



# 2018 Minutes

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

Three Hundred Fifty-Eighth Year

Castleton State College  
Castleton, Vermont  
August 4–9, 2018

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# 2018 New England Yearly Meeting Sessions Schedule

## Saturday, August 4–Thursday, August 9 • Castleton (Vermont) University

### —Schedule—

	Saturday, August 4	Sunday, August 5	Monday, August 6	Tuesday, August 7	Wednesday, August 8	Thursday, August 9
6:30–7:00			6:30–7:00 <b>Early Morning Worship</b> (See YM News** for locations)			
6:45–8:45			6:45–8:45 <b>Breakfast</b> (Huden Dining Hall)			
8:30–11:30	<p>9:00 <b>Registration begins*</b> (Fine Arts Center Lobby)</p> <p>9:30 <b>Permanent Board</b> (Stafford Auditorium) &amp; <b>Ministry &amp; Counsel</b> (Jeffords Auditorium)</p> <p>11:15–1:30 <b>Lunch</b> (Huden Dining Hall)</p> <p>2:30 <b>Registration closes*</b></p>	<p>8:15–9:00 <b>Registration*</b> (Fine Arts Center Lobby)</p> <p>9:00–11:30 <b>Worship</b> (Pavilion) – All-Ages Worship – Bible Half Hour</p> <p>11:15–1:30 <b>Lunch</b> (Huden Dining Hall)</p> <p>12:45 <b>Orientation</b> for first-time attendees (Jeffords Auditorium)</p>	8:30 <b>Bible Half Hour</b> with Diane Randall (Fine Arts Center) transitioning worshipfully into...	8:30 <b>Bible Half Hour</b> transitioning worshipfully into...	8:30 <b>Bible Half Hour</b> transitioning worshipfully into...	8:30 <b>Bible Half Hour</b> transitioning worshipfully into...
11:15–1:45				9:00–11:30 <b>Meeting for the Conduct of Business</b> (Fine Arts Center)		9:00–11:00 <b>Meeting for Business</b> 11:00–11:30 <b>Concluding Worship</b> (all ages)
1:00–4:45	<p>3:00 Shriners Parade on Main Street</p> <p>4:30–6:00 <b>Registration continues*</b> (Fine Arts Center Lobby)</p>	<p>1:30–2:30 <b>Plenary Speaker</b> (Pavilion) followed by small group sharing in...</p> <p>2:45–4:15 <b>Anchor Groups</b> (Leavenworth/Jeffords)</p>	1:15–2:45 <b>Anchor Groups</b> (Leavenworth/Jeffords)	1:15–2:45 <b>Anchor Groups</b> (Leavenworth/Jeffords)	1:15–2:45 <b>Anchor Groups</b> (Leavenworth/Jeffords)	1:00–3:00 <b>Permanent Board</b>
4:45–6:45			4:45–6:45 <b>Dinner</b> (Huden Dining Hall)			
6:00–9:00	<p>6:45 <b>Opening Celebration</b> (all ages) (Fine Arts Ctr)</p> <p>7:30 Children &amp; youth staff leave</p> <p>8:00–9:00 <b>Anchor Groups</b> (Leavenworth)</p> <p>8:30–10:00 <b>Registration Continues*</b> (Fine Arts Center Lobby)</p>	<p>6:15 <b>Vespers</b> Singing for all ages</p> <p>7:00–9:00 <b>Meeting for Business</b> (Fine Arts Center)</p> <p>8:30–10:30 <b>Conradance</b> (Pavilion)</p> <p>9:00 <b>Evening Opportunities</b> (Leavenworth)</p>	3:00–5:00 <b>Memorial Meeting</b> (Fine Arts Center)	3:30–5:00 <b>Workshops</b> (Leavenworth)	3:30–5:00 <b>Workshops</b> (Leavenworth)	Youth Programs Times to be posted Junior High YM, Junior YM, Young Friends, Young Adult Friends: See respective schedules for Orientation schedules & locations check YM News** or neym.org/sessions/youth
9:00–11:00				6:15 <b>Vespers</b> Singing for all ages 7:00–9:00 <b>Meeting for Business</b> (Fine Arts Center) <p>8:30–10:30 <b>Conradance</b> (Pavilion)</p> <p>9:00 <b>Evening Opportunities</b> (Leavenworth)</p>	6:15 <b>Vespers</b> Singing for all ages 7:00–9:00 <b>Coffee House</b> all ages (Fine Arts Ctr) <p>9:00 <b>Evening Opportunities</b> (Leavenworth)</p>	
<p>* <b>Registration Hours:</b> Fri, 5–7 p.m. &amp; 8–10 p.m., Sat, 9 a.m.–2:30 p.m., 4:30–6 p.m., 8:30–10 p.m., Sun, 8:15–9 a.m., 12:15–1:15 p.m., 4:30–5:30 and 7–9 p.m., Mon–Wed, 9:30–10:30 a.m., 4:30–5 pm. / For registration needs outside these hours, please contact the Registrar well in advance at registrar@neym.org or 978-494-6396 to make alternate arrangements.</p>						
<p>** <b>Yearly Meeting News</b>   Published Saturday through Wednesday mornings at breakfast and on the web at neym.org/sessions, with information about events at Sessions. Deadlines for submissions: Sunday, Monday and Tuesday at 1:30 p.m. Drop off materials at the Info Desk, located in the Fine Arts Center Lobby. Announcements, notices and flyers not specifically related to Sessions will not be included in the YM news. Please check with the Info Desk for where to post these items.</p>						

## 2018 Sessions Coordinators, Officers, Speakers and YM Staff

Access Needs Coordinator	Jana Noyes-Dakota
Accounts Manager	Frederick Martin*
Bible Half Hour Speaker	Diane Randall
Bookstore	Sara Burke, John Fuller
Children's Bookstore	Jean McCandless and Karen Sargent (managers), Christopher McCandless
Clerks	Fritz Weiss (presiding), James Grace and Rosemary Zimmerman (recording), Jeremiah Dickinson and Katherine Fisher (reading)
Events Coordinator	Elizabeth Hacala*
Housing Coordinator	Kristin Wilson
Information Desk Coordinator	Chris Jorgenson
Office Manager	Sara Hubner*
Pastoral Team Leader	Abigail Matchette
Registrar	Martha Hinshaw Sheldon
Religious Education Coordinator	Beth Collea*
Sessions Committee Clerk	Leslie Manning
Sessions Office Assistant	Jessica Sheldon
Shuttle Coordinator	Barbara Dakota
Special Needs Coordinator	Jana Noyes
Treasurer	Shearman Taber
Volunteer Coordinator	Hannah Zwirner Forsythe
YM News Editor	Liz Yeats
Yearly Meeting Secretary	Noah Merrill*

\* YM Staff

### **Child Care**

**Coord:** Chloë Grubbs-Saleem & Whitney Mikkelson  
 Darien Brimage  
 Rainer Humphries  
 Avery Johnson  
 Holly Lapp  
 Karen Sánchez-Eppler  
 Martha Schwope  
 Phillip Veatch  
 Stefan Walker

### **Junior Yearly Meeting**

**Coord:** Betty Ann Lee  
**On-Site Coords:** Margy Carpenter & Laura Street  
 Carol Baker  
 Brad Bussiere-Nichols  
 Helen Carpenter  
 Robin Carpenter  
 Steve Correia  
 Janet Dawson

Pamela Drouin  
 Rebecca Edwards  
 Charlotte Gorham  
 June Goodband  
 Tyler Green  
 Anna Lindo  
 Laurie Maheu  
 Theresa Oleksiw  
 Jane Radocchia  
 Lynn Taber

### **JYM Afternoon Choices**

**Coord:** Cynthia Rankin

### **Junior High Yearly Meeting**

**Coord:** Gretchen Baker-Smith\*  
 Anne Anderson  
 Buddy Baker-Smith  
 Steve Ball  
 Jesse Ball  
 Dave Baxter  
 Lilly Campbell

Jerry Carson  
 Emily Edwards  
 John Humphries  
 Adam Kohrman  
 Dug Lippincott  
 Branwyn McDowell

### **Young Friends**

**Coord:** Maggie Nelson\*  
**Asst Coord:** Allon Dubler  
 Xinef Afriam  
 Tom Antonik  
 Denny Dart  
 Abby Kelly  
 Kate Murray  
 Nora Spicer  
 Rick Townsend

### **Young Adult Friends**

**Coord:** Hilary Burgin  
**Asst Coord:** Emi Link

## Minutes of the Annual Sessions

### Saturday Evening

#### **2018-1 Opening and Welcome**

The presiding clerk, Fritz Weiss (Hanover), opened the meeting with vocal prayer. “My prayer is to remember that my heart is larger than I know; there is room in it for joy. My arms are stronger than I know; there is room in them for blessings.”

We are on Abenaki land, and we received a greeting from Melanie Brook, a citizen of the Elnu Abenaki Band (originally of the land around Castleton and Rutland) and Chair of the Vermont Commission on Native Affairs:

*I heard a story once about the friendship between the Quaker community and the Abenaki people of Ndakinna. I would like to welcome you today to our homeland, Ndakinna, and to share a story I would imagine people have forgotten on both sides of the relationship. Much of the colonial period was plagued by warfare and disease. Abenaki people were allied with the French from the landing of Samuel de Champlain through many successive conflicts. As it was told to me, the French during likely the French and Indian War commanded their allies (us) to attack a village. The inhabitants of the village happened to be a Quaker community and when we moved in to raid, people were at prayer. As it is a steadfast rule in our culture that people at prayer and in ceremony should not be harmed but rather protected, we sat down and joined the meeting. We found friendship in prayer even if we prayed a little differently. Discussions were had and in each successive war or conflict we protected the area and made sure our new friends were safe. From my understanding, we visited the community through the War of 1812. After this point our connection remained only in memory but one of our elders in the Northeast, Wayne Newell, always tells us, “Nothing is ever lost, it is only us who have lost our way.”*

*Our ancestors have a lot to teach us. During a time of war and conflict, together we found peace and friendship. Even in the darkest of moments, we can find love to light the world. The glimpses of humanity that our collective communities showed toward each other can be a guidepost for the future. Much of my historical focus has been on first encounters because it is that moment in time where anything is possible and you either see the best or the worst in ourselves. Every day we encounter new people, ideas, and potentially places and we face those choices of the past that play out constantly within our own lives. This story has always helped me to understand that when given the choice, to always find the best in people; to find value in difference and stay true to the relationships we have built. There is a more beautiful world within our grasp and our ancestors showed us the way. In order to walk that road, it cannot be based upon guilt and superficial affirmations, as that leads to stereotyping, dehumanization, and friendships based upon the wrong platforms that cannot hold the test of time. A house cannot be built upon paper. In order to walk that road we must get rid of what is holding us back from our authentic selves and light the path with the best humanity has to offer. Our ancestors walked that road once and we can follow in their footsteps. This connection today is an affirmation of remembrance but it is also a step back onto the path. Let us be good ancestors. Oliwini [“Thank you”].*

The clerk then welcomed us to the 358th annual gathering of Friends in New England. He introduced our theme “In fear and trembling, be bold in God’s service.”

### **2018-2 Clerks’ table**

Fritz Weiss introduced the rest of the clerks’ table: reading clerks Jeremiah Dickinson (Wellesley) and Katherine Fisher (Beacon Hill), and recording clerks Rosemary Zimmermann (Bennington) and Jim Grace (Beacon Hill, worshipping at West Richmond Friends in Indiana).

### **2018-3 Roll call**

We called the roll of meetings by quarter. Friends from each Quarter then stood as a body.

We note with joy two new worship groups: Islesboro Worship Group (Vassalboro Quarter) and the Orchard Hill Quaker Worship Group (Northwest Quarter).

North Fairfield monthly meeting has been discontinued; we noted this with tenderness.

### **2018-4 New Babies, First Time Attendees, and Visitors**

We waved hello to the new babies among us, celebrated the presence of first-time attenders, and introduced some visitors. Throughout the week the following visitors were introduced and welcomed:

Derek DeJager: Reformed Church of America

Bill Hartman: Lancaster, PA; Everence

Mustafa El Hawi: John Woolman College of Active Peace, Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) in Gaza, Palestine

Gloria Thompson: FWCC Executive Committee member

Ruth Reber: Friends General Conference

Hoot Williams: Catskills Friends Meeting, New York Yearly Meeting; Friends of Jesus Fellowship

Lyle Miller: Everence Stewardship Consultant

Duncan Sabwa: East Africa Yearly Meeting North

Judith Nandikove: Nairobi Yearly Meeting and United Society of Friends Women

Salomon Medina: El Salvador Yearly Meeting, Coordinator of Alternatives to Violence Project in El Salvador

Hayley Hathaway (Monadnock): Quaker Earthcare Witness, Publications Coordinator

Emma Condori Mamani: Bolivia, Holiness Yearly Meeting; Friends International Bilingual Center in La Paz, Executive Director

Eden Grace (Beacon Hill): Friends United Meeting, Director of Global Ministries

Kristina Keefe-Perry (Fresh Pond): brings greetings from Sierra-Cascades Yearly Meeting

Jackie Stillwell (Monadnock): Right Sharing of World Resources, General Secretary

Lorena Boswell: Humboldt, Pacific Yearly Meeting; Friends Meeting at Cambridge, Resident Friend

Wendy Cooler: Baltimore Yearly Meeting and Earlham School of Religion

Eric Hanson: Baltimore Yearly Meeting

Adria Gulizia: Chatham-Summit Monthly Meeting, New York Yearly Meeting

Xinef Afriam: Minister of Hope Community Church, Amherst, MA.

Elaine Emily: Strawberry Creek Meeting, Berkeley, CA

Liz Yates (*Yearly Meeting News* editor): Austin, South Central Yearly Meeting

Liana Knight (Durham): Center for Courage and Renewal

## 2018-5 Introduction to the Theme

Our theme this year is “In fear and trembling, be bold in God’s service.” Leslie Manning (Durham) and Beth Collea (Wellesley) led an exploration of that theme.

Worship opened quietly; we viewed a photo montage depicting scenes from Sessions over the past several years. Several of the pictures were of those who have died in recent years; we were grateful to have another glimpse of these Friends.

*...even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is as bright as the day, for darkness is as light to you. For it was you who formed my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; that I know very well. (Psalm 139)*

Worship continued in a brief reflection on Psalm 139<sup>1</sup>, quoted above; in song; in performative storytelling of the “faith and play” tradition.

“We are gathered under God’s special blanket of Love, that can hold all things ... Now we are ready for bold faithfulness.”

## 2018-6 Youth Programs

We noted that through the week there are actually four concurrent yearly meetings: the Junior Yearly Meeting (JYM); Junior High Yearly Meeting (JHYM); Young Friends (YF); and the adult Yearly Meeting. We celebrated the presence of our youth programs attendees and staff as they left us to go to their own yearly meeting programs.

## 2018-7 Prayer

Patsy Shotwell, a long-time New England Friend, died only days ago, on July 27th. We took a moment of remembrance.

Derek DeJager, ecumenical visitor from the Reformed Church of America, offered a prayer from his church’s book of prayer:

*O great God, glorify yourself in all the earth. Be glorified in creation, be glorified in your church, be glorified in our worship here this evening. Though we are so small and you are so grand, help us nevertheless to magnify your name. Help us to make your name and the nature of your grace larger and easier for people to see. Help us to live and worship in such a way that we become like magnifying glasses through which our neighbors and coworkers and children and friends can see you come into focus in ways they may not have seen before. When people ask for an explanation of the hope we have, give us the words to answer thoughtfully and well. When people wonder out loud who Jesus is and why he matters, help us to reply in words that will echo the sweetness of your gospel. Help us to magnify your name, O Lord, so that you may be glorified in all the earth. Amen.<sup>2</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> All quotations from Scripture are from the New Revised Standard Version Bible, copyright ©1989 National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

<sup>2</sup> Reprinted by permission from *The Worship Sourcebook, Second Edition*, ©2013 Faith Alive Christian Resources.

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**2018-8 Events Coordinator and Advanced Documents**

The clerk introduced us to Elizabeth Hacala, the new Events Coordinator. This is her first Annual Sessions as Events Coordinator; she is commended to our gentle care.

We were reminded to be faithful in the small things in order that we may be faithful in the large things. Specifically, the clerk reminded us to read our Advance Documents and come to business sessions prepared.

**2018-9 Visiting the Youth Programs**

The clerk noted that we are changing our practice on visiting youth programs this year. Instead of appointing Friends to visit each program, Friends who would like to visit the programs are encouraged to talk with the coordinators of each program. We will have time in each of our sessions to share joys from the youth programs.

**2018-10 Closing Worship**

The meeting closed with worship, but the worship did not close—we remain in worship all week long, gathered in our various guises.

## Sunday Evening

**2018-11 Opening Worship**

Maggie Edmondson (Winthrop Center) sang and prayed us into worship.

**2018-12 Epistle from Friends World Committee for Consultation**

We heard an epistle from the General Secretary of Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC), addressed directly to our Yearly Meeting. The Secretary expressed gratitude and joy for the global diversity of Friends, and for the way Friends are “changing the world by actively bringing God’s loving presence into illumination.” She shared her hopes for our annual sessions: “We extend our best wishes for a full and gathered yearly meeting. ... May you cherish the love in each other and the great joy of being a Quaker. We bask in God’s love and in the unity of the Quaker heart.”

**2018-13 Faith & Practice Revision Committee**

Phebe McCosker (Hanover), clerk of the Faith and Practice Revision Committee, introduced eight members of the committee who were present. She invited Friends to engage in the work with the committee and to give them guidance.

Committee members Phebe McCosker, Eleanor Godway (Hartford), and Doug Armstrong (Monadnock) talked about their personal engagement with the work of the committee.

The committee is asking for preliminary approval this year to a chapter section on Membership. When a text has preliminary approval, it is used in place of the text of the 1985 *Faith and Practice*. This gives Friends the chance to get familiar with the text and to suggest changes when the section is considered for final approval.

They are also presenting two draft papers, on Pastoral Care and on Dying, Death and Bereavement. They actively seek and encourage group discernment and input from monthly meetings on these two draft papers, and how these papers speak to the life of our meetings. “Does this draft



encourage you on your spiritual path? Does it create space for you and your meetings to find the way forward together, trusting in the spirit of Truth?"

Friends were presented with an excerpt from the Pastoral Care section and given some time to respond to a related query with one or two people sitting near them.

### **2018-14 Development Committee Report**

Christopher Gant (Beacon Hill) and Deana Chase (Westport) presented a report from the Development Committee.

See the committee report for full financial details. In brief, we are doing well in reaching our monetary fundraising goals, with a \$200,000 goal for individual contributions within reach.

Development Committee has been working to stabilize the giving patterns of individual donors. Many individuals give widely varying amounts from year to year; if giving became more consistent, future planning would be easier. To this end, Friends are invited to consider making a three-year commitment at a level of giving equal to or greater than the amount of their largest donation in the previous three years. A group of supporters has created a \$30,000 matching fund which will match one year's worth of this commitment in the current fiscal year. Those who cannot commit to repeat their largest recent gift are encouraged to make statements of committed intention as possible.

We are also entering into a partnership with Everence, a Mennonite stewardship organization, for development of a planned giving program.

Questions of money are intertwined with questions of identity and belonging, power and privilege.

How do we simultaneously hold both the concrete financial realities of the Yearly Meeting, and also the ways in which money, power, and privilege have been used to exclude and to control?

We are reminded that our possessions and money are not our own, but that all things belong to God who made them.

### **2018-15 Ad hoc Challenging White Supremacy Working Group**

Susan Davies, clerk of the ad hoc Challenging White Supremacy Working Group of Permanent Board, began by noting that we are here meeting in *Ndakinna*, the ancestral homeland of the Abenaki People. They bring a yearning for healing the wounds of racism, and a yearning to transform the "spiritual malformation" that permits it.

Fran Brokaw (Hanover) led us in a brief exercise to "Hold Space for Transformation."

Xinef Afriam (minister at Hope Community Church in Amherst, MA) read his poem "Let Us Be the Next Flood."

Susan Davies asked if we can sit in worship as one body if we are still clinging to notions of "us" and "them." Can we reach for the mutual salvation that awaits when we fully embrace "us"?

We watched an excerpt from a video of Greg Williams, offering a prophetic call to action. Friends were encouraged to watch the full video on the New England Yearly Meeting YouTube channel. Greg said that he has been nurtured by the Society of Friends, but that we have failed as a community to reach into life and take on the power of building a community that is inclusive.

Anita Mendes (Monadnock) read from Alexa Sykes about her exhaustion living in a structurally racist community and the daily experiences of racism.

Carole Rein (North Shore) read from Julie de Sherbinin about what is required for racial healing.

Xinef Afriam read from Vanessa Julye and Donna McDaniel's book *Fit for Freedom, Not for Friendship*: "Racial awareness is not static. It is a process. ... I hope you will join me in co-creating that blessed community now."

Will Taber asked Friends to take a moment and answer three queries with their neighbor: “What did you hear? What are you feeling? What will you do?”

### **2018-16 Closing Worship**

The evening closed with a period of silent reflection and worship.

### **Monday Morning**

### **2018-17 Epistle from Sierra-Cascades**

Out of worship, we heard the epistle from the inaugural annual sessions of Sierra-Cascades Yearly Meeting. They acknowledged mixed feelings at the beginning of their journey, starting as it did with a forced separation from Northwest Yearly Meeting, as well as their feeling of being held in grace in seeking new way forward. They prayed to “be good soil even as we are good gardeners, trusting God to give the increase.”

Two New England Friends, Kristina Keefe-Perry (Fresh Pond) and Rosemary Zimmermann (Bennington), traveled in the ministry to Sierra-Cascades. They carried a letter of introduction from the presiding clerk and the clear intention to join these Friends in prayer, worship, and fellowship.

### **2018-18 Greetings from Cuba**

We received video greetings from Cuban Friends who were appointed to visit our Yearly Meeting in recent years but were denied visas.

“The bridge of love is not broken; everything is possible with God.”

Alisa Pavón, Pueblo Nuevo

Yerandis Ricardo Reyes, Pastor, Puerto Padre

Julio Rubio Sales, Gibara

Enelda Saldivas Medina, Banos

Elsa de los Reyes, Vista Alegre

Alexis Gonzalez, Pastor, Banos

We learned that Alexis died two months after the messages were recorded.

### **2018-19 Initial Nominating Report**

Penny Wright (Hanover), interim clerk of Nominating Committee, thanked the many Friends who are completing terms of service and Friends who have agreed to serve a second term. Nominating Committee slates are posted on campus for Friends to review before new appointments are brought for approval later in these Sessions.

There is still a plethora of opportunities for Friends to discern whether they are led to serve. Suggestions to the committee are welcome, and appointments can also be approved at Permanent Board in September if the discernment is not finished at Sessions.

### **2018-20 Treasurer’s Report**

Shearman Taber (Beacon Hill) presented the Treasurer’s Report. The Treasurer’s written report is available on page 11 of the Advance Documents, and outlines in detail the state of our reserves. This

includes the impact of the transfer of the funds from the sale of *The Bloody Tenent of Persecution* to the general fund.

### **2018-21 Introduction of the Budget**

Bob Murray (Beacon Hill), Finance Committee Clerk, introduced the budget. He noted that the Friends Camp budget will be approved in the fall by Permanent Board. The Finance Committee welcomes input from Friends before the budget is presented for final approval, including at a scheduled listening sessions.

### **2018-22 Report from the ad hoc Long-Term Financial Planning Committee (LTFPC)**

Ben Guaraldi (Beacon Hill) gave the report from the Long-Term Financial Planning Committee (LTFPC). See their written report, page 39.

In Sessions 2014, the Permanent Board was directed as follows (NEYM Minute 2014-47):

“Yearly Meeting Sessions asks Permanent Board, in consultation with Finance, Personnel, Development, and Coordinating and Advisory Committees, to prepare and maintain a five-year financial plan for the Yearly Meeting that will bring our income and expenditures into balance. We also ask Finance Committee to prepare our annual budgets in the context of this five-year plan.”

See also minutes NEYM 2014-25 and NEYM 2014-30.

Permanent Board created the LTFPC and charged it with carrying out this directive.

