones we’ve been waiting for, if we can be present with our hearts and eyes wide open to all that is passing away and all that is being revealed. This is our opportunity, the same one we always had. We have glimpsed the glory. Now is our opportunity to live as if the Truth is true.

2016-62 Janet Hough (Cobscook), Vassalboro Quarterly Meeting Ministry and Counsel clerk, shared the deep discernment process concerning our response to the concern from Vassalboro Quarterly Meeting for the Friends Ugandan Safe Transport Fund that has occurred at Sessions following the direction of Minute 2016-13. This led to a new minute for the body to consider. They presented the following report of their process:

Since Sunday, we have had numerous conversations with individuals and groups of Friends regarding the Vassalboro QM minute calling NEYM to endorse the Friends Ugandan Safe Transport Fund. This season-ing resulted in a new minute. This report speaks of our process and summarizes several related concerns which arose:

- In calling attention to the dangers facing LGBT people in Uganda, we are answering the clear call of faith, to stand in solidarity with those who are vulnerable and oppressed. We are keenly aware of the fact that we have no right to speak on behalf of Ugandan Friends. We have thought carefully about how to proceed so as not to unintentionally put them in danger. Friends among us who have spoken face to face with Uganda Yearly Meeting leaders about this concern helped redraft the minute.
- New England Friends will continue to seek ways to strengthen our bonds of love and unity with Ugandan Friends. We remain eager to learn from their perspective and experience, and hope for further intervisitation as way opens.
- Just as our own country cannot be defined by one issue, as urgent as that issue may be, Uganda is a multi-faceted country with many challenges and also many blessings. By focusing on this specific situation of severe injustice in an African country, we may risk inadvertently reinforcing the prevailing stereotype that African peoples and African countries are more violent and inhumane than other peoples and places. This stereotype is a feature of white supremacy that we recognize and repudiate.
- The work of the Friends Ugandan Safe Transport Fund is undertaken with a high degree of confidentiality to protect the safety of those who are doing this work on the ground. Although we recognize its necessity, this secrecy does not always rest easy with us. We are calling for this endorsement with a prayer for God's grace in releasing us from the need to have all the information.
- The actions of certain American Christians have fueled the flames of homophobic hysteria and greatly increased the level of risk under which LGBT Ugandans live within their own families and communities. Uganda has been the locus of particular activity by anti-gay Christians from New England, directly resulting in the 2014 anti-gay law and a new culture of social acceptance for violence against LGBT people. This degree of socially and legally sanctioned violence is a new and externally introduced phenomenon that is appalling to African Friends. As American people of faith with long-standing commitments to peace and to solidarity with Africans, what is our responsibility for calling out the ways in which our fellow American people of faith are using the Bible to spread hatred and violence in Uganda?

We appreciate the input of those who had the knowledge to help this deep discernment.

We approved the following minute on the Friends Ugandan Safe Transport Fund:

Friends gathered at New England Yearly Meeting Annual Sessions at Castleton, Vermont, August 6–11, 2016, abhor violence inflicted on lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT) individuals, whether it occurs in a nightclub in Orlando, Florida, on the streets of one of our communities, or on the other side of the globe. During our Sessions, one of our members has given powerful ministry from her deep and well-seasoned concern for LGBT individuals in Uganda, where the government has promoted policies threatening the lives, freedom, and human dignity of all LGBT Ugandans and those who support and assist them. They have been forced to leave their homes, denied basic rights, beaten, imprisoned, or killed; they live in constant fear. She has brought this concern forward through her meeting and quarterly meeting, and has travelled under her meeting's care to carry her concern to a number of other meetings.

Our Friend has lifted up the work of the "Friends Ugandan Safe Transport Fund," a project of Olympia (Washington) Monthly Meeting (North Pacific Yearly Meeting), which provides financial support such as housing and transport for LGBT Ugandans and their allies who are fleeing their homeland. A number of Friends meetings in the United States and elsewhere have endorsed and/or financially supported the Fund.

New England Yearly Meeting publicly endorses the work of the Friends Ugandan Safe Transport Fund and encourages individuals and meetings within NEYM to consider contributing financially to its vital work. We hold in prayer all individuals affected, and those who are helping people find safe refuge.

2016-63 Jay O'Hara presented the work of an ad hoc working group of over 30 people which has been working at Sessions to determine two concrete actions on sustainability to take within the next 12 months to meet the recommendation of the FWCC Plenary to affect climate change, as directed by the body in Minute 2016-29.

Friends wrestled with the proposal, affirmed the group's work, suggested improvements, and ministered about how we can take this work forward in our life together. This ministry included an expression of joy that there are those among us who are actively considering further civil disobedience, with a reminder that we still have a Fund for Sufferings to provide assistance to those who encounter financial difficulty on account of

their conscience. Also, this is a great time to work with both ecumenical and interfaith groups and with other religious bodies.

The clerk expressed his sense that we are almost there, and asked the group to take our feedback and report back to us tomorrow morning.

2016-64 Our hearts were touched earlier this week when we heard the pain and honesty in the reports of the experiences of Friends of color and other attenders at the 2016 FGC Gathering and in the report from several Friends who attended the April 2016 White Privilege Conference in Philadelphia. We felt the spirit move us to affirmation and action. The clerk requested that we hold a threshing session to determine our initial step (Minute 2016-38).

LVM Shelton and David Haines reported on the discernment of these Friends and proposed a minute for our discernment.

The body engaged in a deep, vulnerable and extended exercise in response to the proposed minute. We truly labored over the work and traveled over the rocky ground we needed to traverse.

Some were uncomfortable with the words “white supremacy” and “colonized” in the minute. These are strong words; one Friend described them as “brutal.” Not everyone present agreed that these words are accurate as a description of our condition. We do not share a common understanding of these words. Friends made many suggestions of other words or phrases we might use together to express how we are affected by the pervasive structure of racism and power in our culture—“white privilege,” “complicit in” and “wounded by” were suggested. Others felt that although these are hard words they are honest. “Supremacy” refers to a system that empowers white people. “Colonized” is an accurate word for how we are inhabited by the culture without our consent. Fear or denial of a hard truth causes us to forget our deep connections with each other. We need to release our fear to hear each other clearly.

We are each only able to truly speak from and know the world from our own experience.

We heard how the experience of Friends of color and the experience of white Friends differ even within our beloved Quaker communities and gatherings; even this week at Sessions. Only a few among us know first-hand the experience of “driving while black,” or the constant fear of wondering if our children are safe, even when simply leaving the campus of Castleton University to walk to town to get a milkshake.

We long to find the right words, but we do not know the right words. Yet we are clear we want to do this work. When we know Truth experientially, but do not know each other’s experience, we only know a portion of the Truth.

This minute is an important instance of speaking Truth to power. This minute represents the hard truth of Friends of color. The largely white Yearly Meeting is the power that needs to receive this Truth.

We want to grow; we want to become whole. We have received this minute and have been exercised. We want to invite others into the same experience. With our hearts broken open we approved the following minute, uniting with it with both joy and pain. This is the truth God has brought us to at this time. We feel the Love in these words.

We are complicit in white supremacy. We at New England Yearly Meeting have been “colonized” by our white supremacist culture and fall short of our full potential as a gathered body of Quaker Meetings because of this colonization.

We commit to engaging in interrupting white supremacy in ourselves:

- within individuals
- interpersonally
- in our meetings
- and at all system levels of NEYM

To start this, we ask Permanent Board to explore an external cultural competency audit of New England Yearly Meeting.

We support Friends General Conference, an organization of which we are a part, in its efforts to interrupt white supremacy in its organization.

We commit to support fundraising by the New England Yearly Meeting FGC committee to raise \$4,000 from our membership and our monthly meetings by the end of 2016. These funds will be available to FGC towards the cost of an external cultural competency audit if FGC decides to have one conduct-

ed. If more than \$4,000 is raised, we direct the Permanent Board of NEYM to find use for the additional funds to support the work of interrupting white supremacy.

The clerk asked us to go forward in love, in confidence, and boldness, knowing that God is with us.

Thursday morning

2016-65 We opened in worship, hearing North Pacific Yearly Meeting's 2015 epistle focusing on the theme "Quaker Craft: Becoming the Quakers the World Needs," a skill which is learned experientially through practice and teaching.

2016-66 Doug Gwyn, pastor of Durham Friends Meeting and author of many books, Quaker historian and Biblical scholar, brought us a Bible half hour series to match our Yearly Meeting theme, "Being the Hands of God: a Call to Radical Faithfulness." Using stories of first-generation Quakers in the 17th century, he showed us their lives of radical faithfulness, what it meant for these early Quakers to answer the call in a way that often stripped them of their possessions, their liberty, and sometimes their lives, and opened the Bible to them in fresh ways based on their experience. Doug Gwyn suggested the early Quakers could be our intermediaries to a better understanding of the Bible, as he shared excerpts of their writings. We learned that these Quakers, often very young, lived in tumultuous times and were willing to risk everything for their faith. They supported each other. We can learn much from their stories. They had a clarity, born of crisis, that we can but admire, and that led them to transformation.

Early Quakers lived Biblical stories through their lives. Jacob, the twin who stayed at home, was their metaphor for finding the Spirit internally; the bondage in Egypt was their struggle in the everyday world; the Red Sea was a symbol of the narrow path to a transformation of a people; Jericho, the city taken down by loud shouts, was a declaration that the Lord's day had come; Revelation was the end of a corrupt social structure; and as Jesus' 70 disciples were sent out in pairs, the Valiant 60 went out in the world preaching Truth. They read the Bible, experienced these themes in their lives, and then in turn their experience affected the way they read the Bible.

Doug Gwyn told us of specific ways that these early Friends created a community as they took radical actions, sharing examples and writings from George Fox, Margaret Fell, James Naylor, Ann and John Ogden, John Burnyeat, Sarah Jones, Sarah Blackboro, and Francis Howgill. They were frequently imprisoned for their beliefs. They wrote epistles, as did the early Christian church, with language which intentionally echoed Biblical passages. They reimagined a social order that included universally consistent pricing instead of bargaining and they did not take oaths or recite creeds. They used nonviolent direct action in their Lambs War. They were willing to suffer for what they believed.

We, informed by the early Quakers, are challenged to put ourselves in a place of crisis that will challenge our comfort zone, find the place where we can take a stand, awaiting where the Lord will meet us, going through the Red Sea of transformation to the Promised Land. We have a choice of staying in bondage in Egypt or taking radical transformative action.

2016-67 The clerks brought back Minute 2016-27 from Monday evening, having incorporated suggestions from Friends.

Drawing from the spirit and words of the Connecticut Valley Quarterly Meeting minute on climate change and the epistle from the second New England Climate Spring, Friends approved the following:

Friends at the New England Yearly Meeting Annual Sessions at Castleton, V, August 6–11, 2016, have heard a Divine call to the witness of addressing climate change. We affirm the overwhelming scientific consensus that greenhouse gases released by human activity are causing climate change, that these changes threaten life on our planet as we know it, and that we have a responsibility to address the very real threats that will impact both rich and poor. Those on earth who have contributed least to this crisis are likely to suffer most from it.

This is not just one concern among many to be carried by only some among us. We all live on this planet and are all complicit in altering its climate. It is incumbent upon every Friend and every Friends Meeting to discover how God is leading us to do our part to reverse this great threat.

As in past times of crisis, the strength and love of our community life will make it possible for Friends to see to what they are called, and carry it out faithfully whatever the cost. We can engage with each other tenderly and hold each other lovingly accountable to move from fear into courage, in response to this crisis. This is the manner in which Friends have always responded to great moral challenges of their own time.

Recognizing that we, gathered here, are shaped and limited by our own economic and social positions, nevertheless the divine Witness challenges us, in compassion and in love for all children of God, and for the beautiful earth, to pray, wait, and act with a focus and fearlessness appropriate to the urgency of the times. Love requires it of us.

Friends received this with gratitude.

2016-68 Jay O'Hara and Meg Klepack presented recommendations of the ad-hoc working group discerning what two concrete actions the Yearly Meeting could commit to this year. Friends were reminded that on Monday evening we had directed the Yearly Meeting to take two concrete actions as challenged to do by the FWCC minute on sustainability (Minute 2016-28). The ad-hoc working group proposed:

Gathered in our midst this week are those who are led to take bold public prophetic action. These Friends, gathered as a working group, will convene early this fall for discernment of God's leading into ongoing nonviolent direct action for climate justice, rooted in the vision of faithfulness described movingly by Doug Gwyn in our Bible half-hours this week.

1. We will listen to how we will, as a Yearly Meeting, collaborate with and support the actions of this working group.
2. Building on the minute we have adopted on climate change this Session, we ask each Monthly Meeting and constituent body of the Yearly Meeting to enter into an intentional process of discerning:
 - God's leading for each meeting and its members to take concrete action, and to commit to taking action before next Sessions
 - what further steps God is calling us to take as a Yearly Meeting to address this issue.

New England Yearly Meeting will hold a consultation in spring of 2017 to receive what has risen during the year and to discern together where the Yearly Meeting is being led.

Friends approved committing to these actions.

2016-69 Lisa Graustein (Beacon Hill), convener, and Hannah Zwirner Forsythe (Beacon Hill) of the working group planning for the Living Faith Gathering, shared that the first of two events will occur on November 5, 2016, at Portland Friends School, followed by an optional dinner and dance. Those who come will be fed, nurtured, and will have many opportunities for fellowship, prayer, and fun. There will be programs for all ages. Friends who are interested in helping to plan these gatherings are invited to contact the planning group. These are also short-term opportunities to serve as a part of planning one or more of these gatherings.

2016-70 We received the epistle for this year from the Correspondence Committee with great thankfulness for the movement of the Spirit this week. (See page 80)

2016-71 We heard and accepted the reports from our visitors to the other business meetings that are a part of NEYM.

2016-72 Kathleen Wooten (Fresh Pond), Events Coordinator, shared that every year she experiences a little more love and a little less chaos. The community has come together to help each other, in ways small and large. This is the first year her daughter has attended Sessions, and she was in our hands. Kathleen is filled with gratitude and love, and caffeine.

She thanked John Humphries, Sessions clerk for the last 3 years, and gave a special gift, a T-shirt reading on the front: "I was YM Sessions Clerk for 3 long years, and all I got was this Tee Shirt... and...", and on the back: "The deep gratitude of the Quakers of The New England Yearly Meeting."

2016-73 Noah Baker Merrill presented a report about attendance at this year's Sessions and about the continuing experience of the pay-as-led approach to fees. This year 595 people attended Sessions. There were 83 first-time attenders, and 125 attenders in the 0–18 age group—both increases from last year.

Other yearly meetings are considering pay-as-led rather than traditional fees following our model. We have similar breakdowns of figures to last year: 44 percent of attenders paid less than what it costs, 28% of attenders paid more (which is an improvement over past years), and 28 percent of attenders paid the traditional amount. Equalization contributions from monthly meetings are \$10,000 more than budgeted for. Altogether Sessions revenue was a little over \$214,000.

2016-74 In worship and song, the children and youth joined us.

2016-75 We heard the epistles from the week, from nursery through adult.

2016-76 We closed in worship, purposing to meet on August 5–10, 2017, at Castleton University, Vermont, and encouraged to attend the Living Faith Gatherings in November 2016 and April 2017.

Approved Budget

FY17 Approved Budget

**New England Yearly Meeting Operating Division
FY2017 Budget**

FY2017 Budget Proposal Income Category	Actual Amounts			Budgeted Amounts		Annual % Change		FY17 Budget Proposal
	FY13	FY14	FY15	FY15	FY16	FY15 Actual to FY17	FY16 Budget to FY17	
4010 Individual Contributions*								
General Fund Contributions			119,050		126,600	4.66%	3.00%	130,400
Equalization Contributions			15,589		8,400	-12.26%	42.86%	12,000
Other Contributions			107		-	-	-	-
Total 4010 Individual Contributions	126,718	134,764	134,746		135,000	2.80%	5.48%	142,400
4020 Monthly Meeting Contributions*								
General Fund Contributions			304,705		326,500	5.06%	3.00%	336,300
Equalization Contributions			15,550		6,500	-12.15%	84.62%	12,000
Other Contributions			450		-	-	-	-
Total 4020 Monthly Meeting Contributions	309,535	306,912	320,705		333,000	4.21%	4.59%	348,300
4030 Organizations Contributions	2,248	943	-		-	-	-	-
4050 Interest and Dividend Income	10,587	3,719	2,572		6,000	52.74%	0.00%	6,000
4055 Student Loan Interest	-	-	-		-	-	-	-
4070 Books and Other Items	15,554	17,094	14,282		18,000	4.18%	-13.89%	15,500
4077 Consulting Fee Contribution	35	-	-		-	-	-	-
4080 Retreat Program Fees	48,995	46,143	51,887		50,000	-1.84%	0.00%	50,000
4085 Sessions Program Fees	155,634	208,553	185,007		210,000	6.54%	0.00%	210,000
Funds from the Legacy Gift	-	18,391	25,000		20,000	-100.00%	-100.00%	-
Total Income	669,306	736,519	734,199	736,500	772,000	2.56%	0.03%	772,200

FY17 Approved Budget (continued)

FY2017 Budget Proposal		Actual Amounts			Budgeted Amounts		Annual % Change		FY17
Expenses		FY13	FY14	FY15	FY15	FY16	FY15 Actual to FY17	FY16 Budget to FY17	Budget Proposal
Category									
4000 Reconciliation Discrepancies									
5000 Staff									
5010 Salaries & Wages		248,931	258,847	275,498	273,482	279,852	1.93%	2.27%	286,208
5020 Payroll Taxes		16,274	18,911	19,642	20,904	21,409	5.58%	2.27%	21,895
5030 Benefits		71,270	83,227	65,948	82,284	79,935	7.03%	-5.50%	75,541
Total 5000 Staff		336,476	360,985	361,088	376,670	381,196	3.08%	0.64%	383,644
5100 General & Administration		41,531	56,409	47,904	54,365	59,615	10.71%	-1.51%	58,715
5300 Travel & Conferences		28,298	32,033	32,093	33,200	36,600	3.53%	-6.01%	34,400
6000 Programs									
6110 Sessions Room & Board		153,233	150,142	152,148	160,000	170,000	5.70%	0.00%	170,000
6112 Retreats Room & Board		33,372	37,191	44,054	30,000	34,000	-7.12%	11.76%	38,000
6125 Program Expenses		11,193	22,588	26,199	26,400	27,700	5.03%	4.33%	28,900
6130 Committee Expenses		10,028	17,606	18,160	26,940	31,540	25.29%	-9.62%	28,505
6160 Program Support		-	-	-	-	-	∞ %	∞ %	4,020
Total 6000 Programs		221,186	227,527	240,561	243,340	263,240	5.83%	2.35%	269,425
6140 Books and Other Items		13,293	13,151	11,110	15,000	14,500	10.23%	-6.90%	13,500
6200 Support of Other Organizations									
6310-625 FGC FUM FWCC		41,310	40,270	40,351	41,449	39,199	-1.41%	0.07%	39,225
6330 Friends' Organizations		2,250	2,250	2,250	2,250	2,250	2.20%	4.44%	2,350
6575 Other Organizations		-	-	-	650	-	-	-	-
6590 Ecumenical Organizations		4,319	4,400	4,400	4,400	4,400	0.00%	0.00%	4,400
6200 Total Support of Other Organizations		47,879	46,920	47,001	48,749	45,849	-1.10%	0.27%	45,975
6600 Publications		10,240	14,254	14,972	9,600	7,500	-6.82%	73.33%	13,000
Total Expenses		698,939	751,279	754,729	780,924	808,500	4.15%	1.26%	818,659
Net Operating Income		(29,633)	(14,760)	(20,529)	(44,424)	(36,500)			(46,459)
Excluding Legacy Gift Funds		(29,633)	(33,151)	(45,529)	(69,424)	(56,500)			(46,459)

FY17 Approved Friends Camp Budget

FY2017 Operating Budget Proposal Income	Actual	Budgeted	Annual % Change		
Category	FY15	FY16	FY15 Actual to FY17	FY16 Budget to FY17	FY17 Budget Proposal
Contributions					
Unrestricted Contributions	39,124	43,908	-5.96%	-21.20%	34,600
Restricted Campership Contributions	14,408	19,600	12.64%	-6.73%	18,280
Restricted Donations for Asset Purchases	-	-	∞ %	∞ %	16,040
Total Contributions	53,532	63,508	13.47%	8.52%	68,920
Operating & Miscellaneous Revenues					
Conferences, Rentals & Merchandise sales	24,699	23,790	0.00%	3.83%	24,700
Total Summer Program Fees	303,969	310,790	1.18%	0.14%	311,210
Total Investment & Miscellaneous Income	5,381	36	-92.53%	-16.67%	30
Total Operating & Miscellaneous Revenues	334,049	334,616	0.28%	0.40%	335,940
Total Income	387,581	398,124	2.20%	1.69%	404,860

FY2017 Operating Budget Proposal Expenses	Actual	Budgeted	Annual % Change		
Category	FY15	FY16	FY15 Actual to FY17	FY16 Budget to FY17	FY17 Budget Proposal
Total Staffing Expenses*	179,057	199,148	2.02%	-6.42%	186,367
Program, Fundraising, Supplies & Accounting	48,053	44,840	4.01%	15.93%	51,985
Campership Expenses			0.00%	0.00%	
Youth Campership Support Expenses	23,879	12,200	-12.51%	49.84%	18,280
Campership Fundraising	1,292	1,200	11.29%	33.33%	1,600
Total Campership Expenses	25,171	13,400	-11.13%	48.36%	19,880
Total Food & Kitchen Supplies	52,429	49,334	-1.23%	3.68%	51,150
Buildings & Grounds	12,505	14,500	7.68%	0.00%	14,500
Ocupancy & Utilities	7,462	8,450	9.21%	5.33%	8,900
Travel & Conferences	16,233	17,197	3.83%	1.76%	17,500
Depreciation & Amortization	17,580	17,967	1.91%	1.62%	18,258
Insurance	10,660	10,868	1.12%	0.29%	10,900
Fixed Asset Purchases, from Operating Fund	6,464	22,420	98.31%	13.38%	25,420
Total Operating Expenses	375,613	398,124	3.82%	1.69%	404,860
Net Operating Income	11,969	-			-

Unity Agenda

The items listed on the Unity Agenda were introduced in the Advanced Documents and proposed for consideration on Wednesday evening. Prior to Wednesday evening, Friends were encouraged to familiarize themselves with the Unity Agenda, to read the written information pertaining to each item and to consult with the Friends listed as resource people about any questions or concerns, in order to be ready to act on the items without discussion on Wednesday. This process helps free additional time for corporate worship and discernment. The following items were initially included on the Unity Agenda.

Decisions & Actions Concerning ...	See page
Accepting Staff Reports	32
Accepting Board, Committee & Representative Reports	40
Approving Bank Resolutions <i>removed from Unity Agenda</i>	
Accepting Memorial Minutes	67
Approving Clerks' Authorization to Make Edits & Corrections	below

Minute to Authorize Edits and Corrections

Friends authorize the presiding, recording, and reading clerks to make and approve edits, clarifications, and corrections to the minutes of NEYM Sessions 2016.

Staff Reports

Yearly Meeting Secretary

Oh! be faithful! ... for ye have no time, but this present time: therefore prize your time for your souls' sake. (George Fox, 1652)

Dear Friends,

I feel a rising tide of Life among Friends in New England. Even though so much more remains to be done, that sense of new Life is spreading. One of the most exciting changes I see in the administrative aspect of my work is that we are indeed turning our attention toward the “Why”—the core purpose of our structures and organization. **Now is our time to live into the work we've discerned is set before us, helping one another to become—in the words of Friends World Committee's Robin Mohr—“the Friends that the world needs.”**

Last year at Sessions (Minute 2015-64), Friends approved the following core purpose to guide the work of the part of the Yearly Meeting that is an organization:

New England Yearly Meeting of Friends connects the people of the Religious Society of Friends across the six New England states. New England Yearly Meeting supports and strengthens a vibrant and growing web of monthly meetings, quarterly meetings, and other Friends communities under our care, helping us do together what we cannot do alone. In all our work, we strive to obey the promptings of the Spirit to bring healing, wholeness, and transformation of ourselves and to the world.

We also approved the following priorities to focus our work: 1, Spiritual Development and Religious Education; 2, Outreach, Welcome, Inclusion, and Witness; 3, Relationship and Communication; 4, Leadership and Administration; and 5, Stewardship, Integrity, and Accountability. *For detailed descriptions of these priorities see the Minutes of New England Yearly Meeting of Friends, Minute 2015-64.*

Here is a glimpse into some of the work that has been done this year in the five priority areas. While I have played an active role in supporting much of what has been accomplished, of course this isn't my work alone. **We have done this work together, with God's help.**

Spiritual Development & Religious Education

Permanent Board approved **an experiment of hosting two large regional day-long gatherings for worship, spiritual nurture, connection and strengthening our witness in the coming year.** Preparations are underway for a fall “Living Faith” gathering on November 5, 2016, in Portland, ME; and one on April 8, 2017, in Providence, RI. *More information about this new initiative will be shared soon, including at Sessions.*

The new SAGE (Support Across Generations for Elders) program continues to bring tested approaches to **helping our meetings support our elders**, an important part of strengthening the capacity of our local meetings for pastoral care. *See the SAGE report in these documents for details.*

In May, a working group of **Yearly Meeting Ministry and Counsel** hosted a **daylong event offering support and connection for those caring for the spiritual life of their local meetings.** *We hope this will be the first of many such opportunities. See the Ministry and Counsel report for more information.*

Outreach, Welcome, Inclusion & Witness

We organized a dynamic conference on outreach which drew Friends from throughout New England and from several other yearly meetings. This community of practice is thriving; New England Friends are at the heart of the conversation and at the growing edges of the work. Another such gathering, a weekend for Friends and local meetings just beginning to explore outreach and welcoming, is tentatively envisioned for the fall of 2017.