In recognition that long-term financial planning could not be done without a clear sense of the purpose and priorities of the Yearly Meeting, in 2015 the LTFPC brought a statement of the Yearly Meeting purposes and priorities which was approved (minute NEYM 2015-64). The committee has worked since then to establish the necessary elements of continuing long-term financial planning and have helped standing committees of the Yearly Meeting to take up this work.

The committee is now clear that the work is now complete, except for ongoing work delegated to Finance Committee, Development Committee, and Permanent Board: Finance Committee has brought a balanced budget and is using multi-year budget projections, there is a robust development program underway, and Permanent Board has accepted responsibility for an annual funding priorities process to guide the budget planning.

Friends were briefly introduced to the new funding priorities process under the care of Permanent Board. Flow diagrams representing the old process and new process are included below.

Figure 1 Old Process

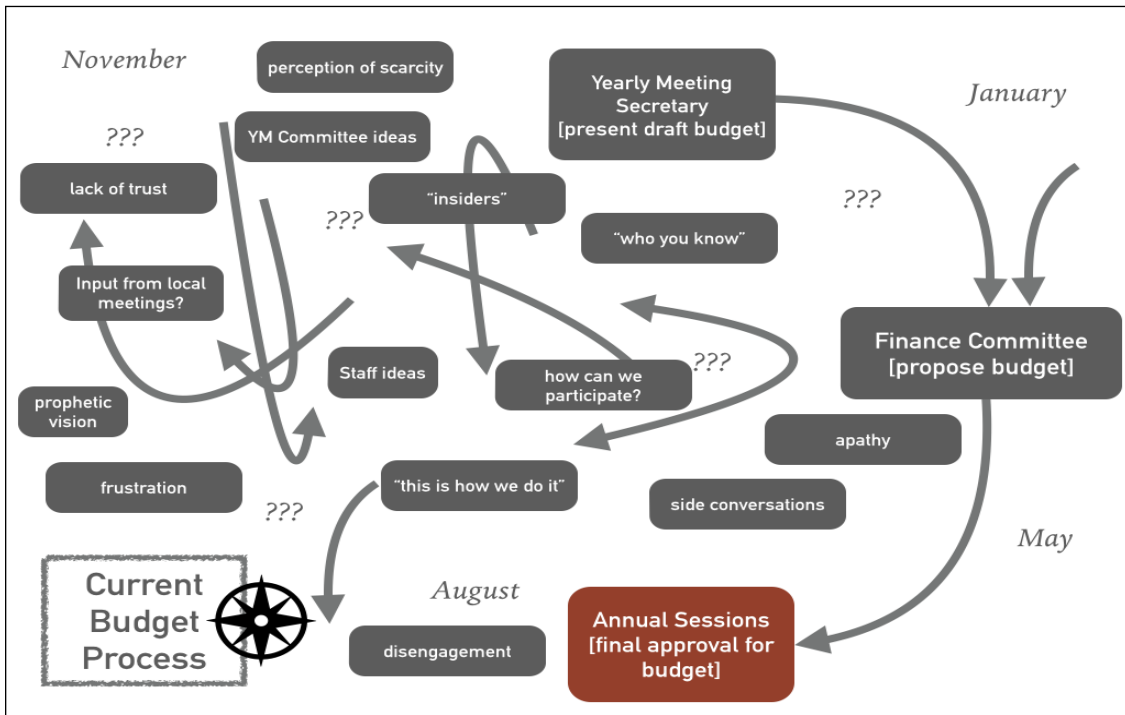
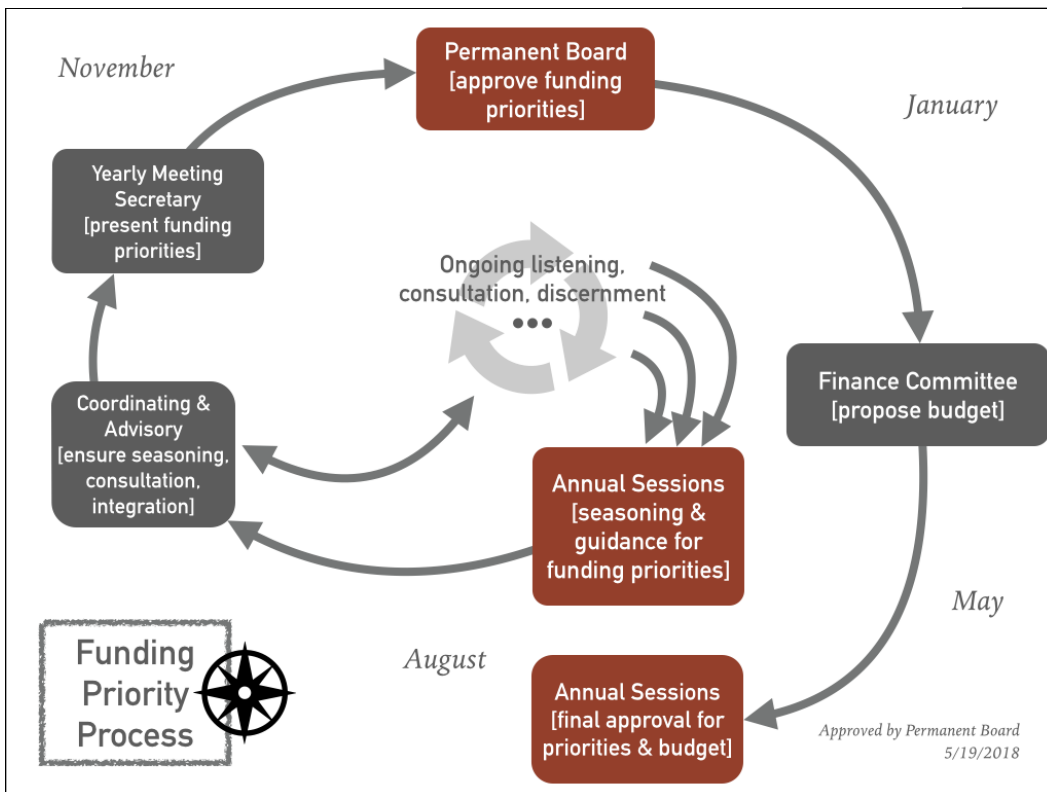


Figure 2 New Process



**2018-23 Closing Prayer**

Noting that it is Hiroshima Day, the meeting closed with a prayer for peace and an extended period of open worship.

**Monday Evening****2018-24 Worship**

Eden Grace (Beacon Hill) prayed us into worship.

**2018-25 Epistle from Cuba Yearly Meeting**

We heard the epistle from Cuba Yearly Meeting, gathered this year around the theme “A church that grows in love and seeks the Truth.”

Cuban Friends felt great joy in renewal, in recognizing new ministers, and in receiving visitors to the annual sessions from New England Yearly Meeting: Cynthia Ganung and Roland Stern (Wellesley), Fritz Weiss and Len Cadwallader (Hanover), and Diego Low (Framingham).

A minute challenging the policies of the U.S. government that limit the interchange between our faith communities was simultaneously approved by Cuba Yearly Meeting in their annual sessions and by the Permanent Board of NEYM.

**2018-26 Ministry**

Out of worship, we heard that we have failed, repeatedly, to hear the pain of those among us who live in fear under white supremacy. When we did hear the pain, we continued with our agenda.

How can we continue on in the midst of suffering?

How can we tear down the vessel of domination we have become and rebuild it, plank by plank, at sea?

Where do we begin? We begin where we are, in all our brokenness. When do we start? We start now.

We must scrutinize both our beliefs and also the structures of NEYM. By these structures we are complicit in the white supremacy that adds to the danger of many of our members. We have responsibility for this pain.

**2018-27 Secretary's Report**

Noah Merrill (Putney), Yearly Meeting secretary, reported that he had felt exhausted, angry, and heartbroken, that the world was falling apart, and that he had lost the ability to connect with the Spirit. He has found that many other Friends have felt the same. When we give our focus to the evils of the world, we lose the ability to be an instrument of love. The invitation to transformational love is greater than any of the powers and principalities of evil. We are bound by love and not by hatred. We need to find the way to be beacons of light, outposts in enemy territory.

Some are led to build up our meetings and some are led to action in the world. It is only by holding together the dynamic tensions that we can open ourselves to fall into the hands of the living God. Each individual is given a place, not where they can most successfully assert themselves, but where they can best perform their service. We need to seek not ego, but community.

We do not have a community that listens to the yearning of all hearts. We have a community that struggles, and fails, and falls. But we have the hope, and in that hope we live.

**2018-28 Friends Peace Teams**

Nancy Shippen (Fresh Pond) testified to the faithful ministries of the Friends Peace Teams (see their written report, page 60). She also introduced us to Salomon Medina, Friends Peace Teams Peacebuilding Coordinator for El Salvador.

FPT seeks to work in solidarity with the communities they serve, grassroots to grassroots, not coming in with a fixed agenda. By seeking, testing, and supporting leadings from local individuals and from local partner organizations, they hope to facilitate healing from trauma, and to deconstruct historical legacies of exploitation, racism, and oppression.

FPT would love to see more engagement from within our Yearly Meeting, and offered us many opportunities to serve. Both Salomon and Nancy are eager to share their work with Friends in ongoing conversation. Nancy welcomes invitations from local meetings.

**2018-29 Minute on Nuclear Weapons**

Susan Vargo (Northampton), clerk of Connecticut Valley Quarter, came before us with a minute of concern from her Quarter.

“In light of Friends long-standing opposition to weapons of war, and in light of the horrific nature of nuclear weapons, and in light of the unique opportunity presented by the 2017 United Nations Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, we encourage Friends in New England to seek ways to support this treaty and to inform people about it.”

Connecticut Valley Quarter asks the Yearly Meeting to receive this minute, endorse it as seasoned, and send it to the other quarterly meetings. Quarters are invited to engage with this concern and to welcome Tim Wallis (Northampton) and Vicki Elson (Northampton) as they travel under concern to promote a ban on nuclear weapons.

We ask that the clerk distribute this minute to other meetings in the Yearly Meeting and to encourage meetings to invite Tim and Vicki to visit.

Friends approved.

**2018-30 Minute on Criminal Justice Reform**

Kristina Keefe-Perry (Fresh Pond), clerk of Salem Quarterly Meeting, introduced the Quarter’s minute on Criminal Justice Reform. As she did so, she acknowledged the prophetic ministry that the body has heard on the urgency of addressing white privilege and supremacy. She presented the minute, but not without struggling to understand how she should respond to this ministry.

It is time to take a hard look at our systems of criminal justice, in Massachusetts and our nation. Misguided policies and practices of incarceration and isolation bury people alive, rather than creating the way for a new chance at life. The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) have long worked for a more humane system of corrections, and in so doing have introduced both problems and solutions. We are writing this document to resolve for ourselves our own actions. We also see this as a statement of our intent to the wider (Friends’) community along with an invitation to join us and hold us accountable.

Quakers introduced reforms and innovations, from their involvement in the beginnings of the penitentiary system in the 18th century to the present day. The Walnut Street Jail, built in Philadelphia in 1790, is considered the birthplace of the modern prison system. At Walnut Street,

each cell block had 16 one-man cells. In the wing known as the “Penitentiary House,” inmates spent all day, every day, in their cells.

Felons would serve their entire sentences in isolation, not strictly as punishment, but as an opportunity for spiritual reformation and seeking forgiveness from God. With good intention, Friends unknowingly invented solitary confinement. Auburn Prison (another Quaker innovation) gave birth to the first maximum security prison—Sing Sing, in the Hudson Valley.

William Penn and John Bellers were active in prison reform in England and the Pennsylvania colony. In the 1800s Elizabeth Fry started the Association for the Reformation of the Female Prisoners in Newgate (London) to promote rehabilitation, education, and job training. In 1975 Friends worked with men incarcerated at Green Haven Prison and with Dr. Bernard Lafayette, an associate of Martin Luther King, in developing the Alternatives to Violence Project, which provided over 1,000 workshops in 103 prisons during 2016 alone.

As contemporary Quakers, it is important to us that we acknowledge our contribution to the penal culture in our nation and that we name the injustices in the current prison system. Friends believe that each person is divinely endowed with individual and social worth and should be treated humanely, with dignity and respect, regardless of their circumstances in life, or their behavior towards others.

Recent innovations in restorative justice have shown that alternatives to punitive justice are possible. Alternatives to incarceration, treatment for addiction and mental health, educational opportunities, and social-emotional learning have all been found effective in turning lives around. Building a culture of positive growth instead of a culture of command and control is an essential step.

Every year, in Massachusetts and federally, progressive legislation is introduced that begins to improve our broken penal system. We intend to become aware of that pending legislation and become involved as citizen activists and voters. We support comprehensive criminal justice reform in Massachusetts that will promote restorative justice, support alternatives to incarceration, reform the pretrial process, and reduce the criminalization of poverty and race.

As a community of faith we have discerned a call from God to the work of peace, justice, and reconciliation. We recall the words in Hebrew Scripture: “Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to live in.” (Isaiah 58:12) Some among us are called to work with people in prison. Some are called to work with our legislators to introduce criminal justice reform. Some are called to help reintegrate former prisoners into society. Others are called to offer education about our broken system. And always we strive to live in the Life and Power that takes away the occasion of violence and war. We invite you to join us in the work of repairing and restoring our communities by reforming our criminal justice system.

We ask that the clerk distribute this minute to other meetings in the Yearly Meeting as received and well-seasoned. Friends approved.

A Friend asked that we also recognize how the criminal justice system and policing falls disproportionately on people of color and the poor. This is part of systemic racism.

### **2018-31 Minute on the Poor People's Campaign**

Susan Davies (Vassalboro), co-clerk of Vassalboro Quarter, presented the Quarterly Meeting's minute on the Poor People's Campaign (page 25). As she did so, she acknowledged and grieved for the unhealed trauma caused by systemic racism that has been expressed in these Sessions.

The 2018 Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival is actively engaged in confronting systemic racism, systemic poverty, the war economy, and ecological devastation, as it works to shift the distorted moral narrative of our country.

The minute from Vassalboro Quarter includes the request that NEYM become an endorsing partner of the national Poor People's Campaign. Discernment on this was stopped when parents needed to leave to pick up children. The clerk asked Friends to be ready at a later business session to consider whether NEYM is ready to do so.

## Tuesday Morning

### **2018-32 Epistle from Great Plains Yearly Meeting**

We heard the epistle from Great Plains Yearly Meeting. They are programmed and unprogrammed, pastoral and non-pastoral, and they encompass the spectrum of Friends in the United States—Evangelical, Friends United Meeting (FUM), Conservative, and Friends General Conference (FGC). They know they are different and they choose to be in fellowship, seeking in intervisitation to support each other through ministry “from a place of love and with a commitment to deep listening. God is not done with Friends on the Great Plains.”

### **2018-33 Permanent Board Report**

Ben Guaraldi, member of Permanent Board, gave the report from Permanent Board on behalf of Sarah Gant, the clerk of Permanent Board. Sarah's mother has been taken severely ill, and Sarah has left Sessions to be with her. We hold both Sarah and her mother in our continual prayers.

Ben then offered a responsive prayer from the Episcopal Book of Common Prayer.

*For the aged and infirm, for the widowed and orphans, and for the sick and the suffering, let us pray to the Lord.*

**Lord, have mercy.**

*That we may end our lives in faith and hope, without suffering and without reproach, let us pray to the Lord.*

**Lord, have mercy.**

Ben Guaraldi shared that Permanent Board had made the decision to release the funds received from the sale of *The Bloody Tenent of Persecution* to the general fund. These funds had been restricted by Permanent Board “until the future of our archives and future expenses related to our archives are clear.” (Permanent Board minute 2015-53). Permanent Board released these funds without consulting with the Archives and Historical Records Committee (A&HRC). Permanent Board and the A&HRC will meet jointly this fall to review this decision. Ben reported that Permanent Board had a full and productive year and referred Friends to the Permanent Board report in the Advance Documents for more information.



Permanent Board brings forward several items for approval.

The following items are on the Unity Agenda and will come forward for approval later in the week: the purposes, procedures, and composition of Friends Camp Committee, Archives and Historical Records Committee, and Faith in Action Committee.

### **2018-34 Publications and Communications Committee**

Permanent Board recommends laying down the Publications and Communications Committee, while directing Coordinating & Advisory and Permanent Board to consider how to better support publications in New England.

Publications & Communications had dwindled to one member—the clerk, Mark Barker (Concord). No other members were forthcoming. Currently the Mosher Book and Tract fund is being managed by the Permanent Board until a new structure for supporting publications is approved.

Sessions is not in unity with laying down Publications & Communications. We ask Coordinating & Advisory and Permanent Board to discern how publication and the ministry of the written word could be more fully supported and to bring a proposal next year.

### **2018-35 Rising Clerk**

Permanent Board brought forward a name for Rising Clerk.

We experienced a painful dissonance between our repeatedly stated desire to reject white supremacy and, simultaneously, the appointment of a white man as Rising Clerk.

The Clerks' Nominating Committee has asked a variety of people to consider serving. The role of clerk demands time and resources which have proven to be an obstacle to most Friends of color, most Friends with financial constraints, and most LGBTQ+ Friends.

We labored, at some length, about why this is.

The Presiding Clerk carries an absurdly heavy workload for an unpaid volunteer, a workload that can seem daunting to anyone with a full-time job, anyone who does not have a fully supportive partner, anyone with small children, or anyone who is not financially secure.

We place impossible social demands on the clerk. We seem to expect the presiding clerk to please all constituencies simultaneously, never to say an unguarded or intemperate word, to absorb the anger and pain of the body.

We assume that the presiding clerk can easily summon all of the resources needed to perform these tasks. And then we wonder why our clerks, repeatedly, are people of privilege.

We need to stop.

In order to make room for marginalized voices in Yearly Meeting leadership, the answer is multifaceted.

We must keep asking those who have been marginalized to serve. We must hold people of privilege accountable when they inevitably fail to be perfect, as we all fail. We must support our clerks more fully. We do not yet know what this might look like, but we do know we are always called into fuller support and love. And we must examine how our practices and structures work to exclude the marginalized from positions of leadership.

To begin this examination, the body asked for a time of discernment to discuss how we might implement accountability and confront systemic white supremacy and privilege in Yearly Meeting leadership. How do we name gifts and consider resources of those we ask to serve? What can be done better to reflect our intentions to be a fully inclusive community? This meeting was then scheduled for the next day of Sessions, and the report from this discernment was received on Thursday, August 9, 2018 (see minute 2018-54).

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**2018-36 Earthcare Ministry Report**

Mary Bennett (Worcester) and Rebecca MacKenzie (Quaker City Unity) gave the report for the Earthcare Ministry Committee (EMC). See their written report on page 46.

At Sessions last year, we approved the following minute (2017-67):

“Earthcare Ministry clerk Ruah Swennerfelt offered the following statement as a follow-up from earlier in the Sessions:

The Earthcare Ministry Committee is not bringing back a request for NEYM to sign or endorse the Paris climate accord. It’s become clear we’re not ready at this time to consider that request. Instead we’re offering the following, which requires no action today.

At Sessions this year we reaffirmed the 2016 Climate Minute, indicating that we will, “pray, wait, and act with a focus and fearlessness appropriate to the urgency of the times.” The Earthcare Ministry Committee believes that setting concrete goals to reduce our emissions in line with a maximum 1.5°C global temperature rise (the aspirational goal of the Paris climate accord) would be helpful for our next steps. The committee will coordinate collecting carbon emission data as a basis for proposing a percentage emissions reduction goal for the Yearly Meeting. That proposal will come back to Sessions in 2018 for consideration.”

EMC has faithfully carried out this charge and now brings us the following proposal:

New England Yearly Meeting gathered in Annual Sessions at Castleton University, August 2018, approved the following.

We have minuted that “we will ... act with a focus and fearless appropriate to the urgency of the time.” We must do more than symbolic actions. As a blessed community we will act to reduce our contribution to climate dysregulation. To do this, we must be assessing our current impact and taking concrete steps to reduce this.

All NEYM members and constituent meetings are encouraged to assess their carbon emissions using the Cape Cod Climate Change Collaborative’s carbon calculator. This will create a baseline assessment of NEYM’s carbon footprint.

Multiple tablets are available as a resource to help individuals and meetings perform this assessment. These baseline assessments should be completed by December 20, 2018.

After performing this baseline assessment, individuals and meetings are asked to commit to a 10% carbon emissions reduction over a one-year period ending on December 20, 2019. The recommended carbon calculator also contains a long list of possible actions to reduce a carbon footprint. Of paramount importance, Friends are asked to prayerfully engage in these suggested carbon-reducing actions as led to either begin or continue the journey toward creating ecological and social justice for all of God’s creation, living into the Beloved Community.

Marginalized communities are often disproportionately impacted by global climate change. Meetings are further encouraged to seek ways of helping our neighbors who may not have the resources we do to also act to reduce their carbon footprint.

EMC is prepared to serve as a resource for meetings to complete the baseline assessment and to offer information about how to perform an energy audit. Please contact Stephen Gates at [scgates1@sbcglobal.net](mailto:scgates1@sbcglobal.net), or visit [climatecalculator.org/ClimateCalculator.html](http://climatecalculator.org/ClimateCalculator.html).

## Tuesday Evening

### **2018-37 Epistle from Western Yearly Meeting**

We heard the epistle of Western Yearly Meeting. With the theme of “joined by every supporting ligament,” they looked to strengthen their local meetings, knowing that “strengthening requires action,” and remembering “that love and the Spirit of God sustains us.”

### **2018-38 Prayer**

Greg Williams (Beacon Hill) prayed us into worship.

### **2018-39 Immigrant and Refugee Rights**

Minute 2017-42 of NEYM Sessions was read.

“As members of the Religious Society of Friends (Quaker), we believe that the human family is one family; that there is that of God in every member of this family; and that generosity of spirit toward all the members of the human family is of overriding importance.

“As Quakers, we reaffirm our unconditional support for the wellbeing and protections of all threatened individuals in our community, including, especially at this troubled time, Muslims and undocumented immigrants.

“We urge our government to reaffirm our country’s founding values, especially freedom of religion; to affirm our welcome to peaceful refugees and immigrants; to reject bigotry and xenophobia; and to adopt laws and policies that respect the humanity and dignity of all people.

“We call on our fellow community members to join us in defending human rights for all, working toward nonviolent religious and civic sanctuary that protects all who are vulnerable, and striving together for compassion, dignity and safety for everyone.”

Judy Goldberger (Beacon Hill) and Mary Hopkins (Fresh Pond) are engaged with this work in the Yearly Meeting, and reported back to us on how well we, as a Yearly Meeting, have been living into this charge.

The presenters asked Friends to stand if they have engaged in a variety of ministries and actions, both of monthly meetings and of individuals. Many who were present stood. Immigrant justice is an enormous and multifaceted body of work that calls on a diversity of gifts. It is a witness very much alive in New England.

The presenters asked the Yearly Meeting to formally endorse and support the formation of a working group to gather those engaged in the ministry of ongoing justice work with immigrants and refugees—however openings occur. The body approved this request.

We are reminded that we are not listing a catalogue of concerns—we are stating and restating one concern: how we live with faithfulness into the kingdom of God.

**2018-40 Legacy Gift Committee**

Suzanna Schell (Beacon Hill), co-clerk with Jean McCandless (Burlington) of the Legacy Gift Committee, acknowledged the many Friends present who have received grants or been in groups that have received grants. Many projects have been funded in areas including climate change and sustainability; meetinghouse projects; challenging racism and supporting indigenous people; and ministry, education and outreach. We watched a slideshow of pictures from these projects, accompanied by live music from Peter Blood-Patterson.

Friends responded with a deep sense of gratitude for the work of the committee and for the leadership of Suzanna Schell. Friends celebrated the creative and spirit-led work that the Legacy Gift Committee has helped to lift up.

**2018-41 State of Society**

Honor Woodrow, clerk of M&C, read the State of Society report.

“We have been led as a people to walk further and further out on the limb of faith, taking risks in our commitment to address the seeds and practices of white supremacy within us, and to respond prophetically and actively to the climate crisis. We see that taking a risk, even a small one, encourages more risk-taking, and as we have read all the news of the Yearly Meeting, a risky question arises: *What is the foundation of our hope? How can we speak with confidence about the springs from which our witness, our endurance, our experiments and our joy take their strength?* We see that where we are alive to the springs of life, are willing to be foolish in the eyes of the world, to be children in the Spirit, our faith takes us into hard places. In these hard places we see our true condition more clearly. This demands of us both deep inner work and deep outer work. *Where will we find courage and capacity to tell that story, and to share what wonders we have found?*”

(See full report on page 92.)

The body accepted this report with gratitude. We then settled into a period of worshipful reflection.

**Wednesday Morning****2018-42 Epistle from Piedmont Friends**

We heard the epistle of Piedmont Friends Yearly Meeting. Feeling their gathering was both deeper and larger, they were grateful that their new yearly meeting had grown in size and in spirit. The strength of their witness and the power of the Light evident in their Young Friends led them to optimism about the future of Friends.

**2018-43 Unity Agenda**

Friends gave approval to the Unity Agenda, which includes accepting reports from staff, boards, committees, and representatives; purposes of quarterly meetings—in the past and today; memorial minutes; and time-sensitive statements.

The clerk noted that the report from Coordinating and Advisory Committee failed to specifically state that the remaining committee purposes will be brought to Annual Sessions after being approved by Permanent Board. The clerk also clarified the source of the document “Purposes of Quarterly

Meetings—in the past and today” which represents the work of a two-year consultation with the leadership of quarterly meetings by the presiding clerk.

The unity agenda also includes approving Yearly Meeting committee purposes, procedures and composition (see page 44); approving clerks nominations; approving authorization to make edits and corrections; and approving the bank resolutions.

### **Bank Resolutions Minute**

The following resolutions are brought by the Finance Committee:

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 Kathryn Olsen be appointed New England Yearly Meeting assistant treasurer for the ensuing year or until a successor is appointed and qualified.
3. That Robert M. Spivey be appointed Friends Camp treasurer for the ensuing year or until a successor is appointed and qualified. The Friends Camp treasurer will work under the oversight of the NEYM treasurer and the Friends Camp director.
4. That Shearman Taber, Yearly Meeting treasurer, be authorized to open and close bank accounts in the name of New England Yearly Meeting as needed.
5. That Robert M. Spivey, Friends Camp treasurer, be authorized to open and close bank accounts in the name of Friends Camp as needed.
6. That Shearman Taber, NEYM treasurer; Kathryn Olsen, NEYM assistant treasurer; Sarah Gant, Permanent Board clerk; and Noah 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.
7. That Anna Hopkins, Friends Camp director; Robert M. Spivey, Friends Camp treasurer; and John Reuthe be authorized, individually, as signers of the Friends Camp bank accounts, except those checks for greater than \$10,000, which shall require the signatures of two signers from the list above.

### **Presiding Clerk and Clerk’s Table Nominations**

The Permanent Board presents the following slate to begin service at the close of sessions 2018:

Presiding Clerk: Fritz Weiss (Hanover)  
Recording Clerk: Rosemary Zimmerman  
Reading Clerk: Gina Nortonsmith  
Reading Clerk: John Humphries

### **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 2018.

### **Time-Sensitive Statements**

Listed below are the public statements issued by the presiding clerk and Yearly Meeting secretary since 2017 Sessions, in keeping with Minute 2015-57.

These were sent via e-mail to local meetings and shared on social media. They are also posted on our website.

### For Such a Time as This

White supremacy, white nationalism, anti-Semitism and Islamophobia are contrary to God's vision for our world. White supremacy is a form of idolatry, and a sin against the God of Love and Justice. In this moment—as in every moment—the Spirit calls us to another way.

We are four white Quakers serving in positions of leadership in our faith community. Our spiritual communities across the six New England states include people of many races, ethnicities, sexual and gender identities, national origins and backgrounds. We who write to you are called to speak to those in our faith community and beyond who share with us the privilege that being perceived as “white” in this society affords. This is a message from us as white Quakers to white Quakers, white people of faith, and white people who live in the United States of America in 2017.

In this historical moment, as in so many before, the voices, bodies and spirits of people of color are rising in witness, struggle and liberation whether we as white people join them or not. The essential question is whether—at such a time as this—we who benefit because of our “whiteness” will accept in a new way the Spirit's call to act for justice and wholeness, asking for God's guidance with every step.

Our Quaker spiritual ancestors testify to the experience of how we can be painfully “convicted” when we see the true nature of our lives illuminated in the Light of God. This is one such moment of conviction for us, and we are compelled to share it.

At such a time as this, alongside many throughout our world, we condemn the acts of hateful, racist, anti-Semitic violence and terrorism in Charlottesville and elsewhere in recent days as contrary to the will of God, the witness of Jesus, and all that is holy. God is Love, and we witness that this Love is stronger than hate, fear and death. We speak this truth to that of God in each one of the white nationalists and pray that their hearts will be changed, trusting that even now there can be transformation.

Yet even as we are appalled by the horrific events in Charlottesville, we must not allow ourselves to forget the centuries-old foundation and present economic and political reality of white supremacy. Even as the torches tore through the night in Charlottesville, and as our prayers and voices joined the call for healing and justice, we bore the marks of privilege. We bear them today. Each of us who this society sees as white stands on a corrupt foundation. Our worldly power, material wealth and inherited perception of ourselves as being normative and central to history are rooted in this painful truth. This is not just about white supremacists “over there”—it is about the ways in which we too have been formed and benefited from the myriad ways whiteness oppresses whether we like it or not, whether we are aware of it or not.

None of us who benefit from a “white” identity have clean hands or pure hearts. The recent events in Charlottesville and elsewhere offer a monstrous mirror for us. May we find the courage not to turn our eyes away from this mirror, comforted that we aren't like “those” white people. There are no easy answers or quick fixes, but we are promised that by allowing our lives to be illuminated, convicted, and held up by Truth, a way can be made where it seems there is no way. In this searching and struggle, the souls we save may well be our own.

This is indeed a time for grieving, a time for prayer, and a time for turning again toward Love. This is a time for showing up with humility, courage and steadfastness—seeking relationship with those engaged in this work for the long haul. This is a time for being willing to make use of the privilege we have inherited in small and large ways, to risk some greater pain, discomfort and loss with an eye toward transforming the systems of domination that cause the ongoing suffering of so

many. This is a time to affirm and live the Truth that God's Love is stronger and more powerful than all the forces of hatred, division, isolation, numbness and fear that hold this country hostage. This is a time to act precisely because we don't have to—because comfort is the payment we receive in exchange for our spiritual lives in the devil's bargain that is white supremacy.

Tearing down these structures and systems of domination—the spiritual powers of white supremacy in our hearts, in our faith communities and in our society—is not something white people must do out of a sense of altruism, for those who suffer most. In this historical moment, once again God offers us the possibility that even in the face of centuries of injustice, there could yet be redemption for white people. Casting out the seeds of white supremacy so deeply rooted in our society and in our hearts is work we must take up each day.

The in-breaking of the reign of God reveals a vision of equity, justice, and joy: white supremacy has no place in God's plans.

The work of dismantling white supremacy is our responsibility. It's time to live as if the Truth is true.

Frederick Weiss, presiding clerk; Noah Merrill, Yearly Meeting secretary; Sarah Gant, clerk of the Permanent Board; Honor Woodrow, clerk of Ministry and Counsel

### Statement Responding to Shootings in Florida

March 1, 2018

Dear Friends,

Again, our hearts are broken by news of a school shooting.

Galen Hamann of Providence (RI) Meeting, Director of Friends Education at Moses Brown School, writes to us asking: "What do we say to our children who ask why schools aren't safe places?"

She shares the first query raised by the students in the school's Letting Our Lives Speak group: "How many kids have to die before we take action?"

Each tragic episode challenges our faith and calls us to live it ever more deeply. We mourn with communities who have recently lost children to gun violence. We mourn with communities—especially communities of color—who have been losing children to gun violence for many years and whose work to end it has gone unrecognized by those in power.

New England Friend Diane Randall, Executive Secretary of Friends Committee on National Legislation, calls us to move beyond "thoughts and prayers" to bold action.

Participants in our Young Friends program—teenagers from across New England who had planned to be on retreat in March in Hartford—have chosen to join the nationwide, youth-led "March for Our Lives."

This is not a time to restate facts or to make new arguments about the need to prevent gun violence. We are called to testify to Truth, even when it may seem impractical or unpopular. William Penn reminds us, "Truth will not lose ground by being tried."

As Quaker faith communities across New England, can we still proclaim as Friends did in 1660, "We utterly deny all outward wars and strife and fightings with outward weapons, for any end, or under any pretence whatsoever; and this is our testimony to the whole world...?"

New England Friends are deeply engaged in the education and nurture of youth. In our youth ministries retreats, at Friends Camp in Maine, Moses Brown School and Lincoln School in Providence, Friends School of Portland, Cambridge Friends School, Friends Center for Children in New Haven, and at Quaker gatherings large and small, children and youth are cherished. In our local meetings and in our families we strive to create communities where all are safe, where all are loved and where all belong.

But our testimony as Friends is not that we can create safe harbors in an otherwise dangerous world. Our testimony is that, wherever we are, we can hear and heed the promise of the voice that speaks in Isaiah 11:9, “They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain... .”

We affirm that the whole world is the Holy Mountain. As a people called to faithfulness, we strive for a prophetic life that lives as if the Truth is true, that God’s Reign is here, now. Children and youth deserve to be safe in every part of their lives.

Friends, let those of us who are adults tell the children and youth in our lives what we will do to witness to this today— and let our words become actions.

Let us keep writing letters, making calls, joining demonstrations, and standing up. Let us counter the lie that violence is best met with more violence. Let us risk for love what some so readily risk for hate. Let us advocate for effective laws and regulations to prevent gun violence. Let us join our neighbors and rise with the fierce faith that inspires bold action.

In a blog post, Doreen Dodgen-Magee, a Friend from the Pacific Northwest who has lost family to gun violence, writes:

We can ... take small but powerful steps to usher in ripples of justice, love, and action. While they may seem small, such actions carried out boldly, consistently, and over time can disrupt a system that has become overly passive about violence and ... overly permissive about guns. I must believe that each of us, small and insignificant as we may seem or feel, have a part to play in creating a country and a world where the love of self and other reigns. Where we are willing to stand up for the rights of our neighbors and children to feel and be safe. Where we are willing to have difficult discussions and to listen and to be open to being moved. Where we can communicate effectively about our values, thoughts, and feelings and have the skills to handle the strong emotions of anger and rage. Where we feel capable of handling conflicts within us or between us with our words rather than with weapons.

The foundation of our witness is knowing where to stand— in the Life and Power of God’s Love—and to stand there together; with strength and courage, not giving up.

Fritz Weiss, presiding clerk

Noah Merrill, secretary

## **2018-44 Friends Camp Report**

Friends Camp Director Anna Hopkins gave the Friends Camp report.

The Camp has had its largest summer ever. Interest in camping is high nationwide, and this is reflected in Friends Camp enrollment and, therefore, finances.

In recent years Friends Camp has centered on issues of inclusivity, particularly inclusivity of race, gender identity, and class. The names of camp sessions now reflect the names of Friends of color. A new gender-expansive bathroom and cabin have been successfully completed.

Friends Camp is a haven, a place to play, a place to be a child in a safe and inclusive environment—and a haven where youth can develop the spiritual identity and the interpersonal skills needed to navigate an often frightening world.

Friends Camp is financially healthy. The camp’s budget is prepared in the fall after the summer season and approved by Permanent Board in the fall.

Anna shared a montage of photos of Friends Camp in sessions to share the joy words could not convey.

We celebrate the gifts that Friends Camp brings to the life of Friends.



**2018-45 Faith & Practice**

Phebe McCosker (Hanover) reported for the Faith and Practice Revision Committee that based on Friends' comments, there were some changes to the draft membership paper; these changes are available in print.

There was wide and deep affirmation for the amazing work done by the committee.

There was a concern about the section on dual membership, since Friends have a distinctive understanding of the nature of divine/human interaction. Other faith bodies may understand this interaction differently, resulting in a firm and different understanding of such things as original sin, the sacraments, and the atonement. If members of the Religious Society of Friends can belong to another religious body as well, are we declaring that Quakerism has no theological claim on the nature of divine/human interaction, that we accept the beliefs of any or all other bodies in such matters?

It was also noted that we tend to talk about membership as an event, but we do not talk as much about what happens before and after. It might be helpful to widen the scope of the chapter in this way.

The body as a whole was not in unity with this concern, but Friends were not ready to approve the chapter.

**2018-46 Final Budget Approval**

Bob Murray (Beacon Hill) brought back the budget for final approval.

The Yearly Meeting has intentionally approved deficit budgets for the past few years while the ad hoc LTFPC had done the work of building the structures for financial stability. In 2017 the Finance Committee committed to bring a balanced budget to Sessions this year. This year, Finance Committee did indeed bring a budget that was balanced: in part because of the development work which has resulted in an increase in donations by individuals and monthly meetings, in part because we did not choose to immediately re-hire for the Religious Education and Outreach Coordinator position; and in part because we reduced contributions to FGC, FUM, and FWCC. Finance Committee is clear that they recommend a balanced budget this year, and recommend against drawing down our reserves.

The body discerned that, despite our desire for a balanced budget, cutting contributions was not the right way to achieve this. We are willing, if necessary, to draw down our reserves in order to maintain our contributions at current levels. Our contributions to FGC, FUM, and FWCC demonstrate our priorities and our fellowship with these organizations. This will not result in a deficit budget if Friends increase their contributions to the Yearly Meeting sufficiently to meet this obligation. Some Friends were not in unity with this decision, especially citing a concern for future generations. However, the sense of the meeting was clear.

Sessions therefore directed the Finance Committee to restore the contributions to FGC, FUM, and FWCC to their FY18 levels, recognizing that this may well result in a deficit budget if we do not receive a corresponding increase in donations.

With that understanding, Friends approved the budget.

**2018-47 Directive to Permanent Board re: Priorities Funding Process**

Pursuant to our new priorities funding process, Sessions directs Permanent Board to consider budget priorities and planning in light of our concerns around white supremacy and colonialism.

**2018-48 Laying Down the ad hoc Long Term Financial Planning Committee**

Friends approved laying down the ad hoc Long Term Financial Planning Committee with gratitude and celebration.

**2018-49 First Reading of the Epistle**

Jay O'Hara (West Falmouth), LVM Shelton (Plainfield), and Sheila Garrett (Putney) introduced and read the first draft of the Epistle.

Friends expressed awe and gratitude for the work of the committee.

**Thursday Morning****2018-50 Epistle from South Central Yearly Meeting**

We heard the epistle of South Central Yearly Meeting. Gathering with the theme, "Lift Hearts and Spirits to the Light," they experienced a lighter tone in business, the light of revelation in expanding what they had believed to be their limits, and a lightening of their burdens. There they have known the inexhaustible Light which will guide and sustain them.

**2018-51 Nominating Committee Report**

We heard an updated report from Nominating Committee (see page 88), and Penny Wright, clerk of Nominating, expressed gratitude for the many Friends responding and presented us with a final slate for approval.

The body approved.

**2018-52 Poor People's Campaign (Vassalboro Quarter)**

We returned to consideration of the following minute proposed by Vassalboro Quarter.

New England Yearly Meeting gathered in annual sessions at Castleton University in Vermont in August 2018 approved the following minute.

Fifty years after Martin Luther King Jr. and others launched the first Poor People's Campaign, the plight of the poor has not improved—but rather, it has declined. The 2018 Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival is actively engaged in confronting systemic racism, systemic poverty, the war economy, and ecological devastation as it works to shift the distorted moral narrative of our country.

The New England Yearly Meeting recognizes the work of the Poor People's Campaign as a Spirit-led public witness. We encourage meetings and individuals to unite with the Poor People's Campaign by working to change the war on the poor to a condemnation and eradication of poverty itself, and to become involved through volunteering, organizing and/or financially supporting the coming together of many people across many different spectrums to further the witness of the Poor People's Campaign. Meetings and quarters are urged to discern whether they are led to make the formal commitment to endorse the 2018 Poor People's Campaign by publicly declaring agreement with the principles, vision, goals, and activities of the Campaign ([poorpeoplescampaign.org/index.php/fundamental-principles/](http://poorpeoplescampaign.org/index.php/fundamental-principles/)) and fulfilling the additional commitments cited by the Campaign. New England Yearly Meeting further re-commits to the

recommendations of minute 1968-53, “Concern for Awareness,” to educate ourselves about the sources and causes of systemic poverty and racism, especially as these malformations reside within ourselves. Through active support, engagement and prayer, we unite with efforts to build a beloved community where all people are loved and cared for.

We further approved signing on as an endorsing partner of the Poor People’s Campaign.

### **2018-53 Recommendation from Clerks’ Nominating**

Fran Brokaw, of the Clerks’ Nominating Committee, brought two suggestions:

First, that the Yearly Meeting examine the roles and job descriptions of the Presiding Clerk, the clerks’ table, and other sizable clerking roles, to consider how a wider range of people might be able to perform these roles in the future. Ways to address this might include redistributing some responsibilities, considering new or different ways of having our body held and our clerking done, new and creative methods of supporting the clerks, providing childcare for a clerk who has young children, providing transportation, providing a stipend for the clerk, having co-clerks, etc. It is suggested that a working group to examine this be established under the care of Permanent Board.

Second, that the Yearly Meeting develop a practice of appointing people who will observe, name and reflect back to us long-standing, unseen patterns and practices that result in our complicity in oppression. Development of this practice should proceed under the care of Ministry and Council. This will be a paradigm shift for our Yearly Meeting. Whatever practice or practices we adopt should start soon, before our next Annual Sessions, and should then be evaluated continuously and improved as we are able. We hope that once observers have been identified and trained, committees could then request such an observer. This might be especially useful for committees like Ministry & Council and Permanent Board.

Friends approved the following:

We instruct Permanent Board to perform a formal re-examination of the structures and practices of clerking in the Yearly Meeting, including the clerks’ table, clerks of major committees, and support structures for clerks.

We instruct Ministry and Council to develop a practice to appoint people who will observe, name and reflect back to us long-standing, unseen patterns and practices that result in our complicity in oppression. This recommendation will then be brought back to Permanent Board.

### **2018-54 Rising Clerk II**

Leslie Manning (Durham), clerk of the Clerks’ Nominating Committee, read from NEYM 1985 *Faith and Practice*:

“Friends believe that true leadership consists first and foremost in being led. This conception involves a curious but profound paradox. True leaders are not in any important sense initiators; rather, they are chiefly responders to the Divine Will. This means that the chief determinant of authentic leadership is not human talent but availability to the Divine. The only authentic leadership is divine followership. The converse of this is that when leadership ceases to be Spirit-led, it ceases to be authentic.”

The Clerks’ Nominating Committee brought the name of Bruce Newman (Fresh Pond) as Rising Clerk. Friends approved.

## 2018-55 Appreciation of Speakers

In turns, we were exhorted, blessed, encouraged, inspired, and challenged by this year's plenary speakers and Bible Half-Hour presenter.

Sarah Walton (Vassalboro, sojourning at Atlanta Friends, Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting and Association), Adria Gulizia (Chatham Summit, New York Yearly Meeting), and Meg Klepack (South Starksboro) gave the plenary address as a panel. They each reflected on the theme of Sessions, "In fear and trembling, be bold in God's service," as well as maxims 540 and 548 from William Penn's *Some Fruits of Solitude*: "It is as great Presumption to send our Passions upon God's Errands, as it is to palliate them with God's Name," and "Love is the hardest Lesson in Christianity, but, for that reason, it should be most our care to learn it. *Difficilia quae pulchra.*"

Their full remarks are recorded and available to the public at [www.youtube.com/channel/UCjh62LXMAAjw5w0FP-uDLAQ/videos](http://www.youtube.com/channel/UCjh62LXMAAjw5w0FP-uDLAQ/videos).

Diane Randall gave the Bible Half-Hours, also on the Sessions theme, and incorporating her experiences at FCNL. The full recorded series of Bible Half-Hours is also available online at the same website.

We give abundant thanks to all of the speakers who have so enriched our time together.

## 2018-56 Report of the Events Coordinator

Elizabeth Hacala, Events Coordinator, reported about Sessions. The weather this week provides an allegory for her experience: "The mist is clearing and the light is shining." We had a robust attendance of over 620 persons this year, slightly above last year. There were 85 first-time attendees, and 109 attendees 0 to 17 years of age.

Noah Merrill updated us on the success of our "pay as led" system. Since we adopted this system, it has worked very well for us. Some yearly meetings, including Intermountain and New York, have now adopted the system, and other yearly meetings and gatherings are in the process of considering it. This year we are running about \$9,000 behind what we had budgeted, and Friends are encouraged to consider additional contributions to help close this gap.

## 2018-57 Approval of the Epistle

LVM Shelton (Plainfield), standing with Sheila Garrett (Putney) and Jay O'Hara (West Falmouth) of the Epistle Committee, read the revised draft of the Epistle.

With deep appreciation for the work of the committee, Friends approved (see page 93).

## 2018-58 Youth Programs Joys

During our business sessions throughout the week, we allocated time to hear joys about our youth programs. They included:

*Childcare has not many words, but a lot of activity, like a sea of insects darting to and fro.*

*Childcare has mostly male caregivers who are willing and able to be very nurturing.*

*Young Friends and Young Adult Friends learned about the radical nature of Jesus.*

*Junior High and Young Friends had a joint program on community. They played games, sang songs, and shared in small groups about community.*

*I sang songs and taught songs with the Kindergarten through Grade 2 group. At supper and breakfast kids ran up to me and asked again for the songs.*

*I accompanied a young child in his nap. You can see in childcare the gifts that are rising in our community: music, leadership, sharing.*

*Here and in our home meeting children are participating. I brought my child here and I now see them in a new way as others see them.*

*I talked with second- through fourth-graders about consciousness objection. They were engaged. They had questions and opinions, and we had a great talk.*

### **2018-59 Thanks to Castleton University Staff**

We are so very grateful for the hard work of Castleton staff, who have gone above and beyond to welcome and support us. We would especially like to thank Israel Dudley, who provided technical assistance to our presenters, speakers, and clerks' table. Our business could not have moved so smoothly without your help. Thank you.

### **2018-60 Closing Worship**

As business concluded, the children and youth entered, singing. We joined them in song. We then heard the epistles from the week, from child care through adult sessions.

We closed 2018 Sessions in worship, proposing to meet next year August 3–8, 2019, at Castleton University, Castleton, Vermont, and encouraged to attend the Living Faith gathering on October 27, 2018, in Hartford, Connecticut.

# Approved Budget

## FY19 Approved Budget

Category	Actuals FY17	Budgets						
		FY17 Budget with approved	FY18 Budget	Δ FY18 to FY19	FY19 Budget	Δ FY19 to FY20	FY20 Budget Projection	
<b>Income</b>								
4010 Individual Contributions	170,229	142,400	200,000	12,000	212,000	2,000	214,000	
4020 Monthly Meetings	326,132	348,300	373,115	-115	373,000	4,000	377,000	
4030 Organizations	1			0	0	0	0	
4050 Interest and Dividend	10,562	6,000	5,000	-1,000	4,000	2,900	6,900	
4070 Books and Other Items	17,597	15,500	16,000	0	16,000	1,000	17,000	
4080 Retreat Program Fees	41,152	50,000	50,000	0	50,000	0	50,000	
4085 Sessions Program Fees	183,815	210,000	189,757	-4,757	185,000	16,000	201,000	
4090 Change in Fair Market	679			0	0	0	0	
4099 Net Assets Released	0			8,500	8,500	-8,500	0	
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>750,167</b>	<b>772,200</b>	<b>833,872</b>	<b>14,628</b>	<b>848,500</b>	<b>17,400</b>	<b>865,900</b>	
<b>Expenses</b>								
Total 5000 Staff	401,244	401,722	417,388	-53,473	363,915	2,089	366,004	
Total 5110 Administration	62,774	59,996	62,496	34,000	96,496	-500	95,996	
Total 5200 Office	18,878	22,215	25,615	11,400	37,015	0	37,015	
Total 5300 Travel & Conferences	32,417	34,400	36,000	0	36,000	0	36,000	
Total 6000 Programs	255,839	269,425	272,520	-13,500	259,020	5,950	264,970	
Total 6140 Books and Other	15,167	13,500	14,500	0	14,500	500	15,000	
Total 6200-6500 Support of	43,988	45,975	45,975	0	45,975	-9,225	36,750	
Total 6600 Publications	6,859	13,000	11,500	-7,500	4,000	0	4,000	
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>837,166</b>	<b>860,233</b>	<b>885,994</b>	<b>-29,073</b>	<b>856,921</b>	<b>-1,186</b>	<b>855,735</b>	
<b>Net Operating Income</b>	<b>-87,000</b>	<b>-88,033</b>	<b>-52,122</b>	<b>43,701</b>	<b>-8,421</b>	<b>18,586</b>	<b>10,165</b>	

## Staff Reports

### Yearly Meeting Secretary

On retreat recently, I was led to a deeper exploration of gratitude<sup>3</sup> as both a practice and an antidote to the deadly, deadening powers wreaking havoc in our society. The Spirit helped me to see more clearly my own condition and the role that a lack of gratitude plays in the exhaustion, despair, and hopelessness that can corrode my own life and, I believe, our corporate life as Friends. Just as perfectionism sustains a culture of white supremacy, I've come to see how the absence of gratitude impoverishes and imprisons our spiritual life. But when I recognize that my every breath is sustained by grace freely given, unearned and incalculable, gratitude can reorient everything. I am liberated to participate in that same unconditional Love.