In partnership with New York Yearly Meeting, **New England Friends were awarded a substantial three-year grant from the Shoemaker Fund of Philadelphia.** The focus of this project, **“Fostering Vibrant Multigenerational Meetings,”** is to **develop approaches for outreach, welcoming and inclusion across the Northeast and beyond.** In New England a key focus is working alongside meetings to increase our capacity to welcome and include young adults and families. *More information on this project will be shared as part of the Permanent Board's report at Sessions.*

With support from Obadiah Brown's Benevolent Fund, **we are partnering with Friends Journal on Season Three of the QuakerSpeak video project.**

The four videos will lift up the life and ministry of Friends in New England, with a particular focus on local meetings doing the essential work of fostering faithfulness—welcoming youth & families, deepening worship, supporting ministry and welcoming newcomers. *Look for Jon Watts, director of Quaker-Speak, at Sessions.*

We've awarded the first two rounds of grants from the new NEYM Future Fund of the Legacy Grants. Sessions will be an exciting opportunity to hear what we've learned and offer guidance as we enter the second year of nourishing and empowering the ministry of New England Friends. *See the Legacy Grants Committee report for more information.*

Relationship & Communication

This year I partnered with the Presiding Clerk, with guidance and input from many others, to **issue time-sensitive public statements to lift up a more public voice and witness on pressing issues of concern to New England Friends.** *Links to these statements are provided elsewhere in these Advance Documents, and an oral report and request for guidance will be made during business meeting at Sessions this year.*

In May we launched an experiment with a new monthly e-mail newsletter. Response has been overwhelmingly positive, but we're just beginning to learn how this new channel can help the living water to flow more freely among Friends. It's one more way to share stories, exchange resources and carry shared concerns, and strengthen our witness to Love. We're also exploring regular communications addressing more focused interests, particularly religious education and outreach. We will be growing into these efforts over the coming year. To support the increasing call for quality communication, we've transitioned to a new e-mail communications platform that integrates with our database.

The **upcoming Living Faith Gatherings** mentioned above are also intended as a substantive response to the call for more large-scale gatherings of Friends from across New England.

We have tested ways to promote more opportunities to connect, both in person and online, Friends who share common concerns, experiences and roles. From **periodic virtual meetings for clerks of quarterly meetings and the presiding clerk of Yearly Meeting to intimate conversations among Quaker parents hosted by Friends with experience in family ministry, the ways we connect to help one another live our faith are flourishing**—and we're running to keep up with the new life that is emerging.

Leadership & Administration

We're continuing to overhaul and improve Yearly Meeting's administrative and financial support of local meetings, informed by an increasing number of requests from local meetings for assistance, resource-sharing and more effective ways to perform the tasks that each of our meetings faces—among other things, managing finances; providing training for clerks, recording clerks and other key roles; considering issues of child safety, insurance and legal matters; finding funds and making decisions to steward property.

As the fruit of a dynamic and robust process of discernment, **we are bringing to Sessions a recommendation to hire a new Director for our Yearly Meeting's Friends Camp.** A key aspiration as we look toward the future is how Friends Camp and our other youth ministries can connect, inform and nourish each other.

We've continued to review how we provide support to Yearly Meeting committees and envisioned new ways to support this work in the coming year. We plan to improve dissemination of essential information for clerks and committee members, including calls with the presiding clerk to orient committee clerks for the coming year, help with online meetings, and support in scheduling and hosting committee meetings.

Supporting increased participation of New England Friends in wider communities, both among Friends and in ecumenical and interfaith circles, has included renewed attention to supporting Friends who represent us on state councils of churches, bringing more attention to the role of the Yearly Meeting's Ecumenical Council, and participation by Friends serving in leadership in gatherings of denominational leaders (both in New England and nationally) and in conferences on digital ministry and religious education.

This year **we reorganized and improved the office of the Yearly Meeting hosted by Worcester (MA) Meeting,** for the first time providing each staff member with a desk and creating a conference room. We've also continued to take steps to provide the staff with the tools they need (purchasing computers, for example) and **invest in appropriate professional development opportunities for Yearly Meeting staff** to keep their skills current and to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of their work on our behalf.

Stewardship, Integrity & Accountability

This spring **we launched the new Youth Ministries Committee, whose first task is bringing forward a proposed child safety policy for the**

youth programs under the direct oversight of NEYM. This addresses what had been a critical gap for our Yearly Meeting, which until now had no formally approved policy, despite our dynamic and thriving youth ministries.

Continuing our progress toward financial sustainability, and thanks to the generosity of many Friends, **a successful matching challenge campaign played a key role in meeting last year's fundraising goal following Sessions 2015.** *See the Development Committee's report for more information.*

We completed the relocation of the Yearly Meeting Archives from Providence to the University of Massachusetts at Amherst that Sessions approved last year. Now a new phase begins: cataloguing the main collection, communicating with local meetings, and gathering the many backlogged troves of Friends records from throughout New England. A key part of this effort is putting into place the staffing and support that the Archives will require as they become a more and more useful and accessible resource for our journey as Quaker faith communities.

Bringing to completion a process of many years, and thanks to the advocacy and diligence of Nat Shed as Friends Camp Director, **we completed the Friends Camp Good Governance process.** Now the work before us, with the leadership of a new Friends Camp Director, is to live into the recommendations of that process to ensure the Friends Camp ministry remains vibrant.

This year also saw **the completion of another multi-year effort—a complete revision of the NEYM Personnel Manual,** a key part of our commitment as a spiritual community to witness to our faith by being a good employer.

An Invitation

I feel clear that the most important single action I've taken this year has been to renew my commitment to a discipline of daily prayer and meditation.

In the early morning and late evening, when I encounter in some new way the Seed that is always waiting to be born anew in us, or simply rest in the Presence of Love, I find freedom, forgiveness, and courage. Often I see how far I have to go, or I see the next faithful step. For centuries this practice was at the heart of what it meant to be a Friend: seeking to cultivate and continually renew an inward watchfulness, an availability to the immediate work and guidance of the Holy Spirit *here and now.*

It may be that this daily discipline has long been part of your life. If not, **I invite you to join me in the coming year in creating this space.** I welcome your accompaniment and encouragement, and I await eagerly the fruits such a shared commitment might bear—both in our common life as Friends and in our ministry to our broken-hearted, beloved world.

Many of us have tasted how this foundation of receptivity to the guidance of the Spirit gives power to sustain our work and to nurture a resilient witness to a living faith. In these times so beset by division, injustice, violence, and climate disruption, I believe the world needs communities of faith with hearts opened and spirits awakened to what it is time for. I'm convinced that the quality of presence we cultivate together now matters more than ever. **We have no time but this present time in which to be faithful; these are the days we've been given to love.**

For the coming year, my intention and prayer for myself and for our Yearly Meeting is that—as we did when we set our priorities—we will continue to clear away distractions in order to focus on the few things that can make the greatest difference, fostering communities of deep hope and lives that bring Love more fully into the world. I pray that we will make the difficult choice to do less, more deeply. And even in these times—especially in these times—may each of us know joy.

—NOAH BAKER MERRILL

Accounts Manager

Four years ago I began my first Accounts Manager staff report by observing, "Truth is the primary spiritual goal of the Accounts Manager, whose role in the Yearly Meeting staff is to keep the financial records, under the direction of the treasurer, in an accurate, honest, usable and clear manner. Together we hope to show clearly how Friends as a body are using the money entrusted to the Yearly Meeting."

The role of my job has not changed, and together with the treasurer and Finance Committee I continue to strive for consistency, accuracy, honesty and clarity. Each of my reports since then has centered around this pursuit of Truth. But what if we take a broader view? After all, the ultimate goal of collecting, tracking, distributing and reporting on all this money is to enable the activities of Friends—

our loving communities and our witness to the world.

I have watched with joy as the flow of money through our Yearly Meeting has increased in the last few years—the grants of the Legacy Gift, the activities of the Puente and FWCC Committees, greater generosity growing toward sustainable engagement.

If the Accounts Manager has a spiritual goal, then it's really in service of empowering Friends generally. For early Friends, "the Truth" was a synonym for God. But we have also heard that God is love. Where Truth and Love come together—that's the place of growing joy that we find when we meet.

—FREDERICK MARTIN

Communications Technology Coordinator

What is a Quaker Communications Technology Coordinator? Two years in, and I'm still trying to understand the interrelated meanings of all the words in my title. Semantics aside, I have a clear understanding of the work I've been given and how to do it. Yet I have much to learn in assessing what I can accomplish in a part-time role, when the work could easily fill all my time.

Since last Sessions, I've:

- Assisted the accounts manager and the Development Committee in completing a migration to a new credit card processor that integrates more seamlessly with our database and website
- Worked with the Junior YM/Junior High YM retreat coordinator to create an online retreat registration process
- Edited and posted 2015 Sessions Audio Recordings (*neym.org/recordings*)
- Added database functionality to help the office track visits to our local meetings
- Trained all relevant YM staff on the basics of using our database
- In support of the Finance Committee, begun development of more sophisticated tracking and analysis tools for YM contributions by our monthly meetings (in progress)
- Performed an unanticipated web server migration after a hosting policy change rendered site e-mails unsendable (fun surprise!)
- Migrated our mass e-mailing tools to a platform that better serves our communications strategy and integrates with other systems
- Implemented the changes to the Sessions registration system requested by the Sessions Committee and YM staff
- Achieved some minor website performance improvements
- Kept our existing technology infrastructure functioning and secure via unexciting yet essential maintenance procedures

As you can see, much of my work was invested in extending our database, often in direct response to support requests by YM committees. I have not

yet accomplished other goal—any related to our website. For instance:

- Creating the remaining tutorials for committees' website editors
- Integrating data between our database and *neym.org*
- Revising site content listings to better promote committee-generated content
- Giving Quarterly Meeting clerks access to similar content tools on *neym.org* as committees have (three QMs have asked for this now!)
- Website documentation
- Database documentation
- Documentation, documentation, documentation

As I approach the end of my second year in this position—and my sixth as an employee of New England Yearly Meeting—I'm thinking a great deal about those final three bullet points. And more broadly, I'm reflecting on the relationship between my current work and the future operations of Yearly Meeting admin, in a time when I am no longer YM staff.

I am happy to confirm that I am absolutely replaceable. But I do worry that too much of the Yearly Meeting's understanding of our technology infrastructure and day-to-day operations presently exists solely in my head. The past three years have involved an impressive accomplishment list of creating new systems and capabilities, but not as much emphasis on improving existing functionality, or documenting how everything fits together and is to be used.

Following this Annual Sessions, writing down all of this knowledge will be my top priority for the remaining part of the fiscal year. This will not be tedious for me—if my work over recent years has been Holy work (as I believe it has been), then this is my opportunity to give an account of it—the journal of a Quaker developer who has labored to be faithful to the leadings of God in service of his community.

—JEFF HIPPIE

Events Coordinator

When Jesus' followers saw what was going to happen, they said, "Lord, should we strike with our swords? And one of them struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his right ear. But Jesus answered, "No more of this!" And he touched the man's ear and healed him. (Luke 22:49-51)

I've been holding close this year our YM Sessions theme of being "Christ's hands" in the world. I am sure St. Teresa's reminder was for us to be the hands, the feet, the hearts ... And yet I keep returning to this powerful example of the actual hand of Jesus, healing in an act of love under the most awful of circumstances.

It provides me with a stunning example of Truth, given in deep Agape/Love. Both are required of us. Firstly, the Truth that must be clearly named—a need to clearly say "no more of this!" when violence happens (even when committed by our own friends and community). Second, it is balanced by the equally important need to heal, to re-member the body that has been injured, a human body, a human heart, or us as a people and the Body of Christ.

Why am I sharing this story as my staff report, as the events coordinator for the NEYM? Because through this work of logistics and planning, I am given the opportunity to hold both of these motions, Truth and Love, among us all in everything I do.

The "stuff" I do, I am pleased to report, is continuing to bear fruit as I lean into the work and learn more every day. Along with the substantial work of planning and implementing YM Sessions (a year-long commitment), I have had the care of multiple committee days, smaller committee meetings, and a large outreach conference. I have shared our news on our various social media channels and connected us more widely with Friends in many places. I have joined in a wonderful ecumenical partnership, learning more about organizations and systems, in the Duke Divinity "Foundations of Christian Leadership" program. I have engaged in learning how to share our NEYM good work with others in Virginia Theological Seminary's "eformation" digital ministry workshops. I am hopeful and encouraged that our proposed changes to our shape of support and con-

nection for monthly meetings, work of YM committees, and other gatherings will improve our capacity, flexibility, and outreach in the coming year.

If we are called to be God's hands as we do the work required of us—the way in which I do this work also matters. As I reflect on this past year, there are times when I too have had (in smaller ways than Jesus, of course!) to say "stop it." It's usually room capacity, fire code, schedule conflicts. But it is my work to see the bigger picture, and help our ministry to "fit" into the worldly spaces we are given to work with. Our systems of old are often unwieldy and do not serve the body. They quite often fall apart in the implementation and logistics. I am learning how to name that disconnect more fully and helpfully so we can learn from those concerns. But merely improving those systems is not enough.

In this year, I have been given the deep blessing of learning from my fellow companions on this journey of faithfulness—to remember how we gathered and how our Holy work was shaped in response to our call, and to learn a caution to preserve what is a rightly ordered shape of work in our deep traditions of listening and Quaker practice. So often, those connections with others (on a conference call, a quiet corner in a dining hall, or on a golf cart) are what enables me to heal from my own fear of change and growth and the unknown. The Truth of the work we are called into, and the healing of support and Love in community, feels most right in this work when they are in balance. We heal as we go.

I hold deep gratitude for all the companions in this journey of service. I note the particular guidance and support of Fresh Pond Meeting, and my support committee of wise elders that walk beside me in both the troubles and the joys. I also hold dear in my heart the many Friends who share not only their work requests, but also their time, their stories, their appreciation for my efforts and their understanding and forgiveness when I fall short. This is a community effort. I am grateful to be taught that lesson again and again. I look forward to connecting more widely with Friends of NEYM through this service in the coming year.

In faith and service,

—KATHLEEN WOOTEN

Friends Camp Director

This year has seen continual improvements in programming and important capital projects, as well as thoughtful preparations for the transition to a new camp director in the fall of 2016. One of the year's highlights was the final approval of the Friends Camp Good Governance Report. This provides an effective internal structure for the operation of the Camp Committee, and also defines the relationship between, and the roles of, the Yearly Meeting, the Camp Committee and professional leadership. The implementation of this new governance plan has begun; it will likely take another year to fully incorporate all of the changes. One of the most important checks and balances that came out the work of the Good Governance committee was to institute regular professional audit reviews of the finances of Friends Camp and of the Yearly Meeting.

On the building-and-property front we continue to make steady investments of time, funds and labor in order to assure the ongoing viability of the camp's infrastructure. In the fall of 2015 major foundation repairs were made to the 1806 Meeting House that serves as the arts & crafts building. Five of the youth cabins also received much needed jacking-up and repairs to their foundations. The major structural upgrade occurred in sink and bathroom renovations for the Big Bird Dining Hall. The expansion of the number of hand-washing sinks, required by regulations, will have a positive and long-lasting mark on the health of our campers and staff. Future building projects that are under consideration are the construction of a new building for ceramic arts and we are looking into investing in solar electric production to cover most of the camp's future energy needs. For five days in early October, Friends Camp hosted a large work crew from the Alternative Sentencing

Program of the Kennebec County Jail. These workers painted many of the cabins and worked on several construction and rebuilding projects.

One of our core values is to work toward a more diverse camp community by providing affordable tuition and camperships. With our current three-tiered fee structure, our standard fees for a two-week camp session are the same as or below the amount charged by similar youth camps in Maine. We are continuing our ongoing campership collaborations with the Maine Children's Home/Keller Family Fund and the Codman Academy Charter Public School. We are also pleased to continue for a fourth summer a campership program called "One Child at a Time." During the 2016 summer, the "One Child at a Time" funds will offer camperships to eight children with an incarcerated parent.

On the weekend of May 6–8, 2016, Friends Camp offered for the first time a Couple Enrichment Retreat for nine couples. This weekend was facilitated by Jacob and Gretta Stone and Debbie and John Humphries. In August and September of this year we are offering a self-directed four-week young adult art camp.

The summer enrollment for the 2016 season is about ten campers below the budgeted goal of 365 campers. One concern remains a dearth of elementary-school-age campers for the Jones session.

As I start my last summer, I feel deeply thankful for my 12 years as director of Friends Camp. I will look back at the fulfilling years from 2004 to 2016 ever cognizant of the blessing it has been to provide leadership and stewardship for the Yearly Meeting's summer camp.

—NAT SHED

Junior Yearly Meeting/Junior High Yearly Meeting Coordinator

The JYM-JHYM Retreat attenders and staff have worked hard this year to build grounded spiritual communities that are kind, inclusive, Light-giving, and fun. We celebrate the growth of individual children, particularly those for whom the experience of being in a safe and loving fellowship has been new and transforming. Our JHYM registrations were smaller than usual—a consistent trend for this trio since their childcare days—while JYM's almost always overflowed to a wait list.

It is my experience that retreats are the primary source of spiritual nurture for an increasing number

of children. Thus, our retreats included such Quaker 101 topics as worship, the peace testimony, service, leadings, and spiritual community. In response to a growing number of our children who struggle with anger management, we sponsored a staff training and introduced some more tools and common language into both JYM and JHYM around anger and conflict resolution.

The cornerstones of JYM-JHYM are the grounded and dedicated adults who consistently staff. We are blessed by those who generously give not just their time and energy, but also their hearts, life sto-

ries and spiritual journeys retreat after retreat, year after year, providing a depth of spiritual grounding and circle of love that is extraordinary. However, our average age is climbing. This year's fantastic group of junior staffers added youthful energy and personality at JYM. I continue to actively encourage more YAFs to join us. A campaign with the slogan "Ask me how staffing youth programs transformed my young adult spiritual journey" is in the early stages—initiated by two Friends who often attest to this experience.

Consistent with society in general, our JYM-JHYM families are challenged by such difficulties as overcommitted schedules, un- or under employment, addictions, social isolation, serious illness, trauma, depression, and divorce. Pastoral care of young people, families and YAFs is a significant aspect of my work. Far more than I can give is needed. Many of our children, families, and staff do not feel meaningfully connected to a meeting. How can the wider

NEYM community, outside of the youth programs' circle, reach "a tender hand" out in practical and spiritual ways? Offering to drive children to a retreat, dropping off a casserole, listening to deep questioning around that of God, or simply asking "How can I help?" are all opportunities for Light and transformation for the receiver as well as the giver.

I continue to grow in the fellowship of the Friends on our Yearly Meeting's staff who pull me up, cheer me on, and teach me how to breathe, trust and pray—rather than panic—in conflict or difficulties. The newly formed Youth Ministries Committee is full of good-hearted and grounded Friends with many gifts and skills, much Spirit, and enormous love. I am grateful for them and for the important work they have begun. Our youth programs are surrounded by the love, care, and prayers of NEYM Friends, and for this, I give thanks and remain in awe to be here in this work. Amen.

—GRETCHEN BAKER-SMITH

Office Manager

This year has been defined by the terminal illness and death in November of my younger sister, Connie. Many of you know that I had been accompanying her in her cancer journey and spending as much time with her as I could. Now there is a Connie-shaped hole in my life. I am grateful for the loving support I have received from my co-workers and from Friends around New England, particularly my support committee and other Gonic Friends who are truly supporting me in my grief journey.

I am grateful, too, that my work for the Yearly Meeting gets me off the couch and busy helping others. In addition to the daily routines of responding to e-mail and updating the website and database, I have produced my first Minute Book and gotten more comfortable with layout in InDesign. I survived Sessions 2015 (!) and got a lot of ideas of how to do things better this year; I hope some changes are noticeable. The other staff and I have made progress in cleaning out the Worcester office and reorganizing the space, creating a conference room as well as more functional work areas.

I have also taken on some additional duties to help with the transfer of the Yearly Meeting archives to the University of Massachusetts, and look forward to moving accumulated files, minute books and other records from the office to the archives.

In the year ahead, I hope to further sort and organize the boxes of supplies we move back and

forth for Sessions; inventory office equipment; build a pool of skilled volunteers to help with various short-term tasks; continue assembling a library of photographs to use in our publications; develop more skills in InDesign, Photoshop, Illustrator, and MailChimp (the service we use for mass e-mails); and also get administrator training in Salesforce (our database software). I'm looking for ways to improve the collection of data from local meetings and the ways we share information in print and online between local meetings and the office.

The rewards of this job are many. I am privileged to work with the wonderful people who serve the Yearly Meeting on staff and on committees. I enjoy learning what's happening around the New England and getting to know the Friends who serve their local meetings. I am spared from boredom by the variety of tasks my job entails and by the unexpected work that comes via e-mail requests and telephone calls.

I sense the presence of God in my work as I write thank-you notes, answer the telephone and e-mails and respond to requests for help. God is teaching me to be more patient with myself as well as others, to perceive the pain behind someone's impatience or unkindness, to ask for help, to not take on more than I can handle, to be kind and to trust more.

—SARA HUBNER

Religious Education and Outreach Coordinator

This year, God surprised me! We seem to have entered a new chapter of possibility and hope. We're in a new "heart-space" even if there is still much work to do building a vibrant Quaker movement equal to the challenges of society and nature around us.

I felt this newness at the NEYM Ministry and Counsel Daytreat in May. There was a can-do vibe coupled with a clear-eyed awareness of the inreach and outreach work ahead of Friends. I heard the newness when Mt. Toby Friends told me they consistently overfilled their meeting room and had to use additional space for worship.

I saw the newness at three lively weekend workshops for skill building and fellowship: two for First Day School teachers, on Godly Play/Faith & Play (GP/FP) storytelling and on the craft of teaching; and one for Emerging Practices in Quaker Outreach that drew 48 Friends from five yearly meetings in addition to NEYM.

I celebrated the newness when Nancy Haines, a Wellesley Friend, more often led to serve among adult Friends, wrote a blockbuster storybook on children's meeting for business, called *Approved!*

I was grateful for the newness when Harriet Heath, a retired psychologist and co-founder of the Quaker Parenting Initiative, hosted a series of virtual Quaker Parenting Sessions using GoToMeeting software. She offered a grounded conversation space for Friends scattered around New England.

There were other expressions of this newness, too. Friends explored different shapes and forms for their ministries. NEYM, with generous support from

Obadiah Brown's Benevolent Fund, created short videos of a religious education master teacher to extend the reach of her vital ministry.

In addition to this spirit of possibility and hope, God surprised me with a sense that we are entering a time of impending wholeness in the Quaker movement. There was a shift from emphasis on areas of difference and disagreement among Friends to one on areas of shared faith and creative overlap in interests and concerns. Way opened over and over again this year as we discovered coordinated leadings placed in the hearts of Friends living hundreds or thousands of miles apart. We are enlivened by these faith and service connections with Friends in Cuba and Central and South America. The ministry of sharing Godly Play and Faith & Play method and stories has had dramatic success this year! Dozens and dozens of Latin American Friends have eagerly seen demonstrations and taken trainings. Now, African Friends have asked to come to Boston for a GP/FP training on their way to the United Society of Friends Women International Triennial.

The newness God has shown me this year required some adjustment in thinking. What had seemed like a dichotomy between ministries within vs. beyond New England doesn't quite hold the emerging reality. Ministry that began here in New England has swung wide into the world and then circled back home with an energy and an intention beyond our own. I am left feeling grateful and wondering how our Guide will lead New England Friends forward next year!

—BETH COLLEA

Young Friends/ Young Adult Friends Coordinator

Serving in my role requires constant re-dos, re-evaluating, reflection, and inviting in the Spirit. This year has been one of new life, new experiments, and opportunities to be changed. Many of the items on my long-standing "as Way opens" list of have begun to be realized. All around me, Friends are opening doors and stepping through new thresholds.

I see Friends responding to the call to stewardship and accountability. The YAF Standing Committee has found strength in focusing their work around "SMART" goals (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound), challenging themselves to respond in real ways to the concerns YAFs lift up. The new Youth Ministries Committee

has begun to do the work necessary to ensure that NEYM meets the spiritual needs of our youth into the future by developing ways to hear what is sought and clearly share what our programs offer. In large thanks to Noah and the Shoemaker Fund, I've begun to shift my work away from some tasks that Hilary Burgin, the new Young Adult Engagement Coordinator, will now handle and more fully serve Young Friends.

I see Friends growing spiritually and learning more about our faith. YAFs, a group which consists of nearly equal portion of "birthright" and convinced Friends, has focused this year on the "basics" of Quakerism through our retreats on Business

Meeting and Worship. YFs spent their midwinter retreat articulating their spiritualities and exploring how they live them in a social atmosphere that often fears the “religious.”

I see Friends stepping into leadership. YAFs are testing leadings, attending trainings and offering to serve. RPs (the adult volunteers who serve as Resource People to youth) are working to develop roles that keep our retreats running smoothly and share their varied gifts. YFs who were part of the delegation to the White Privilege Conference are challenging their community to work towards their anti-racist ideals.

I see Friends unafraid of outreach and inclusion. They are RPs learning about neurodiversity and multi-culturalism, youth visiting newer meetings for outreach, YFs engaging in Lisa Graustein’s workshop on celebrating all bodies, and participants in our local youth groups bringing friends from school.

I see Friends increasing communication and deepening relationships. It’s an honor to share the life from within NEYM when I meet YFs and YAFs in

my travels to multi-regional conferences or virtual gatherings like the Quaker Religious Education Collaborative’s “Conversation Circles.” It inspires me to collaborate with Friends Camp staff, local youth group volunteers, and the Moses Brown Nurturing Friends Education Committee to think more broadly about who we serve.