So as we prepare for Annual Sessions, I'm grateful to the Giver of all gifts for the opportunity to lead and serve with such a dedicated, faithful and gifted staff team; for the hundreds of Friends serving in countless ways to nourish the Quaker movement in New England; for prayers and encouragement offered to me by so many; for the Life I experience in my visits to local meetings and alongside Friends in public ministry; for my home meeting and its oversight of my vocation. I give thanks for the generosity, humility, patience, steadfast care, and courage shown by those whose service—seen and unseen—brings joy and life to our shared ministries.

In our corporate life I am especially grateful for:

- The fruits of the Spirit being born as we risk living, and acting, in new ways<sup>4</sup>, including working for racial justice and healing, and challenging white supremacy
  - God's work through Friends' growing participation and partnership in witness, organizing and action within and beyond our local communities, at such a time as this<sup>5</sup>
  - The Life at work as Friends explore more vibrant support of ministry and ministers<sup>6</sup>
  - The faithful stewardship of resources entrusted to us, including the Finance Committee's diligent work to present a balanced budget<sup>7</sup> for the coming fiscal year
  - The increasing simplicity, clarity and focus of the Yearly Meeting's organizational structure, policy, and priorities, helping NEYM become a more integrated and effective tool to support the life and ministry of Friends<sup>8</sup>
  - The invitation and challenge, facilitated by our new development program, to examine the powerful role our relationship with money plays in our individual and corporate life, while joyfully raising funds to meet our short- and long-term financial goals
- Finally, I give thanks for the life-giving power in paradox, of challenges held between seemingly opposing energies—between the good of the one and the good of the whole, between focusing on the life of local meetings and nourishing the wider movement, between particular and universal ministry, between

<sup>3</sup> Diana Butler Bass' 2018 book, *Grateful: The Transformative Power of Giving Thanks*, was a gift in this search.

<sup>4</sup> See RSEJ report (page 55) and Challenging White Supremacy Working Group report (page 40)

<sup>5</sup> See page 21, "For Such a Time as This"

<sup>6</sup> See Ministry & Counsel Committee report (page 51) and Legacy Gift Committee report (page 50)

<sup>7</sup> While a balanced budget was proposed, changes made at Sessions resulted in a budget that was not balanced.

<sup>8</sup> See ad-hoc Long-Term Financial Planning report (page 39), Permanent Board report (page 38), and report on Purposes, Procedures, and Composition review (page 45)

tradition and continuing revelation, between prophetic criticizing and prophetic hope.

I am convinced that it is through honoring and living in the dynamic tension, while not being paralyzed or prevented from acting, that

we are given insight and power to take the next faithful step. God makes a way where there is no way. For this experience and this promise, I give thanks.

—NOAH MERRILL

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### Accounts Manager

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Regular readers of my staff reports over the years will recall my consistent theme relating the Accounts Manager's spiritual goals to various aspects of Truth—first and foremost the truth grounding our financial records in accurate, honest, and clear numbers, then in expanding senses of truthful presentations of complex materials; the living, evolving aspect of truth in relationships and communications; and the truth-seeking that approaches better solutions in times of change.

My staff report for 2016 widened the scope more, observing that the truthful tracking of money was really dedicated to the service of Love: “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.” This year I'm happy to report that even more of my activities have been directed toward supporting our witness and our loving communities.

A highlight for me was presenting at the annual Finance Committee workshop for treasurers of monthly meetings, and I have been excited to work on several other projects extending NEYM's help to local meetings, or supporting others as they helped Quakers reach outward. Early travelling minister Stephen Crisp had a vision about how this shared inner work of Truth could spread out to the whole world around us: “wait in his pure light in your own consciences ... and then you will feel a hope to spring up in you ... then ... the government of Truth comes to be set up in thee; ... and then thou comest to see that change in another; and so it goeth forward, from one to ten, and from ten to a thousand, and so forth, more and more, ... til truth and righteousness ... comes to be set up in the earth.” (“An Alarum sounded in the Borders of Spiritual Egypt,” 1671, in *The Christian Experiences, Gospel Labours and Writings of that ancient servant of Christ*, Stephen Crisp, 1822, p. 223.)

—FREDERICK MARTIN

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### Events Coordinator

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With this Sessions, I will have completed my first year with NEYM. It was just about a year ago I came up for the day to see Sessions as part of my interview process. I had spent several years running conferences, but nothing that had residential stays so integrated into it.

I called my husband to tell him I had gotten there safely; he asked me what I thought. I said, “It is quiet and everyone is wearing Birkenstocks. I LOVE IT!” Although that is a simplification of the community, I have continued affection for Quakers and the Quaker community.

A lot of my first few months were simply getting up to speed on the language: meeting, clerk, secretary, quarterly meeting, advanced documents, and so on. Soon though, I found I was translating Quaker terminology for other non-Quakers and realized I was becoming acclimated to my Quaker surroundings. The relationships I have formed so far have been cemented in a common belief in kindness, work, and the worth of people, coupled with a goal of personal spiritual growth.

Last April we held the third, and my first, Living Faith gathering in Portland Maine. It was a wonderful event and I was staggered by the



energy and enthusiasm of all who attended. In addition to this Annual Sessions, I am continuing to work on support of meetings, future Living Faith gatherings, and events in the broader community.

I have gotten to know the wonderful, dynamic, and talented staff at NEYM. I applied for this position because I craved a different kind of work, work that allowed me to be part

of a team once again. This is one of the very best teams I have worked with. In many ways, joining the staff at NEYM and working with the broader Quaker community has been a homecoming. I celebrate the conclusion of this first (almost) year and look forward to many years to come.

Faithfully,

—ELIZABETH HACALA

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### Friends Camp Director

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While the magic of a new summer is just beginning as I write this report, it will already be almost over by the time we are together for Annual Sessions in Castleton. The winter is long, but it's worth it. One of the most enjoyable parts of my winter months is connecting with camp professionals from different camps. For two "semesters" this year, I joined in weekly online video calls with a group of camp directors from all over North America called The Summer Camp Society. We also got together for two retreats, one in Pennsylvania and one in New Jersey. I always get great ideas from these folks, and I enjoy brainstorming with them about programming, staffing, logistics, and other challenges. One of the greatest gifts, however, is seeing through their eyes what is special and unique about Friends Camp. My peers who run other kinds of camps are amazed by Quaker ideas and how our way of being encourages children to lead, to be themselves, and to seek Truth.

My colleagues from other camps are surprised and impressed to learn that Friends Camp counselors run our daily staff meetings, that our entire community worships in silence twice a day, and that our campers get equally excited about ice cream as they do about social justice (okay, maybe almost as excited). Seeing our camp through others' eyes reminds me how crucial the Quaker way is for all children today. In an over-stimulated, over-scheduled world, camp allows a place for calm and for play. Bringing campers from many backgrounds and

ways of life creates a mixture of experiences; campers can learn from each other while surrounded by the loving environment built by staff.

Interest in Friends Camp continues to be active, and we have our highest enrollment ever this summer. In some ways, camp has different challenges than the rest of the Yearly Meeting; we have young people! Lots of them! But, unlike the Yearly Meeting, we have to continuously search for ways that our campers can meaningfully connect with the national and global community while still feeling the emotional safety of being in an intentional camp community. In other ways, we share challenges, such as dismantling the harmful effects of white supremacy and looking for ways to be more inclusive of people of all genders at camp.

We continue to do work to improve the buildings and grounds at Friends Camp. Next time you're in Maine, swing by and see the beautiful, new, insulated ceiling in our dining hall. Going forward, we plan to invest in renewing and replacing our aging property. Beginning this winter, we plan to do major work renovating the Pond Meetinghouse (built in 1807 and functioning as our art space).

I feel enormously blessed to be the director of Friends Camp, and I am grateful for the support of Friends on the camp committee, in our staff community, and all those who believe in camp!

Respectfully submitted,

—ANNA HOPKINS

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### Junior Yearly Meeting & Junior High Yearly Meeting Coordinator

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Children and teens in JYM and JHYM strive to live with compassion and faithfulness to the movements of the Spirit. They care deeply about all of Life, celebrating hopeful Goodness and struggling with weariness and despair at all of the ways our world could do—must do—better. They come to our programs looking for respite and companionship. By middle school, they already differentiate between “school friends” and “Quaker friends.” Their mutual understanding and experience of living in the Light with love and intentionality is Thomas Kelly’s description of the Beloved Community.

Attendance at JYM retreats has declined.

While there is concern about this, we have noticed more individual and collective growth in the children who come. A significant number of 6th graders chose to move up to JHYM, providing more opportunities for younger children to impact JYM as well as more vibrancy and energy in JHYM. We continue to experiment with ways of increasing youth leadership, particularly in JHYM. Our first-ever retreat at New Haven Friends Meeting was a joy, and we were touched by their welcoming hospitality. JYM and JHYM staff and junior staff are beyond-generous and grounded Friends. The intergenerational fellowship feeds all of us in profound and life-giving ways.

Illinois Yearly Meeting Friend Joy Duncan was with us for three JHYM Retreats this year, thanks to a grant from the Lyman Fund. What started out as a mentoring relationship grew into true collaboration. We delighted in sharing our wisdom and receiving hers. We look forward, with deep gratitude, to other ways of mutually nurturing the juice and joy of ministry with her and with other Friends from outside of our Yearly Meeting.

My position now includes support and oversight of the Child Care programs at both Sessions and the Living Faith Gatherings. Our Yearly Meeting is deeply blessed by a pool of gifted, grounded, and experienced child-care and early childhood coordinators and

volunteers. Together we are naming good practices, creating resources, and organizing supplies that are easily available, empowering, and inclusive not just for NEYM-wide sponsored events but for smaller, more regional gatherings. This is joyous work.

We continue to look for ways we can eradicate racism, sexism, classism, and gender rigidity in all of our programs. We have made some changes and are committed to continuing the deep spiritual work towards becoming more welcoming and affirming. We ask for your prayers and welcome your guidance and collaboration.

I am deeply grateful for the growing levels of shared ministry and trust among all who do this work. The Youth Ministry Committee’s February gathering, to consider what we hold most precious and what we hope and need for the future, was affirming and energizing. We are aware that weekend retreats do not best serve all of our youth and families. Stepping into ways of expanding ministry and outreach beyond traditional First-Day School classes and weekend youth retreats is exciting—and potentially overwhelming. We need more grounded and loving Friends to do this life-giving work. Our retreat staff will happily share the reasons why they volunteer and why it is difficult to answer “You’re welcome” when thanked, because of all the spiritual sustenance and hope we receive.

The death of my dad, who taught me so much about the powers of both unconditional love and laughter, and the serious illnesses and deaths of other family members and friends, particularly Edward Baker, has made this a very challenging year. I have discovered that “Good Enough,” “Say No,” and “Ask for Help” are essential spiritual practices for sustainable ministry. I am deeply grateful for the continual prayers and extraordinary support and love from Friends of all ages in this Beloved Community.

—GRETCHEN BAKER-SMITH

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### Office Manager

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My Lord God,  
 I have no idea where I am going.  
 I do not see the road ahead of me.  
 I cannot know for certain where it will end,  
 nor do I really know myself,  
 and the fact that I think I am following your will  
 does not mean that I am actually doing so.  
 But I believe that the desire to please you  
 does in fact please you. (Thomas Merton)

Nearly everything I do helps to make and build connections: helping Friends stay in touch with Friends, helping newcomers find a local meeting, sharing news and events from around the Yearly Meeting through the email newsletter and website, thanking donors, answering questions, providing information via the Directory, Advance Documents, the website, the Yearly Meeting News at Sessions, campus maps.

I don't always get to see the result of these connections—meeting visits, spiritual friendships, workshops, committee work, gatherings for worship, education and for fun—so I have to remind myself of my part in all of that.

My work encompasses a variety of tasks and that keeps me from getting bored. But it can also leave me feeling scattered and disorganized and a little lost. (Where would I be without Basecamp and a white board?) It seems I am

continually learning new skills and taking on new projects, such as helping to choose a website developer, learning how to use the database in new ways and learning added database features, improving office systems, finding ways to make work easier for others.

At times I feel as though I have a pile of jigsaw-puzzle pieces in front of me and no illustration of how the finished puzzle should look. Are there pieces missing? Will the finished composition be a single image, or will it look like a patchwork quilt? Does the quilt have a pattern and is it made up of colors that work together? Is there a single thread that runs throughout?

When I am in the midst of tasks, activities, data, phone calls and e-mails, I lose the thread. As in all of life, it's only when I look back that I see the connections made and how the pieces actually complete a pattern.

The pattern is, I hope, the freeing of Life among Friends and Friends meetings in New England, helping us to know one another in that which is eternal and to live into the reality of God's Kingdom.

—SARA HUBNER

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### Religious Education and Outreach Coordinator

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Soon after I answered the call to serve New England Friends in 2004, I had a vision of thriving Quaker meetings sprinkled all across NEYM. When I began to talk about renewal and lift up the first signs of new Life, Friends were often nonplused! Weren't we graying and dwindling? Fast-forward 14 years, add in a lot of hard work and prayers by many Friends, and the signs of growth and vitality are unmistakable!

In previous years, I usually traveled in response to problems or expressed needs. This year, I began by visiting Mt. Toby Meeting, because of the stories of overflow crowds at worship; and Providence Meeting with its

burgeoning First Day School. I followed with more visits around and beyond New England and found striking similarities among thriving meetings.

Here's my working hypothesis. Thriving meetings combine strong eldership with an amped-up sense of wholeness in community. Robust eldership includes anchoring worship well before the official start time, deep and centered worship, and having successfully met a significant challenge or resolved a conflict involving most/all of the meeting within the last 5 years. Wholeness in community takes shape as a love fest when gathered. Friends linger and

revel in each other's company and folks see each other during the week.

Eldership and wholeness in community work in tandem to keep individualism, rife in our secular culture, in check. This effectively reduces the barriers to the free circulation of Spirit among the Friends. I am coming to see that vibrant, Spirit-filled Life is the natural condition of a Quaker meeting. Our task, then, is to minimize the obstructions we ourselves put into place when we succumb to the individualistic, secular culture.

Here are a few lessons from thriving meetings:

To Build Wholeness in Community:

1. Invite all Friends to introduce themselves at the rise of meeting.
2. Linger longer—encourage casual chatting at coffee hours and other times. Food helps!
3. Remove obstacles to participation—have a changing table and high chairs for families.
4. Show current activities with pictorial displays. Can newcomers find images of people like themselves?
5. Help newcomers know how to get involved.

6. Labor with Friends who issue the “Mighty No” in meeting for business or other arenas. Risk discord on the way to a deeper place of mutual understanding and unity with Spirit.
7. To Strengthen the Quaker Roots of the Meeting:
8. Anchor worship early to kindle a centering of the group.
9. Sit in closer physical proximity in worship to deepen the experience.
10. Frame the Quaker journey as dynamic, engaging, and done in community.
11. Speak about seeking a faithful path by using distinctly Quaker modes of listening, clearness committees, and discernment.
12. Make space for explicit conversations about our spiritual condition.

Begin as you are led! Small changes implicitly invite others to join you.

It has been a joy and privilege to serve New England Friends—thank you! While I am led to lay down my employment with NEYM, I still feel moved to answer a living call to ministry. We'll have to see what shape that takes, together.

—BETH COLLEA

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### Interim Young Friends Coordinator

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Dear Friends,

I feel so privileged to have had the chance to serve the Young Friends community in Nia's absence. This community has been through a time of tremendous growth and change, and I have hoped to hold it as tenderly and lovingly as I can as it works to affirm its mission.

Since last spring and into this year, Young Friends have been grappling with how to draw boundaries as a community in order to reaffirm the community's existence. After several incidents of broken trust at Sessions last year, a sense of urgency was added to the already present need for clarity of purpose. Young Friends asked each other, What hopes and life bind us together? What is it that we seek when

we gather for retreats and program at Sessions? What needs does this community fill for us, despite everything that pulls us away in our daily lives? And to what do we hold each other accountable?

I want to highlight the amount of time, energy, patience, and love that Nia, Resource People, Young Friends (YFs), and families placed in this program after Sessions and into this year as trust was being rebuilt as a whole community. Transitioning out of last summer and into the fall, much work and faith needed to be poured into the community in order to rebuild trust amongst YFs and between YFs and staff. We've shifted the way we communicate expectations: instead of YF Ministry and

Counsel announcing a general set of commitments at each retreat, the coordinator has announced three lists containing more-explicit goals, intentions, and imperatives necessary for the safety and wholeness of the community.

Expectations were raised and Young Friends rose to them with grace and with love for their community. We've witnessed a profound culture shift amongst YFs towards heightened engagement, accountability, and a palpable sense of intention and unity. Ministry and Counsel members have been lights, showing the community a way forward and showing newcomers a way in. At the same time, retreat attendance this year was cut nearly in half. It's been a practice of not getting bogged down by challenges, but being present to the gifts shown to us, that has allowed us to celebrate the positives, such as the new depth to which we can go during program when everyone is able to participate fully, and being able to connect

authentically with every person present at a retreat when the group is so much smaller. I've heard many mixed responses, from wondering at the power and intensity of program this year, to mourning the Young Friends who have been missing from retreats, to a feeling of fear that the program might get too small to function. It's been hard for Young Friends who have been so present in the community, who have put so much work in, to know that there are so many who just haven't shown up at all.

The feeling that we're leaning into, though, is one of hope: hope in the power of this community to pass over a threshold of trial and conflict and come out even more loving, more trusting, and more powerful than before, which is exactly what Young Friends have managed to do. At the end of this year, it feels like a community with faith in itself, a community convinced, and my hope is that this is infectious.

—MAGGIE NELSON

### Young Adult Engagement Coordinator

In the Friends landscape of New England, I hear the beginnings of conversations about outreach to young adults. There are all these ideas! Wonderful ideas of how we can invite people who have never been to a Quaker meeting to *our* meeting, ideas about an event, and what the production will look like. As the ball gets rolling, often someone (or many someones) says "Wait a minute! We need to think about how we're doing as a meeting before we can invite people into this."

And so we take a pause, and decide to do some work within our community—strengthening relationships among existing meeting members and attenders, making decisions about how to be welcoming, writing documents about our beliefs, having business meetings to approve these documents—all things that need to be done. But we've just put outreach and welcoming by the wayside so that we could "get our house in order."

I believe that our house will never be in order. We will never be fully ready. Sometimes I

find this disappointing, but mostly I feel relieved to see this reality. We'll never have our house in order! What a release from perfection.

So, the question I'm most interested in is: How do we welcome newcomers and engage in outreach by grounding ourselves in our tradition, wherever we're starting from? I know it's possible to engage with one another authentically *and* welcome those who are new to Friends. In order to do this, though, we need a growth mindset—a belief that we can change, and that the change might be good. And a willingness to work on all of it, seeing it as a whole rather than as separate projects, organized by separate people, with separate goals.

This year, the question I've been asking newcomers and long-time attenders at my meeting is "How was worship for you this morning?" This has opened up a range of conversations for me. Often it quickly gets to a point where the newcomer says "I wasn't totally sure what to do. What do you *do* during

worship?” And then we have a conversation with whomever is sitting nearby about the “techniques” we each use to center down and communicate with a Divine Presence.

This past fall, a newcomer to Friends visited Beacon Hill Friends Meeting and, when I asked her how worship was for her, she told me how she used the time to pray to God for connection. She has always known God, but in graduate school something has shifted—she can’t connect with God. She wanted to try unprogrammed worship. A pregnant couple came to worship recently and we talked about their interest in raising their child in a spiritual tradition. They’re moving to New York soon, but wanted

to try out Friends before leaving Boston to determine whether to visit the Friends meeting near their future home. With each of these individuals, I first asked “How was worship for you?” Perhaps we would have had the same conversation if I said “Where do you live? What do you do for work?”—but I somehow doubt it.

I don’t think we can press the pause button for our welcoming of newcomers, or our outreach to those who don’t yet know Friends, while we deal with our issues. We have to do the work simultaneously. Because: we have something real to offer others.

—HILARY BURGIN

## Committee and Board Annual Reports

### Permanent Board

Members of Permanent Board, together with visitors, have met six times since Sessions 2017 to conduct the necessary business of NEYM. NEYM committees, ad hoc committees of Permanent Board, quarterly and monthly meetings—widely dispersed Friends from across New England—season this work for Permanent Board’s worshipful discernment.

At each meeting, in addition to regular reports from the presiding clerk, secretary, and treasurer, we hear reports from two of our sub-committees: the ad hoc Challenging White Supremacy Working Group and the ad hoc Reparations Working Group.

We also hear regularly from the Finance Committee, Development Committee, and ad hoc Long-Term Financial Planning Committee. In May, the Finance Committee brought forward its draft budget for comment and discernment; the Development Committee brought for approval a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Everence, a Mennonite financial services firm, to support a philanthropy, education and stewardship program; and the ad hoc Long Term Financial Planning Committee brought for approval a process to set annual funding priorities to guide Finance Committee as it creates the annual operating budget and to support long-term financial planning. The Board approved forwarding to Sessions its recommendation to lay down the ad hoc Long-Term Financial Planning Committee with the completion of this work, after 4 years of labor informed by more than 40 years of committee work and discernment.

It is Permanent Board’s work to faithfully discern when to lay down and when to lift up the life and ministry of Friends. Since Sessions 2017, Permanent Board has lifted up:

- The creation of the Faith in Action Committee to support and connect the faithful ministry and witness of Friends throughout New England
- The revitalization of the Fund for Sufferings to support both individuals and meetings that suffer for their witness to the Truth. Permanent Board re-designated \$25,000 from the Legacy Gift Committee’s Witness and Ministry Fund to seed the Fund for Sufferings
- Our history and love of the written word in our approval to forward to Sessions the Purposes, Procedures and Composition of the Archives and Historical Records Committee. NEYM archives are now housed at the Special Collections and University Archives (SCUA) of the W.E.B. Dubois Library of the University of Massachusetts. The Archives and Historical Records Committee continues to deepen our partnership with SCUA through a MOU which clarifies the care and use of the archives and how the yearly, quarterly and monthly meetings can transfer materials to SCUA. This year, SCUA is hosting the bi-annual Conference of Quaker Historians and Archivists!
- Support of the ministry and witness of individual Friends, our monthly and quarterly meetings in our approval to use \$40,000 for a website redesign to enhance our efforts at communication and outreach. These funds come from the re-designation of the \$128,800 received from the 2015 sale of Moses Brown’s 1644 copy of *The Bloody Tenent of Persecution for Cause of Conscience*. The remaining \$88,800 will become working capital in NEYM’s undesignated reserves. In recognition of the changing nature of how we connect, communicate, and publish, Permanent Board approved forwarding to Session its discernment to lay down the Publications and Communications Committee—leaving to Coordinating and Advisory Committee the continuing work of discerning how best

to support publication and outreach in all its forms

- The good work of the Friends Camp Committee in our approval to forward to Sessions the Camp's Purposes, Procedures and Composition and the Committee's discernment to better align its budgeting process with that of the Yearly Meeting operating division
  - Providence Monthly Meeting's physical plant expansion to better serve its growing membership, while affirming the faithful work of Vassalboro Quarter to lay down, in good order, two of its monthly meetings
  - Personnel Committee's discernment that NEYM's non-compliance with the 1986 Federal Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) is no longer a living witness of the Yearly Meeting. Personnel Committee lifted up the numerous places where Friends bear faithful and living witness to immigration concerns, outlined how the IRCA non-compliance witness arose, and reported on the significant personnel and financial liabilities that non-compliance engendered. Permanent Board approved the Yearly Meeting coming into full compliance with IRCA regulations.
  - The inspirational witness of Friends as we heard Vassalboro Quarter's recently approved minute calling for Friends to support "The 2018 Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival" and approved the presiding clerk's signing the NEYM-Cuba Yearly Meeting joint minute to "support full and equitable diplomatic, commercial and socio-cultural relationships between our two nations"
  - The lives and testimony of 14 Friends as we heard their Memorial Minutes in worship
- As the administrative structures and financial foundation of NEYM grow more robust, I feel ever greater hope that NEYM stands better prepared to do what we are truly called to do: "to obey the promptings of the Spirit to bring healing, wholeness and transformation of ourselves and to the world" [2015-64].

Advance documents for Permanent Board meetings are available on the NEYM website. Meetings of Permanent Board are open; all are welcome. Dates and locations of meetings are posted into 2019! Please join us.

—SARAH GANT, CLERK

### Ad-Hoc Long-Term Financial Planning Committee

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Below is a brief history of the ad hoc Long Term Financial Planning Committee and then a description of our recent work.

The Committee was formed in 2014 by Permanent Board at the request of Sessions (see minute 2014-57). Initially, the charge was narrowly focused on financial sustainability, but we quickly realized—and Permanent Board affirmed—that it was impossible to create a financial plan without the Yearly Meeting first articulating a shared sense of why the organization of Yearly Meeting exists, what work it does, and how we could discern our shared work going forward.

We were grateful to discover that this discernment had been happening for years. We synthesized many documents into a report called "We Need a Plan," which we presented at Sessions 2015. The report drew on consultation and listening going back to 1968, and articulated the core purpose and priorities for the Yearly Meeting organization, which Sessions then approved (see minutes 2015-37 and 2015-64). We also have either undertaken or supported several other initiatives, including clarifying, integrating, and aligning the work of committees and staff; making our financial reporting clearer and more transparent; encouraging a more dynamic voice for New England Quakers through time-sensitive public statements; increasing attention on outreach and inclusion; and launching both a monthly email newsletter and the twice-yearly Living Faith gatherings.

Over the past three years, we have worked towards delegating to more permanent (i.e., less ad hoc) bodies the capacity to support the current and future work of our Yearly Meeting,



both financial and otherwise. Finance Committee is now preparing budgets with the help of multi-year financial projections and has made difficult choices to bring us a balanced budget this year. Development Committee is participating in a more robust and integrated development program that includes the work of staff and other partners. And Permanent Board has approved a process to integrate ongoing discernment about NEYM's current and potential work, creating annual funding priorities to guide Finance's creation of the budget that Sessions approves each year.

With the Yearly Meeting purpose and priorities clarified, with a process in place for discerning work going forward, with a balanced budget proposed, and with longer-term planning functions integrated into the organization, we believe we have fulfilled the purpose for which we were created. With gratitude for this opportunity to serve and confidence in the fruits of faithful work by so many, we are asking the Yearly Meeting to lay down the ad hoc Long Term Financial Planning Committee.

At Sessions we will provide a short presentation to the gathered body on our work thus far. We will also provide two breakout sessions where we can share more about this journey, answer questions about our work, and explore together where the Life is moving among Friends in New England. We hope to see you there!

— BEN GUARALDI, CLERK

### Challenging White Supremacy Working Group

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“Begin where you are, to heal racism ... wherever you are is OK; but it's not OK to simply stay there.”

Immediately following passage of the 2016 Yearly Meeting Minute on White Supremacy ([neym.org/news/2016-yearly-meeting-minute-white-supremacy](http://neym.org/news/2016-yearly-meeting-minute-white-supremacy)) Permanent Board minuted formation of an ad hoc committee to hold and promote the NEYM-wide work of “interrupting white supremacy in ourselves, within

individuals, interpersonally, in our meetings, and at all system levels of NEYM.” The 10-member working group has focused on raising awareness via newsletter submissions and outreach, building leadership capacity via training workshops, and supporting monthly meetings by directly leading racial dialogue religious education series.

Design Principles: We intend that all our work and out-reach should be:

- Invitational
- Inclusive
- Grounded in the Spirit
- Action and Forward-Oriented
- Prophetic
- Conducted to promote intersectionality—awareness of the interconnectedness in the Spirit: of racial justice, environmental justice, economic justice, sensitivity to class differences, gender equality, recognition of gifts and leadings, spiritually grounded budgeting

CWS activities this year include

- October 14, 2017: “Leadership in Envisioning Racial Justice” workshop led by Lisa Graustein. Attendees: CWS, RSEJ, and NEYM Coordinating and Advisory members.
- January 2018: CWS committee retreat at Woolman Hill (with guest Fritz Weiss, NEYM Presiding Clerk) “Visioning the Path to Challenge White Supremacy”
- April 2018: Presented workshop at the Living Faith Gathering, “Call and Response: How Meetings can Engage with the Minute on White Supremacy”
- June 2018: Presented workshop at Wellesley, “Capacity-Building for Leadership in Racial Dialogue”
- Submitted four CWS offerings for NEYM newsletter

Monthly meetings and individuals have responded to the invitation to join in this liberating work. Many are leading by facilitating or sponsoring conversations and education about racial identity and racism. Fifty Friends from 18 NEYM monthly meetings attended the June “Capacity-Building Training” in Wellesley to learn how to facilitate healing racial dialogue.

In 2017 Lisa Graustein summarized a vision for how we in New England Yearly Meeting might liberate our Quaker culture from the oppression, injustice and spiritual malaise of white supremacy. It involves both the inward work of education, skill-building, accountability and working toward liberation from internalized and external manifestations of white supremacist thinking and behavior; and the outward work of public witness, activism, humble service, and reparations of resources.

“We need tens of thousands of white people courageously and passionately winning over the hearts and minds of white people so that we can all get free.” (Chris Crass, *Towards the “Other America,”* 2015)

As a community and as individuals on the CWS work group, we understand this as an engagement with no beginning and no end that the Spirit leads us to continue. Those of us on the work group who identify as white are continually humbled by the realization that this is our work to do as beneficiaries of the dominant culture, by “virtue of our whiteness.”

We are reminded of all we do not know and see about racial injustice, and the damage inflicted by our dominating culture. We are also humbled by our missteps, by our epiphanies, and by the Grace that releases vulnerability and healing, and the yearning to keep at it so that all may be lifted up to thrive and flourish in the shared, Life-giving fellowship of the Spirit.

— SUSAN DAVIES, CLERK

### Student Scholarship Granting Subcommittee

This is the third year of our grant awards. We had 24 applicants and awarded 22 grants to a total of \$30,000. The fund will have remaining balance to allow for one more year of grant awards. We plan to repeat this cycle for one more year to spend out the remaining balance. Awards were made to those who have connections with New England Yearly Meeting, applications coming from both young and old and for a wide variety of educational purposes.

—REBECCA LEUCHAK, CLERK

### Archives & Historical Records

The Archives and Historical Records Committee has been focused this year on the completion of the Memorandum of Understanding with the Special Collections and University Archives at the W.E.B. Du Bois Library at University of Massachusetts, Amherst (SCUA).

In February, the Memorandum of Understanding was approved by the Permanent Board and signed copies of the agreement were shared with Rob Cox at SCUA.

The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between New England Yearly Meeting and SCUA lays out the expected communication between the organizations as well as the documents and directions for transfers to SCUA. The Archives Committee looks forward to the on-going development of the work with SCUA to support the Yearly Meeting, our monthly and quarterly meetings, and researchers. The MOU specifies our agreement to an annual review of the understanding. We understand that

relationships between organizations can change with time. The MOU may in the future be amended to address needed changes.

In particular, two areas are detailed in the MOU, as they were in our letter to monthly meetings regarding both what the deed of gift means regarding copyright and the rights of meetings to protect privacy of individuals for a period of time.

The Committee spent time in collaboration with Rachel Onuf, consulting archivist, and SCUA to detail what the nonexclusive copyright means for the donating meeting and for individuals who may have individually authored or created donated material. We worked to ensure that the Deed of Gift forms make clear the choices that Meeting have regarding copyright of the material they are transferring to SCUA.

Privacy has been another area with which the Committee has spent time to articulate

policies and come to agreement with SCUA, to ensure the privacy of persons. The MOU provides for the closure of documents to research upon request for either 20 or 40 years upon donation.

With the completion of the MOU and the Collection Policy, we as a Committee turned our attention to working with meetings on the transfer of documents to SCUA. We focused on discerning what the Yearly Meeting needs for an archivist to support NEYM and the monthly meetings in this work. A proposed description for the work of an Outreach Archivist has been created and submitted to the Secretary.

A description of the work for an archivist has been written with a significant list of possible responsibilities, ranging from outreach to local meetings to liaising with other New England repositories that continue to hold meeting records. The committee will continue to work actively to further shape this position as well as to work with whomever fills this position to set annual priorities and actively support and contribute to the work.

In this coming year, we must transition from the use of our consulting archivist Rachel Onuf. While the committee agreed to take a year working with Rachel with restricted hours, in order to both support a balanced budget and to better understand the needs of this new position, as a committee we agree strongly that the needs of the Yearly Meeting may be better met by an Outreach Archivist working 4 to 5 days each month.

As Part of our agreement with SCUA, Rob Cox provides an annual report, which is included below.

As clerk, it is a pleasure to work with such a hard working Committee who come to our monthly meetings prepared with an enthusiasm for the work.

—CAROL FORSYTHE, CLERK

## Special Collections and University Archives, UMass Amherst

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### **Cataloging (books)**

Over the past year, SCUA hired a short-term cataloger who catalogued nearly 2,000 books and pamphlets that arrived with the NEYM collection. The remainder of printed materials, primarily periodicals with some pamphlets, represent low-priority titles. The metadata department in the library is currently understaffed due to recent retirements (the search for a replacement is under way), and the uncatalogued titles are part of the queue for cataloging as time permits. The cataloged books are currently shelved in glass-fronted bookcases in our newly built seminar room.

### **Processing (manuscripts and archives)**

We completed our general survey of the entire NEYM collection and have made inroads into clarifying and standardizing the naming. The boxes are now organized in archival order according to provenance (committee, meeting, or other source). During the survey we identified approximately 40 boxes of “miscellaneous” materials that will have to be interfiled with existing records, work we hope to begin this summer. We have delayed making a new finding aid available to the public until we have a better handle on this miscellany.

From here, our plan is to process (or re-process) the entire collection systematically, creating separate finding aids for each discrete segment of the archive: NEYM as a whole, each quarterly and monthly meeting, and other sub-collections. We are currently processing the records of AFSC-Western Massachusetts (acquired separately), and have completed finding aids for several of the sub-collections: the papers of Samuel Austin, Moses Brown, the Howland family, and Quaker miscellany collection, the Peck-Sisson-White family, the Slade family, and Sarah Swift; and the records of the Providence Society for Abolishing the Slave-Trade. A graduate student intern from UMass is currently at work on processing a collection from Henry Perry, head of AFSC-run

Civilian Public Service Camps in New England during the Second World War. Perry's papers were not identified in previous NEYM listings, but are a significant addition.

### **Digitization**

Our efforts in digitization thus far have been exploratory only, designed to set a baseline for future work. We have digitized selected portions of the papers of Samuel Austin, Moses Brown, the Howland family, Slade family, and Sarah Swift, as well as the Friends miscellany. Estimates derived from these explorations and previous projects will enable us to estimate the total cost of any larger-scale initiatives. Although we can continue digitization without external support, external funding will enable us to hire additional workers and thus speed the process. We have identified two potential funding sources to assist with a larger-scale project, but will wait to apply until we have completed some of our current mass digitization projects.

### **Preservation and conservation**

SCUA received a donation from a Friend in Virginia and a small regrant from the Massachusetts State Historical Records Advisory Board that has enabled us to purchase additional supplies for rehousing the NEYM collection. We have already purchased boxes and folders for use as processing continues.

Our new conservator has prepared custom enclosures for a number of books and other items in the collection and we plan to create custom housing for selected volumes among the bound records in the collection according to need and as our budget permits.

### **New arrivals**

We received an addition to the records of the Obadiah Brown's Benevolent Fund, which we will begin to process shortly, and several monthly meetings have been in touch about adding to their collections. Durham (Me.) MM and Hartford MM have each contributed additional minutes and we have received books and other materials from Mount Toby MM and newsletters from several meetings.

—ROB COX, SCUA

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## **Board of Managers of Investments & Permanent Funds**

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The Board of Managers of Investments and Permanent Funds is pleased to provide this abbreviated 2018 annual report to New England Yearly Meeting. For more details, see our complete report on the NEYM web site. In the fiscal year ended March 31, 2018, annual income distributed to constituents from the Pooled Funds totaled approximately \$4.00 per 100 units after expenses. This was below the \$5.50 per 100 units that the Board had forecast. Interest rates remained low again in 2017, whereas many analysts had expected rates to increase higher during the year. For same fiscal year, the NEYM Pooled Funds had a total return, net of expenses, of 7.79%. This consists of a distribution of income per unit to beneficiaries of 0.97% and a 6.83% increase in the market value. Expenses during the fiscal

year ended on March, 31, 2018, amounted to \$85,389, or 0.78%. These expenses are generally lower than comparable investment vehicles.

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 also seeks to increase the value of the principal. The Board seeks to invest in businesses aligned with Quaker testimonies, companies making a positive contribution to the world's needs and providing work in a healthy, equal opportunity environment. Furthermore, the Board of Managers avoids investments that are inconsistent with Friends' testimonies, including

companies that deal in war materials, alcoholic beverages, tobacco or gambling; conduct unfair employment practices; or pollute the environment. The policies and procedures are available online at: [neym.org/board-managers/investment-guidelines-procedures](http://neym.org/board-managers/investment-guidelines-procedures).

The Board of Managers reviews each company based on these principles before adding it to the Approved List. In addition, stock holdings (including preferred stocks) in the portfolio are reviewed by sector in a cycle so that all holdings are rescreened on a triennial basis after initial inclusion on the Approved List. The Board remains committed to investing in community developments; currently, the Pooled Funds community investments amount to approximately 3% of the total portfolio.

The Board of Managers recently determined a new procedure to calculate quarterly distributions to participating meetings which is designed to provide a predictable income stream, optimize the amount of income distributed, and preserve and grow the total value of the fund

This new distribution calculation went into effect as of April 2018.

In the past, the amount of income available for distribution or reinvestment was constrained to dividends and interest, as calculated in the quarter prior to the distribution. The new

process will distribute 4% of the total value of the fund (including all interest, dividends, and capital gains or losses), as calculated at the end of the fiscal year, based on a rolling average of the prior 3 years' fund balances. The quarterly distributions to be distributed for the year are therefore set at the beginning of the year. The quarterly distribution per unit will remain consistent, although the dollar amount could change if units are purchased or redeemed during the quarter.

The Board of Managers believes this will make budgeting and forecasting easier for meeting treasurers. This will also allow investors to benefit from the Pooled Funds significant capital growth without having to redeem units.

We hope you will join us for a workshop on investing during Sessions. Members of all participating organizations and any other interested members of New England Yearly Meeting are welcome. Treasurers are encouraged to invite members of their respective Finance Committees.

As always, the Board of Managers welcomes your questions and comments; please email us at [neypooledfunds@neym.org](mailto:neypooledfunds@neym.org).

Yours in the Light,

—BRIAN CLARK, TREASURER

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### Coordinating and Advisory

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Coordinating and Advisory Committee (C&A) began our work this year with a weekend retreat. At the retreat, the committee considered how we wish to work together and the themes and priorities before the committee and before each of the members of the committee this year. My experience of the retreat was that C&A named its work clearly as supporting NEYM in continuing to turn towards God and laid the foundation to do this work grounded in God's presence and supported by our love for each other.

The committee has almost completed the triennial review of purposes, procedures, and composition of NEYM committees. Two

committees reviews are outstanding and will be brought to Permanent Board this fall. Three are in the Unity Agenda for approval. One of these is for a "Faith in Action committee" to support witness in NEYM. When the Peace and Social Concerns Committee was laid down in 2017, C&A was directed to explore how the Yearly Meeting might more powerfully support witness. This new committee is the fruit of that discernment.

The committee is charged with the supervision of the Yearly Meeting secretary. The secretary reports monthly to C&A on his priorities, concerns and sense of where attention

might be needed. We are responsible for ensuring his annual evaluation is completed.

The committee continued to support quarterly meeting leadership and to host ongoing video conference calls with the quarterly meetings. One of the results of this conversation is the “Purposes of Quarterly Meetings” document included in these Advance Documents and in the Unity Agenda.

C&A’s purpose is to “shepherd the work of the Yearly Meeting.” This year this has included supporting leadership development for Yearly Meeting committees; supporting committee clerks; responding to requests for advice, assistance, and support from quarters and monthly meetings; and sharing the news of deepening faith and persistent witness among Friend in New England. There has been a noticeable decrease in requests from committees for support this year. I think this is a reflection

of the careful review of the purposes, procedures, and composition of committees last year.

An essential piece of the work of C&A is to advise and support each member of the committee. The committee consists of the clerks of Permanent Board, Ministry and Counsel, and Finance Committee, the presiding clerk, the secretary and the secretary’s supervisor.

Over the course of this year I have heard from several Friends that they feel that C&A is functioning as an executive committee of the Yearly Meeting. This is not my experience. The primary work of C&A is to pay attention and to provide support. At each meeting of Ministry and Counsel and of the Permanent Board, I report and seek advice on the activities and concerns of C&A.

—FRITZ WEISS, PRESIDING CLERK

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### Development Committee

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This year Development Committee has been working to stabilize the giving patterns of Yearly Meeting’s supporters in order to be able predict with a reasonable level of confidence the figures the Finance Committee is to use when preparing NEYM’s budget. As of this writing (mid-June) monthly meeting contributions to support NEYM total just under \$202,000 and individual contributions total just under \$114,500; both figures are slightly better than last year in terms of percentage of goal raised at this point in the fiscal year.

Development Committee’s experience has been that there is a high degree of variability in giving from year to year. Some friends/households who gave generously in 2016 for example may pull back a bit in the following year, while others who gave modestly one year may become unexpectedly generous the next year, and then pull back again. We assume that this is in part because folks are not regularly tracking their own giving. This can result in variability of as much as \$80,000 from one fiscal year. For a budget like ours, \$80,000

is a very substantial degree of change from one year to the next.

Friends may recall that over the past several years the Yearly Meeting has had good success with financial “challenges” that have highlighted certain issues, calling forth a response that set NEYM finances on a more solid footing. We have a new challenge this year, very much related to helping our budget achieve financial sustainability. In early April Development Committee set a new challenge for our supporters, focused on reducing variability. We asked New England Friends with a past history of financial support for the Yearly Meeting to consider making a 3-year commitment (for FY 2018, ‘19, and ‘20) at a level of giving equal to or greater than whatever their largest gift to NEYM has been over the last 3-year period. And if a Friend/household can commit to sustain whatever their largest recent gift was for the upcoming three years, we have a \$30,000 matching fund, created by a group of generous supporters, to match one year’s worth of this commitment in the current fiscal year. And even if someone is not able to commit to repeat their

largest recent gift annually over the next three years, we welcome statements of intention that will help us to minimize uncertainty as we move forward.

The initial response to date has been very encouraging, and we look forward to telling you more about this initiative at Sessions.

We are also excited to announce that, after consultation with Permanent Board, NEYM is embarking on a program of stewardship education in conjunction with the launch of a planned giving program in partnership with Everence, the financial services company owned and operated by Mennonite Church USA. At

Sessions we will have several opportunities to engage with Everence for their perspectives on the intersection of faith and finance. Everence has a vast archive of material to share with Quakers, resulting from their experiences serving the Mennonite community as well as other faith traditions. Everence has working relationships with many Quaker organizations including Friends General Conference, Friends United Meeting, and Iowa Yearly Meeting. We hope you will take advantage of opportunities to engage with and learn from our friends at Everence during Sessions.

—CHRIS GANT AND DEANA CHASE, CO-CLERKS

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### Earthcare Ministry

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Long-time Earth activist Ruah Swennerfelt (Burlington, VT, MM) stepped aside from being clerk of EMC; Mary Bennett (Worcester, MA, MM) and Rebecca MacKenzie (Quaker City, NH, MM) stepped in to co-clerk the business of EMC.

Friends Rod Zwirner and newly appointed Christopher Haines represent NEYM at Quaker Earthcare Witness (QEW). Ruah Swennerfelt gave workshops on “Inner Transition,” a personal transformation movement within the work of the Transition Movement, at the Living Faith Gathering in Portland in April, 2018.

EMC formed a sub-committee to research carbon calculators, which was our charge in NEYM Minute 2017-67. We chose a calculator to collect the data necessary to create a baseline in assessing the carbon footprint of individual Friends and our meetinghouses. We encourage our members to choose actions to reduce carbon emissions from the hundreds of suggestions offered with the calculator of choice, the Cape Cod Climate Change Collaborative’s calculator—created by Stephen Gates (West Falmouth, MA, PM). Stephen subsequently received a grant through Quaker Earthcare Witness (QEW) to purchase computer tablets to aid data collection for this project. These tablets may be used by monthly meetings for this purpose with the help of EMC members. This project will be presented at Sessions 2018.

EMC was also charged with updating its Purpose Statement this year. We were asked to “be bold” in our re-creation of this Statement to reflect the Spirit’s movement in these pivotal times of climate destabilization and environmental injustice. The Purpose Statement revision began with collaborative efforts online, continued at our annual retreat in May 2018; the Statement is in its final phase of edits as of early July 2018.

Our annual retreat was held at Mary Bennett’s home in Spencer, MA the weekend of May 11-13, 2018. It was the only face-to-face meeting we had during the year. Other EMC meetings were held every 6-8 weeks via our Committee’s virtual meeting Zoom program. This meeting method has aided our desire to reduce our carbon emissions; however, we realize the very positive benefits of gathering in person to renew our connections to one another. We are considering a second face-to-face weekend gathering during the year to conduct business and renew our connections.

The theme of our annual retreat focused on Quakers and The New Story: Healing Ourselves and The Earth, a resource developed by a focus group attended by EMC member Mary Coelho (Cambridge, MA, MM). This QEW pamphlet, which can be accessed online, examines the inter-relatedness of scientific breakthroughs in quantum mechanics and theory and our

spirituality as a religious society. The integration of these paths helps us to see that we are inextricably connected at the micro and macro levels, and whatever we do to our environment and one another, we do to ourselves. We are made of the same matter as Earth's micro-organisms and the furthest star in our expanding universe. The Spirit described "in the beginning" is our common matrix, and we are all connected.

Some EMC Friends are active in our monthly and quarterly meetings and larger Friends gatherings, bringing information about the Transition Movement, environmental justice, and the Prophetic Climate Action Working Group; organizing professional conferences and delivering presentations to educate colleagues about climate destabilization and our response to it; rebuilding and

renovating our homes to incorporate renewable sources of energy and energy efficiency; creating inventions that move us toward resilience; working with home communities to increase renewable energy; and writing about resilience in national newsletters.

EMC wishes to explore new ways within and beyond the Yearly Meeting to promote responses to climate destabilization and create resilience and environmental justice. We seek to collaborate with other YM committees to achieve this goal. It is with faith we continue to seek the Spirit's guidance and with thanksgiving we experience the manifestation of the Spirit among Friends who practice environmental justice.