Serving as coordinator fills my days with tasks I cannot do alone and my heart with gratitude for those with whom I work. I hope you all know how sincere I am when I say “thank you.” I’d also like to thank someone who is rarely seen or appreciated by Friends: my husband Rob. Rob washes my dishes and does my laundry; he tiptoes into my office while I’m on conference calls with tea and dinner; he stays up late the night before retreats, folding schedules; he asks, “How was your meeting?,” and listens. I would not be able to live into this work as I have for the last six years without his support. This year my “to do” list was often long, but my heart was always full.

—NIADWYNWEN THOMAS

Committee and Board Annual Reports

Permanent Board

The Permanent Board of New England Yearly Meeting meets as a whole body six times per year between Sessions. The ad hoc committees and standing committees of Permanent Board meet additionally to discern and prepare their work for these six day-long meetings, as do standing committees of NEYM. Currently, 23 Monthly Meetings have members on Permanent Board. This year, Burlington Monthly Meeting, Hanover Friends Meeting, Wellesley Friends Meeting, and South Berkshire Monthly Meeting hosted meetings of Permanent Board. In addition, we have met twice at Castleton University.

Permanent Board conducts the business of NEYM between Sessions. All of our meetings are open; visitors are warmly welcome. Indeed, by moving our meetings around the Yearly Meeting we often are joined by Friends who have never been to Sessions! It is a great blessing to know these Friends and to have them join our business, if only for a day. All of our advance documents—70-100 pages per meeting!—are available on the Permanent Board page of the NEYM web site (neym.org/permanent-board).

Among the items approved by Permanent Board since Sessions 2015 are:

- The Friends Camp Good Governance Report
- A revision of NEYM’s Personnel Policy Manual
- The NEYM Child Care Policy
- The Deed of Gift that paved the way for our archives to move to the Special Collections and University Archives of the W.E.B. DuBois Library of the University of Massachusetts, Amherst

At each meeting of the Permanent Board we hear reports from NEYM’s presiding clerk, secretary and treasurer. These reports are typically informational; we hear about committees that might need special support and about connections to Quaker organizations beyond New England, as well as about our public statements that reach beyond the Quaker world. We also hear about and approve (or not) shifts in the organization of NEYM (staff time priorities and staff development) to better fulfill the organization’s purpose—to meet the needs of the body of NEYM—the monthly and quarterly meetings, as well as other Quaker organizations (such as Young Adult Friends) around New England.

We also typically hear extensive reports from the clerk of Finance Committee and Permanent Board’s Ad Hoc Long-term Financial Planning Committee. Members of the Finance Committee

have worked especially diligently this year, along with members of the Friends Camp Committee, to integrate the Friends Camp budget into the processes of the Yearly Meeting in accordance with the Friends Camp Good Governance document. In addition, they have prepared short- and long-term budgets for consideration at Sessions and, along with the Treasurer, have sought approval for a number of changes that move NEYM closer to sound accounting and budgeting practices.

The Ad Hoc Long Term Finance Planning Committee has brought Permanent Board proposals to start a NEYM monthly electronic newsletter, as well as for NEYM to organize twice-yearly gatherings to provide a large and diverse body of Friends from around New England opportunities for worship, spiritual nourishment and fellowship. Informed by the work of the Structural Review Committee, these proposals respond to the hunger these committees have heard for better communication among our committees and opportunities to gather in faith and fellowship. We approved both proposals.

Friends Camp has been much on the hearts of Permanent Board members this year as the Friends Camp Committee grows into the structures and strengths of the Good Governance Report, as it welcomes a new Director and both bids farewell to Nat Shed after 12 years of service to the Camp—and welcomes him as a consultant to the new Director and Camp Committee during this time of transition. The individual who Permanent Board will bring to Sessions for consideration to be the next Director of Friends Camp places a high priority on strengthening the relationship between NEYM and the Camp, especially by better integrating the Camp's work with the youth programs of the wider Yearly Meeting.

Finally, and important, Permanent Board has worked on a number of administrative tasks: approving shifts in staff time and/or priorities to better support NEYM committees, approving job descriptions, managing grants and funds, and preparing for the upcoming review of the purposes and procedures of NEYM committees. This year, we have heard eight memorial minutes and approved travel minutes for 12 Friends whose ministry takes them beyond New England.

There is a great deal more to share, Friends, as you will read in the advance documents and will hear in the oral reports at Sessions. In Permanent Board's oral reporting, I will share more specific information about:

- Ways we are better supporting NEYM committees:

- By establishing structural connections between Permanent Board, Ministry and Counsel, and Youth Ministries Committee
- Through invitational consultations which bring together Friends with shared concerns (e.g. pastoral care, supporting the YAF community, and outreach)
- By shifting staff time from Committee Days to tailored support for NEYM committees
- The Shoemaker Grant and the initiatives that it supports
- The Friends Camp Good Governance report, strengthening the relationship between NEYM and our camp, and the new Director
- Planning for the twice-yearly gatherings of NEYM between Sessions

We are bathed in abundant blessings.

—SARAH GANT, CLERK

Personnel Subcommittee

The Personnel Committee works to see that the Yearly Meeting is a good employer, supports the efforts of the Yearly Meeting secretary by providing guidance on personnel matters, and acts as a sounding board for new approaches for staff work and management. We frequently review job descriptions for new or existing positions, and consider how changes in the Yearly Meeting's functions and goals will affect the work of our staff. We also carry a concern for staff having the technology and other resources they need to work effectively.

We presented a revision of the 2013 NEYM Personnel Policy Manual to the Permanent Board, who approved it in February 2016. In May 2016, a revision to the Harassment section of the Manual was also approved. In a major change to our employment structure, Permanent Board approved our recommendation to change our staff employment from renewable yearly appointments to continuous appointments. We invite members of the Yearly Meeting to review the revised Personnel Policy Manual, as we as a body share responsibility for being good employers of our paid staff. The Manual may be found at neym.org/personnel.

During our work on the Personnel Policy Manual, we heard concerns about our staff's health care benefits—both that they are limited to providing health insurance benefits (pro-rated) only for employees who work more than 30 hours a week for NEYM, and the inequities that can arise because of the generous 80% coverage for families. We will continue to work on a review of health benefits in the coming year.

We reviewed the Yearly Meeting's policies and practices concerning compliance with the I-9 section of the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA). We saw an inconsistency in our practice of compliance in having employees fill out I-9 forms. In 1992, NEYM reaffirmed its 1989 minute of non-compliance, leaving "other employment units"—at that time, Moses Brown School, NEYM Friends Home, and Friends Camp—free to make their own decision on compliance. Friends Camp has always done so. We considered whether non-compliance is still an active ministry of the Yearly Meeting.

We reviewed and recommended revisions to the Friends Camp Good Governance document as we were concerned about the lack of clear lines of authority between the two managerial level staff members, the Yearly Meeting secretary and the camp director. We recommended that while the camp director should have a supervisor on the Camp Committee who would meet with the director regularly and be an available support, the Yearly Meeting secretary should also have ultimate supervisory authority over the camp director. We also recommended that the YM Secretary should have supervisory responsibilities for major policy, legal, property and financial decisions of the Camp, with accountability to Permanent Board. These recommendations were embraced by Permanent Board and were reflected in the updated Personnel Policy Manual and the Friends Camp Good Governance Report.

—ROBERT MURRAY, CLERK

Student Scholarship Granting Subcommittee

In 2012 Quakers of NEYM asked Permanent Board to look into the status of the Student Loan Fund because the program was no longer functioning as originally intended. All activity in granting new loans had ceased. The loan program held money in the bank that was not being used.

The Student Aid Revisioning Working Group was named by Permanent Board to look into this matter; members included Justice Erikson, Ian Harrington (Wellesley), Allan Kohrman (Wellesley), and Rebecca Leuchak, Galen Hamann (Providence). This working group solicited input from Friends young and old from throughout NEYM. Consultation was made with NEYM Friends who have worked on the Student Loan Committee over the years. Comparative research was done with other Yearly Meetings (Philadelphia, New York, and Baltimore) and with Quaker schools, including Moses Brown School, Guilford, and Earlham College.

After a two-year study period, mindful that there is need among NEYM Friends for support in educational and training pursuits, the working group determined that funds remaining in the loan program would best be repurposed and spent down through grants to meet the expenses of full-time or part-time college or graduate-school study, trade school, or other training programs. Permanent Board acted upon the recommendation of the Student Aid Revisioning Working-group and proposed that the Student Loan Fund be repurposed, and that the monies currently held and any income coming back to this fund be spent out as grants to be distributed over the next few years (Permanent Board minute 14-93). Awardees would be eligible on the basis of spiritual connection to the Religious Society of Friends and participation in NEYM. Friends of all ages were seen to benefit from this investment in our community. At Yearly Meeting Sessions last year this recommendation from Permanent Board was approved (NEYM minute 2015-30).

Since last August, the NEYM Permanent Board Student Scholarship Granting Subcommittee (Justice Erikson, Ian Harrington, Allan Kohrman, and Rebecca Leuchak, clerk) has acted upon Yearly Meeting's directive that the funds held in the NEYM Student Loan account, and the income coming back to this fund be spent down to give grants for post-secondary education/training advancement. The grants are open to individuals who are either: 1) members of monthly meetings within NEYM, 2) children of members of the meetings within NEYM, or 3) persons who have been active in the life of a meeting within NEYM, or the programs of our Yearly Meeting.

Following the stipulations of the minute, the total amount of award money available in 2016 for this first year of the program was \$30,000, and the same amount of \$30,000 will be available in the second year of the program, with any remaining funds to roll over to a subsequent year. This schedule is planned to continue until all funds are paid out.

Announcement of the program was made in early 2016 on the grants page of NEYM's website, on NEYM's Facebook page, and in *The New England Friend*. Additionally, a Grants Program Announcement was sent to each monthly meeting clerk in NEYM and to the Yearly Meeting Religious Education and Outreach and Young Friends/Young Adult Friends Coordinators.

The first round of applications were received by the May 15th deadline of this year, and the available funds were divided equally among 26 successful applicants, four of whom have strong ties to NEYM.

through youth and young adult programs, while 22 recipients hail from 12 monthly meetings within NEYM. In their application essays, applicants' wrote eloquently of how this grant would be used to support their educational and spiritual growth, and

their commitment to Friends' principles and to the role of Quakerism in their lives.

Friends are encouraged to look for further details and for the grant application process for the coming year at neym.org/quaker-grants.

—REBECCA LEUCHAK, CLERK

Committee on Aging

As the Committee on Aging (COA), our efforts focus on helping Friends to address the many dimensions of growing older: spiritual, physical, practical.

At Sessions 2015, we reprised the Respite Oasis, a quiet space to lounge with a particular invitation to caregivers, provisioned with take-way pamphlets and flyers related to aging. During the Afternoon Opportunities, we offered a "Death Cafe," worship-sharing about death with a view to living fully in the now, inspired by the Swiss sociologist/anthropologist Bernard Crettaz, who organized the first *café mortel* in 2004. Fourteen Friends with varying backgrounds, including hospice, nursing, and academia, participated.

The following day, members of COA and Anita Paul, a long-time New York Yearly Meeting trainer with Aging Resources Consultation Help (ARCH) presented Support Across Generations for Elders (SAGE) to identify Friends called to minister to meeting members facing challenges with chronic or serious illness, or end-of-life concerns. Friends were invited to participate in the in-depth training December 13–15, 2015 at Woolman Hill to become SAGE visitors. C.O.A. worked to recruit participation from a variety of monthly meetings for the SAGE training.

—MARTHA PENZER, CLERK

Archives and Historical Records

Past Committee Work

The Archives and Historical Records Committee would like to report on a very busy, very successful year. At the 2015 New England Yearly Meeting Sessions, the Archives Committee recommended that Sessions approve: "that the Special Collections and University Archives (SCUA), at the W.E.B. Du Bois Library of the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, take physical custody of the Archives of the New England Yearly Meeting. We recommend Permanent Board have the authority to negotiate and finalize the terms and conditions of doing so in concert with the Archives Committee." Sessions approved both recommendations, and the Archives Committee began the process in consultation with Permanent Board.

Following this acceptance, the Archives Committee worked with SCUA and came to a two-part agreement: the first is a Deed of Gift and the second is a Memorandum of Understanding. The former document is a one-time agreement that covers the ownership of the materials and the latter is meant to be a living document that reflects how materials are to be transferred to SCUA and the other details of the ongoing relationship. The Deed of Gift was signed by the Clerk of Permanent Board and Rob

Cox, Head of Special Collections at SCUA. NEYM's collection was transferred to SCUA on April 26, 2016, and work on describing the collection and making it available is well underway. In addition, we sent letters to monthly and quarterly meetings to keep them informed about the process and to make sure they had time to consider and ask questions and keep us on the right path.

This does not mean that the work is complete. The Memorandum of Understanding is still being detailed, and will need attention and tending adjustment for the lifetime of the relationship—as does every relationship. The Archives Committee is also working with the Yearly Meeting secretary to define the position of NEYM archivist and, eventually, will work with whoever fills the position in any capacity they, the Yearly Meeting, and all its constituent members require. However, this work must fall to other hands, as my time of service to this committee ends with end of Sessions.

For all this work, I must call to the attention of Permanent Board and Sessions the work of the members of the Committee. This was an exceptionally busy year and, for a stretch of four months, required meetings every other week—far more work than any of us expected. All Committee members,

including our Permanent Board representative, served with thoughtful attention, even when it seemed a struggle to hold these issues and work in the light, AGAIN. I feel honored to have worked with them on such weighty matters and to have witnessed their care and concern for all of NEYM through this work.

Report from Rob Cox for SCUA

The collection arrived at UMass on April 20, 2016 in good order and we have unpacked and arranged them onto shelving. We are conducting a comprehensive re-survey of the collection, hoping to compare our new inventory against the existing one, and then effect a systematic reorganization to bring like with like. We are about halfway through the new survey, and it's taking a bit of time because we are doing our best to open every box and capture (at that level) what can sometimes be pretty heterogeneous content.

Once the survey is complete, we will prepare a new collection-level finding for NEYM and, in priority order, processing or reprocessing sub-units of the collection for their own, separate finding aids. The survey has turned up quite a number of pieces of the collection that would benefit from separate and more detailed description. These would, of course, be listed as part of the NEYM collection and linked back to it, but having separate description tailored to these smaller sub-units will be a benefit to researchers and, I would add, will be necessary for efficient digitization.

At my urging, the library is hiring a temporary (six-month) cataloger to catalog the NEYM printed materials. That job description has been posted and, I believe, just closed yesterday or today, meaning after all is said and done that we hope the candidate will begin work at the end of the summer.

I have reached out to our friends at the Internet Archive seeking assistance in digitization of some of the materials, probably the bound volumes, and with the okay of the Archive Committee, I'd like to begin that process when our new director arrives (he gets here in August, but it may be September before I kick into the project). In the meantime, I digitized four things in the collection and posted them to our digital repository, more as a placekeeper than anything (<http://credo.library.umass.edu/search?q=collection:%22New%20England%20Yearly%20Meeting%20Collection%22>). I selected three short pamphlets, including a very scarce antislavery piece from Nantucket that is actually a reprint of an even scarcer tract, and a spectacular piece: the testimony of the three Friends imprisoned in Boston in 1657, having been arrested for infiltrating Mass.

Bay colony. Most of us are more familiar with the four who were executed for being Quakers in Boston in 1659–1660 (Mary Dyer, William Leddra, Marmaduke Stevenson, and William Robinson), but this trio and a couple of others were earlier activists in confronting Mass. Bay authorities and should be remembered. This could be the first plea for religious liberty coming from British North America. It looks beaten up because it is, but it was already beaten up when it was printed in a Friends' journal in 1820, so it's at least not much worse for the wear.

We do not tabulate use statistics by collection; however, I know we have had several inquiries thus far (perhaps ten) and at least one visitor from Oregon. I'll see if we have a way to capture stats going forward, but I don't expect things to pick up fully until we have a fuller finding aid online. The brief description that we posted online can be seen at <http://scua.library.umass.edu/umarmot/new-england-yearly-meeting/>.

Future Work

There is much work ahead for the Archives committee and the Yearly Meeting secretary. The most important of these tasks is finding a temporary archivist. It might be asked why not hire the NEYM archivist and then work on the MoU, and this is a reasonable question. The Committee weighed the number of hours per week NEYM has budgeted for the position of NEYM archivist against the amount of work that needs to be done both in the short term and in the long term. After much thought and discussion, the Committee realized that the short-term needs required a greater time commitment, and a different knowledge and skill set, than the long-term needs of NEYM. It seemed sensible to look for a temporary person to do the short-term work and then, based on the MoU and the needs of NEYM, work to create a new position of NEYM archivist.

The principle work the temporary archivist will need to do is: help draft the language of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between SCUA and NEYM (the part of this work most of interest to the NEYM community is creating policies and procedures for submission of materials to SCUA); and then to help design the position of NEYM archivist. At this point, the committee feels that the position of NEYM archivist needs to focus on outreach to NEYM's constituent meetings and helping meetings with their records. The temporary archivist may bring new information that will change this viewpoint, and their specialist knowledge of the profession will be very helpful in seeing the way forward. I am very pleased to state that the Yearly Meeting secretary has been in contact with a consulting ar-

chivist and she has expressed interest in working with NEYM, and will be able to so starting in September.

Other work facing the Archives and Historical Records Committee is determining the most effective

size and form of the Archives and Historical Records Committee for the future, and supporting the NEYM Archivist, in whatever form required.

—MARY FRANCES ANGELINI, CLERK

Board of Managers of Investments & Permanent Funds

Please note: This report has been edited due to space constraints. For the full text, please see the NEYM website.

In the fiscal year ended March 31, 2016, annual income distributed to constituents from the Pooled Funds totaled approximately \$5.18 per 100 units (\$0.05175/unit) after payment of expenses. The Board had forecast \$5.19 per 100 units. Interest rates have remained low; for example, the 10-year Treasury yielded 2.21% at the end of 2015, making it difficult to invest in securities that produce substantial yields without taking more risk than our advisers consider reasonable. Furthermore, the Federal Reserve has stated their intention of raising rates slowly through 2016. Therefore, for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2017, we are projecting \$4.90/100 units (\$0.0490/unit), net of expenses.

The projected annual income distribution of \$0.0490/unit divided by the market value (as of March 31, 2016) per unit of \$4.0623 yields an estimated income distribution of 1.21%. Please keep in mind that this will vary as the market value of the portfolio changes. Distributions from interest earned and stock dividends represent only a small part of the Pooled Funds' total return. If distributions are insufficient to meet constituents' needs, the Board of Managers encourages constituents to take advantage of the capital gains earned by the Fund. The treasurer or members of the Board of Managers can describe how this works.

For the period of April 1, 2015, through March 31, 2016, the NEYM Pooled Funds had a total return, net of all expenses, of 2.09%. This consists of a distribution of income per unit to beneficiaries of 1.28% and a 0.81% increase in the market value. A history of the performance of the Pooled Funds can be found with our annual report on the NEYM website.

As of March 31, 2016, the market value of the Pooled Funds was \$10,973,000, an increase of \$406,000 during the year, while the total number of units increased by 79,000. Net additions to the funds excluding income reinvested totaled \$234,000.

The Board of Managers manages the portfolio primarily to produce and distribute income and,

through principal appreciation, increase the level of income distributed at a rate equal to or greater than the rate of inflation over the long term. The Board seeks to invest in companies that contribute to the world's need for goods and services and provide a healthy, equal-opportunity environment, and avoids investments that are inconsistent with Friends' testimonies. The policies and procedures are available by request from the Board of Managers or online at neym.org/board-managers/investment-guidelines.

The Board of Managers reviews each company based on these principles before adding it to the Approved List. The portfolio (including preferred stocks) is reviewed by sector in a cycle so that all holdings are rescreened on a triennial basis. The Board remains committed to community development investments, which currently amount to approximately 3% of the total portfolio.

The Pooled Funds do not and have not held shares in the companies appearing on the 350.org list or that engage in fossil fuel production (extraction, refining, or processing). At its April 2015 meeting, the Board adopted the following new wording for Section II. Investment Objectives, ¶B of the Green Book:

“The Board of Managers avoids investments that are inconsistent with Friends' testimonies, including companies that:

- Depend upon war materials, alcoholic beverages, tobacco, or gambling;
- Explore, extract, process, and/or refine fossil fuels;
- Conduct unfair employment practices;
- Pollute the environment.”

The Board of Managers continues to discern the appropriate screens to apply Friends testimonies to energy-related investments.

Over the past several years, multiple constituents of the Pooled Funds have expressed their concern about the use of Bank of America as the custodial bank for the Pooled funds. After several years of searching and evaluating, the Board of Managers chose US Bank as the new custodial partner for the Pooled Funds, and made the switch as of June 2015.

All funds in the Pooled Funds will remain in the investment vehicles and these investments have been found to be in keeping with Friends principles. All distributions will continue without any disruption to our constituents as we move forward. If you have specific questions, please contact Brian Clark.

We will be holding a workshop at Sessions, August 8, 2016, at 3:00 p.m. Any interested members

of New England Yearly Meeting are welcome. Treasurers are encouraged to invite members of their finance committees.

If you have any questions or comments, please e-mail the Board at neympooledfunds@neym.org, or call Brian Clark 978-897-5646.

Yours in the Light,

—BRIAN CLARK, TREASURER

Coordinating and Advisory

The Coordinating and Advisory (C&A) Committee consists of the Yearly Meeting clerk, the clerk of Permanent Board, the clerk of Ministry and Counsel, the treasurer, the clerk of the Finance Committee, the supervisor to the Yearly Meeting secretary, and the Yearly Meeting secretary. The committee is charged with coordinating the work of Yearly Meeting committees; nurturing the clerks of committees, monthly and quarterly meetings; and supervising and evaluating the Yearly Meeting secretary. The committee also provides mutual support and prayer for each other in our service to Friends in New England. This committee helped the new presiding clerk of the Yearly Meeting, the new clerk of Permanent Board and the new clerk of Finance Committee, as well as a new treasurer, step boldly forward during their first year in these roles.

This year we met monthly throughout the year. We offered clerking consultations through the quarters, hoping to be able to support Friends serving as clerks of monthly meeting committees. We supported the outreach by the Ad-hoc Long Term Financial Planning Committee (LTFPC) to all committees of the Yearly Meeting, exploring how their work aligns with the purpose and priorities of the Yearly Meeting as approved by Sessions in 2015. We hosted two phone consultations with quarterly meeting clerks. We consulted with several individual clerks of YM committees and of monthly meetings. We helped the Youth Ministries Committee begin the work it was charged with in 2014 and have helped form a robust working committee to support the important youth ministries of the Yearly Meeting.

We supported the development of the work plan and conducted an annual performance appraisal for

the YM secretary. This year the secretary participated in executive coaching and in the leadership development program hosted by Duke University School of Religion. We encouraged the secretary to support all YM staff in professional development activities.

This year we asked that the presiding clerk and the secretary submit written reports to both Permanent Board and the Ministry and Counsel committee and for the two clerks of these committees to reciprocally share the work being done with their committees, in hopes of increasing a shared sense of the challenges and of the life and hope that we see among Friends in New England.

Every three years, committees of the Yearly Meeting are asked to review their purposes and procedures and to bring the revised purposes to sessions for approval. During the coming year all committees are asked to conduct this review and to specifically consider how their purposes and procedures align with the purpose and priorities of the Yearly Meeting—articulated in minute 2015-64. A major task of Coordinating and Advisory for the coming year will be to shepherd this process. We anticipate working collaboratively with LTFPC and Permanent Board on this project.

In our work together and in our individual roles serving the Yearly Meeting, we are witness to how many Friends in New England are living into the Spirit. We are grateful for the support, feedback, guidance and prayer we have received throughout the year. At the heart of our work is prayer and holding Friends in New England.

—FRITZ WEISS, PRESIDING CLERK

Development Committee

We are counting our blessings after a very successful year in individual giving to NEYM. Although it is hard to know exactly why people have given, much

of it seems to be in response to the \$10,000 matching challenge by two New England Friends. Donations totaled \$134,746 (initial goal, \$125,000) of

which \$42,458 met the terms of the match for new or increased donations. Those gifts came from 170 households, with 46 giving for the first time. In total we had 302 donor households, up from 257 in FY 2014. Thank you to our challenge donors and to everyone else who gave. This is great news!

As part of this new giving, we added 17 new Give Monthly donors, which is a huge increase. Give Monthly now accounts for 28% of our individual giving goal, which is awesome. It really is a way to give that is very affordable and easy to budget for. I thank those Friends for their steady commitment to Yearly Meeting.

A big “Thank You” to all who gave last year!

As I write this though, donations are down from where they were last year at this time. In spite of a beautiful card with artwork by Tom Antonik, we have not received the support we need. At this time, we have received only about 28% of our goal of \$135,000. I am sure that if everyone who gave in

the last couple years made a donation, we could make it.

If you have not given this fiscal year, consider what those donations mean. Not only are you making Sessions affordable for all; many other vital programs need support. Think about our wonderful youth programs. They are vital for our future, yet we cannot charge families for the true cost of them. Both the programs and family support staff provides are invaluable. We all need to support them, as they nurture the next generation. NEYM also supports monthly meetings in more ways than I can list. But I do want to mention the amazing work being done to strengthen outreach, welcome and inclusion. This also is vital to building the future of New England Friends. As you look through the rest of these documents, I am sure you will find something that you think is worthy of your support. I hope that, with your help, by September 30th we will have made our goal of \$135,000 for this fiscal year.

—SARA SMITH, CLERK

Earthcare Ministry

We have 15 active, creative, and enthusiastic participants serving on the Earthcare Ministry committee. To facilitate sharing of Earthcare work throughout the Yearly Meeting, we are trying to find an Earthcare liaison in every meeting in New England. So far, 24 meetings have liaisons who give us news of the Earthcare work of their meetings and share the work of New England Earthcare regional news and events to their meetings. We welcome more liaisons!

At the 2015 NEYM Sessions, Earthcare Ministry sponsored afternoon and evening opportunities by Jose Aguto, Friends Committee on National Legislation’s Legislative Secretary for Sustainable Energy and Environment. He shared his personal history, interfaith cooperation, and the spirit-led climate change work of FCNL. Our committee continued to have care of early morning outdoor worship at Sessions.

See the Earthcare Ministry page of the NEYM website for Earthcare news and reports on special events at neym.org/earthcare-ministry. The website page, currently managed by Louis Cox, is regularly updated with contributions from Earthcare liaisons and other news of Earthcare-related activities in the New England region. We are hoping to add blog posts and discussions whenever the NEYM website is able to support those functions.

We try to keep our committee’s carbon emissions as low as possible by holding meetings online, but we still meet face-to-face for most Committee Days, annual retreats, and NEYM Sessions, carpooling as much as possible to get there. We also try to combine our travel for other purposes with visitations. Do any local meetings wish a visit?

We hold a continuing concern about low carbon/sustainability during Yearly Meeting Sessions.

Some of our members took part in Climate Spring II at Woolman Hill, from which a powerful epistle emerged (neym.org/earthcare-ministry/news). We again held our annual spring retreat at the home behind the West Falmouth meetinghouse. Some of our committee members: attended the Jobs, Justice & Climate Rally at Boston Common in October 2015; work with Quaker Earthcare Witness; were part of the Democracy Spring action in Washington, DC, April 2016, and the Albany oil train protest in May 2016. Others attended the Friends World Committee for Consultation gathering in Pisac, Peru, bringing back a follow-up to the Kabarak Call, asking every local meeting to set itself two Earthcare tasks for the year, and report back.

We have worked with others in the Yearly Meeting to bring the Connecticut Valley Climate Minute to 2016 Sessions.

—RUAH SWENNERFELT, CLERK

Faith and Practice Revision Committee

The Faith and Practice Revision Committee has completed its 15th year of work. In the spring of 2015 our clerk, Jan Hoffman, asked to step back from committee work to take a sabbatical. The committee continued under the joint leadership of the four committee members who had been working with Jan to develop the agendas for the meetings and who had been carrying a few of the administrative tasks of the committee.

At our first meeting of the year, the committee sent the Queries for Ministry and Counsel which we had presented at Sessions to the monthly meetings and worship groups. Once again we were grateful to those meetings and individuals who engaged with the document and responded to our request for feedback.

For some time the committee has been grappling with how to best organize the material of the “core chapters”: those chapters which are titled in the 1985 edition, “Faith into Practice in the Life of the Meeting,” “Faith into Practice in Personal Life,” and “Faith into Practice in Social Concerns.” We began our work together this year by deciding to organize our work by topic, writing on all aspects of a topic as it cut across the life of the meeting, of the personal life and of the witness of Friends. We started work on Membership, Pastoral Care, and Death, Dying and Bereavement. By early winter we focused

on Membership, preparing a working paper for Yearly Meeting Sessions in 2016. This document can be found at neym.org/jp-revision/documents-discussion.

Once again, we have found the work of fully engaging with the many aspects of the truth of Friends’ spiritual practice to be both challenging and spiritually rewarding. We have worked to express these truths clearly and in a manner that opens the way for further spiritual growth.

In May 2016, Jan Hoffman let the committee know that she did not feel a “‘rising’ of the Life” to pick up the work of the Revision Committee again. She quoted Thomas Kelly: “when we say Yes or No to calls, on the basis of a lack of any inward ‘rising’ of that Life to encourage us in the call, we have no reason to give, except one—the will of God as we discern it.” We are grateful for the foundation that Jan lay in the first years of the committee’s work: for her grasp of the scope of the work and how best to approach it, for her spiritual insights, and for her ability to pull us into a cohesive working group.

The committee plans to move forward with the same shared roles of leadership we have used this year with Phebe McCosker serving as our contact person, or clerk.

We continue in faith,
—PHEBE MCCOSKER, CLERK

Finance

Budgeting for a deficit, as we have done this year, shouldn’t make things better. However, I found this year’s work on the Finance Committee incredibly uplifting and joyous. I am very grateful to everyone on the Finance Committee for how hard we worked together, how hard we prayed together, and how hard we laughed together as we felt our way towards the policies we developed to improve financial oversight and the budget we have been led to propose.

It wasn’t fun because we were easy on ourselves. For example, we began the budgeting process with a challenge to not draw on the Legacy Gift Fund. The Long-term Financial Planning Committee generously provided guidance on how to face this challenge, recommending that we make up for the \$20,000 in Legacy Gift Funds we are using in fiscal year 2016 over two years, not one. After much work, the result was a proposed budget deficit that exceeds that of fiscal year 2016 by \$10,000, but that actually closes

by \$10,000 the gap between the money we are bringing in and our expenses.

In light of the Long-term Financial Planning Committee’s two-year guidance, the Finance Committee took on the additional challenge of developing a draft budget for not one, but two years. This was a big success. Already, we are very close to the projected deficit target for fiscal year 2018: to return to the deficit budgeted in fiscal year 2016 without using Legacy Gift Funds. As we learn more about our expenses this summer, we will be able to decide what changes we can make to meet that goal. We are extremely grateful to all of the Yearly Meeting committees, and especially the Development Committee, that did the extra work to develop budgetary guidance a full two years out.

There are two reasons I want to celebrate this: First, we are learning how to develop multi-year financial plans. Second, we are on course to close

the gap between the money we expect to bring in and our expected expenses by \$10,000 each year for the next two years. That is real progress towards balancing the budget and suggests we are in a good position to escape deficit spending and start rebuilding the reserves we have drawn down.

I can't end this report without giving special thanks to the Friends Camp Committee. This year, the Camp Committee shifted its whole budgeting process forward by nine months so we could present a Camp budget at Sessions. I am extremely grateful

to Camp Director Nat Shed, Camp Treasurer Betsy Muench, and the entire Camp Committee for all the effort and flexibility this required. There's no way to repay them for their work, but I can use what little space I have left to make a start:

After years of incredible service, Betsy Muench hopes to step down as Camp Treasurer. The Camp Committee is looking for someone to carry that work forward.

—ELIAS SÁNCHEZ-EPPLER, CLERK

Friends Camp

The Friends Camp Committee met four times this year. We reviewed the Friends Camp Governance Report with the NEYM staff and Governance Committee members who prepared the report. The Friends Camp Committee set right out in implementing recommendations in the report by forming ad hoc committees. These committees—Buildings and Grounds, Finance and Development, Health and Safety, Personnel, and Program—convened in late fall. Meanwhile, NEYM set up a Friends Camp Director search committee, as Camp Director Nat Shed will retire in September 2016.

In January, the Friend Camp Committee reviewed the annual budget, including deciding to increase the food budget and consider offering the Assistant Director an increase in salary.

Friends Camp Committee met in May 2016, which coincided with the Camp work weekend, and met the proposed new Camp Director, Anna Hopkins, and accepted the NEYM proposal to hire Nat Shed as a consultant to the camp. Anna will be at-

tending sessions for the full week; we look forward to introducing Anna to the Yearly Meeting when we gather in August at Castleton College. We also invite Friends to join us in celebrating Nat Shed's tenure and many wonderful contributions to Friends Camp. Nat will be at with us at Castleton on Tuesday and there will be an opportunity to share our love and thanks.

At the spring meeting, the Building and Grounds committee recommendations were reviewed. The Camp Committee decided to table projects proposed by Buildings and Grounds until a development/fundraising plan is put in place next fall.

The NEYM Friends Camp nominating committee, clerked by Leslie Manning, is currently seeking new members to the Friends Camp Committee. Friends Camp Committee is seeking a treasurer, as well as members excited to participate in long-range visioning and development of a long-term capital campaign for Friends Camp.

—TERESA OLEKSIW, CLERK

Friends United Meeting

Called by Christ to live out God's love in the world, members of Friends United Meeting are active in ministries of education, peace and relief work, nonviolence training, evangelism and church planting, health and healing, water and sanitation, leadership, and discipleship.

We are at work wherever we have members—in Kenya, Samburu, Turkana, in the African Great Lakes Region, in Belize, in Cuba, in Ramallah, in Jamaica, and in North America. (fum.org)

The FUM Committee consists of representatives to the General Board for North America and the Caribbean and those named to attend Triennial, the international gathering of members of the 34 Yearly Meetings of FUM. New appointees will serve in Triennium beginning July 2017. If interested, please see us for more details.

We serve as spiritual support to the members of our community called into relationship with FUM and foster our relationship, here in New England, with this vital organization which we helped birth. In addition to the cherished work of Rufus Jones, Ed and Dorothy Hinshaw, Betsy Muench, Susan Furry

and Dinah Starr, those currently serving our world-wide community and living our love into the world include Eden Grace (Beacon Hill, MA), Global Ministries Director; Mimi Marstaller (Durham, ME), teaching at Ramallah Friends School; and Minga Claggett-Borne and Jonathan Vogel-Borne (Cambridge, MA) on a world-wide peace-making mission taking them to Palestine, Rwanda, India and Nepal.

Members of the committee meet and worship regularly with meetings and individuals who are conflicted by our relationship with Friends United Meeting and are always available to hold this relationship in the Light. Many are relieved to learn that in 2011 the General Board minuted that it is not in unity with the existing personnel policy of FUM, although since there has not been unity on any replacement, it remains in effect. They are further surprised to learn that some current employees have never signed onto it, as a matter of conscience.

Friends in New England have long wrestled with our place and our responsibility in this association.

We have sometimes bargained and sometimes argued for the rightness of our witness and the prevalence of Truth as we understand it. In the end, however, we accept that we are part of a much larger whole and that it is in the carriage of our daily lives and the answering to that of G-d in all we meet, even those with whom we disagree, that we are made whole.

How, then, are we called? What is our place in this constellation, this witness, this work?

Are we called to lead, to serve, to obey? Is there room in our hearts and our lives for different understandings of spiritual authority, ministry and teaching rooted in our shared faith and the presence of the Living Christ in our midst?

FUM's annual report can be found at neym.org/fum-committee/news/2016-fum-annual-report

Respectfully submitted.

—LESLIE MANNING, CLERK

Friends World Committee for Consultation—New England

FWCC-NE encourages relationships between Friends meetings and churches in New England and around the world, deepening our faith and enlarging our understanding of what it means to be a Quaker and fostering Friends' ability to listen to that of G-d across a wide range of differences. We organize programs in New England, nurture Friends who travel in the wider Quaker world, and support them in sharing their witness upon their return.

At Sessions 2015, Bolivian Friend Emma Condoni led worship and programs with young people. We also organized an interest group with Emma and Cuban Friend Kirenia Criado. Gloria Thompson, FWCC Section of the Americas Eastern Region coordinator, participated in Sessions for a day. A plenary session led jointly with NEYM's FUM and FGC Committees to discern NEYM's formula for funding FWCC, FUM, and FGC showed there is a broad range of Friends' involvement with all three of these organizations.

NEYM Friends joined Friends worldwide to organize World Quaker Day activities on October 5. More program resources will be available for this fall's World Quaker Day on October 2 at worldquakerday.org. Finding ways to communicate with monthly meetings and involve more Friends in programs is a challenge. We have communicated via postcards, e-mail messages, and the NEYM and FWCC-NE websites (neym.org/fwcc-committee).

New England Friends are well represented in FWCC's governance and activities. We have six representatives active in the FWCC Section of the Americas. Benigno Sánchez-Eppler is presiding clerk and Dorothy Grannell, recording clerk. Betsy Cazden serves as clerk of FWCC World's Central Coordinating Committee.

Four NEYM Friends attended the FWCC World Plenary in Peru in January as NEYM's official representatives: Noah Baker Merrill, Ben Guaraldi, Rachel Guaraldi, and Jackie Stillwell. Seven other New England Friends attended—Beth Collea, Elias Sánchez-Eppler, Karen Sánchez-Eppler, Mary Gilbert (representing Quaker Earthcare Witness), Benigno Sánchez-Eppler, Betsy Cazden, and Chris Jorgenson, who raised close to \$8,000 for the FWCC world international travel fund. Their experiences of this transformative gathering have been and will be shared with many monthly and quarterly meetings. We expect to hear their reports at Sessions and to present the plenary minute on environmental sustainability.

Our support for the diffusion throughout the Americas of the Spanish adaptation of the *Godly Play/Faith & Play* religious education program bridges different Friends' traditions and brings us closer to Latin American Friends. Trainings were held for Friends at the World Plenary and elsewhere in Peru in January and in May in Central America.

Guatemalan Friend Karen Gregorio and Bolivian Friend Emma Condori are apprenticing as trainers. This project is also supported by Puente and Quaker Youth Education committees and received generous financial support from the Obadiah Brown Benevolent Fund and the NEYM Future Fund. Two Kenyan Friends have been invited to a special GP/F&P training in New England in June and to attend NEYM Sessions in August.

We look forward to nurturing connections through exciting new initiatives in the Section of the Americas, including a “Traveling in the Ministry Corps.” The next Section meeting will be held March 23–26, 2017, in Pittsburgh. Part of FWCC-NE’s work is raising funds that are essential for these programs. Read more at www.fwccamericas.org.

—JUDY GOLDBERGER AND CYNTHIA GANUNG, CO-CLERKS

Reflections on the World Plenary, Peru

Peru was my first World Gathering of FWCC. Friends from around the world came together to know each other and experience the different ways we worship. Outwardly our practices looked different, but the closer we got and the more time we spent together, the more we realized our shared faith and practice. My role was to coordinate and support Plenary worship each morning. This gave me a personal connection with each Section and their distinct worship. In this service, and with my home group discussions on God, it became clear

that we are all Friends striving to heed God’s calling faithfully, and to learn from one another.

—JACQUELINE STILLWELL

Having been at several world Quaker events previously, Peru felt like coming home, in spite of the fact that we had never witnessed its great heights and its stunning natural beauty. Highlights for us included talking about theology in the conference jacuzzi, emceeding and filming four hours of remarkable talent acts in the talent show, walking through the gorgeous mountains surrounding the conference, hearing Spirit-filled messages, and interpreting—both between languages and theologies. Rachel co-led one of the four consultation workshops with Cuban Friend Janet Velázquez Hernández on creating and sustaining living communities of faith. Convening the consultation in both English and Spanish created a space of rich sharing, imagining what our global and local communities are and could be. Other consultations looked at issues of youth leadership, climate change, and the future of FWCC gatherings. Because of financial and environmental concerns, this gathering released FWCC to hold gatherings with world representation less often. While these gatherings are lovely, this decision may enable FWCC to focus on other initiatives to enliven the Quaker movement.

—RACHEL AND BEN GUARALDI

Legacy Gift

This fall, we felt great anticipation when we shifted from how to use the Legacy Gift to using the funds to support the ministry of New England Friends. As we put the finishing touches on the application form and considered our process for reviewing and discerning grant awards, we had no idea what Friends would send us. What joy and excitement we experienced when, on December 1 and again on March 1, our e-mail inbox filled with applications!

This year we had a total of \$116,000 available (\$58,000 per cycle). We received 27 applications from almost every Quarter. We awarded 24 grants. For a complete list please go to neym.org/legacy-gift-grants.

We endeavored to create a process that would give every applicant careful and loving consideration according to the guidelines and eligibility set forth by Sessions. Each application was assigned to a review team that was responsible for meeting with the applicant to understand their proposal and answer any questions from the committee.

We asked if each project or ministry was grounded in the spiritual life of NEYM, especially the ongoing concerns around racism, First Nations justice, and climate change; if funding would release a new ministry or project or serve as a continuation of previous funding running out; if a project would continue or supplement the regular work of NEYM or broaden its horizons. And we asked if each applicant was spiritually and financially accountable to a monthly or quarterly meeting, or Yearly Meeting committee.

We also asked all recipients to find a way to bring their ministry back to the NEYM, by sharing at Sessions, holding workshops, or sending reports. In this way, these grants open channels of transformation that flow from NEYM through the ministries and back to our community, enlarging the ministries of NEYM and enriching our faith community.

After our first year, we have a few observations:

- A small amount of money can do a lot, and can access additional funds from other sources.
- The majority of applications came from monthly meetings or individual friends under the care of their monthly meeting.
- Most individual requests were to support ministries of long standing rather than new leadings.
- We have received a number of requests related to climate change, including meetinghouse solar projects, but fewer requests responding to racism.
- We are receiving a great many requests for meetinghouse repairs that are beyond our capacity to fund. There is clearly great need for repairs and upgrades of our meetinghouses. What is NEYM's role in meeting these needs? Where might that money come from?

There are many questions about what it means for meetings to take ministry under their care. From our perspective, one of the most exciting things from this first year was seeing meetings appointing clearness or support committees and corporately endorsing leadings and ministry.

We've been gathering resources about caring for ministry which will be available on the Yearly Meeting website. On October 15 we will be co-presenting a workshop with M&C and Finance called "Leadings, Meetings and Money."

We also provide information about other sources of funding. For example, we referred Gonic

Meeting to the Friends Meetinghouse Fund at FGC and were happy to learn that they received funding to build a ramp to improve accessibility.

Another question was whether we should wait to see what Friends bring us or whether we should solicit more actively, especially if proposals in key areas of concern for Friends are not coming forward.

A meeting asked us to direct "funds under our care" to support the Wôpanâak Language Reclamation Project as part of NEYM's commitment to repudiating the "Doctrine of Discovery." The Legacy Gift Committee did not find unity in this approach—sending money without any deeper engagement with a project. In our long period of discernment prior to establishing the Legacy Gift Funds, we heard a desire to fund ministry related to issues of First Nations justice. There are meetings in New England for which this is an active concern. Should we wait to see what ongoing ministry with First Nations might come to us from Friends or should we more actively encourage this ministry to come forward?

We also look forward to receiving Friends' observations and feedback on our first year of funding and advice for the coming year during our report at Sessions.

In love and service,

—SUZANNA SCHELL, CLERK

Ministry and Counsel

Pastoral Care is the way in which we journey with each other in times of celebration, sadness, turmoil, transition and along quiet stretches. Together with our shared worship experience it is the main glue which holds our meeting community together. From *The Ministry of Pastoral Care*, Arlene Kelly, 1993.

This past year, Ministry and Counsel gatherings were hosted by Burlington (VT), Dover (NH) and Mattapoisett (MA) monthly meetings, and we held our annual November retreat at Camp Mechuwana, outside of Winthrop Center, Maine. We were enriched by the interactions with our hosts and by learning more about what issues are alive in each of the meetings. We spent time at each of our day-long gatherings sitting with others from the same quarter, reflecting on the condition of our monthly meetings. For some quarters at times there were no meetings represented, and while all meetings in New England are invited and encouraged to send representatives,

a number of our meetings are very seldom represented. We miss those meetings and quarters when we gather. How do we encourage the life of the Spirit in the Quakers spread throughout New England who do not feel connected, or engaged in the Yearly Meeting more widely? What is our role in helping to nurture ministry wherever it arises among us?

Some of the concrete actions we've taken this year include:

- Reaching out to Friends who may not come to annual Sessions through special events. This year the Resources Working Group of M&C organized the first Ministry and Counsel "Day Treat," hosted by Smithfield Meeting in Rhode Island. This was a day-long gathering where Friends from ministry and counsel committees of monthly meetings were invited to attend to share their work and concerns. The Friends that attended found it to be a vibrant

and nourishing gathering, and we look forward more of these gatherings in the future.

- Wrestling with how to more faithfully carry the work of pastoral care. We are considering new approaches, but have not yet reached unity to fully move forward.
- Looking at ways to nurture ministry among us. A group of Friends under the care of M&C are working in fluid task groups to identify resources, workshops and other potential offerings.
- Discerning how to faithfully carry forward the work of the Working Party on Spirituality and Sexual Ethics (WPSSE). In May 2015 we received the report of the WPSSE, and we spent time at each of our meetings this year considering the report and discerning how we are led to share the report. The focus of our November retreat was exploring as Ministry and Counsel our own views on spirituality and sexual ethics, using the report as a model for our work. We found the experience of considering for ourselves what we can say to be challenging, and we are grateful for the commitment of the WPSSE in working together over the last eight years. At our May meeting we approved moving forward with release of the report, titled "Faithful Sexuality." Print copies will be available at Sessions in August. The report will also be available online by August.

M&C is responsible for presenting a State of Society report at Sessions. As we did last year, we will be using queries to help to frame the State of Society report, and we invite Friends to prepare for these queries by rereading your monthly meeting's State of Society report and by looking at the Meeting Fair during Sessions. We invite you to revisit the queries that we shared in our invitation to meetings for the State of Society report:

- How is our meeting a community where we experience a depth of Divine Presence and transforming power?
- How does our community experience of the Divine ground and nurture our actions in the world?

We are thankful for the grace that we experience in our work together, and the living Presence in our midst as we gather, seeking to be open to "the immediate presence and life of the spirit."

—DEBBIE HUMPHRIES, CLERK

SAGE Annual Report

What are the spiritual gifts of aging? What are Quaker values around the last chapter of life? How can we support difficult conversations around death

and dying? How do we help Friends create a lasting legacy for families?

Support Across Generations for Elders (SAGE) began with a grant from Friends Foundation for Aging in spring 2015, to build a program akin to the ARCH (Aging Consultation, Resources, Help) program of New York Yearly Meeting. SAGE aims to support monthly meetings as they provide pastoral care to individuals and caregivers coping with chronic illness and disabilities, losses and diminishment of aging, and serious illness including end-of-life concerns. SAGE trains Friends in skills and knowledge to assist with decision-making; provide spiritual support for families, caregivers, and individuals; address tasks of life completion and leaving a legacy for loved ones; make advance directives and other aspects of advance care planning; and assist with care coordination.

With support from the grant, we brought Anita Paul of NYYM, one of the founders of ARCH, to NEYM Sessions last August for an interest group on building the SAGE program and to consult with members of the Committee on Aging. The first SAGE training took place as a weekend retreat at Woolman Hill, led by Anita Paul, with Fran Brokaw and Lori Martin as co-leaders. Sixteen Friends from around NEYM took part, representing ten monthly meetings. Four meetings provided partial or full scholarships for their participants, and the grant provided additional support for several others.

SAGE Friends have undertaken the following work:

- Led adult education sessions for their meetings on advance directives.
- Provided ministry of accompaniment and presence for Friends on hospice.
- Accompanied people with new cancer diagnosis to physician visits to provide support and advocacy.
- Led conversations on grief and loss in their meetings.
- Suggested books and other resources for meetings to obtain for their libraries
- Accompanied a Friends pastor on visits providing pastoral counseling

ARCH of NYYM focuses on training individuals to provide visits to Friends and families in need, to listen to their needs and assist them in clarifying goals and connecting them with resources. This model works well for New York; is this also what will work best for New England? What model will best serve NEYM to connect individuals, families, pastoral care and ministry and counsel committees with needed resources? SAGE is in its infancy, and we have the opportunity to develop a program that

suits the unique needs of NEYM. How do we best assist rural programmed meetings? What added benefits are there for large meetings in urban areas who already have a robust pastoral care program that serves their meeting well? How might we use technology to share best practices, reaching out to those in need across New England?

An additional training is scheduled for November 2016 at Woolman Hill, and planning is underway. We hope every monthly meeting will send one or two Friends to take part, as the SAGE program grows and develops.

—FRAN BROKAW

Committee for Nurturing Friends Education at Moses Brown School

In September 2015, the Nurturing Friends Education Committee identified the following priorities:

- Be more strategic and less project oriented
- Play a guiding role in the Friends Council on Education (FCE) Membership Renewal Process
- Support Galen Hamann's role as Director of Friends Education
- Discern and offer Friends' perspective on issues as they arise
- Help find more Quaker students and educators for MB
- Explore ways to bring MB and NEYM closer together

At our May 2016 committee meeting, we reflected on our work and goals. There was clear sense among committee members that discernment and action around issues this year has been powerful. Galen expressed that she has felt actively supported by Nurturing Friends. She highlighted the subcommittee work on the Friends Education Conference held at Moses Brown in November and expressed how having other committee members engaged allowed her to gather diverse perspectives to create a richer, more dynamic event. The conference enabled us to bring in other Quakers as MB played a leadership role connecting people interested in Friends education in New England. We believe this as well as other initiatives will provide opportunities for Moses Brown to connect with NEYM and the broader Friends community moving forward.

The central dimension of our committee work this year was to develop and shape the report for the FCE membership renewal. With the Head of School and the Director of Friends Education, we worked to conduct anonymous surveys and hold conversations with the following constituencies: faculty in all three divisions, administration, staff, trustees, and upper and middle school students. We worked to engage all voices and to transparently affirm that while the salient points would be integrated into the FCE self-study, the collective voices and thoughts expressed would also provide a living

framework for continuing work of the FEC over the next five years to strengthen our Friends' identity.

This process was a dynamic source of meaningful discernment and dialogue, and allowed us as a committee to gather a sense of the interest and passion throughout the community in Friends' faith and practice, as well as a sense of what is already taking place in the day-to-day life of the school, and to acknowledge places where we can further support Friends' faith and practice in strategic and explicit ways.

Over the summer, Nurturing Friends will explore the following queries to discern our work for next year:

- How can we continue to engage the voices and material gathered in the discernment conversations to inspire our future work?
- What is the best way to engage our Quaker families and to connect local meetings with MB families curious about Quakerism?
- How can we link people thinking about Friends education—in both schools and meetings—to tease out the complementary, mutually beneficial relationship that Friends schools bring to Friends meetings and vice-versa?
- How can we gather our approved minutes into a resource available for all members of our community?
- How can we engage in meaningful, relevant conversation around the upcoming election, upholding Friends beliefs?

Respectfully submitted,

—DAWN TRIPP, CLERK

Moses Brown School Report

The sessions theme of "Being Hands of God: a Call to Radical Faithfulness" feels particularly appropriate to the school community at Moses Brown. This has been a year of deepening our commitment to

our mission as a Friends school and engaging with our local and global communities.

One significant accomplishment this year was the completion of a self-study as part of the decennial membership renewal process for Friends Council on Education. The 30-page report, documenting MB's faithfulness to six defining standards of Friends schools (Mission, Meeting for Worship, Governance, Leadership, Program & Community Life, and Continuing Revelation), has been submitted to FCE, and MB will host a visiting committee in the fall as the final step in renewing its membership.