—MARY BENNETT AND REBECCA MCKENZIE,  
CO-CLERKS

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### Faith & Practice Revision Committee

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Once again Faith and Practice Revision Committee began its year by mailing to our monthly meetings and worship groups the work we had presented at Sessions in 2017. Last fall we sent a draft on Membership and a draft on Personal Spiritual Practices. Meetings have continued to support our work by responding to the drafts with thoughtful comments, sometimes even giving us new wording for a section that has shown us the wisdom of their discernment. We are grateful for your support in this work.

Last summer two members retired from the committee and in the fall we welcomed two new members. We continue our work with ten members, meeting nine times during the year.

This year we have continued to work on sections within a chapter we are currently titling "Personal and Communal Spiritual Life.:" We are bringing drafts of two new texts to sessions: "Pastoral Care" and "Dying, Death and Bereavement." In September we will mail copies of these documents to the monthly

meetings and worship groups asking for their input. Use them as occasion arises in the life of your meeting and report to us where your meeting would be better served by changes to the document.

In February we began revising the draft on Membership. We are bringing the revised Membership document to Sessions for preliminary approval. During Sessions, the Revision Committee will offer two opportunities for Friends who have read the document to meet with committee members to suggest final changes before the Yearly Meeting is asked to give the document preliminary approval.

When a document is given preliminary approval by the Yearly Meeting, meetings are asked to use the approved document in place of the 1985 NEYM Faith and Practice. This gives meetings, and NEYM, time to work with the document and to make any necessary changes before final approval is given.

We continue in faith,  
—PHEBE MCCOSKER, CLERK



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## Finance

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It has been a busy year for the Finance Committee, one full of hard but exciting discernment. The year has seen us launch new projects, continue our ongoing work, and achieve some goals we have been working towards for years.

First and foremost, we have achieved our long-term goal of being able to present a balanced budget. Last year, we projected that we would be able to present a balanced budget this year and after much work we are able to do so. This has included hard conversations and some painful cuts, but through faith and tender listening we have achieved our goal.

The Finance Committee continued our tradition of holding workshops for monthly meeting clerks, treasurers, budget committee clerks, and other interested Friends. At this year's workshop, titled "Taxes, Contributions & the Life of the Meeting," attendees shared about their meetings' financial practices, described challenges they are facing, and provided ideas for other attendees based in their meetings' experiences. As always, the workshop was a powerful reminder of the depth of wisdom in our community and of how coming together not only created a beautiful community among those of us present, but can also strengthen our meeting communities.

That afternoon, Accounts Manager Frederick Martin led a session on improving meetings' documentation of their tax-exempt status. He described how the Yearly Meeting's 501(c)3 status works and how monthly meetings are exempt, and then showed attendees how to apply for a Federal EIN, a first step to better documenting meetings' status under the Yearly Meeting's exemption. This marks the completion of a multi-year process of identifying how best to document the relationship between monthly meetings and the Yearly Meeting for tax and financial purposes. This marks the beginning of

a process to make it easier for monthly meetings to demonstrate their tax-exempt status to banks, businesses, investment companies, and other organizations through a Group Exemption process. For more information, please contact Frederick.

We have also continued our efforts to make the Yearly Meeting's finances and financial management practices as simple and transparent as possible. We have grown into the practice of doing multi-year budget projections. We have continued work to update the Financial Handbook, with a goal of presenting it to Permanent Board for approval in 2019. We have continued a process of eliminating designated funds that no longer serve the needs of the Yearly Meeting, as well as renaming funds with confusing titles. (See Permanent Board minutes from November 2017 for details on this.)

Like many jobs I have held, serving on the Finance Committee is all about relationships. As a committee member, and now even more as the clerk, I have had the pleasure of working with a dedicated committee, the Yearly Meeting Secretary, Accounts Manager, the Treasurer, the Assistant Treasurer, the clerk of Permanent Board, the clerks of many other committees, and Friends involved in monthly meeting finances. Those relationships have become precious to me and I know that for all of us involved in this work, the relationships it creates provides most of the joy of our service. I would invite Friends into that joy, either by considering service on the Committee or by letting us serve as resources for your committee or monthly meeting. The Finance Committee is a resource for the entire Yearly Meeting. We are here for anyone (not only for Yearly Meeting staff and committees, but also for monthly meetings) to provide help and guidance with financial matters. We look forward to hearing from you.

—BOB MURRAY, CLERK

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### Friends Camp

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As we did last year, the Friends Camp Committee met four times this year, with our most recent meeting coinciding with a well-attended work weekend. We remain grateful for the many volunteers who help in so many ways, not only during that one particular weekend, but throughout the year.

Our enrollment remains strong, and while we are ever vigilant as to what brings in new campers and what nourishes and sustains our returning ones, we are fortunate to have a director, Anna Hopkins, whose energy, leadership and outreach has been vital to these efforts. As a committee clerk, I also want to express not only my appreciation, but also profound admiration for the dedication, skills, and depth of caring that committee members bring to their subcommittee work.

Working with other committees and the staff of NEYM, we have revised our budgeting approval process and schedule to better reflect our fiscal condition, considering the seasonal nature of Friends Camp. This process revision also allows us to work with more recent actual

income and expenses data, and less on projections.

Maine winters and heavy summer usage takes a toll on the buildings and infrastructure. This summer will open with a new ceiling and other improvements in the dining hall (“Big Bird”) and a new, small, multi-use building primarily designed to store and sell camp merchandise, which fittingly came to be named “Magpie.” A new well is in place at the waterfront. Many other maintenance needs, too numerous to mention, have been thoughtfully attended to.

When addressing maintenance, improvements and additions, we pay careful attention to the broader Quaker values of stewardship. Perhaps that should go without saying. What is often unspoken is all of our work is that of continuing revelation—continuing revelation as to what to hold on to, what to change, and most of all, how we meet the ever evolving physical, spiritual, and emotional needs of our campers and our staff.

—TOM ANTONIK, CLERK

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### Friends World Committee for Consultation— New England

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Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC) brings Friends of varying traditions and cultural experiences together in worship, communications, and consultation, to express our common heritage and our Quaker message to the World. NEYM’s FWCC Committee fosters opportunities locally for Friends to come together across our branches, answering God’s call to universal love, and nurtures Friends who travel in the wider Quaker world, helping them to share their witness upon their return. Through this love, through the friendships that develop, through the diverse worship shared, and through programs and fellowship opportunities, our individual and collective faith is deepened. We are transformed by our

relationships with others, with Friends different from ourselves, and with the living Spirit of God weaving our lives together.

FWCC Section of the Americas’ Traveling Ministry Corps presents NEYM meetings and churches with the opportunity to receive a Friend who listens to and discerns the movement of the Spirit in your worship and community. Any meeting or church can invite a traveling minister, to bring their spiritual vitality, their humble gifts of deep listening and vocal ministry, and their commitment to revel and live into opportunities for spiritual transformation. For more information and the invitation form, visit [fwccamericas.org/visitation/traveling-ministry.shtml](http://fwccamericas.org/visitation/traveling-ministry.shtml). Two Friends

in NEYM, Debbie Humphries (Hartford) and Greg Woods (serving as Youth Ministries and Education Coordinator for Friends Meeting at Cambridge), also travel in the Americas as members of the Corps.

World Quaker Day (WQD), this year on October 7th, presents Yearly Meeting Friends another opportunity to take part in the rich tapestry that is the wider Religious Society of Friends. FWCC offers materials to enrich your meeting's or church's WQD celebration, including Quaker Speak videos and accompanying Religious Education materials (produced in collaboration with Friends Journal), and a map of Quakers around the world, to elicit discussion and storytelling about where and with whom Friends have worshiped around the world. We encourage Friends to experiment with different kinds of Friends worship, either in your own meetinghouse or by visiting nearby Friends; or to invite a Traveling Minister, a member of NEYM's FWCC Committee, or someone who has attended an

FWCC gathering to share rich experiences of the Quaker faith and Friends worldwide.

NEYM names up to six representatives to FWCC's Section of the Americas. The Section, which meets every three years, will next gather March 21–24, 2019, near Kansas City, Missouri. FWCC's next World Plenary will be in 2023.

NEYM Friends were blessed to have two Kenyan Friends take part in Sessions 2017: Margaret Amudavi, the Academic Dean of Friends Theological College, and Moses Murenga, a pastor from Kakamega Yearly Meeting in Kenya. FWCC-NE is collaborating with the Quaker Religious Education Collaborative this year to support the participation of Bolivian Friends Emma Condori and Zulma Quispe Mayta, and a Friend from Central America in NEYM Sessions.

FWCC-NE continues to look for opportunities to weave FWCC's work overcoming historical patterns of colonialism and inequality, including racism, into the work NEYM is doing.

—JUDY GOLDBERGER, CLERK

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### Legacy Gift Committee

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The Legacy Gift Committee completed our third year of grantmaking in this multi-year experiment in watering our Quaker garden. We awarded a total of \$125,510 in grants from the NEYM Future Fund and made our first grants from the NEYM Witness and Ministry Fund totaling \$28,890.

This year's grants supported the year-long Nurturing Worship, Faith, and Faithfulness program, the creation of new Quaker adult religious educational materials, digital outreach and ministry, and Friends' continued witness against climate change and against racism and white supremacy.

New ministry projects include releasing Friends for leadership in the Maine Poor People's Campaign, the Quaker Dinner Church in Boston, outreach and inclusion for Quaker Voluntary Service, hiring a new program manager for Beacon Hill Friends House, and the

use of visual art to explore our Quaker Faith and Practice.

We also supported a number of energy and infrastructure projects including refurbishing South Starksboro's antique woodstove, more efficient windows for Framingham Meeting, and accessibility at Providence Meeting. For a full list of this year's grants please visit [neym.org/legacy-gift](http://neym.org/legacy-gift).

Part of our charge from the Yearly Meeting is to do an annual workshop exploring Quaker testimonies and values. On June 2 we led an inspiring and engaging workshop on "Supporting Ministry and Ministers" that was attended by more than 30 Friends from New England, New York, and Philadelphia yearly meetings. Thanks to the digital gifts of Kathleen Wooten, we were able to live-stream and record the morning program for further use. You can view the workshop on the NEYM YouTube channel or at [neym.org](http://neym.org).

We are committed to meeting in person with our applicants as part of the Legacy application process. This year we experimented by inviting a guest reviewer to join us for the spring cycle. This experiment increased our capacity, as well as giving a Friend an opportunity to participate in the grantmaking process without making a longer commitment to serve on the committee.

In 2017, in recognition of these challenging times, the Legacy Gift Committee made a \$25,000 grant to revitalize the NEYM Fund for Sufferings. The Permanent Board then created a process for responding to requests for disbursements from the Fund. At its May 2018 meeting, Permanent Board approved our Committee's further recommendation that the Fund be made available to meetings as well as

individual Friends. The Fund for Sufferings is there to assist us if there are financial consequences to our witness for peace and social justice.

In 2018–2019 we will have two deadlines for the Future Fund, October 1 and March 1; and one deadline of March 1 for the Witness and Ministry Fund. Guidelines and application forms are available at [neym.org/legacy-gift](http://neym.org/legacy-gift).

The seeds we have sown together are bearing fruit across NEYM and beyond. The Legacy Funds are indeed a catalyst for new growth in our Quaker movement and we are honored to do this work on behalf of the Yearly Meeting.

—SUZANNA SCHELL & JEAN MCCANDLESS,  
CO-CLERKS

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### Ministry & Counsel

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It is with great joy, tenderness and love that Ministry and Counsel has undertaken its service to Friends and meetings this year. We have endeavored in our work to focus on what has life, and to always bear in mind that we are accountable to local meetings as we work to “foster spiritual growth, strengthen the religious life of Friends and Friends meetings, and serve as a resource on religious education, worship and ministry.” All of our minutes are available on the Yearly Meeting website, and all are welcome to attend our meetings.

While our meetings are a time to gather for worship and mutual discernment, much of the work of Ministry and Counsel is done outside of our committee meetings, as we visit local meetings, respond to pastoral care needs that are brought to us, and hold Friends and meetings in prayer. Last year we approved a new process for responding to pastoral care needs, and since implementing the “on-call” team of Friends, we have successfully responded more effectively to the most urgent needs that have come to us, while also focusing on building capacity in local meetings. Cornelia Parkes (Cambridge, MA) led a workshop for Friends doing the work of pastoral care in their local

context, which provided Friends with a chance to experience rejuvenation and to leave with increased skills for their work at home.

This year has been full of opportunities for conversation and engagement around ministry. In September we met jointly with Permanent Board to clarify our respective responsibilities with regards to Friends who are traveling in the ministry, endorsed by the Yearly Meeting. Members of Ministry and Counsel were deeply involved with the Nurturing Worship, Faith, and Faithfulness program, and as clerk of Ministry and Counsel I helped to plan the joint New York and New England Yearly Meeting weekend-long gathering for those called to pastoral ministry, and consulted with the clerks of the Legacy Gift Committee as they planned their annual workshop, which this year focused on “Supporting Ministers and Ministry.”

In February, we were grateful for the opportunity to learn more about the work being done on inclusion of young adult Friends from Nia Thomas (Northampton, MA), our Young Friends and Young Adult Friends Coordinator; and Hilary Burgin (Beacon Hill, MA) our Young Adult Engagement Coordinator, and to think about what we see in own meetings, and about

the implications of these findings for the growth and thriving of the Religious Society of Friends. This work, like the work of addressing white supremacy, is at its core about starting to recognize and change patterns of behavior that prevent us from living into the Kingdom that God has in mind for us. This work will surely continue in the coming years, as we take more risks and try new ways of being and seeing that can lead us to the promised land.

Our Ministry and Counsel meetings this year have been characterized by growing trust and

Love as we have engaged with one another in ways that have been at times uncomfortable—from prayer and conversation about the spiritual disease of white supremacy, to engaging in art and singing as part of our work together. We have been accepting the challenge of experimentation and are feeling the Fruits of the Spirit. May it be so for all of us!

With hope and humility,

—HONOR WOODROW, CLERK

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### Nominating Committee

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We have worked hard and faithfully during this year despite our very small committee. We were delighted to welcome three new at-large members through the discernment of Permanent Board's Internal Nominating Committee.

However, each of them is new to Nominating Committee work and we have taught through our handbook, demonstration, and example so that they will be ready to fully engage in the committee's work next year. In the face of the Interim Clerk completing her term, the whole committee has felt uncertain about the future of the committee, but are feeling reassured since hearing that there is a plan in place for leading the committee next year. Additionally, some of the longest-serving meeting representative members are completing their terms of service, leaving us well below a functional level of membership.

In fact recently, as we have struggled to articulate to potential Ministry and Counsel members the difference between serving as an at-large member and as a meeting representative, we have come to realize and feel strongly that the original intent for this committee structure is no longer being met. We hope that our concern might be addressed in the coming year by Permanent Board and/or Coordinating and Advisory. Having two categories of membership on Nominating

Committee has not shown to make any difference in committee participation.

And yet, we take joy in being together at our meetings and telephone conferences which have been greatly enhanced by using Zoom! While discerning and inviting Friends with the gifts needed for service on specific committees can be frustrating, more frequently we hear that Friends are eager to serve or are amazed that they have been recognized as having needed gifts. With ever-shifting numbers and natures of committees, we have both felt relief that there are not as many committees that we must people (either through the committees being laid down or the responsibility for them passing to Permanent Board) and challenged by the formation of new committees.

The slate we offer Sessions this year has quite a few "needs," but the philosophy of the committee is that we work throughout the year to complete the slate. To that end, we are fortunate that Permanent Board meets several times during the year and can approve interim appointments. We do appreciate email and telephone as means of accomplishing our work, but even more look forward to being at Sessions where we are able to have face-to-face conversations with Friends and open up opportunities for going deeper into that which is eternal.

—PENNY WRIGHT, INTERIM CLERK

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### Committee for Nurturing Friends Education at Moses Brown School

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This year was the first year implementing the procedures that were put in place for the search, selection, and proposal of Friends to be nominated to Moses Brown's Board of Trustees, and for the selection of Friends to serve on the NFEMB committee.

In early winter Moses Brown's nominating committee sent out a request for names to be considered for nomination to the Board. This was sent to a wide number of people associated with the school, including Permanent Board and the Yearly Meeting presiding clerk and secretary. In February the Friends on the NFEMB Committee conferred and approved two names from those brought forward. In April an additional name was also approved by the same group and these names were brought to Permanent Board at their May meeting for consideration and approval.

The procedure has allowed a larger number of Friends familiar with and interested in the school to be involved in the process, and has reached a larger geographic base.

The agendas for our scheduled meetings continue to bring topics which lead to thoughtful and deep spiritual discussion of issues.

We gave input to the Director of Friends Education in the preparation of a Minute on Taking a Knee during the singing of the national anthem at sports events.

Communicating the values underlying Friends Education to prospective families has been a topic of much consideration and work this year. In tandem with the School's Enrollment and Marketing Committee, we are developing language that is clear and inviting for those who may be unfamiliar with Quakerism, the history of Friends educational practice, and its roots and influence at Moses Brown.

Committee members were involved in supporting the presentation of the October conference, "Discerning Truth in a Post-Fact

World: A Friends Education Conference, for Librarians and Educators." In April we also helped support "Hope & Strength: A Community Concert to Benefit Refugees."

In conclusion, we are sad to be saying farewell to Galen Hamann, the Director of Friends Education. She has led the school in its exploration of new avenues in the ways Friends educational practice enriches the classroom and the school community. She has made our school a welcoming site for conferences for other New England Friends schools and educators. She has encouraged student attendance at other Friends School conferences and continually found ways to support student exploration of their own spiritual paths. She has brought this committee into the life of the school in fundamental ways. We thank her for all she has done, and wish her every success as she moves forward in her life path.

—ELIZABETH ZIMMERMAN, CLERK

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### Moses Brown School Report

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The school year at Moses Brown began with a first-ever trip to Friends Camp in Maine for the entire 9th grade. Students engaged in team-building activities (led by seniors), social innovation challenges, and orientation to Friends testimonies. It was meaningful to see the legacy of MB alumnus Rufus Jones impacting a new generation of students, and MB will run a second iteration of the trip in August.

In October, MB hosted its third bi-annual conference on Friends Education, this year themed "Discerning Truth in a Post-Fact World." Sixty librarians and educators from 45 schools, universities, and institutions participated (23 of them Quakers, 18 working at Friends institutions). This conference—one of the ways MB supports and enriches the practice of Friends education in New England—was a success, and messages in final worship reflected great appreciation for the opportunity.

This year the MB community wrestled with the question of kneeling during the national anthem, and the differing perspectives and emotions this issue engenders. Director of Friends Education Galen Hamann consulted with the school's Nurturing Friends Education committee to draft a minute of guidance on the subject. A coach and several players at the school subsequently decided to kneel at away sports games (MB does not play the anthem at regular home contests) in support of racial justice in America. The act of solidarity and protest sparked intense but good conversation within the community and was the subject of a called meeting for sharing with students and teachers.

This year MB also hosted "Hope & Strength: A Community Concert to Benefit Refugees" as part of a broader Refugee Awareness Week in April. Led by NEYM members Annie Patterson and Peter Blood, and uniting families from MB and the greater Providence communities, this sing-along event raised money for AHOPE, a volunteer-led organization that helps settle new refugees in Rhode Island. More than 100 people attended. While at MB, Annie and Peter also led an Upper School meeting for worship with song.

Director of Friends Education Galen Hamann will be leaving Moses Brown at the end of the 2017–18 school year to become Assistant

Head of School at Virginia Beach Friends School. MB has hired Barbara von Salis (member of Brooklyn Monthly Meeting and alumna and trustee of Brooklyn Friends School) to be the interim director next year, and will conduct a search for the permanent position in the fall.

Moses Brown—one of the oldest and largest of the 78 member schools of Friends Council on Education—remains fiscally sound and continues to enjoy a strong reputation and high demand for enrollment (750 students ages 3–18). As a result of the school's current capital campaign, the endowment has grown to \$37 million, putting the school on much stronger footing in terms of long-range financial sustainability. Access and affordability remain a top priority. This year 206 students (28% of the student body) received financial assistance, with the average award being \$20,000. There were 19 Quaker students. The P.J. Trip Fund (established by members of NEYM to support the education of Quaker children at Moses Brown School), currently valued at \$605,000, provided \$22,960 in scholarship assistance for children of Friends (to which the school contributed an additional \$226,000 in financial aid for Friends students).

—ERIK WILKER, DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATIVE & STRATEGIC AFFAIRS

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### Puente de Amigos

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Dedicated to Paul Hood, early traveling minister from New England to Cuban Friends.

Puente de Amigos works to deepen the spiritual relationship between New England Yearly Meeting and Cuba Yearly Meeting. What a blessing to report that our relationship is thriving!

A short chronological summary of our work this year:

**August 2017** At Sessions last summer we delighted in the first-hand reports from members of the Inter-generational Trip that met with youth in Holguin and Vista Alegre and the Young Friend who lived and worshiped with Cuban Quakers for six months. Our intention to

honor the request of young adult Friends in Cuba to send young Friends their way had born fruit. Our government policy, however, prevented two Cubans scheduled to attend NEYM from coming.

**January 2018** At the Instituto Cubano Cuáquero de Paz (ICCP), Benigno Sanchez-Eppler gave an in-depth workshop on Robert Barclay at four different sites. This Quaker History series has been conceived, researched, and written by Susan Furry and Benigno Sanchez-Eppler. Benigno also started the field work of conserving Cuba Yearly Meeting's archives by making digital images.

**February 2018** An all-New England delegation attended Cuba Yearly Meeting Sessions in Gibara. Our Presiding Clerk Fritz Weiss was asked to give the closing keynote address. Because the U.S. government is not issuing visitor visas to Cubans at this time, Fritz Weiss is asking the Puente Committee to be diligent in its efforts to have New England Friends provide a prayerful and visible presence at Cuba Yearly Meeting.

The members of the delegation came from three monthly meetings and visited with their sister meetings in Havana and Puerto Padre. Despite construction material shortages, we learned that the conference center construction projects in Holguin, Puerto Padre, and La Habana continue on schedule. These are prime examples of the “social enterprise” projects encouraged initially by FWCC-Section of the Americas and supported when possible by Puente de Amigos. Conference center rental income covers other Cuban social outreach expenses.

The all-New England delegation continued the tradition of providing workshops giving opportunities for the Cubans and us to learn from one another. New England Friends offered introductory workshops in Jugar Llenos de Fe, the immigration crisis in the U.S., Quaker decision-making, the Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP), and forgiveness. ICCP has expressed interest in reviving their AVP training after learning that AVP International can provide facilitators.

Puente de Amigos continues to provide some technology assistance by bringing hardware requested by Cuba Yearly Meeting. This year a modem, printer, and ink cartridges were delivered.

**April 2018** Cuban Quakers did not submit applications for U.S. visitor visas this year, knowing the U.S. Embassy in Havana had stopped interviewing candidates. Nevertheless, we have persisted in informing our congressmen of the situation and advocating for change. Vermont Senator Leahy and Massachusetts Representative McGovern continue to intervene on our behalf. Fritz Weiss met personally with Representative McGovern to make the case that our religious freedom has been violated.

Over the past two years the Cuban Government has loosened restrictions on internet communication, making it easier for sister meetings and individuals to communicate with each other. We are truly blessed by our connections with our Cuban sisters and brothers and their vibrant Spirit-filled expressions of faith.

As we said at the conclusion of last year’s report, our times demand that we preach and practice goodwill in the world. Puente de Amigos provides one way to do this. Please consider opening up new links of communication with your sister meetings and joining a Puente delegation to Cuba.

—LEN & MARY ANN CADWALLADER, CO-CLERKS

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### Racial, Social, and Economic Justice

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The Committee of Racial, Social, and Economic Justice has experienced the Beloved Community through communicating and connecting with each other as full human beings with deep love and respect. Our meetings are filled with worship, love, and joy. Our vision for all of our Yearly Meeting is that we may all experience inclusion. We express our mission with the diversity within our committee as we bring our individual and communal deep spiritual commitment in this work.

We’ve supported each other and found strength in that support for our ministries including the Poor People’s Campaign, civic engagement against police violence, antiracism work, and working for homeless concerns.

We are in our third year of trying to resolve the financial discrepancies in the Freedmen’s Fund. We also have been wrestling with our place in the constellation of New England Yearly Meeting as we worked on our Purposes and



Procedures. In addition to these concerns we have had a productive year:

- We helped 3 students with the Freedmen's Funds. One will graduate from Fisk this year, another will graduate from Savannah State University in December; the third just finished her first year at Georgia State.
- At Sessions 2017 we:
  - ◆ gave a workshop, (YOUR Healing Racism Toolkit; A Catalyst for Transformation)
  - ◆ sponsored table conversations on race and Sarah Walton's dinner talk on Police Education and Active Civil Engagement
  - ◆ led a Black Lives Matter vigil with the Dragon Panel Project
- We produced the Freedom and Justice Crier
- We created a video to demonstrate our Toolkit which was updated multiple times
- We firmed up funding for the Book Project and approved and sent out *Mashpee Nine: A Story of Cultural Justice*
- We continued the development of the Journey of Healing Project
- We developed liaisons with Ministry and Counsel, Finance Committee, and the book group sponsored by NEYM M&C reading *Fit for Freedom*
- We provided support for two different Legacy Grants
- We minuted support for the Poor People's Campaign.

And maybe most important, the love, friendship, and support and spiritual depth present in each other as we come together building this wonderful community. May it spread to other's hearts and hands.

—RACHEL CAREY-HARPER AND NUR SHOOP,  
CO-CLERKS

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### An Epistle to New England Friends from Racial, Social, and Economic Justice

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6/9/2018

We write you today to acknowledge that we know we are all struggling, in each of our imperfect selves, towards the beloved

community. God has many faces and forms. They are all beloved.

Love is not just hugs and roses; it is also truth-telling. For over 50 years the Committee of Racial, Social, and Economic Justice has been doing our best, with hearts full of love, to deal with racism, classism, and other social justice issues. However through much of this time we have felt marginalized, insulted, disenfranchised, and shunned.

We've asked ourselves why, as New England Friends, do we seem not to want to hear the message that we need to insure that all marginalized people, and especially people of color, are treated with dignity and respect because we believe there is something of God in all humans? Faith and Practice, "Characteristics of a Quaker Concern" (pg. 177) says that a "characteristic of a Quaker concern is that it does not rest until it has penetrated through the superficial evil to its root causes."

Bypassing the RSEJ committee and empowering new ad hoc groups\* is a reflection of the pattern that NEYM has committed itself to try to change—behavior based upon white privilege and supremacy. With decades of the RSEJ committee bringing difficult questions that many didn't want to hear and experiencing intense pushback and denial, we ask ourselves and our fellow New England Friends:

How do we treat those outside of our familiar circle, who trouble us or who make us uncomfortable?

Do we merely speak our testimonies or do we live them?

What could our community look like if we truly searched for the Light within each other?

How do we work together to change our individual and collective practice?

Faith and Practice (pg. 117) goes on to say, "the person with a social concern is willing to accept censure and ridicule—Yet in the last

analysis, obedience to light is the only satisfying course.”

Respectfully,  
—RACHEL CAREY-HARPER AND NUR SHOOP,  
CO-CLERKS

\*Gender Inclusivity Task Force (Sessions Committee 2015)

Racial Inclusivity Task Force (Sessions Committee 2016)

Ad hoc Challenging White Supremacy Working Group (Permanent Board 2017)

Ad hoc Reparations Working Group (Permanent Board 2017)

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### Sessions

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“For Quakers, the most vital expressions of our faith go beyond words into action. We witness to the Spirit of Love and Truth as we work to bring the society around us more into harmony with God’s peaceable kingdom and the natural world.” (NEYM website)

The Sessions Committee comprises Friends named to serve and those who, by virtue of their responsibilities, have a voice in the logistics and planning of our annual gathering. We set the table, prepare the feast, go into the highways and byways and invite all to the banquet; most important, we invite the presence of Spirit in our midst. Our gathering is a multi-layered event, seeking to serve the needs of our constituent meetings, the varied age groups who make up our entire community, and the needs of more than 600 individuals to learn and grow together in the service of Love and Truth.

We meet 4 or 5 times during the year, reviewing the previous gathering and planning

for the new. We discern the theme, the speakers, and the schedule, and try in all our endeavors to make room to attend to Spirit. We welcome your suggestions and input and ask for your feedback in our evaluations. We seek to serve and support the clerks who have care of our meetings for worship for conduct of business; to offer a warm welcome to all of you, especially those for whom this is a new experience; and to learn from each other about what holds us back and rises us up.

Welcome, Friends. Let us be together in creating, during this time together, a Religious Society more in harmony with God’s peaceable kingdom and the natural world. Let us give each other hope and strength. Then, let us take what we have gathered and share it with this world so in need of hope and healing.

—LESLIE MANNING, CLERK

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### Young Friends

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This past year started off with an air of uncertainty regarding what Young Friends would look like due to the issues that arose in our community during this past Sessions. We were left unsure how Young Friends would recover, and what steps would need to be taken in order to rebuild trust within our community and the larger NEYM community going into the year.

In place of the annual Ministry and Counsel retreat at the beginning of the year, Young Friends had a one-day gathering open to the entire Young Friends community where we

could address the issues that had come up during Sessions.

During this gathering, we discussed what the purpose of Young Friends is and how it can best serve the members of our community. We also discussed what role we felt the adults in our community (RPs) should play in supporting us, and what the relationship between RPs and Young Friends should be in order to maintain a safe and sustainable community. During this discussion, Young Friends, along with Nia, decided to restructure the way we look at rules in the program. We created a bipartite system of

imperatives (rules that we need all Friends to follow in order to maintain the community) as well as commitments (actions that our community has committed to strive to perform in order to strengthen our community and help everyone feel included and safe).

In December, we braved the cold to gather for the midwinter retreat. Discussions continued over the Young Friends community and how we can help it grow and evolve in these times of change. We noticed that we had been welcoming an unusually small number of Young Friends to the past few retreats. During this gathering we looked at how Young Friends has evolved in the past, and how it has had to change as the members of the community have changed. We also welcomed Maggie Nelson going into the rest of the year as our new retreat coordinator as Nia left on maternity leave.

In March, we gathered at the Hartford meetinghouse for our Gender and Sexuality retreat. On Saturday, Young Friends made a trip into the city for the March for Our Lives rally at City Hall. At the end of this retreat, Young Friends encountered some issues when we

forgot to take down a poster that we had put up on the wall of the meeting room which had some of the sexuality topics that we had covered during the retreat. Some adult Friends of Hartford meeting expressed their disgruntlement over the poster being visible during meeting for worship, and one Friend expressed that they found it distracting and inappropriate and they didn't want visitors to the meeting to feel uncomfortable or feel as though this poster was representative of Hartford Meeting's normal meeting for worship. We left this with a feeling of embarrassment and regret. We are very grateful to the meetings that let us use their spaces and we hope to always better care for the surroundings and be mindful of the ways we impact others.

We look forward to improve and grow our community. We are excited to welcome new members as well as say goodbye to our seniors as they continue into their lives. We look forward to Sessions where we will be able to continue strengthening our community.

—QUINN NORTONSMITH AND ZOSIA SZATKOWSKI, YOUNG FRIENDS CO-CLERKS

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### Youth Ministries

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The Youth Ministry Committee is charged with ensuring “the vitality, health, safety, and relevance of the youth programs offered by the organization of NEYM, as well as youth ministries offered within and across the web of local meetings in our region.” The work of making that web a lived reality feels both exciting and challenging. We see this web taking form in the love that families, young people, and staff devoted to fostering presence, clarity of purpose, and engagement amongst Young Friends this year, and the real strengthening of community that has followed. We see this web developing in New England Yearly Meeting's deepening involvement with the Quaker Parenting Initiative, founded by Harriet Heath and others. In February the Youth Ministry Committee hosted a day long gathering of a wide range of stakeholders to recognize what is precious in our youth programs, to acknowledge

the barriers we face, to envision changes we might make that would help these programs serve more families, and to think about how we can create closer relations between NEYM youth programs and monthly meetings. Some of the ideas generated at this gathering have already been put into action, and more will be in the near future.

This has been a year of important life changes for our staff: sorrows, joys, and new leadings. JYM/JHYM Coordinator Gretchen Baker-Smith's father passed away in September; he is much loved and deeply mourned. Llewelyn Thomas was born March 10; join us in welcoming him to the world and to NEYM! YF/YAF coordinator NiaDwynwen Thomas will be on maternity leave until fall. During Nia's leave Maggie Nelson is holding the YF community with great skill and creativity. Religious Education Coordinator Beth Collea has

been led to lay down her work for NEYM; she will continue to participate in the Quaker Religious Education Collaborative and to stay involved with specific NEYM projects. Beth is describing this decision less as a change of ministry than as finding new containers for a ministry that stays strong. We are so grateful for all Beth's light and love and for the broad vision of religious education that she fosters. Keeping these relationships and initiatives thriving as Beth moves on will be an enormous challenge, even as we know that her work is the

foundation that will make whatever comes next possible.

We are not rushing to simply replace Beth's position. Instead we will build on the visioning process already begun at our February gathering and will work with the Yearly Meeting secretary and other Yearly Meeting committees as the decision about the staffing structure that will best serve the web of youth ministries in New England unfolds. Please join us in this work of discernment through the months ahead.

—KAREN SÁNCHEZ-EPPLER, CLERK

## Representatives to Other Friends Organization

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### American Friends Service Committee

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In the second year of its centennial, the American Friends Service Committee is embarking on a strategic planning process to set the course for the organization moving forward after the difficult program cuts made last year. At the annual Corporation meeting, we heard a powerful call to address the painful challenge of being a person of color and a Quaker. Yearly meetings were challenged to consider diversity in their appointment of representatives to the Corporation and white Friends were challenged to put aside fears and engage with Friends of color. We were reminded of the importance of

making explicit in all reports the fundamental organizational commitment to anti-racist work, putting it front and center. Reflecting the theme of this year's corporation meeting, "Reclaiming Radical Faith in Action," Lucy Duncan, Friends Relations staff, shared her vision of all Quakers putting our bodies on the line for a just society. AFSC is eager to engage with monthly meetings and offers directly applicable resources through its Friends Relations program ([www.afsc.org/friends-engage](http://www.afsc.org/friends-engage))

—SUBMITTED BY MELISSA FOSTER

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### Friends Committee on National Legislation

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FCNL's 2017 Annual Meeting took place from November 1st to the 4th in Washington, D.C. and included two days of lobbying by Friends and others participating in the Quaker Public Policy Institute. Thirty members of New England Yearly Meeting were part of the 400 volunteer lobbyists, representing 39 states, who visited 220 offices on Capitol Hill. The lobbying focused on the federal budget and urged members of the House and Senate to maintain funding support for the domestic safety-net programs so essential to the needs of vulnerable members of our society, and to reduce military spending. Highlights of the Annual Meeting were tours of the new Quaker Welcome Center adjacent to FCNL's Capitol Hill office building and the opening of the organization's 75th anniversary

celebration year. Other featured events were the awarding of the annual Ed Snyder Award to Minnesota Representative Keith Ellison, a Muslim and a leader in work on Iran, Palestine-Israel, and refugees and in opposition to religious discrimination; and a presentation by Sister Simone Campbell of NETWORK and leader of "Nuns on the Bus" tours. Annual meeting participants gathered for worship and worship-sharing, met with staff lobbyists, approved committee reports, were challenged by General Committee and staff leaders, and were strengthened in solidarity through opportunities for fellowship.

Respectfully submitted,

—IAN HARRINGTON, ELIZABETH CAZDEN, BOB SCHULTZ, STEVEN WHINFIELD

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### Friends Peace Teams

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Friends Peace Teams (FPT) is a Spirit-led organization working to develop long-term relationships with communities in conflict, creating programs for peacebuilding, healing, and reconciliation. We build on Quaker experience combining practical and spiritual aspects of conflict resolution. We go to places

that are difficult—geographically, politically, and emotionally—to contribute to healing the effects of trauma and deprivation.

The FPT administrative core, spiritual support groups, and initiative working groups are all part of the work. We are unusual in seeking and testing leadings and supporting

them rather than perpetuating projects and programs. We learn, refine and promote the Quaker practices of discernment, listening and service.

We maximize the resources that go to program. The small central FPT administration allows programs to focus on their work. We work for people, not for material accumulation, while being aware that we have employees who depend on us for their livelihood.

FPT has further developed our structure and governance, examining our origins, recording our practices, proposing changes, and seasoning them. Along the way, the peace work by volunteers with local partner organizations in

violence-torn communities proceeds vigorously with remarkable success. Our stories of peace are recorded in our newsletter, PeaceWays. Please know that there are many opportunities for you and members and attenders of your monthly meeting to participate in our work. We also have many at-home opportunities to serve in admin tasks that do not require international travel.

As always, we are grateful for the spiritual and financial support of so many Friends. Please help us spread the word.

—NANCY SHIPPEN ([NANCYSHIPPEN@COMCAST.NET](mailto:NANCYSHIPPEN@COMCAST.NET)),  
REPRESENTATIVE

## Purposes of Quarterly Meetings—in the past and today

The seeds of the living practice of Quarterly Meetings were planted in the 17th century.

... with the aim of maintaining good order, comforting and instructing all within the society, and keeping us in the ways of truth, meetings of our members are called to provide care and conduct business. These are held monthly in each district, quarterly within each region, and yearly for the whole nation. These [meetings] are held to ensure accurate communications with each other on those things that sustain us in piety and charity. ... Thus, Reader, you can see the character of the people called Quakers in their doctrine, worship, ministry, practice and discipline. (p. 337, In *Twenty-first Century Penn* by Paul Buckley, 2003. From Penn's *Primitive Christianity Revived in the Faith and Practice of the People called Quakers* [first published in 1696])

The Monthly Meetings in each county made up a Quarterly Meeting, where the most devoted and well-known Friends of the county could meet to talk with each other and to offer advice or assistance to each other—especially when a particular piece of business seemed especially difficult or when a Monthly Meeting was unable to settle a matter. (p. 382, in *Twenty-first Century Penn*, Paul Buckley, 2003. From Penn's *A Brief Account of the Rise and Progress of the People called Quakers* [first published in 1694].)

Most of Penn's treatise on *Primitive Christianity Revived* is devoted to describing how Quaker “doctrine, worship, ministry, practice and discipline” is rooted in the direct experience of God, of Spirit at work in hearts and lives. The fiery work of ministers who supported each other in spreading the prophetic truths revealed to them, and the openings, witness and ministry rising in local meetings for worship, came first. Later, processes and structures which arose were formalized to care for the needs of individual Friends and maintain order and discipline—or as Penn put it, to maintain good order, comfort and instruct all within the society, and keep us in the ways of truth. There remains a living and dynamic relationship between individuals and the Society of Friends as a whole, between an individual's direct experience of God, of Spirit, and the ongoing need for group care and accountability, both to maintain unity and order, and to test new, continuing revelation.

Fox created a tiered structure of geographically based meetings to care for the needs of individual Friends and maintain order and discipline. Like the congregationalists, Fox affirmed that those gathered in any meeting for business could be guided directly by Christ their leader and teacher. Like the Presbyterians, however, he set up superior bodies of recognized ministers that had authority over the subordinate meetings. Overall responsibility lay with the ministers and leaders of the entire Yearly Meeting.

This structure was not merely a pragmatic way of balancing the “prophetic” or charismatic functions of preaching and witness and the “priestly” or institutional function of maintaining unity and order ... Friends understood that individuals could misinterpret leadings, fall into pride or self-will, run off into notions. The discernment of the broader community was a surer guide to Truth. (pp. 4–5, “Fellowships, Conferences, and Associations: The Limits of Liberal Quaker Reinvention of Meeting Polity,” Elizabeth Cazden, *BHFH Quaker Issues*, 2003)

Today, as in the past, Quakers are called to engage fully and faithfully, with Spirit and with one another. Locally, regionally and in the Yearly Meeting as a whole, Friends in New England are called to obey the promptings of the Spirit to bring healing, wholeness, and transformation of ourselves and to the world. Quarterly meetings today are networks of meetings in the different regions of NEYM, by which local meetings support one another in matters that cannot be addressed by local meetings alone, and by which local meetings engage together in regional concerns and season business for the Yearly Meeting.

### Purpose of Quarterly Meetings and Three Main Functions of the Work of Quarterly Meetings today

**Purpose:** Quarterly meetings are regional groupings of monthly meetings that aim to “maintain good order, comfort and instruct ... and keep us in the ways of truth.”

**Three main functions of the work of quarterly meetings, in brief:**

1. Quarterly meetings cultivate social and spiritual connections between meetings, worship groups and individuals, prioritizing inclusion and encouraging relationships to grow and flourish through ongoing regional communication, including social media.
2. Quarterly meetings draw on the human and spiritual resources of local Meetings to provide support, counsel, and instruction in Quaker ways of truth, faithfulness (piety), and compassion (charity) to meetings in the region; quarterly meetings help local meetings connect with and access resources from the whole Yearly Meeting.
3. Quarterly meetings bring together the spiritual, personal, and financial resources of member monthly meetings to provide mutual care and maintain good order in matters of the faith and practice of New England Yearly Meeting of Friends. Quarterly meetings conduct mutual discernment (a.k.a. meeting for business) and provide accountability to one another and to the Yearly Meeting.

**The three main functions of the work of quarterly meetings, expanded:**

1. Quarterly meetings cultivate social and spiritual connections between meetings, worship groups, and individuals, prioritizing inclusion and encouraging relationships to grow and flourish through ongoing regional communication, including social media. (See below for more on the “Purposes for coming together”)
  - Quarterly meetings (QMs) offer regional opportunities for coming together in one place, generally four times a year, for worship, fellowship, and learning, as well as shared business. These meetings are generally held on set dates, for consistency, and may be hosted by different meetings within the quarter, on rotation, with financial support from the QM available.
  - Quarterly meetings facilitate regional retreats and workshops, which may be planned by and for particular ages (youth, young adults, elderly, etc.) or focused on particular areas of interest.
  - Quarterly meetings strengthen connections between meetings in the region by encouraging:
    - ◊ *Intervisitation*: individuals and groups traveling within the region for worship
    - ◊ *Invitation*: meetings inviting other meetings to participate in programs and events
    - ◊ *Cooperation*: two or more meetings coordinating or planning programs together
    - ◊ *Engagement* with mutual work in the world: by regional community work and witness, state lobbying on Friends’ concerns, and engagement in state ecumenical or interfaith bodies
  - Quarterly meetings facilitate ongoing regional communication through newsletters, Facebook pages, and times together:
    - ◊ Lifting up and drawing attention to what is happening in local meetings and the region, sharing the good news and building connections between meetings
    - ◊ Sharing witness/concerns among meetings
    - ◊ Sharing news from Annual Sessions (This is especially important for those meetings without representation at Yearly Meeting Sessions or on Yearly Meeting committees.)
2. **Quarterly meetings draw on the human and spiritual resources of local meetings to provide support, counsel, and instruction in Quaker ways of truth, faithfulness (piety),**

**and compassion (charity) to meetings in the region; quarterly meetings help local meetings connect with and access resources from the whole Yearly Meeting.**

Quarterly meetings empower the work of the quarter by pooling human and spiritual resources. Meetings within the Quarter work together to:

- Attend to and support the spiritual life and condition of the constituent meetings, offering mutual assistance in matters of ministry, eldership, and pastoral care (see below for some thoughts and queries about the function of quarterly meeting ministry and counsel)
  - Extend particular care and concern to meetings which are lacking in leadership, and to small worship groups and meetings with widely scattered or declining membership
  - Support youth, young adult, and multigenerational spiritual and religious education
  - Recognize, nurture, and support emerging gifts of ministry in the quarter, sharing and learning together how to do this better
  - Care for new and unaffiliated worship groups that don’t have a relationship with a monthly meeting
  - Extend help to meetings in trouble, lovingly addressing challenging behaviors and embracing conflict
  - Serve as a resource to local clerks, providing peer support; nurturing and mentoring emerging leaders
  - Share witness, concerns and rising ministries across meetings (This work may be undertaken by quarterly committees and other groups, meeting in-person and/or virtually.)
  - Help local meetings contribute to and access the resources available from around the Yearly Meeting; encouraging active connections with Yearly Meeting leadership, programs, committees and staff
3. **Quarterly meetings conduct mutual discernment (a.k.a. meeting for business) and provide accountability to one another and to the Yearly Meeting. Quarterly meetings bring together the spiritual, personal, and financial resources of member monthly meetings to provide mutual care and maintain and good order in matters of the faith and practice of New England Yearly Meeting of Friends.**

Quarterly meetings (QMs) have limited but important authority in some matters, as stated in NEYM Faith and Practice. Ongoing care in these matters may be functions of QM officers, QM finance, and QM ministry and counsel—or the work may be undertaken by differently named



groups. As necessary and appropriate matters are brought to QM meeting for business for consideration and approval, or as informational reports. (See below for some thoughts and queries about the function of quarterly meeting ministry and counsel.)

Quarterly meetings are responsible for:

- Maintaining minutes of quarterly meeting (QM) proceedings and archiving them in accordance with procedures set out by the Yearly Meeting
- Maintaining financial oversight of quarterly meeting funds and the finances of member meetings
- Reading state of Society and statistical reports from monthly meetings, reaching out to and encouraging meetings who have not contributed reports
- Preparing an annual quarterly meeting state of Society report, to be shared with meetings in the quarter and sent to Yearly Meeting Ministry and Counsel
- Seasoning travel minutes for Friends seeking to travel outside the quarter under a concern or in ministry, when these are brought forward by member meetings; when clear to do so, endorsing travel minutes and forwarding them to the Permanent Board; supporting and holding accountable those with QM-endorsed travel minutes. When there is an ongoing care and support committee it can be helpful to have a member from outside the meeting (See Permanent Board and Ministry and Counsel procedures for travel minutes.)
- Seasoning recommendations for recording gifts of ministry when these are brought forward by monthly meetings in the quarter, recording recognition when clear to do so; supporting and holding accountable those with recorded gifts in ministry; and rescinding recognition when gifts in ministry have come to an end. When there is an ongoing care and support committee it can be helpful to have a member from outside the monthly meeting. (Faith and Practice 1985 pp. 246–7: on naming/recording gifts of ministry; and Interim Faith and Practice 2014, Appendix 5D)
- Raising up and laying down monthly meetings. Ordinarily this involves mutual discernment with the local meeting. This includes reviewing the status and spiritual condition of monthly meetings and discontinuing monthly meetings that have ceased to function in good order. The QM may determine that, in the best interests of the Society of Friends as a whole one or more monthly meeting may be joined, divided, or laid down (see Faith and Practice pp. 220–221)

Quarterly meetings for business engage member monthly meetings in mutual discernment to:

- Prepare and season concerns rising from member monthly meetings, as well as concerns shared by other QMs and coming from NEYM; when clear to do so, endorsing minutes to be sent to Permanent Board or to Annual Sessions
- Receive reports and engage in discernment on matters brought by quarterly meeting ministry and council, finance, and other committees and groups of concern.
- Receive and read memorial minutes submitted by monthly meetings; endorse those to be forwarded to the Yearly Meeting
- Nominate and appoint quarterly meeting clerks, officers, and committees, including representatives to state ecumenical councils and other bodies, and supporting all of them (Note: Representatives to state ecumenical councils serve as representative of the Yearly Meeting)

#### **Purposes for coming together for quarterly meetings and other meeting-wide gatherings**

Periodic, one-day quarterly meetings and weekend gatherings can be especially important in regions where local meetings are widely scattered, and for meetings that have little connection to the wider Yearly Meeting. Regularly scheduled quarterly meetings provide opportunities for members and attenders of all ages from the meetings in the region to:

- Worship together, listening for Spirit speaking through a broader range of voices and lives than are present in any one meeting, experiencing different styles of ministry and forms of worship
- Build and strengthen relationships and friendships between members of different meetings in the region, with particular attention to children and youth, and for multigenerational opportunities of welcome, inclusion and shared activities (including work and play)
- Participate in the business of the quarter, including hearing about the spiritual condition, emerging gifts, needs and concerns of the various local meetings; fiduciary stewardship; and discerning when and how to speak with a common voice and/or act with a common purpose
- Learn about the life and concerns rising in meetings in the region through programs, retreats, workshops, witness actions and other events

#### **Some thoughts and queries on the purpose/function of quarterly meeting ministry and counsel**

Quarterly meetings are mutually responsible for cultivating and empowering ministry and for providing spiritual nurture, counsel and accountability to member meetings. While not all monthly and quarterly meetings have experience in recording gifts in ministry of members, this practice is still alive in New England. Recognizing calls to travel under the weight of a concern or in ministry are more common today. Quarterly meetings have particular responsibilities in both types of recognition, when asked by member monthly meetings. These are not functions that are easily handled by meetings for worship for business. Ongoing or ad-hoc groups tasked with the function (if not the name) of ministry and counsel are needed in these and in other matters.