In November MB hosted its second Friends Education conference. Themed around the testimony of Integrity, the event drew 75 participants from around New England and featured eight workshops and a panel of keynote speakers, including Drew Smith, Executive Director of Friends Council on Education.

The school's new TRIPs program is helping to build connections with Friends around the country and world. This year MB sponsored service trips to Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic and a service "retreat" here in Providence. Students visited Cuba and attended an international affairs conference at The Hague. Students in the Civics in Action course traveled to DC to attend the FCNL lobbying weekend; the Literature of War class also went to DC to visit memorials, the Institute of Peace, and the Vietnam War exhibit at the Newseum.

In February, MB and Lincoln School co-hosted the Quaker Youth Leadership conference. The theme was "Equality: Past, Present, and Future,"

and the event was attended by over 200 students from 23 schools. By leading discussions, introducing speakers, and participating in meeting for worship, MB Upper School students significantly enriched their experience of Friends education.

In the Lower School, the Quaker Life committee introduced the idea of meeting for business to the faculty, for use both in faculty meetings and with students. This year the division also focused on encouraging the spiritual development of our youngest students, including use of programmed meeting for worship. SPARK, a new leadership group focused on Friends testimonies, provided an opportunity for discussion and leadership. The students prepared and led two meetings for worship and one service project.

Under the umbrella of MB's strategic plan, the school continued to focus on fostering key skills in students such as creative problem solving, global awareness and ethical leadership. This year, three new teacher-leader positions were created to guide the ethical leadership initiative, which will be shaped around Friends testimonies. The teachers designed and hosted an in-service day where all faculty discussed values-laden topics currently in the news, including environmental sustainability, Islamophobia, and gender.

This year MB also completed the writing and publication of a community Faith and Practice booklet, which articulates our identity as a Friends school—what we believe and how we live it.

—MATT GLENDINNING, HEAD OF SCHOOL; GALEN HAMANN, DIRECTOR OF FRIENDS EDUCATION

Publications and Communications

I am writing this report during a time of transition for our committee. I am rotating off Publications and Communications after six years of service, four as clerk. We have accomplished a great deal in this time and this year we wrestled some especially significant projects.

I am particularly excited to report that after many years of discernment, we have completed a set of advices and queries on the use of electronic meetings to better enable Yearly Meeting committees to do their work. We encourage all Yearly Meeting committees to check them out on the Yearly Meeting website's page for committee resources: neym.org/resources/committees.

Over the many years we have labored over this project, we noticed an evolution in our thinking about electronic meetings: an early draft suggested

that "electronic meetings are no replacement for in-person meetings" and by the end of the process, we affirmed that electronic meetings help Friends do collaborative work with others across the globe that would not be possible otherwise. We are grateful for the many Friends who offered us feedback on these advices and queries at various stages, and for the many past Publications and Communications Committee members who have worked on these over the years.

In addition to wrapping up this major project, we supported other important work within the Yearly Meeting. We had conversations with Friends about sharing resources for outreach, translation projects, and the use of social media by the Yearly Meeting. Our committee is energized by the drive Friends have to create and share Quaker resources

and we look for ways to expand this support work in the future.

As this year winds down, we are considering new ways forward for our committee. What might a new structure for the committee look like? How might we raise up the gifts of Friends in the Yearly Meeting and provide increased support for committees and meetings who may need it? How can we

more fully embrace our role as Publishers of Truth? The coming years will be an important time of discernment for Publications and Communications Committee. Prayers, support, and new ideas are welcome. I look forward to seeing what new structures, resources, and messages emerge from this work.

—EMILY TABER, CLERK

Puente de Amigos

We are blessed by our relationship with Cuba Yearly Meeting; its meetings, its members. Saying, “YES!” to Heredio Santos’ invitation to create a relationship between our Yearly Meetings 25 years ago has done so much: it has deepened both yearly meetings’ perspectives on Quakerism; has enriched the lives of Cubans who’ve come to New England; and it has enriched those of us who have hosted and gone to Cuba with spiritual leadings. In a year when many of our acquaintances have gone to see Cuba, we hold dear the opportunity we’ve had as members of NEYM to experience Cubans and share in the joys of the Spirit with them. New England Friends’ relationship with Cuban Friends continues to be nurtured by connecting at FWCC meetings. In January, Cuban Friend Yanet Velazquez and New England Friend Rachel Guaraldi co-led the “Living Ministry” strand at the FWCC World Plenary meeting in Peru.

Cuban Friends have seen little effect of the “normalization” in U.S./Cuba relations. We feel that the growing inequality and change in values that tourism may bring to Cuba calls us to increase our involvement with Cuban Quakers during this time of transition.

What follows is a list of the connections our yearly meetings made this year. Please think about a way that you can say “YES!” to contribute to building the bridge between our two faith communities.

The year started with the dynamic presence of Kirenia Criado descending upon us as our guest to 2015 Sessions. Her energy and Spirit-filled ministry ignited each of us who were fortunate to connect. No one will forget how she called elder Paul Hood (Burlington, VT) up to the podium to sing *Ubi Caritas* before she gave her keynote address at the opening plenary of our Sessions. When still a teenager, Kirenia had met Paul Hood when he and Benigno Sanchez-Eppler did their “bicycle ministry” in 1994.

She was thrilled to see him in the audience and recalled for us how she had learned the Latin round from him 22 years earlier.

In November, Hanover Friends Meeting sent six members to celebrate its sister meeting’s (La Habana) 15th anniversary and to join in Cuba Yearly Meeting’s 115th anniversary festivities. This delegation’s trip aligned with a group arriving from Friends United Meeting, and together they were able to visit every single one of the nine monthly meetings in the eastern end of the island nation. Plans have commenced to send an intergenerational trip in August 2017.

Our long-standing commitment to send laptops to Cuba Yearly Meeting (CYM) so it can interconnect all its monthly meetings was renewed when three more laptops were sent this year. Cuban Quakers are incredibly creative at utilizing this resource, mostly through the use of flash drives. Once each monthly meeting has one, we can start providing them to CYM’s Cuban Quaker Peace Institute (ICCP).

ICCP started its second 3-year cycle of classes this year. Benigno Sanchez-Eppler (Northampton) taught a course on Quaker decision-making in January and Betsy Cazden (Providence, RI) taught a course on early Quaker women’s history in May. ICCP has had to adjust its schedule and now offers three-day courses over a long weekend.

We have been able to work with the NEYM Friends World Committee for Consultation committee to disseminate Spanish language manuals of *Godly Play/Faith & Play* to monthly meetings.

Building on the steps already taken by so many volunteers, we look forward to ever deeper, more profound encounters in the years ahead.

—LEN & MARY ANN CADWALLADER, CO-CLERKS

Quaker Youth Education

“Even more, QYE’s ministry was linked together with those of other Friends’ committees like the beautifully colored Olympic rings.” The words with which the 2015 QYE report began continue their relevance this year. As we gather for Sessions, the 2016 Summer Olympics have just begun in Brazil. And the QYE Committee has seen the Light of Quaker education grow brighter in the NEYM through loving cooperation with many other groups—Quaker and non-Quaker alike.

We proceeded on the basis of Malvina Reynolds’ principle: “Love’s a circle, so let’s begin it and bring it to every door. For love is something if you give it away, you end up having more.” The list below includes the month, the activity, and some of the groups we partnered with.

August: QYE Family Neighborhood—Sessions

August: Signs of Light Poster Fair—Sessions

August: Discussion with Cuban Friend Kirenia Criado in New Bedford—Puente de Amigos, Mattapoisett Monthly Meeting, New Bedford Free Public Library Howland (Spanish) Branch, New Bedford, MA

September: Walk to the Sea on the Cornell Farm Reservation—Sandwich Quarter, Smith Neck Meetinghouse, Young Adult Friends Ministry

October: Outreach Roundtable, Pam Cole, Beth Collea to Shrewsbury Friends Meeting, NJ—New York Yearly Meeting

October: Godly Play/Faith & Play training by Caryl Menkhus Creswell (West Hills Friends Meeting)—Wellesley Friends Meeting

November: GP/FP/*Jugar llenos de fe!* Introduction by Caryl and Jeff Creswell—in addition to Friends meetings, 10 faith groups including Greek Orthodox; Puente de Amigos; New Bedford Monthly Meeting

January: *Godly Play* study of Zaccheus by Beth Collea, Gale Schultz—in addition to Friends meetings, 15 faith groups including Haitian Church in preparation for 2016 World Day of Prayer for Cuba, Church Women United, Smith Mills Christian Congregational Church, Dartmouth, MA

March: REnewal and REsources Training for First Day Schools with Beth Collea, Melinda Wenner Bradley and Avery Johnson—Woolman Hill

April: East African Ministry, Marian Baker, keynote speaker—MA/RI Church Women United Annual Assembly, Somerset Baptist Church, Somerset, MA

June: GP Training by Melinda Wenner for Margaret Namikoye Musalia and Agneta Kwayumba Injairu—Kenya Malava and Vihiga Yearly Meetings, Wellesley Friends

Interest in the events and training QYE has provided is steadily increasing. Meetings that have not had First Day Schools in many years are beginning the schools again. QYE is able to provide more resources in part because the committee’s administration has been simplified through the use of the NEYM webpage and GoToMeeting software. However, the major reason for our flourishing is because, for the third year, we are reporting the benefits of networking with others that share a deep interest in supporting the religious education of youth and families. I am of one mind with the Yearly Meeting presiding clerk and secretary when they suggest that Yearly Meeting change the structure of the QYE Committee to reflect its networking style. In other words, the time has come to provide a new wineskin for the robust QYE wine.

“So let’s go dancing till the break of day, And if there’s a piper, we can pay. For love is something if you give it away, You end up having more.”

—PAM COLE, CLERK

Racial, Social and Economic Justice

RSEJ met five times this year—at Sessions, Committee Days and at a June retreat.

Friends from several meetings in New England held workshops for a Journey of Healing (following passage of Minute 52, repudiating the Doctrine of Discovery). Since 2013 our committee has carried this work forward, holding workshops facilitated by indigenous leaders from Maine (Passamoquoddy and Abenaki) and Massachusetts (Wampanoag).

Dover, Concord, Mount Toby, Hartford, Mattapoisett (at New Bedford), Monadnock, and Wellesley meetings and Northwest Quarter (at Middlebury) have hosted one or more workshops. Jamie Bissonette Lewey, Mother Bear and other tribal people in New England have offered their wisdom and leadership. Send questions about scheduling or participating in a workshop to Rachel Carey Harper at rch@cape.com.

Our committee continues to oversee two funds. The Freedman's Fund offers college scholarships to Southern descendants of slaves. We currently fund five students at \$2000 each. This year we reviewed the finances of the fund with Shearman Taber, clarifying questions about the amount of funds available.

The Prejudice & Poverty Fund provides one-time grants addressing racial and economic injustice. We encourage applications for these grants.

This third year of our Book Distribution Project we offer the young adult book, *Bayard Rustin: The Invisible Activist*, to all monthly meetings and Quaker schools in NEYM. Jonathan Vogel-Borne was involved in the design.

We continue to update the committee's portion of the NEYM website, adding a lot of material. We invite everyone to visit this site, use what parts of it are helpful and give us feedback, especially any new resources you know of. We are adding information about individual and monthly meeting initiatives as we learn about them.

This year we will not publish a print version of *The Freedom and Justice Crier*, offering instead an online version on the NEYM website. We encourage everyone to read it online, save resources and contribute what you and your meetings are doing.

We are collaborating with Nia Dwywnwen Thomas and others on the Sessions Racial Inclusivity Task

Force, working to address racism and encourage inclusivity during NEYM Sessions.

We discussed the Muslim Justice Project, a leading of one committee member. Interested Friends may contact us for more information.

A member of the committee and other NEYM Friends attended the annual White Privilege Conference in Philadelphia. There are many perspectives on this work. We hope for an opportunity at Sessions to gather and share what we learned at the conference.

We support Sarah Walton's work in Atlanta. Sarah received a Legacy Fund grant to design a program providing training and resources for police and communities to eliminate racial profiling. She is eager to help NEYM Friends replicate this work in New England and will present a workshop at sessions.

Committee members have added panels to the Black Lives Matter poster display that was created for a vigil at 2013 Sessions, Committee Days and at Dover vigils. This and other materials are being prepared for 2016 sessions.

As we seek to follow the leadings of the Spirit, to listen, to learn and to grow in understanding and love, we are grateful for all the opportunities to worship and offer service.

—SHEILA GARRETT AND NUR SHOOP, CO-CLERKS

Sessions

In preparing to write this report, I reviewed what I wrote last year: "We are incredibly grateful this [parade and football game] is a one-year 'thing'..." Ha! Well, at least when we learned last fall that the parade and game would indeed be happening again this year, we were able to say, "Well, that wasn't so bad; we can do this."

With no major changes in structure or schedule this year, the planning and preparations have gone fairly smoothly, allowing us to accomplish our discernment with just two face-to-face meetings, supplemented by four virtual meetings.

We will continue two "innovations" from 2015: the Coffee House will be on Tuesday evening, and

we will hold a separate memorial meeting. This year, the memorial meeting will be the opening gathering on Saturday afternoon, providing an opportunity to start the week grounded in a reflection on and celebration of the lives of recently departed Friends who have helped shape our community.

Drawing upon our experience—and your feedback—from the last couple of years, we will be exploring several smaller changes designed to improve the experience for all of us.

We are excited to welcome you once again to Castleton, trusting that we will together find ways to live into this year's theme of radical faithfulness.

—JOHN HUMPHRIES, CLERK

Young Adult Standing Committee

The Young Adult Friends enjoyed a year of solidifying our community after the previous year's stressful restructuring journey. We are happy to report that the Standing Committee, a group which reflects upon and addresses the needs of that YAF community on an ongoing basis, is still intact and thriving. We are grateful to have a group of passionate people who serve on the Committee. We are also grateful for the support and wisdom of our coordinator, Nia Thomas, as we live into our new structure.

We came together for three retreats. The retreats reflected two leadings of the community. The fall and midwinter retreats enabled us to explore our leading to develop Quaker skills. The fall retreat focused on business. We were privileged to have Ben Guaraldi and Elias Sánchez-Eppler lead us through a "nuts and bolts" workshop about Quaker business practices. The midwinter retreat focused on worship. Different members of our community led spiritually grounded workshops approaching worship from different angles. The spring retreat was put on by the Young Adult Friends Climate Working Group, whose members chose the theme "Coming of Age in a Time of Crisis." Concerns that the group would focus on an agenda faded away as it became clear that the intention was to grapple with the theme at its full spiritual depth and breadth. Overall, attendance at the retreats was strong, with a healthy balance of new and returning people. New York Yearly Meeting was consistently represented at the retreats. Some participants found out about the retreats from their monthly meetings.

Our community experienced many areas of growth. Hilary Burgin was hired for the new Young Adult Engagement Coordinator position. We are excited about the possibilities the position opens up for us. We sense that Hilary is energized to help us turn those possibilities into reality. Sarah Bickel led a compassionate and diligent process throughout the year that culminated in the formation of the YAF Pastoral Care Committee. Maggie Nelson graciously received support from the community for Art Camp, an annual event that will happen for as many years as her passion for the project continues. Chloe Grubbs-Saleem and Gordon Peters clerked business meeting for the first time. Xinef Afriam oversaw our first Day-treat, a shorter opportunity for YAF fellowship, and is planning another. Regional affinity groups and potluck groups have materialized.

The Young Adult Friends continue to be involved in the wider Quaker community. Members of our community are active in monthly meetings and have participated in Quaker Voluntary Service and attended the White Privilege Conference.

There is concern that the process of transitioning from Young Adult Friends to adult Friends is vague and unsupported. We hope that the adult Friends can work with us to make this transition smoother.

In the coming year, we hope to continue our growth. We also hope that the core of our community continues to solidify.

We are grateful for the support of New England Yearly Meeting.

—GORDON PETERS, CLERK

Young Friends

Coming from Westport Meeting after our sixth and final retreat of the year, Young Friends are coming to terms with the end of an incredible retreat season. Our community was often full of joy, as we were fortunate enough to receive bread-making visits from Gretchen Baker-Smith, wonderful lessons from Lisa (and Xander) Graustein, worship and faith-centered talks and visits from Noah Baker Merrill, the attendance of enthusiastic and curious Friends from Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, as well as the presence of countless new Young Friends. Our Resource Person Tom Antonik as well as some Young Friends diligently documented all of these wonderful happenings with photographs. When not en-

gaged by our visitors, Young Friends were engaged in our retreat themes, songs, group games, cuddle puddles, and meaningful community.

This year has also been difficult at times for our community. We struggled with the loss of former Young Friend Ishmael Rosas, a dear friend to a number of people within our community. We worked together to hold each other as well as his family in the Light. With the attendance of Young Friends Ministry and Counsel dwindling by the end of the year, those present felt the strain of more work in holding the community with fewer people to divide it among. As experienced annually, the sorrows of seniors moving up to Young Adult

Friends and the end of the retreat year left a bitter-sweet goodbye that we felt contrasted greatly with the joyful energy often experienced earlier in the season. The stress of the closing school year and the feeling of communal loss made for a more solemn May retreat; however, the strength of our community was felt as Young Friends answered this need for support and kindness with increased vigor. The annual campfire was a time for the community to celebrate together, sing, and reflect on the fantastic F/friends met over the retreat season. We closed out the year by belting out *Circle Game*, *Puff the Magic Dragon*, *Bohemian Rhapsody*, and *Sanctuary* in Westport Meeting's chilly back yard beneath the moon and stars.

This year Young Friends were gifted access to a fund from the Yearly Meeting, which we received by successfully applying for a grant to send a delegation to the White Privilege Conference in Philadelphia. After our November retreat centered around racism and inequality, many Young Friends felt that a retreat weekend was not enough to fulfill our desired role in dismantling systems of privilege. Accompanied by Resource Person Michelle Brimage and Young Friends Coordinator NiaDwynwen Thomas, a small group of Young Friends attended this conference and shared about their experiences and leadings regarding work in social justice at the business meeting held during the May retreat. As a community, there was a strong sense that our role in social justice work was important and something we could work better at living into. We look for-

ward to this group's further work with our community, in the form of workshops and activities at Yearly Meeting Sessions as well as possible future retreat themes.

The work done for, during, and after the White Privilege Conference is just one of the many leadings Young Friends felt throughout the year. Due to concerns about the foreseen decreasing size of the community, some Young Friends committed themselves to outreach and spreading the word about our retreats, while others expressed their truths in the form of music and performance at our Midwinter talent show. We hope these efforts will allow our community to continue to have the large attendance we so greatly appreciate and enjoy currently. Young Friend retreats have been a joyful and worshipful space for us to think deeply about our identities, the community, and the world around us as we experience our retreat themes. Retreats have also been a space for teenagers navigating difficult times to relax and reflect surrounded by love, support, and wise Resource People. We are all thankful (as expressed repeatedly in our affirmations at the close of retreats) to the Yearly Meeting, our fantastic coordinator Nia Thomas, our lovely resource people and cooks, the various meetings that have hosted us, and to each other for entering Young Friends with the kindness, openness, and faith needed to create this community which helps to guide us and support us in our lives within and outside of Quaker community.

—MOSELLE BURKE & DREW CHASSE, CO-CLERKS

Youth Ministries

The Youth Ministries Committee was given a new name (formerly Youth Programs Committee) and a new purpose and new procedures at the 2014 Sessions. This year we began growing into our new mission. The committee's purpose is to "oversee the vitality and relevance of NEYM's youth ministries to nurture the spiritual growth and leadership of children and youth of Friends in New England." We are to "act as trustees." This is a significant charge. Youth ministries are among the most important and long-standing ministries of the Yearly Meeting. Like much of our wider community, our youth retreat programs are challenged by the busyness and pressure to do more that is placed on parents and youth and the resulting strained relationship with local meetings and their existing support structures. The pastoral care needs of our youth can be hard for local meetings to identify and support.

In October, the committee that had been nominated in 2014 met for the first time and named the gifts and skills that were needed on the committee. We also recommended a formal liaison relationship with both Permanent Board and Ministry and Counsel. Coordinating and Advisory Committee, Permanent Board and Nominating Committee recruited Friends with gifts in Pastoral Care, Friends experienced in youth work and Friends with skills in program planning and evaluation.

In April, the full committee met and began our work. Youth programs need architects, builders and workers. We are acting to create the resources and space for our youth workers to do the work with which we have entrusted them. The immediate fruits of our work are a proposal for an approved Child Abuse Prevention Policy and Procedures for the Yearly Meeting, the recruitment of expert advi-

sors for our Youth Program staff, and attention to the development of leadership within the youth staff.

The Yearly Meeting retreat programs are a precious treasure of the Yearly Meeting and offer many of our youth their first experience of Beloved Community. However, we know there is more NEYM could do to nurture the spiritual growth of all of its

children and youth, not just those who can and do attend retreats. With this committee's broadened charge, we see an opening to care both for the programs we have built and for new ways to nurture the spiritual growth of children of Friends in New England.

—FRITZ WEISS, FOR THE COMMITTEE

Representatives to Other Friends Organizations

American Friends Service Committee

AFSC program work, which we learned about in many interesting ways at the Corporation meeting this spring, continues to be diverse and vibrant. Strong focus areas include racial and economic justice, transforming militarism, and bringing justice and mercy into our nation's treatment of immigrants.

Based on the financial reports shared with us, AFSC is once again in rocky financial waters, although on the positive side, its Courageous Acts capital campaign to build an endowment is going well. In response to a request made by the Corporation last year, the AFSC board has made a commitment to divest from fossil fuels. As a Nobel Peace Prize laureate, AFSC may nominate candidates for the prize each year. This year our choice was the Non-violent Peaceforce, which works with communities

to build local capacity to reduce violence and provide unarmed protection of civilians. Shan Cretin, the General Secretary, will be leaving the position soon, and the search process for her replacement has begun. Planning is well underway for observances of the Service Committee's 100th anniversary in 2017.

Friends may also be interested in a couple of personnel changes here in our own Northeast region. The region now has not only Director Keith Harvey, but also an Assistant Director, Amy Gottlieb, who is based in New York City; Phyllis Cohen Gately, longtime Human Resources Director for the Northeast (and formerly the New England) region of AFSC, has retired.

—DULANY BENNETT, SARA BURKE, ANNE NASH, AND PETER CRYSDALE

Friends Committee on National Legislation

Once again, New England Yearly Meeting's participation in Friends Committee on National Legislation was substantial. Most notably, Diane Randall (Hartford, CT) continued serving as FCNL's Executive Secretary and Barbara Monahan (New Haven, CT) continued as Associate Executive Secretary for Development. Diane's annual report to the yearly meetings on FCNL activities is included below in these advance documents. This report focuses on the specific FCNL activities of NEYM members.

Katherine Fisher (Beacon Hill, MA), Scot Drysdale (Hanover, NH), Susanna Thomas (Storrs, CT), Jonah McKenna Moss (Beacon Hill), Ian Harrington (Cambridge, MA) and Donn Weinholz (Hartford, CT) served as NEYM representatives on FCNL's General Committee and attended the annual meeting. Scot also served on the Finance Committee, Ian on the Field Committee and Donn on the Development Committee.

Other Friends from throughout New England contributed to FCNL in many ways. On the occasion of his 90th birthday, Ed Snyder (Acadia, ME), Emeritus FCNL Executive Director, gave a memorable speech at the 2015 Annual Meeting, focusing on lessons that he has learned over his many years of faithful service. (You can read Ed's conclusions at fcnl.org/events/annual_meeting/2015/snyder_90/)

Jim Matlack (Midcoast, ME), the longtime director of AFSC's Washington, D.C. office, also participated as an at-large member.

At-large member Jennie Isbell Shinn (Mt. Toby, MA) served on the Development Committee and is also serving as the paid consultant for the first year of the Forward Planning process. Robert Schultz (Hanover), another at-large member, also serves on the Forward Planning Committee, as does Mark Kharas (Cambridge).

At-large members Becky Steele (Portland, ME) and Mark Kharas both served on the FCNL Education Fund Board, with Becky serving as the Board's treasurer. Becky and her husband, Doug McCowan

(Portland), also took up residence as FCNL Friends in Washington, in the newly renovated apartment adjoining the FCNL Capitol Hill office.

—SUBMITTED BY DONN WEINHOLTZ

Friends Committee on National Legislation 2016 Report to Yearly Meetings

As Friends, our faith and experience convince us to work for the peaceful, just, equitable, and sustainable world we seek. Above all, we seek to remain open to where God leads us. The Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) has carried on this witness of the Spirit through action on Capitol Hill for nearly 75 years.

FCNL is strengthening our civil dialogue and lobbying by our community. We are investing in programs to expand our work with young adults and local lobby leadership. We are seeing results such as the introduction of bipartisan proposals to address climate change (H. Res 424) and build peace through the Genocide and Atrocities Prevention Act (S.2551). Our expanded programs to train and support Friends and others building relationships with their members of Congress have helped grow the power of our Quaker lobbying community. This broadening and deepening of our outreach is made possible by our capital campaign, "The World We Seek: Now Is the Time."

FCNL brings the concerns, experiences, and testimonies of Friends to bear on policy decisions in the nation's capital. We are governed by a General Committee of 178 Quakers representing 25 Yearly Meetings and four Quaker organizations. We are sustained by the advocacy, prayers, and financial support of tens of thousands of Friends and like-minded people across the country, in every state and nearly every congressional district. Thank you for your support and leadership.

Living Our Faith through Action

FCNL's 17 registered lobbyists meet on Capitol Hill with lawmakers and their staff, and we work as partners with citizen advocates across the country. In 2015, 1,314 Friends and supporters of FCNL made more than 593 personal visits to congressional offices, in Washington and in local districts, on FCNL priority issues. Our network also sent 120,516 issue-related messages to Congress and had 101 letters to the editor published that support our advocacy priorities.

In November, we welcomed more than 400 Quakers and other friends in the FCNL network to

Washington for our annual Quaker Public Policy Institute, focused on the importance of the Genocide and Atrocities Prevention Act. Delegations from 38 states lobbied more than 200 congressional offices over the course of two days. As a direct result of FCNL constituent lobbying, three key members of Congress joined as co-sponsors and this legislation (S.2551) was introduced to the Senate on February 12, 2016.

The World We Seek: Now is the Time Capital Campaign

FCNL is building a sustainable future through our capital campaign, which will strengthen the foundation for FCNL's lobbying and programs. FCNL and the FCNL Education Fund are undertaking an effort to build the capacity of our programs and our financial health by raising \$15 million to secure future advocacy. The capital campaign is supporting the next generation of advocates, creating a Quaker Welcome Center on Capitol Hill, re-vitalizing the Friend in Washington Program, and expanding FCNL's lobbying and grassroots network.

Thank you

Thanks to the General Committee, appointed by Yearly Meetings, and our close network of Friends and supporters, FCNL continues to make progress in Washington.

Our faith and experience convince us to work for the peaceful, just, equitable, and sustainable world we seek. Above all, we seek to remain open to where God's spirit leads us. We greatly appreciate and acknowledge the significant impact of the financial support and activism of individuals and Quaker meetings, churches and yearly meetings. Please keep us in your prayers.

FCNL's Executive Committee and Education Fund Board

Eric Ginsburg, Clerk, North Carolina Yearly Meeting (Conservative)

DeAnne Butterfield, Assistant Clerk, Intermountain Yearly Meeting

David A. Bantz, Recording Clerk, Alaska Friends Conference

Constance Brookes, FCNL Treasurer, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting

Becky Steele, Ed Fund Treasurer, New England Yearly Meeting

A. T. Miller, Personnel Clerk, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting

Diane Randall, Executive Secretary, New England Yearly Meeting

Scott Duncan, Clerk of the Development Committee, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting

Deborah Fink, Clerk of the Field Committee, Iowa Yearly Meeting (Conservative)

Mary Lou Hatcher, At-large member, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting

Mark Kharas, At-large member Ed Fund, New England Yearly Meeting

Beth Henricks, Clerk of the Capital Campaign Committee, Western Yearly Meeting

Karen Putney, Clerk of the Nominating Committee, Southeastern Yearly Meeting

Kelly Schoolmeester, Clerk of the Policy Committee, Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting

David Snyder, Clerk of the Annual Meeting Planning Committee, Lake Erie Yearly Meeting

John Wilkin, Clerk of the Finance Committee, Northwest Yearly Meeting

What We Achieve Together:

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

Iran: Diplomacy Works

FCNL was a leader in mobilizing congressional support for the diplomatic agreement with Iran, which is keeping Iran from developing nuclear weapons and preventing war. Our lobbying intensified as Congress prepared to vote on the agreement. We helped organize faith parties in Washington, DC, to lobby for the Iran deal. Our powerful combination of Hill lobbying, grassroots advocacy, organization of other faith groups, letters to the editor in all 50 states, and media outreach helped achieve results: 42 senators supported the deal, enough to block the vote.

Congressional Quarterly called FCNL's Kate Gould "the Quaker lobbyist behind the Iran deal fight," joining the Wall Street Journal, CNN, and U.S. News and World Report in recognizing FCNL's pro-diplomacy leadership. fcnl.org/iran

Climate Change: A Bipartisan Way Forward

Breaking the partisan gridlock that is blocking action on climate change is a central focus of FCNL's advocacy. Our work has directly led to the introduction of a Republican-sponsored resolution committing members to discuss and address climate change. FCNL worked with Rep. Chris Gibson (NY) and other sponsors to build support for the resolution. Speaking at the Climate Justice Rally on the National Mall in September, FCNL's Jose Aguto called it "a crack in the partisan dam, behind which lies a great river of climate solutions." Our lobbying in Washington is supported and reinforced by the members of FCNL's Advocacy Corps, who are organizing in districts across the country for bipartisan climate action. fcnl.org/climate

Mass Incarceration: Ease Harsh, Discriminatory Sentencing

As a result of harsh sentencing laws, the U.S. is the world's leader in incarceration, with 2.2 million people behind bars. FCNL is building support for federal legislation to reduce mandatory sentencing lengths, give judges more sentencing discretion, and limit solitary confinement. This effort was the focus of our Spring Lobby Weekend in March 2016 that brought a record 400 young adults to Washington, DC, to lobby for bi-partisan legislation. fcnl.org/incarceration

De-Militarizing U.S. Police Forces

President Obama announced that the federal government will stop giving certain military equipment to local police departments. Even before the highly publicized killings by police in Ferguson, New York, and Baltimore focused national attention on U.S. policing, FCNL was laying the groundwork to get military equipment off Main Street. We collaborated closely with Rep. Hank Johnson (GA) on the Stop Militarizing Law Enforcement Act, legislation that includes many of the provisions in the president's executive order. fcnl.org/militarism

Ending Endless War

The 2001 Authorization for the Use of Military Force (AUMF) has given two presidents a blank check to justify new wars, deadly drone attacks around the world, detentions at Guantanamo Bay and U.S. airstrikes in Iraq and Syria. FCNL lobbyists in Washington and around the country continue to lead efforts to repeal this law and insist that Congress debate and vote on every war. Last year, we convinced more than 200 members of Congress to vote (at different times) for repeal of the AUMF. As Congress considers a new authorization against the

Islamic State, we continue to press members to first repeal the existing law, which allows the president to act virtually without limit. fcnl.org/endlesswar

Building Structures for Peace

FCNL has led efforts to persuade the U.S. government to invest in diplomacy, peacebuilding, and other means to prevent wars before they start. U.S. support for peacebuilding efforts in Kenya, the Central African Republic and elsewhere show the power of nonviolent approaches to problem-solving. Yet the U.S. infrastructure to carry out this work is precarious and underfunded. U.S. foreign policy needs to pivot to peace. FCNL is helping to secure funding for peacebuilding and build support for permanent authorization of these programs. fcnl.org/peacebuilding

Cutting the Pentagon and Nuclear Weapons Budgets

While Pentagon spending has declined from its height during the Iraq War, the U.S. government still spends almost as much on the military as it did during the Cold War and Vietnam War. FCNL's current lobbying focuses in two areas: eliminating the loophole that lets the Pentagon avoid spending caps, and opposing congressional efforts to fund the Pentagon by cutting domestic spending. We are working to close the loophole that lets the Pentagon avoid spending restrictions and to cut nuclear weapons spending through the SANE Act. This

legislation would eliminate \$100 billion in nuclear weapons spending over the next decade. fcnl.org/budget & fcnl.org/nuclear

Building Life-Long Lobbyists

People of all ages work for change with FCNL. Through advocacy events in Washington, DC, and programs to sustain and support grassroots organizers in their local communities, we are making change together. In 2014 we began a dramatic expansion of our work with young people. We launched the Advocacy Corps to cultivate young adult leadership and to promote grassroots engagement. We visited more than 60 colleges and universities around the country to build diversity and recruit social justice advocates. We're seeing the results in advances on climate action and ending endless wars, and we are well on our way to raising the money to endow these programs through our Capital Campaign. fcnl.org/advocate

There's More!

Check out our website to find out why Americans for Indian Opportunity gave their "Spirit of Indigeneity Award" to FCNL, how our lobbyists organize congressional visits and participate in the Interfaith Immigration Coalition, why our staff are working with a coalition of faith groups on a constitutional amendment to address campaign finance reform, the details on an interfaith initiative to stop lethal drones, and more. fcnl.org/successes

Friends Peace Teams

Your support empowers Friends Peace Teams to offer grass roots peacework in countries around the world that are dealing with civil wars and other violence on a daily basis. Using the leadership skills of its volunteers in coordination with local leaders, FPT offers dozens of workshops every month, sometimes that many in a single week: AVP (Alternatives to Violence Project), trauma resiliency, HROC (Healing and Restoring Our Communities), and other peacebuilding programs. Since its beginning 22 years ago, your generous support of FPT helps make peace possible. Thank you.

The African Great Lakes Initiative conducted two successful HROC International trainings in Rwanda and introduced HROC to the Kakuma Refugee Camp in northwestern Kenya. In Burundi, AGLI addressed the conflict surrounding the election for a third term of the current president by establishing citizen reporting, peace and democracy

groups, and peace dialogues. On Mt. Elgon a peace team made contact with the former Land Sabot Defense Force rebels and worked on reintegrating them into their community which they had damaged. In Rwanda the Children Peace Libraries continued with training in peer mediation via the librarians. The Kamenge Clinic in Burundi provided expanded services to the community, such as programs with rape survivors, and seminars on family planning, particularly with individuals who are HIV positive.

Peacebuilding en las Américas continued an extensive program of AVP workshops in Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras and Colombia. In Colombia, the program in the Central Region (Bogotá) started programs in poor communities of displaced people. A group of Franciscan Sisters working throughout the country joined us in presenting AVP workshops in a variety of communities. In Honduras, one group

worked with poor communities in San Pedro Sula and el Progreso, a prison, and with youth at risk in a local middle school. Another Honduran group trained seven inmate facilitators and worked with local teachers. In El Salvador, our partners worked with several groups of at-risk youth. In Guatemala, in partnership with the American Friends Service Committee, we began a program with the staff of a girls' juvenile detention center. The Peace School program in Chimaltenango at an alternative middle school expanded to include weekly peace activities in addition to the regular AVP workshops. Both El Salvador and Guatemala AVP groups participated in a successful pilot program with a large international child sponsorship program. We hope that AVP can be used throughout this program in its 65 additional countries. Our founding Coordinator, Val Liveoak, stepped down at the end of 2015 and we are seeking a new coordinator.

When the massive earthquake struck Nepal in April of 2015, Asia West Pacific volunteers were leading AVP workshops there. We immediately started work with our local contacts to identify needs for relief that were ignored by other organizations, and raised and distributed \$50,562. Other accomplishments include

- translated Quaker and AVP materials into Indonesian

- created the film *Silaturahmi* (the Power of Visiting) now available on the Internet
- started a new program of local support for Bhutanese refugees who have relocated to the United States
- co-hosted AVP advanced workshops with AVP Korea
- published *The Power of Goodness*, a book of worldwide peace stories illustrated by children of Chechnya during the Russian invasion there in 1995
- held our third annual International Training for Peace in Indonesia with participants from five countries across the region
- supported the people of Baruk Induk, Indonesia, who are being displaced from land they have worked for 15 years
- translated the AVP Basic Manual into Visayas, the local language of the Philippines
- maintained partnerships with other organizations in the development and production of water filters in Indonesia
- partnered in a series of trauma resiliency and AVP basic workshops in Israel—in the West Bank and Gaza

We are grateful for your financial and spiritual support for all those working for peace with FPT.

—NANCY SHIPPEN (NANCYSHIPPEN@COMCAST.NET),
REPRESENTATIVE

Quaker Earthcare Witness

QEW's outward manifestations have continued their upward trend. Our two larger public meetings were at Ben Lomond Center in California and the Cenacle in Chicago.

The former was anchored by a Joanna Macy presentation, where her pattern of active hope resonated with our traditional Friendly sources in facing a chaotic world. Chicago was more business-oriented. Amidst committee meetings, we had presentations on the impact of creating money through debt, a population offsets program, and the challenge of the Pisac Minute from the FWCC gathering in Peru. We had good representation at the latter, as well as the UN's COP21 climate event in Paris.

The above were described in the six issues of *BeFriending Creation* (BFC), as well as other events and thoughts for careful consideration. BFC and the web site are overseen by the Publications Committee which continues to produce trifolds, some of which are now translated into Spanish. Our Face-

book page has increased connections, especially the Wednesday offering.

Our largest foci of activity remain in committee endeavors which continue to change as leadings evolve. One important change this year is a reorientation of the UN Working Group. After years of attending to UN Environmental efforts, Mary Gilbert has moved on to other leadings, especially with indigenous groups. Her writings in BFC chronicle, amongst other things, the struggle to prevent global corporations from taking over UN development efforts. The UNWG will continue to be a presence in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals as we try to refine our advocacy role in relation to QUNO's mediation efforts. The FCNL-WG continues to support the collaborative work of Jose Aguto, who you might have met at last year's Sessions, but there is a difference of opinion over the efficacy of the Green Climate Fund.

Finally, the inward dimension of QEW is less easily seen. Our central focus is not environmental

issues, but searching for unity and integrity with Creation. The climate disruption precipice we face has many aspects, not the least of which will now have to be direct action. QEW will continue to present educational opportunities for furthering discernment to help leadings and right actions to

emerge. Ideally, our concerns will become so integrated into Quaker groups and process that we might be laid down. However, until that time, we greatly appreciate the support and efforts we receive from NEYM.

—ROD ZWIRNER, REPRESENTATIVE

Memorial Minutes

James (Jim) Ellingboe
June 10, 1937 – November 5, 2013

*We dance round in a ring and suppose,
But the Secret sits in the middle and knows.*

– Robert Frost

Jim Ellingboe was born in Delaware and died in Massachusetts. In his professional life, Jim worked as a medical researcher. He studied at Harvard Medical School, where he earned a PhD in biochemistry. He spent a few years doing post-doctoral work in Europe, where he met Karin (his wife of 46 years). As his career progressed, he transitioned from doing hands-on medical research to managing others, eventually as the Director of the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Research Center at McLean Hospital. As the last part of his professional career, he was a scientific editor for biomedical research journals. This allowed him to exercise both his technical competence and his skill at working with people. He was a compassionate “people person.” He remained supportive of many former students and colleagues throughout his life. He gave considerable emotional and practical support to a former colleague during her depression until her death of breast cancer.

His competence was reflected in his personal life as well. When younger, he was seen as rather shy, impish, and stubborn, with an annoying habit of often being right. As he matured he learned to listen more carefully to others, not pushing what he knew, but putting himself in a position to share knowledge when useful. He also understood the importance of just listening. A woman shared the experience of phoning the Ellingboes intending to reach Karin, but talking over a tough experience with Jim: “I was able to tell it to him as I would to a dear woman friend.”

He shared the Robert Frost couplet with which this minute begins with Karin early in their relationship, and they often discussed it. Spiritual life was important to him. He attended Friends meeting while a student at Oberlin, and continued to attend everywhere he could because he found the silence so full. He joined Friends Meeting at Cambridge, in Massachusetts.

He put his abilities to work for Friends in many areas, from local meeting committees to New England Yearly Meeting’s Permanent Board. He recently served us in Acton Monthly Meeting as treasurer. In the last year of his service in that position, he gave us the gift of a compilation of all the substantive finance-related minutes of Acton Meeting. He had read through several decades of our minutes to give us the information that we needed to write a comprehensive minute setting out our policies as we now wanted them. At our retreats he was open, thoughtful, and humble.

Memorial comments reflected our experience of an integration of Quaker ideals into his personal interactions. Inside and outside the Religious Society of Friends he was focused on what was best for the larger body. A professional colleague called him a “wise advisor.” He brought “no personal agenda” to the Yearly Meeting Finance Committee. On the Littleton Conservation Commission he tended to be quiet but had “insightful comments” when he did speak. He engaged himself with everybody, bringing tender listening skills to relationships with young people as well as adults. A young woman commented that he made her feel warm and safe. Another who had a difficult time as a young child and later came to know Jim and Karin, said that “he showed me what a *good man* could be.”

Jim was an active person who loved travel and camping, bird watching, skiing, folk dancing, and music. He enjoyed a challenge—wilderness canoeing with his family, and doing most of the additions and renovations on his home himself. Jim had broad interests including history, anthropology, and genealogy. He loved sharing the writings of Thoreau and the poems of John Greenleaf Whittier and Robert Frost.

— APPROVED BY ACTON MONTHLY MEETING, MARCH 29, 2015

ENDORSED BY SALEM QUARTERLY MEETING, APRIL 26, 2015

Cynthia Fisk
March 5, 1925–January 10, 2015

Cynthia Fisk was one of the pioneering leaders of Amesbury Worship Group in the early 1980s. When Amesbury became a preparative meeting under the care of North Shore Meeting in 1985, Cynthia became its first clerk. Fellow member John Monroe noted recently, “Cynthia was our Elder in every way during the ‘80s. She exuded a calm and clear presence. You can still see the simple elegance of her posture and the way she carried herself. Cynthia, more than any other individual, formed the spiritual nucleus of the group.”

She served as clerk through the preparative meeting year and as clerk of Amesbury Monthly Meeting until 1989.

Cynthia moved to Gloucester in 1993 and immediately became a strong and valued member of North Shore Friends Meeting. Cynthia always prepared herself for meeting for worship and made a point of arriving early. Cynthia’s centered presence enabled the rest of us to enter a quiet place where worship had already begun. Her messages of peace, mutual respect, and understanding and reconciliation were clearly delivered and received by those present in meeting.

In the 1990s Cynthia served on Permanent Board. At one time she served both as North Shore’s clerk of Ministry and Counsel and on the New England Yearly Meeting Committee for Ministry and Counsel as well. Most memorably, Cynthia was a passionate member of our Peace and Social Concerns Committee. After her retirement, she devoted her life to working for peace and justice. She was a voracious reader who kept herself well informed on social and political issues.

Cynthia helped to educate both North Shore Friends and the community at large. She became a dedicated writer with a regular column in the *Gloucester Daily Times*. Cynthia wrote innumerable letters to the editor of the GDT and the *Boston Globe*, many of which were published. As a firm believer in the obligation of being an active citizen, she carried on regular correspondence with her elected officials on issues of importance. She was also a public witness for peace and justice. In the years prior to the Iraq wars, she was a regular participant in weekly peace vigils in Beverly and in peace witnesses in other communities.

Cynthia was so much our social conscience. For most of the last year, she was not in meeting, but she was still a presence. We miss her.

— APPROVED BY NORTH SHORE FRIENDS MEETING, MARCH 8, 2015

ENDORSED BY SALEM QUARTERLY MEETING, APRIL 26, 2015

John Henry Foster
July 1, 1926–June 5, 2015

John H. Foster was born July 1, 1926, the son of Henry Cope Foster and Thyra Jane Meyers of Warwick, Rhode Island. He grew up on a thirty-cow, heritage dairy farm in a strongly Wilburite Quaker family. His grandparents wore plain dress, hats, and bonnets. The family used plain language. They had become Quakers in 1750. They attended Quarterly Meeting in the North Dartmouth, Massachusetts, meetinghouse which John was to later help move to Woolman Hill in Deerfield, Massachusetts.

John graduated in 1944 from Westtown Friends School in Pennsylvania, in keeping with the family tradition. Instead of being granted his application for conscientious objector status in World War II, John was given a farm deferment from military service. He earned a bachelor’s degree from Cornell University in 1950, a master’s degree from Purdue University in 1951, and a doctorate from Cornell in 1957.

In 1951, John was sent by the American Friends Service Committee to the British Quakers’ Rural Development Center, a Gandhian-style village in central India. John worked in this village for two and a half years, leading to a lifelong involvement with Indian farming and agriculture.

In 1952, John met Georgana Falb, his wife-to-be, at a square dance at an American school in the Himalayas. Georgana was just finishing a three-year term with a Methodist service project in Calcutta. After a two-year courtship by letter, they married in 1954 under the care of Providence Friends Meeting in Rhode Island. John was the first man in seven generations of his family to marry out of Meeting and not be disowned.

From 1957 to 1990, John served on the faculty at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. He taught in the Department of Agricultural Economics (later called Resource Economics) for thirty-three years, six of

these as department chair. His colleagues say he listened carefully to every word they said, making it easier for differing personalities to collaborate.

John brought the practices of Quaker discernment and decision-making to his teaching, as to other areas of his life. He was nominated by his students for several Distinguished Teacher awards. He founded the Center for International Agriculture. In addition to his work in India, his teaching and research extended to rural development in the Third World and to land economics in the United States. He did pioneering work in the economic valuation of wetlands, enabling the passage of wetlands conservation law in Massachusetts. This became a model for national legislation.

In 1960, John and Georgana moved into an 1806 farmhouse in Leverett, Massachusetts. Both were active in town government. In 2013, the town named them Citizens of the Year, in thanks for their 48 years of service on town boards and committees. John was a member of the Planning Board, the Personnel Board and the Historical Commission. He served as Selectman, chair of the Police Advisory Commission, and as president and treasurer of the Historical Society. He chaired the committee which closed the landfill and built the transfer station. He helped to bridge differences between townspeople and Buddhist monks in the building of the New England Peace Pagoda.

John's pastimes showed his farming roots: gardening, building stone walls and walkways, making maple syrup, growing and grinding White Flint indian corn, shelling black walnuts, making apple cider and applesauce. John used to say that living in an old house was hobby enough.

For sixty years, John was an active member of Mount Toby Monthly Meeting. He served as meeting clerk when the Mount Toby meetinghouse was being built in 1964. He served as recording clerk and as treasurer. He was active on many committees: Overseers, Ministry and Worship, Meetinghouse, Finance, Burial, and Land Use. He was Trustee of the Greenfield Preparative Meeting.

In the wider Quaker world, John was clerk of the Board of Directors of Woolman Hill Quaker Conference Center, member of the Board of Governors for the Quaker United Nations Program, and member of the Permanent Board and the Finance Committee of New England Yearly Meeting.

On July 18, 2015, a Memorial Meeting was held at Mount Toby where John was known and loved by many. John was remembered as wise and informed, humble and kind, steadfast and faithful.

John is survived by his wife, Georgana Falb Foster; their son, Ethan Foster and daughter-in-law, Natalie Golden; their son, Joshua Foster; their two grandsons, Caleb and Jeremy; and by John's sister, Thera Hindmarsh.

— APPROVED BY MOUNT TOBY MONTHLY MEETING, SEPTEMBER 13, 2015

CONNECTICUT VALLEY QUARTERLY MEETING, OCTOBER 4, 2015

David Hall

February 26, 1937–October 7, 2015

David Hall was a man who kept himself informed about his community, his state, his country and his world. He weighed the information he learned, then shared it clearly and concisely, keeping all of us at Brunswick Friends Meeting informed. Quiet and unpretentious, David was a person who lived his values, as his many volunteer activities show. These include Common Cause, Bath-Brunswick Area Interfaith Council, Appalachian Mountain Club, Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners, and the West Bath Fire Department. He was particularly dedicated to making a difference through Friends Committee on Maine Public Policy.

David served as Brunswick Friends Meeting's representative on Friends Committee on Maine Public Policy from 1992 to 2009, and was that organization's Legislative Advocate in the State Capitol. As the Clerk of FCMPP says, the committee benefitted from David's "quiet insights and wisdom."

Another Friend notes that David was "articulate and clear that he was witnessing as a Quaker." His witness influenced the whole mid-coast legislative area, providing the rational, respectful input that all government needs!

Before beginning his worship with Friends, first at Midcoast Monthly Meeting, then at Brunswick, David was active as a deacon, choir member and youth leader at First Parish Church, United Church of Christ.

Parkinson's Disease took more and more of David's motor control and independence, but to our Meeting, he remained the same David—calm, accepting and continuing in his commitment to be informed about our world. David was a model of civic responsibility and caring. He was a good man who is sorely missed.

— APPROVED BY BRUNSWICK FRIENDS MEETING, FEBRUARY 14, 2015

ENDORSED BY FALMOUTH QUARTERLY MEETING, APRIL 2, 2016

ENDORSED BY FRIENDS COMMITTEE ON MAINE PUBLIC POLICY, APRIL 16, 2016

Nancy Bixler Isaacs
(Anna Emerson Bixler Isaacs)
January 20, 1930–December 4, 2015

Nancy Bixler Isaacs was born Anna Emerson Bixler, the youngest in a family of four girls, on January 20, 1930. She never liked the name Anna, and in 1948 renamed herself Nancy, after Nancy Blackett in the *Swallows and Amazons* stories. Nancy Blackett was an adventurer, and Nancy Bixler grew up running through the woods playing at being the Blackett sisters and swimming. She persuaded her parents to send her to Northfield Mount Herman School when her family moved from Cambridge, Massachusetts, to Waterville, Maine. From there she went on to Swarthmore College, choosing it over Smith, where her female relatives attended, because her father said the smartest girls went to Swarthmore.

She continued her adventures by teaching English on the small island of Vinalhaven, Maine. After getting a masters at Yale she went to Istanbul, Turkey, teaching English at a school for girls for two years. She taught high school in Newton, Massachusetts, for three years. She married Sanford (Sandy) Isaacs in 1958 and by 1965 had four children under the age of 6. Being a mother of young children was satisfying and joy-giving and the family remained a high priority from then on, with frequent visits to and from her adult children as the family expanded.

When she went back to work, she switched careers to become a librarian, getting a degree at Simmons College, then working as a librarian at Lasell Junior College and later as Library Director at Lesley College. She and Sandy attended Wellesley Monthly Meeting where they formed deep friendships. Their hospitality was appreciated by a wide range of people. At her memorial service, a woman spoke about how Nancy and Sandy had invited her and her female partner to their house at a time when they were new to Lasell College, and supported their acceptance into the college community. This was typical of Nancy's care for others.

Monadnock Quaker Meeting joyfully received Nancy and Sandy into its community in 1995 when they retired from the Boston area to live full time in Jaffrey on her family's property. During her time with Monadnock Meeting we appreciated Nancy's practical spirituality, her ability to cut to the core of an issue, her good humor, and her hard work in all aspects of being a member of the meeting, from house cleaning and child-care to being active on committees and clerking the meeting. She was always supportive but not rigid about Quaker process. She and Sandy opened their home for many formal and informal occasions, with the enthusiastic presence of a series of poodles. As clerk, she searched more widely afield for readings for the start of meeting for business. She supported people through their difficulties—a mother dying, a special needs child, losing a job, hearing loss—with practical assistance, a listening ear, and open-hearted hospitality. We enjoyed her energy, dry wit, and her yellow and black “Pippi Longstocking” socks. Truly you could see God within her heart. We knew she saw God in each of us.

Nancy's work extended beyond our local meeting. At various times she was treasurer of the meeting, of Northwest Quarterly Meeting and of New England Yearly Meeting. She was meticulous and thoughtful as a treasurer and, at the Yearly Meeting level, worked to retire numerous designated funds which no longer had validity. She also worked on the New England Yearly Meeting Nominating Committee, having serious and encouraging conversations with people about their leadings regarding work for the Yearly Meeting.

She and Sandy helped maintain our meeting's commitment to the New Hampshire office of the American Friends Service Committee. At a time when trips to Concord seemed onerous she and Sandy faithfully attended. They also traveled to Northwest Quarterly Meeting, New England Yearly Meeting Permanent Board meetings, Annual Sessions, and Friends General Conference Gathering. They usually traveled in their RV where they offered hospitality as generously as they did at home.

Nancy died unexpectedly and quickly on December 4, 2015, while exercising and living her life as she always did, with vigor and purpose.

— APPROVED BY MONADNOCK QUAKER MEETING, FEBRUARY 21, 2016

ENDORSED BY NORTHWEST QUARTERLY MEETING, MARCH 6, 2016

Peter Keenan
August 2, 1941–June 13, 2015

Acton Friends Meeting remembers Peter Keenan for his practical help, his thoughtfulness in thinking through tasks, his caring nature and his dry sense of humor, qualities which reflected his commitment to help others.

Peter's sense of humor and practical nature are exemplified in the following title: "About Peter Keenan: Being a Recounting of Some Facts of His Life; Written by the Subject for the Benefit of Anyone Called Upon to Write His Obituary, June 2014."

In that document, Peter went on to tell the story of his life, revealing how he became the staunch meeting member we knew. He was born in Brooklyn, New York, on August 2, 1941, and brought up in Catholic churches and schools. He described his disillusionment with a career in industry, and subsequent decision to volunteer as a teacher of physics for future secondary school teachers in Cochabamba, Bolivia. While training for the work, he was faced with the moral challenge of the military draft, which he appealed until he aged out of the draft. He described dating a "special young woman," Connie Lewis, who eventually joined him in Cochabamba where they were married on May 25, 1968.

Peter described his changing point of view as: "a final drift away from Catholicism and a shift from the political conservatism of his background to a more liberal and less nationalistic view of the world." He credited conscientious objector counselors with exposing him to Quakerism, which eventually led to his membership in Acton Friends Meeting in 1982.

Peter continued to work in helping professions. He earned a Master of Arts in Teaching from the Harvard Graduate School of Education in 1971, then taught in three high schools and a community college. Twenty-one years later, he pursued interests in environmental conservation, joining the Maynard Conservation Commission and handling wetland protection administration for the town. He worked for several towns, enjoying "on the job" learning of ecology, law, construction and engineering. He ultimately retired in 2006 from the position of Municipal Conservation and Wetlands Administrator for the town of Wellesley.

Acton Meeting felt Peter's helping ethic when he served as clerk, as treasurer, and on committees including Religious Education and Peace & Social Concerns. We remember his close partnership with Connie, and how they helped meeting members with practical tasks such as household moves. This was just one example of Peter and Connie living out Quaker principals. They also travelled by bicycle and train whenever possible, and avoided television. Peter liked to bicycle, and called his bike his "Sport Utility Vehicle."

We remember many rides to meeting and to the Concord Peace Vigil. Peter was part of Concord Prison Outreach, volunteering to teach a course about job searches and joining holiday carol singing. We hear that he "belted out Hispanic Christmas songs as well as the Hispanic prisoners." Peter became a volunteer draft counselor in 2002, serving on the GI hotline.

It wasn't uncommon to hear Peter say, "Isn't it funny that ..." by way of recognizing irony in life. We enjoyed his dry humor. Peter told of the phone company employees who came to replace the Keenan's phone—the last party line in the area. The workers needed to borrow a screwdriver, then a hammer, as it developed they hadn't brought any tools. Peter obligingly loaned the tools. Eventually they left with the phone still not working, but saying, "Call if you have any problems."

We are touched but not surprised that Peter organized his treasurer's duties shortly before his death, ready for those who would take them on. Peter Keenan approached life with the attitude that if something needed doing, he would do it. He would thoughtfully analyze the task, and then work through it. A member sums up Acton Meeting's experience of him, saying, "Peter was a caring person: a very caring person."

— APPROVED BY ACTON FRIENDS MEETING, FEBRUARY 7, 2016.

ENDORSED BY SALEM QUARTERLY MEETING, APRIL 24, 2016

Annette (Anne) Kriebel
January 2, 1925–July 9, 2015

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Galatians 5:22

Thanks and praise to God for the life of Anne Kriebel! Those of us who knew Anne received the gift of witnessing how God's presence can and does manifest itself among us. Anne's life was one of love for others. She was forthright, accessible, organized, funny, and so positive in her attitude it was infectious. She was a joyous, deeply spiritual woman who influenced countless people to live more mindful, more spiritual lives.

Annette Edgerly was born in Springfield, Massachusetts, on January 2, 1925. She and her sister Pauline attended Catholic schools in Springfield. When Anne realized that the impending World War II would require her to work rather than attend college, she attended high school for an extra year to gain what additional learning she could. She moved to Boston, where she worked as a phlebotomist during the day and enjoyed friends and swing dancing in the evenings.

In 1948 she met Hans Bernhardt, a refugee from Nazi Germany and a student at Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Hans was so taken with the young Anne that he proposed on the first date. Anne discreetly waited a few weeks before accepting and they were married later that year. After Hans completed further studies in Cincinnati, they moved to Delanco, New Jersey, where Hans worked as a metallurgist. With the arrival of their daughter Kate, they began to consider a faith tradition which could speak to a former Catholic and a secular Jew. They found, and joined, Westfield (New Jersey) Friends Meeting. Their love of children led them to be foster parents for a number of children, eventually adopting Sheryl.

During this period, Anne and Hans were involved in anti-racism work, including participating in a neighborhood watch to prevent vandalism at the home of a black family. When they sold their house they sold it on the open market, which allowed black families to view a house in a predominantly white neighborhood. For their integrity, they were rewarded with rocks thrown at the house and a swastika painted on the side wall.

When Hans died suddenly and unexpectedly in 1962, Anne was comforted and supported by Westfield Friends Meeting. Three years later, she married William Kriebel, a recent widower and fellow member of Westfield Friends. Anne, Kate, and Sheryl joined Bill and his three children, Jon, Nancy and Greg, on the Taylor family farm on the Delaware river. Family was always of great importance to Anne. At her memorial, one of Bill's children told an insightful story about Anne's insistence on building a swimming pool at the Taylor farm. While others in the family considered this an extravagance, the pool proved to be a great gathering place and helped the blended families bond.

Anne and Bill were active in Westfield Friends Meeting, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, and the Philadelphia office of American Friends Service Committee. In addition, Anne worked with May Roberts Taylor, the mother of Bill's first wife, to publish *Gently, Sister, Gently*, a book of May's reminiscences. Although the book was self-published, its popularity created a demand for a second printing which was funded by the Quaker community.

Anne and Bill moved to Boston in 1980, where Anne had been appointed Director of Beacon Hill Friends House. Anne worked with a wisdom, practicality, and good humor that characterized all her relationships. In addition to her gifts in friendship and mentoring, her gifts of administration were a great asset to the House, bringing a sense of stability when the House had been experiencing a lack of leadership. She handled a wide array of tasks adeptly: from replacing the boiler to dressing as the Easter bunny to entertain children; from counseling young adults as they navigated life to revitalizing committees. Over 30 years later, Beacon Hill Friends House residents from that period speak warmly of Anne's openness, accessibility, and ability to make each person feel cared for and understood.

From early in their time in Boston, both Bill and Anne became very involved with New England Yearly Meeting. Anne served on numerous committees, including Permanent Board, Clerk's Nominating Committee, Program Committee (Sessions), and the Board of Directors of the Massachusetts Council of Churches. When Clerk's Nominating Committee was faced with a gap year between one presiding clerk and another, Anne agreed to step in for a one-year term. Where many would have been anxious about such a responsibility, Anne was relaxed and graceful. On another occasion she took over some of the responsibilities of the Field Secretary while Jonathan Vogel-Borne was on sabbatical. Anne clerked the Ad hoc Committee on the Financial Health of the Yearly Meeting, which undertook visits to every monthly meeting during 1993–1994.

Friends still admire this work for greatly bolstering not only the finances of the Yearly Meeting, but its relationships with meetings in the region.

While the list of work she took on suggests her dedication to the Yearly Meeting, it only hints at the qualities she brought to that work. Anne's reliability, good humor and keen wisdom earned a reputation in the Yearly Meeting. Friends were known to remark, "We need an Anne Kriebel on this committee!"

A beloved member of Friends Meeting at Cambridge for many years, she served on Nominating Committee, the Memorial Meetings Committee and the Grants Committee. Many Friends were heartbroken when, in 2009, she sought a smaller faith community and transferred membership to Fresh Pond Monthly Meeting. Here, those who had not known her before quickly found her to be all one could want in an elder: compassionate, direct, grounded, tender, forgiving and funny. While her committee service was limited to the Gifts and Leadings Committee and the Administration and Stewardship Committee, Anne had a wide influence in nurturing others, including serving on a support committee for the current director of Beacon Hill Friends House. Always committed to the Friends Meeting, she served on committees into the last year of her life.

As devoted as she was to Quakerism, she was no less devoted to her family, sharing her warmth and generous spirit in food, travel and play. Anne was a competitive Scrabble player and filled in the Sunday *New York Times* crossword puzzle in ink until her last months. Scrabble with Anne was serious, and yet somehow every game ended in tears of laughter, the kind that wrings you out, makes you weak, and cures everything. That humor—that laughter—was a gift as powerful as her kindness and moral centeredness. She could simply make you feel good, no matter if there was a problem being addressed or just in conversation.

Anne and Bill discovered a mutual love of travel, and Anne had a finely tuned sense of adventure and of humor. From her 50s on into her late 70s, whether with Bill, her sister, Pauline, daughter Kate, or granddaughter Sophia, she travelled widely through Europe, Turkey and Morocco. She and Kate made an attempt to snorkel at every Caribbean island in the 1980s, sometimes traveling more than once a year to get to those colorful fish.

From the moment of her grandchild Sophia's birth in 1991, Anne and Sophia shared an intensely loving relationship. Within a year, Anne and Bill moved within walking distance of Sophia, Kate, and Ralph, Kate's husband, and Anne became a friend, caretaker, and second mother to Sophia. Their bond was more than grandmother/granddaughter. They were happiest in each other's company and Anne was a formal and loving part of Sophia's care team from infancy onward. At many times, Anne was the most consistent and stable force in Sophia's life. During her final illness, Anne said many times that she was waiting to see Sophia's face before letting go. Shortly before Anne's death, Sophia was able to return from Spain, giving these two a final opportunity to share their love.

Threaded through our memories of the things that Anne did, which are many and remarkable, is the memory of the quality of our relationships with her. Almost always calm and unflappable, she had a rare gift for making people feel they were important to her and was able to gently but powerfully set high expectations which one had no choice but to live up to. She was a masterful elder in her ability to call Friends to a deeper spirituality. She had an array of tools at her side: sometimes she was firm and direct, and other times more subtle, almost sneaky. Her practical and gentle guidance often encouraged Friends to grow further in their journeys than they ever expected. She was also a remarkable elder for Friends in leadership positions.

Near the end of her life, Anne was given the precious gift of recognizing something that was evident to those around her, but less obvious to Anne herself—that her whole life had been a ministry. Through both overt actions, like raising foster children, anti-racism work, and directing Beacon Hill Friends House, and the quiet sustaining work of mentoring and eldership, Anne's life was a ministry, helping in countless ways to build the kingdom of heaven on earth.

— APPROVED BY FRESH POND MONTHLY MEETING, MARCH 6, 2016

ENDORSED BY SALEM QUARTERLY MEETING, APRIL 24, 2016

Ishmael Rosas
December 25, 1995–February 29, 2016

Ishmael Rosas was a beloved and cherished member of Storrs Friends Meeting from his arrival with his mother, Laura, at the age of 5. Ishmael served the Meeting community faithfully during his high school years, first as a child-care worker in our First Day School, and later in his junior and senior years as religious education

teacher for our youngest members. Ishmael was an excellent role model for our children and his kind manner endeared him to the children under his care.

During his freshman and sophomore years, Ishmael was an active participant in a program called Peace Jam which was offered to teens at Storrs Friends Meeting and Hartford Monthly Meeting. Teens in this group discussed topics such as the roots of violence, poverty, reconciliation, and the role of nonviolence in conflict resolution. They also studied about the life and work of a Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, attended a regional conference with the Laureate, and created a service learning project. Ishmael was an invaluable member of the team creating the service projects and, during his sophomore year, he took on an important leadership role for the project. He also represented our meeting at the conference with dignity, maturity and courtesy.

In addition to his local participation at Storrs Friends Meeting, Ishmael was active in the Young Friends of New England Yearly Meeting. He regularly attended youth retreats and, during his junior year, he was selected as a member of Ministry and Counsel. This is a particular honor which recognized Ishmael's deep spiritual presence and the trust that his peers and the staff had in his judgment and maturity.

As a youth, Ishmael pursued training in karate, achieving the rank of black belt at the age of 11. During high school Ishmael was very active in athletics, participating in soccer, track, swim and crew for his high school teams.

With a passion for screenwriting and film, Ishmael took part in all of the video production courses offered at his high school, receiving awards for his work and commitment. In one course, Civic Life Project, he assisted in creating and producing a documentary that focused on a civic issue. (His group focused on bipartisanship.) He also designed some of his own coursework and created the weekly video news segments for the school.

In addition, Ishmael was very active in Boy Scouts, working his way from Cub Scout to Eagle Scout. His Eagle Scout project combined his love of film with his commitment to our meeting. He created and filmed a video of some of our older members talking about the history of the meeting. He created a lasting legacy for us, capturing not only the facts of our history but the personalities of those who helped shape it.

Although Ishmael had a quiet demeanor, his inner strength and spiritual presence were quite strong. His friends particularly remember his willingness to listen without judgment and his wonderful sense of humor. During his time as a student at Emerson College, while pursuing his interest in screenwriting, film and video, he also performed in several stand-up comedy venues.

Ishmael will be remembered for his kindness and caring, his deep humility and quiet wisdom. Beneath his loving and compassionate demeanor, Ishmael suffered from a depression that he chose to keep hidden, even from those closest to him. He left us on February 29, 2016, but his spirit lives on in the many lives he touched.

— APPROVED BY STORRS FRIENDS MEETING, APRIL 10, 2016

ENDORSED BY CONNECTICUT VALLEY QUARTERLY MEETING, MAY 1, 2016

Approved Nominating Slate

Note: This is the Nominating Slate approved by Sessions. The completed slate of committees will be published in the 2017 Directory for New England Yearly Meeting, and any changes or additions since Sessions will appear then.

Permanent Board (50)

2017

Belcher, Travis (Monadnock)
 Forsythe, Hannah (Beacon Hill)
 Sánchez-Eppler, Karen (N'hampton)
 Schell, Suzanna (Beacon Hill)
 Smith, Sara (Concord)
 Szatkowski, Elizabeth (Portland)

2020

Guaraldi, Benjamin (Beacon Hill)
 Hamman, Galen (Cambridge)
 Jackson, Tom (Dover)
 Radocchia, Anna (Lawrence)
 Rein, Carole (North Shore)
 Zimmermann, Rosemary (S.Starksboro)

2018

Davies, Susan (Vassalboro)
 Dickinson, Jeremiah (Wellesley)
 Erikson, Justice (Mt Toby)
Gant, Sarah, clerk (Beacon Hill)
 Kantt, Leanna (Fresh Pond)
 Malin, Rocky (Smithfield)
 McCandless, Jean (Burlington)
 Steele, Rebecca (Portland)
 Wienholtz, Don (Hartford)

Allen, Kimberly (Durh)
 Leuchak, Rebecca (Prov)
 McCandless, Christopher (Burl)

2019

Chase, Deana (Westport)
 Gant, Christopher (Beacon Hill)
 Harrington, Ian (Cambridge)
 Walkauskas, William (New Haven)
 Stone, Phillip (Worcester)

Committee on Aging (9)

2017

Brokaw, Fran (Hanover)
 Martin, Lori (New Haven)

2018

2019

Archives and Historical Records (9)

2017

Burley, Clarence (Worcester)
 Crosby, Eileen (Mt Toby)
Forsythe, Carol, clerk (Putney)
 Quirk, Brian (Lawrence)

2018

McDaniel, Donna (Framingham)

2019

Board of Managers of Investments & Permanent Funds (10)**2017**

Edgerly, Elizabeth (Providence)
Malin, Kathy, clerk (Smithfield)
 Hackman, Matthew (Providence)

2020

McKnight, Jeanne (Wellesley)
 Spivey, Rowan (Brunswick)

2018

Clark, Brian (Framingham)
 Mair, Edward (Amesbury)

2021

Chicos, Roberta (Cambridge)
 Spivey, Robb (Brunswick)

2019

Pang, Andrew (Wellesley)
 Tierney, Joe (Cambridge)

Correspondence (6)**2017**

Cox, Louis, clerk (Burlington)
 Weiss, Lynne (Cambridge)

2018

Appleton, Lisa, clerk (Mt Toby)
 Norton, Bonnie (Wellesley)

2019

Godway, Eleanor (Hartford)

Development (9)**2017**

Bennett, Dulany (Hanover)
Smith, Sara, clerk (Concord)

2018

McKenna-Moss, Jonah (Beacon Hill)
 Pattee, Christine (Storrs)
 Quoos, Thayer (New Haven)

2019

Earthcare Ministry (15)**2017**

Bock, Catherine (Burlington)
 Edmondson, Maggie (Winthrop Ctr)
 Gilbert, Mary (Cambridge)
 Holcombe, William (Sandwich)
 Stoner, Kim (New Haven)

2018

Blanchard, Neil (Framingham)
 Cox, Louis (Burlington)
 MacKenzie, Rebecca (Quaker City)
Swennerfelt, Ruah, clerk (Burlington)
 Zwirner, Rodman (Monadnock)

2019

Bennett, Mary (Worcester)
 Coehlo, Mary (Cambridge)
 Haines, Christopher (Fresh Pond)
 Klinkman, Paul (Providence)
 Salmon, Shara (Belfast)
 Warner, Ben (Cambridge)

Faith and Practice Revision (16)

Armstrong, Douglas (Amesbury)
 Athearn, Marion (Westport)
 Davies, Susan (Vassalboro)
 Edmondson, Maggie (Winthrop)

Edwards, Eric (West Falmouth)
 Godway, Eleanor (Hartford)
 Haase, Ken (Beacon Hill)
 Hubner, Sara (Gonic)

McCosker, Phebe (Hanover)
 Reilly, Susan (Lewiston)
 Williams, Greg (Beacon Hill)

Finance (18)**2017**

Dickinson, Jeremiah (Wellesley)
 Gentile, Ralph (Lawrence)
 Kantt, Elizabeth (Fresh Pond)
Sánchez-Eppler, Elias, clerk (N'hampton)

2018

Forsythe, Hannah (Beacon Hill)
 Murray, Bob (Beacon Hill)
 Neumann, Emily (Cambridge)
 Savery, Carol (Hartford)
 Stern, Roland (Wellesley)

2019

Sazama, Jerry (Storrs)

Friends General Conference Committee (15)**2017**

Anick, David (Cambridge)
 Nutting, Peter (Vassalboro)
 Reddy, Clark (Beacon Hill)
 Riendeau, Michelle (Wellesley)

2018

Haines, David (Wellesley)
 Shelton, LVM (Plainfield)
 Weaver, Hal (Wellesley)

2019

Rush, David (Cambridge)

Friends United Meeting Committee (12 Triennial Reps; 9 appointed)**Representatives to 2017 Triennial; Committee Term 2019**

Baker, Marian (Weare)
 Haines, David (Wellesley)
 Keefe-Perry, Kristina (Fresh Pond)

McManamy, Martha (Amesbury)
 Stillwell, Jackie* (Monadnock)

Vargo, Tom (Northampton)
 Weiss, Fritz (Hanover)
 Zimmerman, Rosemary (So. Starksboro)

General Board Representatives (3)

Evans, Kristna (Durham)

Jennings-Hess, Will (Beacon Hill)

Martin, Frederick (Cambridge)

Friends World Committee for Consultation–New England (12)**2017**

Claggett-Borne, Minga (Cambridge)
 Guaraldi, Rachel (Beacon Hill)
 Hopkins, Mary (Fresh Pond)
 Vogel-Borne, Jonathan (Cambridge)

2018

Goldberger, Judy, co-clerk (Beacon Hill)
 Green, Katie (Worcester)
 Humphries, Debbie (Hartford)
 Jorgenson, Christel (Cambridge)

2019

Grannell, Dorothy (Portland)
 Leuchak, Rebecca (Providence)
 Moran, Nataly (Providence)
 Weaver, Hal (Wellesley)

Legacy Gift (9)**2017**

McCandless, Jean (Burlington)
 Wallace, Pat (New Haven)

2018

Mair, Ed (Amesbury)

2019

Jensen, Craig (Monadnock)
 Wilson, Morgan (Framingham)

Ministry and Counsel At-Large (12)**2017**

Claggett-Borne, Minga (Cambridge)
Humphries, Deborah, clerk (Hartford)
 Shelton, LVM (Plainfield)
 Woodrow, Honor (Framingham)

2018

Brokaw, Fran (Hanover)
 Clement, Daphne (Durham)
 Randall, Allison (Keene)
 Sazama, Gerald (Storrs)

2019

Olsen, Kathy (Sand)
 Parkes, Cornelia (Camb)
 Spencer, Sarah (Bhill)
 Williams, Carl (Plain)

Moses Brown School Board (11)**2017**

McGuigan, Michael (Providence)
 Stamm, Liesa (Hartford)
 Martin, Frederick (Monadnock)

2018

Crysdale, Peter (Durham)
 Hirtle, Michael (Providence)
 McNemar, Don (Cambridge)
 Tripp, Dawn (Allen's Neck)

2019**Committee for Nurturing Friends Education at Moses Brown School (6)****2017**

Martin, Frederick (Monadnock)
 Stamm, Liesa (Hartford)

2018

Thomas, NiaDwynwen (Northampton)
Tripp, Dawn, clerk (Allen's Neck)

2019

Peace & Social Concerns (15)**2017**

Dicranian, Diane (Farmington)
 Mayer, Phil (Smithfield)
 Varner, James (Orono)

2018

Wasileski, Eric (Mt Toby)

2019**Publications and Communications (9)****2017**

McCarthy, Regina (Wellesley)

2018

Monaco, Will

2019

Barker, Mark, clerk (Concord)

Puente de Amigos (9)**2017**

Stern, Roland (Wellesley)
 Kinsky, Deena (Mattapoisett)

2018

Adams, Abigail (Storrs)
 Lopez, Felice (Framingham)
 Smith, Jay (Concord)

2019

Cadwallader, Len (Hanover)
 Cadwallader, Mary Ann (Hanover)
 Fogarty, Margaret (Dover)

Quaker Youth Education (12) - on hold**Racial, Social and Economic Justice (12)****2017**

McDonald, LouAnne (Hartford)

2018

Carey-Harper, Rachel (Barnstable)
Shoop, Nur, co-clerk (Dover)
 Varner, James (Orono)

2019

Dicranian, Diane (Winthrop Ctr)
Garrett, Sheila, co-clerk (Putney)
 Walton, Sarah (Vassalboro)
 Wilson, Lillie (New Bedford)

Sessions Committee (Nominating appointments)**2017**

Woodrow, Susan (Framingham)

2018**2019**

Hoskins, Laura (Putney)
Manning, Leslie, clerk (Durham)
 Rein, Carole (North Shore)
 Schwope, Martha (Wellesley)
 Vargo, Susan, M&C Liaison (Northamp)

Youth Ministries (9)**2017**

Cusham, Sarah (Port)
 Knowlton, Mary (Oro)

2018

Stone, Carolyn (Well)
 Woodrow, Honor (FR)

2018

Brad Bussiere-Nichols (Port)
 Hoskins, Laura (Put)
 Lippincott, Doug (Framingham)

American Friends Service Committee Corp (5)**2017**

Burke, Sarah (Beacon Hill)

2018

Bennett, Dulany (Hanover)
 Crysdale, Peter (Durham)

2019

Nash, Anne (Wellesley)

Friends Committee on National Legislation (6)**2017**

Thomas, Susanna (Storrs)
Weinholtz, Donn (Hartford)

2018

Harrington, Ian (Cambridge)
McKenna-Moss, Jonah (Beacon Hill)

2019

Schultz, Bob (Hanover)
Hajajreh, Omar (Hanover)

Friends Peace Teams Project (1)

Shippen, Nancy (Fresh Pond)

Quaker Earthcare Witness (1)

Zwirner, Rod (Monadnock)

William Penn House (1)

Jennings-Hess, Will (Beacon Hill)

Epistles

General Epistle of New England Yearly Meeting

Dear Friends everywhere,

We send you joyful greetings in the name of our Inward Teacher, known among Friends today by many names.

New England Yearly Meeting held its 356th sessions August 6–11, 2016, at Castleton University, Castleton, Vermont, exploring the theme, “Being the hands of God—a Call to Radical Faithfulness.”

A parallel call is found in a poem attributed to Teresa of Avila:

Christ has no body now on earth but yours,

No hands but yours,

No feet but yours.

Yours are the eyes through which Christ’s compassion looks out at the world.

Yours are the feet with which He is to go about doing good.

Yours are the hands with which He is to bless people now.

As a unifying thread running through most of the week’s programs and activities, the theme of radical faithfulness reminded us that what we are doing together as a Yearly Meeting is holy work. In these unsettled but holy times of crisis and decision we can be the hands of God only when we place ourselves in the hands of God.

In the reading of memorial minutes for New England Friends who had passed away recently, we were mindful of George Fox’s advice to be “patterns and examples” of Spirit-filled lives and thus become blessings to the world. Many of those Friends were exemplary not just for their lifelong dedication to good causes, but also for their willingness to become instruments of divine will—even when that path promised to be difficult, discouraging, and costly.

Yearly Meeting programs and activities took us deeper, into the radical commitment and openness that are required if we are to be transformed to minister to a broken and suffering world. The wide range of topics and current issues that we considered during the week all led to the basic questions: “What are we called to do about this concern as individuals and faith communities?” “What barriers—both personal and organizational—are holding us back from this work?” “What are specific steps that we need to be taking, now?” Plenary speakers, Yearly Meeting staff, and anchor groups offered many rich insights in response to these questions.

In discerning what we are called to do, Quaker meetings typically begin by naming and nurturing their members’ diverse gifts and trying to match them with appropriate committees and offices. But “living in radical faithfulness” draws us back to something closer to the call for inner and outer renewal that early Friends heard and obeyed. This point was illustrated in Bible Half Hour stories in which God chose seemingly unqualified people as servants and sent them on unexpected missions that required inner calm under harrowing conditions.

An authentic leading, in contrast to a personal preference or private agenda, may come to us as a surprise, as something absurd, or counterintuitive. It can be baffling or mysterious because it arises from a deeper place than most humans’ sense of morality and purpose can fathom. In an authentic leading, one does not carry a strong stake in the outcome. In the end, a leading is a leading; God demands obedience whatever the cost and difficulty and whether we initially feel qualified.

Some barriers to radical faithfulness were noted during the week. We may wrongly assume that a divine leading involves only things of earth-shaking significance. We may in our weakness choose personal comfort and security over the promises and risks of change, hoping for a crown without a cross. We may stay silent out of fear of failure, ridicule, or opposition from defenders of the status quo.

We may waste opportunities for radical faithfulness by waiting too long for perfect knowledge or perfect abilities. Protecting ourselves from the full range of our deepest feelings—from despair to anger—may prevent our hearts from being “cracked open” and made accessible to the leadings and power of the Spirit. These very human reactions are learned, and we must unlearn them to move forward.

Other barriers to moving forward in radical faithfulness are old habits, outdated thinking, and rigid structures. We work best, we learned, when our organizations are nimble and flexible, pruned of dead wood and crowded branches that block out the light.

Our youth and youth leaders were a vibrant and inspiring presence among us. Also, Friends from Vihiga and Malava Yearly Meetings in Kenya, Cuba Yearly Meeting, and Miami Friends Church visiting New England brought a powerful Christian witness.

With great tenderness we explored such difficult issues as unacknowledged white privilege and insensitivity to gender diversity. But we also recognized the many ways we do foster inclusion and diversity. We continue to feel great sorrow for the victims of conflict and violence at home and around the world, and we look for ways that we can be healing forces.

New England Yearly Meeting made a significant commitment to take concrete steps in the coming year to address the global climate crisis, in response to a call from world Friends at the 2016 FWCC World Plenary in Peru. Several Young Adult Friends in our Yearly Meeting who had participated in the 2015 New England Climate Spring conference were instrumental in guiding this proposal through our meeting for business.

Racial tensions and wounds persist in ourselves, in the Religious Society of Friends, and in our country. Many are complicit in a culture of white supremacy that hinders white Friends' ability to respond appropriately, openly, and compassionately to people of color. We were led to map out some of the concrete steps we will take to begin recovering from this grievous shortcoming in our Quaker bodies and faith communities.

We came to a fuller appreciation of the role of the beloved community in identifying and cultivating our gifts. Working in relationships empowers us while keeping us from outrunning our Guide. Even when we are physically isolated, we know that we are supported and loved by our community. Working together also brings us inner peace by relieving us of the burden of feeling responsible for every problem.

With greater clarity about what it means to be the "hands of God," New England Friends concluded this year's sessions with a renewed sense of energy, purpose, and urgency.

The harvest is great but the workers are few. May we tend faithfully to the portions we have been given and leave the rest to all the other living hands of God. Even a tiny pebble dropped into the middle of a pond eventually has an impact on the shore. May we open our hearts, our minds, and our eyes to the work that God wants us to do and with humility begin doing it now.

In the Light,

New England Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends

FRITZ WEISS, PRESIDING CLERK

Young Adult Friends Epistle

To Friends everywhere,

From August 6th through the 11th in the year 2016, the Young Adult Friends of New England Yearly Meeting gathered as part of their annual sessions. The theme of the gathering was "Being the Hands of God: A Call to Radical Faithfulness." We went into our gathering hoping to balance engagement with the wider meeting and engagement with each other. Many YAFs enjoyed the lounge space, where games and socializing were common. We went on our annual lake trip, and many friends engaged in fellowship together while catching and comparing Pokémon throughout the week.

There were also four YAF programs. Our opening program, led by Hilary Burgin, welcomed many YAFs into the gathering and allowed us to explore various aspects of our faithfulness and callings through worshipful art. In the days that followed the opening program, there was a core group of YAFs who attended programs and engaged in community together. Our next program, led by Gordon Peters, invited us to consider the dynamics of safety, namely how safe we felt to fully be ourselves within our lives and especially within the Quaker community. The third program, led by Hilary Burgin and Nia Thomas, brought the Young Friends and Young Adult Friends together to share in fellowship, reflect on our experiences of transitioning from one community to another, and examine our relationship with our spiritual communities. This program replaced the "Young Friends kidnapping" tradition, as YAFs wanted to try a more serious program with the entire body of Young Friends instead of just the graduating class alone. Our fourth program, led by Gordon Peters, was centered on naming our individual gifts and discerning the roles that they play in our personal lives and

communities. We discerned that gifts can sometimes be transient, often valued in certain settings but not in others, and can feed or deplete us.

Many YAFs offered their gifts and leadership to the Yearly Meeting by showing up in roles such as staffing for younger friends, leading YAF affinity groups, serving on NEYM committees and panels, working in administrative roles, hosting meal time conversation tables, leading afternoon choices and workshops for the wider community, hosting the latter half of the coffee house for the first time, and serving on the Sessions Planning Committee as well as on the Racial Inclusivity Task Force. We also acknowledge the newly formed YAF Pastoral Care Committee that debuted at Sessions this year and honor and celebrate the newly appointed Young Adult Engagement Coordinator, Hilary Burgin.

In writing this epistle, it has become apparent that while many YAFs are scattered throughout Yearly, sharing their gifts with the wider community, this results in us not being able to fully convey the experiences or express the viewpoints of all young adults at Sessions. We recognize that Yearly Meeting is a difficult time for many of us to feel a strong sense of community within YAFs, though it is our love for this community that drives us to be spread throughout Sessions.

We observe that among YAFs, there continues to be a struggle to fully hold our youngest friends and older YAF friends as we recognize, even here, generational differences. Young Friends transitioning into Young Adult Friends are experiencing the many responsibilities of entering adulthood and thusly some have not felt able to actively participate in or attend our programs and gatherings. Similarly, some older YAFs have felt as though their needs are no longer being met in the YAF community. Some have expressed discomfort and disconnect due to feeling underrepresented and are unsure where their spiritual community lies. These difficult truths have led some YAFs to question if we should split into two different age groups. It is our intention to see the maintenance of this community that so many call home, but these sentiments speak to a deeper issue that needs to be addressed.

This issue is not within the YAF community alone. Throughout our time together many conversations emerged among YAFs concerning dissonance between the younger communities and the rest of the Quaker body. Many Friends identified spaces in which some older friends struggle to view YAFs in equal light and voiced that they sometimes feel unheard, unseen, tokenized, or infantilized. In addition to YAF circles, these sentiments have also been heard among younger friends.

These themes were present when the Racial Inclusivity Task Force asked Friends to notice the systems of racism that persists within this predominantly white culture during sessions this year. This work brought to light some unproductive patterns within the Yearly Meeting—patterns which mirrored resistance and marginalization that were existent in last year's gender inclusivity work. While there were strong examples of this exercise being embraced by the wider community, there was a sense that some older Friends were struggling to embrace areas of growth and change in the community that many YAFs have readily embraced for some time. Additionally, members of the Racial Inclusivity Task Force met with the youth of JHYM and Young Friends to introduce them to the work and it was observed that some of these dissonant feelings were alive in those communities as well. This generational division seems to permeate amongst NEYM in different ways and different spaces. Yet through all of this, there is an undying union and sense of community.

As for us, the YAFs of NEYM, we are young adults aged roughly 18–35, we are students, we are employees, we are journeyers, we are activists, we are children, we are parents, we are elders, we are youth, we are LGBTQ+, we are people of color, we are Quakers, we are in love with this community, we are here, and we are upset. As we continue these conversations and explore the needs of our community and its members, we hope to find ways to reshape aspects of our communities that do not support us and breathe new life and inspiration into them and into the Yearly Meeting as a whole. It is in this spirit that we leave the YAF community and the larger body with these queries which can offer actionable steps forward.

What is expected of us?

Can we meet those expectations while being authentic to ourselves?

Who represents us?

Are we a unified body?

Who or What do we feel called to be?

How can these noticings be transformed into action?

How can we put our gifts to use in the wider community when it feels no one is seeking them out?

How can we truly be heard?

Can we be accepted for who we are?

In love and radically moving forward,
THE YOUNG ADULT FRIENDS OF NEW ENGLAND

Young Friends Epistle

Dear Friends Everywhere,

We 43 Young Friends from New England Yearly Meeting met in August for six days of tenderness in community, program and business, shared absurdity, finding our bearings, and losing ourselves to the spirit.

Throughout Sessions, we worshipped all over the place, with some friends even rising for early morning worship at 6:30 a.m. During intergenerational worship, Young Friends Lizzy Szanton, Mosie Burke, and Roy Veatch led a group of close to 500 friends in worship, reading a poem connected to the theme of Sessions (which was “Being the Hands Of God: A Call to Radical Faithfulness”) and leading the group in song before centering down. Later, adult Resource Person Maggie Nelson led the Young Friends in working with clay as we worshipped. Which was molded more: the clay or the Young Friends? On a sunny morning, we worshipped with two young farmers and spiritual activists who encouraged us to choose love and let our hearts grow wild.

Young Friends also attended the Plenary panel to hear three activists from our community: one with a little boat and a big message, another who urged us not to side with the silent majority, and the last who spoke of wading in the water in radical faith. Although it was more than some of us could take in, the spirit was continuous and bursting. The voices of the speakers were firm and determined, urging on the faith and action of our community of Friends.

Later, four Young Friends (Finn Anderson, Charlie Gorham, Jesse Grace, and Mary Provencal-Fogarty) sat on a panel of our own. Out of the silence, they spoke about the relationship between their work and the divine. Their words swayed our spirits.

One morning, two visitors from Kenya, Margaret Kadima-Mazela and Agneta Injairu, led an interest group during which Young Friends sang songs in Swahili and learned about the lives of young Quakers in Kenya.

The Young Friends met four times for business over the course of Sessions, following the theme, “Being the Hands of the Clock: A Call to Radical Overtime and Excessive Agenda Manipulation.” Our Nominating Committee presented the slate for the upcoming year’s Ministry and Council. Young Friends shared gratitude for the work NomCom and concerns that the coming year’s M&C is mostly male, following a longstanding pattern. We need, Young Friends voiced, better representation of our community on these committees. Also in business meeting, Young Friends Coordinator Nia Thomas brought to our attention the declining number of incoming Young Friends. In reports from our larger Yearly Meeting, Young Friends heard about the Friends World Committee for Consultation’s Minute on Climate Change and the work of the Long Term Financial Planning Committee.

In adult business meeting, Young Friends Drew Chasse and Lizzy Szanton reflected on their experience attending the April White Privilege Conference in Philadelphia. Young Friend Kenzie Burpee joined her fellow Sly Grapes (as the White Privilege Conference delegation was fondly named) to run an hour-and-a-half program of skits, discussion, and worship for Young Friends and adult visitors to practice anti-racism work.

The Young Friends community and all of Yearly Meeting mourned the retirement of Nat Shed, beloved director of Friends Camp. In adult business meeting, tears blurred the eyes of both speaker and audience as all shared their inexpressible gratitude for the years Nat devoted to feeding the souls of young Quakers with humility and joy. A group of Young Friends shared a tender and playful tribute song, set to the tune of George Fox, and all gratefully welcomed Anna Hopkins as the new director.

A day later, Young Friends hosted Coffee Shed, an intergenerational variety show in honor of Nat. Acts were endearing, rousing, and poignant, and left all visibly joyous for the radiance of our community.

In the hot August heat, Young Friends also hitched a ride on a yellow school bus to the local lake, where we played Frisbee, swam, danced, and welcomed the incoming ninth graders.

The Young Friends ended the week with a raucous presence at the under-attended Yearly Meeting contra dance, a dance party of our own, and a ceremony for the graduating seniors. We leave each other with sleep-deprived hearts spilling over.

With Love,

YOUNG FRIENDS OF NEW ENGLAND YEARLY MEETING

Junior High Yearly Meeting Epistle

Dear Friends from all over the world:

Greetings from the 2016 NEYM Junior High (entering grades 7–9) Yearly Meeting in Castleton, Vermont. Our theme this year is Being God's Hands. Related to the theme, we talked with Quakers from all around the world about their personal experiences. We also bonded through games and activities.

On Saturday we all met together and introduced ourselves. Throughout the week we played a variety of games such as The Big Wind Blows, intergenerational Capture the Flag, and JYM ball (an NEYM invention). Playing together was fun and helped us channel our abundant energy.

This week we were visited by Friends who had lived out our theme in a wide variety of ways. Candido Quelevys and Melissa Hernandez-Cruz from Cuba taught us how to express ourselves through cultural dance. On Monday, we had a panel of speakers who described to us how they were called by God and how their lives changed because of that. We learned how at certain points the panel members were unclear about their callings until God helped them through. Leadings come in different forms and in unexpected ways. One described the experience like riding on a roller coaster. Margaret Namikoye Musalia and Agneta Kwayumba Injairu, Quaker pastors from Kenya, described their missionary work and how they used their faith to educate children and lift up women in other countries. Angela Hopkins and members of the Racial Inclusivity Task-force spoke to our community about the struggles they and other people of color faced in various forms of racism. We were challenged to not only notice and recognize racism that is present in our lives but to also then answer the question: What can I do to create a more inclusive community? Some of us were moved to tears by what our speakers had to say.

For us Junior Highers, this week was full of adventures. A highlight of this time was our trip to the local Bomoseen State Park. While we were there we hung out with the Young Friends and held a regatta using makeshift boats. We also had a fantastic time at the Castleton pool and playing Dance Dance Revolution at our late night lounge, which also included pizza and ice cream. We connected through rhythm with our drum circle and through creative projects that included painting Mandela t-shirts as well as decorating affirmation rocks that we left around the campus for people to discover and take with them. And we shared affirmations of each other at our 8th grade circle.

A spiritual highlight was our time spent together in small groups. In a safe and private environment, we checked in on each other spiritually and answered questions about topics like getting out of one's comfort zone and how we can face problems still present in our world today. We reflected on questions such as: What is something that you love to do and are willing to work hard at? What does radical faithfulness mean to you? And do you have a spiritual center that helps you feel calmer and more peaceful? Small groups made us feel comfortable enough to say what we need to say. We learned that no question or answer is stupid and began to learn how to respect each other.

Our time together at NEYM Sessions reminded us of what is special about our JHYM community. One of our strengths is how much we are like a family. Our community is intergenerational and inclusive of young people and the adults who staff retreats and Yearly Meeting Sessions. We are welcoming to new people and accepting of our differences in ways that allow us to be ourselves in a loving community. We continue to work at this and talked about our use of language to describe ourselves and others. We are learning to recognize and respect how people choose to express their gender identity and talked about the use of pronouns and how one can choose these pronouns for themselves. Our language is part of how we make a welcoming and inclusive community and see each other as people first,

To us Junior Highers, being the hands of God means using our gifts to solve the problems of our world and do as we are led. Being the hands of God is a big responsibility and we each have a role to play. Though it was a tiring week, all of us can say that there was lots of fun and plenty of things to remember.

With love and peace to all,

JUNIOR HIGH YEARLY MEETING (JHYM), NEW ENGLAND YEARLY MEETING

Junior Yearly Meeting (5–6) Epistle

To Fellow Friends Everywhere,

Fifteen fifth- and sixth-graders met at Castleton University in Castleton, Vermont, USA from August 6–11, 2016. Our theme this year was “Being the Hands of God” and we explored this in a mindful clay activity and by recognizing that everyone has a part of God in them. We enjoyed finding God in each other.

We played a lot of games this week, including parachute games, kickball, JYM ball, telephone, silent ball and beanie babies. We set a new record in beanie babies by keeping 9 objects moving at once. We were safe during most of our games, but two of us sustained injuries when we played kickball, and one of us had to go to the emergency room. We were happy when our injured friend came back to us.

We played with people from all age groups in the Yearly Meeting and took part in intergenerational worship. We also sang and worshiped with other Junior Yearly Meeting groups every day. We enjoyed a project turning ugly art into beautiful masterpieces.

During free time we went swimming, rode bikes, skateboards and scooters, ate, slept and went to afternoon choices. At the beginning of the week, we got to see a parade.

Visitors from Cuba Yearly Meeting taught us a song and a dance and helped us tune in to moving with the music. Friends from Kenya sang for us and taught us a song in Kiswahili. We made ice cream, did yoga and made a mandala from seeds.

We got to see Friends we don’t see often and continue long-lasting friendships. Overall, it was an exciting, awesome, and amazing time.

In love and light,

YOUR FRIENDS FROM THE JUNIOR YEARLY MEETING OF NEW ENGLAND YEARLY MEETING, 5TH AND 6TH GRADE GROUP.

Junior Yearly Meeting (2, 3 and 4)

To Friends everywhere,

We started our week by writing three queries from Young Friends on the board in our classroom:

How do we need to be the hands of God?

How would God want us to use our hands?

What can we do when our visions of faithfulness differ?

We created hands of God by painting our hands and making a mural of all our handprints. We used our hands to make clay pots and ice cream, to touch crickets and frogs, and to throw and hit balls in JYM ball, four square, and kickball. We learned to use our hands, feet, and hips from our Kenyan and Cuban visitors who sang and danced with us. We learned to bring our visions of community together by creating group works of art like our mini-continent out of recycled materials and a mandala from different- colored beans. We also shared books, met old friends, and made new ones. During our free time outside of program we had fun swimming (one of us did a flip off the diving board!), playing Capture the Flag, exploring the pond, riding bikes and scooters, doing afternoon choices, and going to the Coffee Shed.

JYM GRADES 2, 3 AND 4, NEW ENGLAND YEARLY MEETING OF FRIENDS

Junior Yearly Meeting (K–1)

To Friends everywhere,

We are the Kindergarten–Grade 1 group and our numbers kept growing to a healthy 15. We had lots of indoor and outdoor fun this week. One of us saw a bunny, another saw a deer and her babies, and one went on a hike to waterfalls. Some of us went swimming in the pool. As a group, we played with friends, played with stuffed animals, listened to stories, played JYM Ball, attended morning worship, learned how to finger knit, listened to our Kenyan visitors sing, drew self-portraits, and participated in the Coffee Shed. Also, we went on a scavenger hunt called the Campus Crawl to learn about the campus, and to find Avery’s bike!

We all look forward to getting together next year at Yearly Meeting at Castleton College.

Childcare Epistle

To our big Friends,

We gathered at the Childcare house with a certain amount of trepidation and even a few tears as our parents walked away. But we became a group that looked forward each day to our play time with big blocks and railroad tracks. We especially liked making snails (and other amazing creations) out of play dough; pouring oobleck into balloons that squished and squashed in our hands; and playing ping-pong with a broken ball. We had several visitors, including the local cat and a friend who came with his guitar and played songs at our morning gathering.

We talked about being God's hands in the world and our hands made butterflies, built towers, clapped, shook colorful scarfs, and helped to carry snacks, to clean up messes, and even to pick up all the little beans when a rainstick broke. (Sometimes when things break you can look inside and see how they work.)

Some of our best times were spent quietly reading books and taking naps (which we encourage our older Friends to do more of). We worked very hard at figuring out how to respond to someone who wanted a toy that we were already playing with (which we encourage our older Friends to do more of).

We enjoyed playing with cousins and siblings. We made new friends, with whom we had good times and shared apples, bananas, and crackers. We want to do this again. Thank you for creating a place for us.

Sincerely,

THE CHILDREN OF CHILDCARE, NEW ENGLAND YEARLY MEETING

Epístola de Los Amigos Cuáqueros en Cuba

Gibara 21 de febrero del 2016

Queridos hermanos y hermanas,

La paz esté presente en cada uno de ustedes; así los delegados a la 89 Asamblea de la Junta Anual de Cuba unidos en adoración proclamamos lo imprescindible de buscar la reconciliación.

Nuestras ideas se exponen en la necesidad de la restauración en obediencia a Dios, reconociendo su ofrecimiento del sacrificio de su hijo en la cruz.

Consideramos que en la comunidad de fe la reconciliación es un ministerio de todos porque la luz que mora en nuestro interior nos convoca a convivir en paz, como necesidad del ser humano.

Es entonces que en esa relación personal alcanzamos el ser artesanos de la paz, desde una vida de colaboración, respeto, cooperación sin el predominio del poder sobre los débiles.

Hoy la iglesia está llamada a promover la reconciliación plena desde el texto que preside la asamblea en 2da de Corintios 5:18. Y todo esto proviene de Dios, quien nos reconcilió consigo mismo por Cristo y nos dio el ministerio de la reconciliación.

En esta asamblea surge la preocupación por la necesidad de obreros, la mies mucha y pocos obreros hay. Esperamos que nuestro Dios bendito muestre a muchos este camino de guiar comunidades. Surgen nuevos espacios físicos de utilidad para la obra misionera en Cuba.

Es motivo de alegría ser anfitriones de la Junta General del FUM en junio próximo. Esperamos que este tiempo sea de bendiciones y de un encuentro de hermanos.

La Iglesia de los Amigos con su fe en acción proclama que todo debemos unirnos en el amor universal, de esta manera desde nuestros contextos busquemos el propósito de las enseñanzas de Cristo, sirviendo a Dios y a nuestro prójimo.

Durante este año fue de bendición e historia los primeros graduados del Instituto Cuáquero Cubano de Paz, quienes están certificados como mediadores en la construcción de paz, herramienta para facilitar la resolución de los conflictos. Esta institución cubana prosigue con nuevas formas organizando sedes en diferentes localidades del país.

Hermanos y hermanas así hemos compartido este tiempo en busca de la unidad de unos con otros, en el encuentro de la luz divina en nuestra comunidad. Llegue a ustedes este ambiente espiritual desde la Villa Blanca de Cuba.

En la Luz ,

JUNTA ANUAL DE LOS AMIGOS CUÁQUEROS EN CUBA

Gibara, February 21, 2016

Dear brothers and sisters,

May peace be with each one of you. United in prayer, the delegates of the 89th Session of Cuba Yearly Meeting proclaim the indispensable necessity of seeking reconciliation.

Our ideas express the need for restoration in obedience to God, in recognition of God's sacrificial offering of his son on the Cross.

We believe that in the community of faith reconciliation is everyone's ministry, because the light dwelling within us calls us to live together in peace, a basic need for each human being.

In that personal relationship we become workers for peace, based on a life of respect and shared labor, cooperating without letting power dominate the weak.

Today the church is called to bring about full reconciliation, following the theme of this assembly, II Corinthians 5:18: And all things are of God, who has reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and has given to us the ministry of reconciliation.

In this session a concern arose about the need for workers; the harvest is abundant but there are few workers. We hope that our blessed God will show many people this path of guiding communities. We have new physical facilities which can be useful for the missionary work in Cuba.

It is a cause of joy to host the General Board of FUM next June. We hope that this meeting of brothers and sisters will be full of blessings.

With our faith in action, the Friends Church proclaims that we should all unite in universal love, and so in our own contexts let us seek the meaning of Christ's teachings, serving God and our neighbor.

This past year was blessed by the historic graduation of the first class of the Cuban Quaker Peace Institute, all certified as mediators in building peace, a tool for facilitating conflict resolution. This Cuban institution is continuing with a new structure, adding sites in other locations in this country.

Brothers and sisters, we have shared this time in search of unity with one another, in finding the divine light within our community. May this spiritual atmosphere reach out to you from the Gibara, the White Villa of Cuba.

In the Light,

CUBA YEARLY MEETING (QUAKERS)

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New England Yearly Meeting of Friends

901 Pleasant Street, Worcester, MA 01602-1908
voice: 508-754-6760 • fax: 877-257-2834 • web site: www.neym.org

Accounts Manager

Frederick Martin
508-754-6760
accountsmanager@neym.org

Friends Camp Director

Anna Hopkins
207-445-2361
director@friendscamp.org
www.friendscamp.org

Office Manager

Sara Hubner
508-754-6760
office@neym.org

Junior YM/Junior High YM Coordinator

Gretchen Baker-Smith
508-997-0940
jym@neym.org

Ministry & Counsel Clerk

Debbie Humphries
860-236-5175
mc-clerk@neym.org

Permanent Board Clerk

Sarah Gant
617-543-6985
pbclerk@neym.org

Presiding Clerk

Frederick (Fritz) Weiss
774-415-0719
clerk@neym.org

Religious Education & Outreach Coordinator

Beth Collea
781-784-3471
recoord@neym.org

Events Coordinator

Kathleen Wooten
781-640-1269
events@neym.org

Treasurer

Shearman Taber
617-965-7042
treasurer@neym.org

Yearly Meeting Secretary

Noah Baker Merrill
617-615-6396
ymsec@neym.org

Young Friends/Young Adult Friends Coordinator

NiaDwynwen Thomas
978-886-7179
yf.yafcoord@neym.org

Young Adult Engagement Coordinator

Hilary Burgin
978-760-0116
hilary@neym.org