**Queries that quarterly meetings might need to periodically consider include:**

- How do we mutually care for the local meetings within the quarter? Recognizing that benign neglect is neither loving nor sustainable, what are we led to do now? What does 21st-century pastoral care of meetings look like in the different geographic regions of New England?

- Quarterly meeting of ministers and elders, the precursor to quarterly ministry and counsel, once served an important role in supporting vibrant ministry in local meetings. How might quarters cultivate, nurture and support those serving the function of ministers and elders within quarters today? How do we support and hold one another accountable?

**Some queries on the purpose/function of quarterly meetings in general**

- What can quarterly meetings do to nurture and support emerging leaders within constituent meetings and the quarter itself?
- Do Yearly Meeting programs offering retreats for youth and young adults serve some of the functions of quarterly meeting gatherings? When do geographic groupings bring life? What can we learn from this?
- What functions of quarterly meetings might be better met by state-wide groupings of local meetings?

## Approved Committee Purposes, Procedures, and Composition

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### Archives and Historical Records Committee

#### **Purpose**

Archives and Historical Records Committee establishes and maintains the collection policy which advises meetings on the care of their records, encourages both meetings and committees to donate copies of these records to the Special Collections and University Archive (SCUA) at the W.E.B. Dubois Library, University of Massachusetts, on a regular basis. The committee is responsible for the ongoing relationship with SCUA, as articulated in our Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The committee is responsible to direct the focus and support the work of the Outreach Archivist, who works directly with Yearly, quarterly, monthly and preparative meetings, Yearly Meeting committees, New England Friends institutions, and individual members of the Yearly Meeting. This is an aspect of our testimony of stewardship. Recognizing that Friends' faith is a non-creedal one, and that the expression of that faith is embodied in the records of our actions, the committee promotes the study of Quaker history to the end that Friends may find guidance in their past for their witness in the present. It encourages meetings to utilize the resources of the archives in answering their financial, property, and biographical, or other questions historical in nature.

#### **Procedures**

The committee recommends appointment of an Outreach Archivist, in conjunction with the secretary of New England Yearly Meeting. The secretary supervises the Archivist. The committee consults with the Outreach Archivist on priorities for outreach regularly. Committees members will also participate and work with the Outreach Archivist. The committee meets monthly or quarterly by video conference. The committee submits an annual report to New England Yearly Meeting. The committee reviews

the relationship with the W.E.B. Du Bois Library at the University of Massachusetts Amherst (SCUA) annually as well as the currency of the MOU, and recommends any changes to the NEYM Permanent Board. The committee serves as a resource to SCUA when questions such as copyright use arise as outlined in our MOU.

#### **Composition**

- The Committee includes a group of 5 to 6 Friends with skills and perspectives regarding the collection, preservation and research of historical records, named by the Nominating Committee in consultation with the Archives and Historical Records committee and approved by the Yearly Meeting.
- The committee works with an Outreach Archivist and the NEYM Office Manager.
- The clerk of the committee is appointed by the committee, in consultation with Coordinating and Advisory Committee and approved by the Yearly Meeting. The Yearly Meeting secretary is responsible for supervising the work of the Outreach Archivist.

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### Faith in Action Committee

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#### **Purposes**

To support the public witness of Quakers in New England. To listen for where Friends from across New England are active, to amplify what is happening locally, to connect Friends with each other, to help form networks among Friends who carry related concerns, to highlight and share the news of Witness among Friends, to listen for where Spirit is moving us. The Faith in Action Committee does not do, oversee, or own the work of witness in New England Yearly Meeting; rather, it connects those who are active in witness.

## Procedures

- Listen—(quarters, monthly meetings, Earthcare Ministry, the Committee on Racial, Social, and Economic Justice [RSEJ], Legacy Gift, Prophetic Climate Action Working Group, Friends working for immigration justice, Israel-Palestine working group, etc.). The committee will subscribe to the various listservs and newsletters of these groups, and will use social media and websites to help the committee stay informed about the work being done. When invited or when opportunities arise, members of the committee will attend meetings of quarters, monthly meetings, committees or groups active in witness to learn more about their work, or to help them connect with others.
- Amplify—The committee will use the tools available (the NEYM monthly e-mail newsletter, social media, etc.) to share information about witness that is occurring among Friends in New England.
- Form ad hoc networks—The committee will connect Friends who are carrying the same or related concerns. The committee will invite Friends to share among each other lessons learned and challenges faced.
- The committee will serve as a resource to the presiding clerk and secretary when drafting time-sensitive public statements.
- The committee may be called to consult with the clerk of Permanent Board to inform discernment about distributions from the Fund for Sufferings.
- The committee will work with the Yearly Meeting staff to make use of Yearly Meeting resources (newsletter, Zoom, Salesforce, etc.) as appropriate to support amplification and the forming of networks.
- The committee will consult with the presiding clerk and secretary about where Spirit is moving among Quakers in New England. This may include assisting in developing the agenda for annual business sessions, or preparing items to bring to the gathered body.

- The work of the committee continues throughout the year and does not wait on committee meetings. The committee will meet once in September to coordinate the work for the coming year and once in May with the presiding clerk to consider what might inform the agenda for Annual Sessions. Additional meetings may occur as scheduled by the committee clerk, but the bulk of the work is done through ongoing conversations and communications among committee members.

## Composition

- Three Friends named by Nominating Committee and approved by the Yearly Meeting for staggered 3-year terms, renewable
- Clerk named by Nominating Committee, approved by the Yearly Meeting  
The committee seeks individuals comfortable and skilled in communication, facilitation, and listening. The committee maintains linkages with the witness and ministry committees of the Yearly Meeting (Earthcare Ministry, RSEJ), Legacy Gift, Ministry and Counsel, and with the presiding clerk and secretary. The Committee maintains linkages with quarterly meetings and with monthly meetings.

*Note: These purposes and procedures will be reviewed by Coordinating and Advisory and brought back to the Permanent Board for review after one year.*

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## Friends Camp Committee

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### Purpose

The Friends Camp Committee has stewardship of Friends Camp, supporting and facilitating the Camp mission of providing a unique outdoor camp for spiritual, emotional and creative growth. The Committee helps assure the Camp is a caring and accepting community that embraces the faith and practices of Friends as one of many ways of helping youth discern a true and healthy path

into adulthood with group worship, recreational activities, artistic pursuits and work projects. The Yearly Meeting delegates duties and responsibilities for oversight of the camp operation to the Committee.

### **Procedures**

Meetings of the Friends Camp committee shall be held three or four times each year, at a reasonable time and place designated by the clerk. As needed, the clerk may designate additional meetings.

The Friends Camp Committee meeting held between the end of Sessions and November 15th shall be designated the Annual Meeting. During the Annual Meeting the Executive Council, committee chairs, and committee memberships are defined and will be in place until the next Annual Meeting.

A quorum for the Friends Camp Committee shall be 50 percent of the current active members. A quorum for any of the committee sub-committee meetings will be at least two participants. Members participating remotely will count as part of a quorum.

The Friends Camp Committee has a clerk, a recording clerk, a supervisor of the Camp Director, clerk of Buildings and Grounds, and a treasurer, with the Camp Director serving ex-officio. These positions make up the Executive Council. Any committee member may hold two or more of the committee positions, except the clerk, who may not also be the Treasurer. The Executive Council can conduct business on the phone, on the internet, or face-to-face, if a majority of the members are able to participate in the meeting. As needed and between Friends Camp Committee meetings, the Executive Council may set important and time-sensitive policies in the areas of personnel, safety, and finance. The responsibilities and tasks of these positions are set forth in Appendix 2 of the Friends Camp Governance Document.

The Friends Camp Committee has five standing sub-committees. They are: Finance and Development, Personnel, Building and Grounds, Health and Safety, and Program and Evaluation. The responsibilities and tasks of the sub-

committees are set forth in Appendix 3 of the Governance Document.

All Camp Committee members are expected to join at least one of the standing sub-committees and to attend virtually all the Friends Camp Committee meetings. In addition, non-committee member volunteers may be asked to join one of the five standing sub-committees. Members of these sub-committees who are not on the Friends Camp Committee will have the option to serve without terms or limits on the length of service.

The Friends Camp Committee and clerk may set up additional sub-committees and appoint additional non-committee members to sub-committees, as it is deemed necessary, to help fulfill the mission and objectives of Friends Camp.

The Committee ensures the duties and responsibilities outlined in the committee position descriptions and the committee descriptions are carried out effectively to promote the mission and objectives of Friends Camp.

The Committee conducts its business in the manner and practice of Friends. As guidelines for their process and their discernment of policy, they use the Faith and Practice of New England Yearly Meeting of Friends and the governance publications of the Friends Council on Education.

The Committee provides supervision and evaluation of the Camp Director. They define the scope of authority of the Director and the limitations of what the Director can and cannot do.

The Camp Committee has the responsibility and authority to define the vision, values and the short- and long-term objectives of Friends Camp. The Director defines and implements the tasks and actions needed to accomplish the objectives that have been outlined by the Committee.

The Committee receives reports on the financial health of the Camp from the Camp Treasurer at each of its meetings, approximately quarterly.

The Friends Camp Committee adopts, and from time-to-time reviews and amends, fiscal policies and procedures that govern internal controls and other significant aspects of a sound fiscal operation to assure that Friends Camp will have sound financial controls that substantially conform to generally accepted accounting principles.

The Committee assures that regular professional financial reviews are conducted every third year or as needed, in concert with the Yearly Meeting Operating Division.

The committee receives a proposed budget prepared by the Director and Treasurer in late August or early September, including both operating and capital components. The Director then meets about this budget with the Yearly Meeting secretary and Yearly Meeting treasurer. Following this consultation, and with the Yearly Meeting secretary's and Yearly Meeting treasurer's endorsement, the Camp Director submits the proposed operating and capital budgets for approval by the Friends Camp Committee at its September meeting. Finally, the Committee forwards this budget to the Yearly Meeting Permanent Board for approval at its September meeting.

Given the compressed time frame for budget development, if agreement is not reached, the Camp Committee and Permanent Board will endeavor to approve a provisional budget. This would allow concerns to be addressed and the Camp to operate for the first two months of the fiscal year. Final approval would then occur at the Permanent Board and Friends Camp Committee meetings in November.

The Camp Committee submits an annual written report to the Yearly Meeting.

### **Composition**

- Committee members are nominated by the Friends Camp Nominating Committee and

approved by Yearly Meeting for terms of up to 3 years.

- The Friends Camp committee has at least 7 and not more than 15 members appointed for 3-year terms, with eligibility to be reappointed for two additional terms, or up to 9 years total.
- The Camp Director and Yearly Meeting secretary serve as ex-officio members.
- At least two-thirds of the members of the Committee will be members or active attenders of a monthly meeting in New England Yearly Meeting.
- The terms are organized into classes of up to five members so that one-third of the committee is appointed or reappointed each year.
- Friends Camp Committee Members who are given a midyear appointment will be assigned by the recording clerk to one of the three classes and will serve their first Friends Camp Committee term for one, two, or three years, based on openings in one of the three classes.
- The clerk, recording clerk and supervisor of the Director are selected from membership of the Camp Committee and are approved by the Yearly Meeting.
- Volunteers who are not committee members may be selected to serve on Camp sub-committees as needed to fulfill the mission and objectives of Friends Camp.
- The Friends Camp Committee maintains active relationship with the NEYM Youth Ministries Committee through the Camp Director serving as an ex-officio member.
- The Friends Camp Committee coordinates with the NEYM Finance Committee and Treasurer, as outlined in the procedures.

## Memorial Minutes

Phyllis Fairweather Agard  
September 14, 1920 – August 5, 2016

Phyllis Agard died at home on August 5, 2016, shortly before her 96th birthday. A memorial meeting was held at Mount Toby Friends Meeting on January 7, 2017.

Phyllis was born in West Hartford, Connecticut, on September 14, 1920, the daughter of Harold Davis Fairweather and Maude Agard Fairweather. She graduated from Hall High School in West Hartford, and earned a certificate in drafting and interior design from Pratt Institute in New York City. She grew up in a Methodist-Episcopal church in West Hartford, but found the structures and teachings there of little relevance.

She and Robert Mason Agard were second cousins and met at a family wedding in their teens. They courted from the time Phyllis was sixteen and married in 1942. During World War II, Phyllis and Bob lived in Washington, D.C., where Bob worked for the Library of Congress and Phyllis as a “Millie the Mapper,” drafting bomb targets for the War Department. After the war, the couple moved to Ripon, Wisconsin. Bob was the Ripon College librarian and Phyllis assisted with the resettlement of refugees from Europe, the beginning of a lifelong commitment to helping orient newcomers to the United States.

In 1949 Bob took a new job as librarian at Earlham College in Richmond, Indiana. Here Phyllis volunteered at the state mental hospital, playing her accordion and singing with patients. She was influential in the establishment of a new and much-needed program to connect with patients’ families. In Richmond, Phyllis and Bob continued their work with refugees, helping resettle more World War II refugees and then refugees from the Hungarian uprising of 1956. During the late 1950s, they hosted weekly dinner and English conversation sessions for a group of young Hungarian refugees in their home.

It was also in Richmond that Phyllis and Bob became involved with Quakers. They began attending West Richmond Friends Meeting (programmed) as the closest thing in Indiana to the New England Congregational Church of Bob’s youth. Over time, though, they found themselves more comfortable with the unprogrammed group that met on campus. Later, in 1981, Phyllis wrote a “Spiritual Autobiography” for Mount Toby’s Ministry & Worship Committee that expressed what drew her to Friends at that time:

*It seemed to me that Friends were more likely than people in other denominations I had known to have the sort of integrity where the things they said they believed, and the things they really did believe, and the things they did were all of a piece. I was sure the reason was the silent meeting. You can’t go to meeting week after week and sit alone with your thoughts without sooner or later coming face to face with you as you really are. And if you don’t like what you see, you don’t have very many choices. You can leave and go to a church where ceremony and music and speaking will keep you diverted. You can look the other way and learn to live with it. Or you can go to work and try to change things (i.e., yourself).*

In 1961 Bob accepted a job at the University of Massachusetts Amherst library, and the family joined the Middle Connecticut Valley Monthly Meeting of Friends (the precursor to Mount Toby). Phyllis served on many Meeting committees, most notably, perhaps, as convener of the Religious Education Committee during the turbulent 1960s when she had three daughters in the active and politically focused Young Friends group.

In 1968 the family moved to Bennington, Vermont, where Phyllis continued her involvement in mental health, working as a volunteer paraprofessional at the Bennington Day Treatment Center. She also worked to remodel low-income housing operated by the local Council of Churches, and was eventually appointed to supervise maintenance and renovations. During their years in Vermont, Bob and Phyllis were members of the Bennington Friends Meeting. They continued to be active on committees and were co-clerks for many years.

In 1981, after Bob's retirement, the couple returned to Amherst and the beloved Lincoln Avenue house they had purchased in 1961. They served as co-clerks of Mount Toby and worked extensively with Cambodian refugee resettlement. They welcomed Chamnan Koy (Tan) into the family as a fifth daughter. In addition to her work with Mount Toby's Refugee Resettlement Committee over many decades, Phyllis's most lasting impact on Mount Toby may well be her creation of the Mount Toby Handbook. When she and Bob became co-clerks, she found it frustratingly difficult to find out what our policies and previous decisions were, so she went through all our back minutes and compiled the Meeting's decisions into a Handbook, which she continued to update for the next 20 years.

Phyllis was also active in New England Yearly Meeting. She served on the Prejudice & Poverty Committee, Mosher Book & Tract Committee, and the Committee on Aging. She served on Permanent Board for 10 years. Phyllis was always practical, interested in getting things done, and with little interest in abstract, theoretical discussions. In the "Spiritual Autobiography" mentioned above she sums up her underlying approach to religion:

*I don't see myself as a very "spiritual" person—whatever that may be. I'm sure there are people who would see me as agnostic, if not outright atheistic, because my concept of god doesn't agree with theirs, or because there are some matters I haven't felt I needed to come to a decision on. I can't distinguish between spiritual, emotional, mental, and social development—they are so intertwined that they are forever inseparable, and growth in any one area feeds the others. And physical conditions affect them all, and are in turn affected by them. I do the best I can at the time (or try to) and wait to see what comes next.*

After Bob's death in 2003, Phyllis sold the Lincoln Avenue house to her daughter Sukey and her husband, and designed her own apartment to be built onto the back of the house. She continued to attend meeting for worship regularly and was a calm presence among us for the subsequent 13 years. She left this world as she had wished, in her own home in her own bed. She is survived by her five daughters: Anne Agard, Ellen Agard, Jennette Agard, Susan Agard Krause, and Chamnan Koy Tan. We are grateful for her steady guiding hand for so many years.

APPROVED BY MOUNT TOBY MONTHLY MEETING, JULY 9, 2017

ENDORSED BY CONNECTICUT VALLEY QUARTER, OCTOBER 17, 2017

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Edward Baker

April 20, 1949 – October 29, 2017

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With the late afternoon sun providing its soft light to the room, Edward Draper Baker Jr. passed away on October 29, 2017, after a valiant five-year battle with cancer. October was Edward's favorite month, and he was where he wanted to be, at home in Ashaway, Rhode Island, in the loving arms of his family.

The son of Edward and Anne English Baker, Edward was born on April 20, 1949, and grew up in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, with his three sisters. He earned a bachelor's degree in history from Juniata College and a master's degree from Pennsylvania State University. He spent summers working



for the National Outdoor Leadership School in the Absaroka Mountains of Wyoming and later taught backpacking and rock climbing at North Carolina State University.

Edward met Carol Adair Pringle, the love of his life, at a contra dance when she finally had a waltz free. They were married for 29 years. Their family included daughters Sarah and Hannah of Boston, Massachusetts, son Andrew Yates and his wife Becca, and grandsons Davis and Quinn of Portland, Oregon. Edward loved his family deeply and cherished recent times with his young grandsons. Edward loved to dance, particularly contra dancing and swing, and enjoyed sitting around a table of friends enjoying home-cooked meals and conversation late into the evening, often accompanied by a glass of fine red wine or Kentucky bourbon.

Edward was sustained by his Quaker faith and its tenets of simplicity, peace, honesty, and integrity. He sought the Inner Light in each person he met, and his faith helped him through previous bouts with cancer. Edward's path to his Quaker faith began when he worked for a Quaker farmer outside Philadelphia doing odd jobs during his summers in high school, often hitchhiking to get to work. In college, he worked at a summer canoe camp in Maine, where once again his employer was a Quaker. Edward started attending Quaker meeting regularly in State College, Pennsylvania, when he was a graduate student, eventually joining State College Friends Meeting. He transferred his membership to Westerly Monthly Meeting in Rhode Island after marrying and moving to Rhode Island.

Edward was a renaissance man who lived life deeply and fully. He designed and built his family home in Rhode Island. He loved building furniture, doing finish carpentry on the house, baking bread, cooking for family and guests, creating pottery and reading on the back porch on quiet mornings. He knew how to handle a blacksmith's tools. He loved building and nurturing the soil in his garden each spring with seaweed he harvested from the Connecticut shore and horse manure he collected from a friend's farm. After faithfully tending the garden until harvest time, he loved sharing its fresh produce or Carol's dill pickles or basil beans with others. Edward loved sitting through the flow, dynamics, and intricacies of Quaker process during New England Yearly Meeting (NEYM) Sessions so much that he led others to love sitting through them too.

Edward loved all things historical, but especially those of New England. His professional life included positions as Farm and Garden Coordinator at Hancock Shaker Village in Hancock, Massachusetts. There he and his Percheron draft horse, Patience, tilled a 2-acre vegetable garden as well as logging cordwood to supply the wood stoves in the museum exhibit buildings. At Hancock, he also tended a flock of sheep, including birthing the lambs, often in the middle of the night in the dead of winter.

After he married, Edward moved to Rhode Island and worked as a Supervisor of Historic Interpretation at Mystic Seaport Museum in Mystic, Connecticut. Later he became the first full-time Executive Director of the New London County Historical Society in New London, Connecticut. While in Mystic and New London, he started vintage 19th-century-era baseball teams at both institutions, participated as both a ball player and later as an umpire, and enjoyed the camaraderie that they offered.

Especially important to Edward was his 35-year association with ALHFAM, the Association for Living History, Farm and Agricultural Museums. He served on the Board of Directors, hosted the annual international conference and was an officer of the organization. He faithfully attended annual conferences all over North America, often making presentations alone or with colleagues, and relished his role as auctioneer at the annual auction. In retirement, Edward served as a volunteer secretary/treasurer in ALHFAM. Even as his health took a turn for the worse in his last days, he remained active in the association. He not only cherished the professional relationships he developed at these conferences but also considered some of his ALHFAM colleagues as his dearest friends.

Edward was so well-versed on such a wide variety of subjects that one could almost feel a bit intimidated at times in his presence. He excelled in most everything he did with a quiet, humble confidence. A Friend once remembered picking up a piece of wood from his woodbox to place in a wood-burning stove. Edward noticed that the wood was locust and proceeded to talk knowledgeably to his friend for 10 minutes about the various properties and uses of locust wood.

Friends would always turn to Edward when a question arose about a detail of Quaker history. When faced with a question having to do with Quaker practice, the usual course of events was to listen to his perspective before making a decision. Edward would usually wait for others to share their thoughts, then unobtrusively raise his hand. He had a way of getting right to the heart of the matter, and with his vast knowledge of Quaker faith and practice, he provided insight that always made us feel confident we were proceeding on the right path.

Edward had a forceful and, at the same time, good-natured way of challenging one to be a better person and Quaker. When someone might want to step back, Edward had the ability to guide him or her into wanting to do more. His wise words, grounded presence, and mentorship were a blessing to those who came to him in a time of need. He had the rare kind of authority that allowed him to be both a friend and a boss. The Book of James contains a verse that says, “But be doers of the word, and not merely hearers” (James 1:22). Edward’s quiet, rested way of getting things done serves as an example of that verse for us to emulate.

Edward served NEYM long and well, starting as a member of the Board of Overseers (Board of Trustees) at Moses Brown School from 1996 to 2003, as recording clerk for part of that time. He served on Permanent Board of NEYM from 2001 to 2012. With his usual grace and good cheer, he served as clerk (2009 to 2012) of the body when the then-clerk moved out of the area unexpectedly. Even without a more typical period of transition, Edward stepped into the role immediately and seamlessly. He was an able administrator, attentive to details, yet projected an easy and accessible manner. Edward applied himself with immense self-discipline to Quaker process when faced with extraordinary administrative challenges, such as facilitating the decision to close the New England Friends Home, sell the property to an appropriate buyer, and establish the process to discern what to do with the proceeds of the sale. The money, realized years ago, to this day funds emerging ministry and witness among Friends throughout New England (and beyond) through the Legacy Gift Funds.

Edward’s heart led him to active roles on the Personnel Committee (clerk, 2003–2014; ex officio, 2014–2016), as Supervisor (2014–2016) to the NEYM Secretary, and very recently in leading the effort to hire a new Director of Friends Camp. Edward led the transition to full-time staffing for the Junior Yearly Meeting and Junior High Yearly Meeting youth ministries retreat programs. He was a quiet leader who chose his words carefully and used them sparingly. His wisdom was beautifully paired with a dry sense of humor, affirmed at times only by the twinkle in his eyes. The legacy of his years of dedicated service helped shape NEYM and will live on through the administrative systems he created, and the people whom he hired and mentored and, indeed, loved.

Edward also served Westerly Monthly Meeting long and well, as clerk, recording clerk, member of Building and Grounds, and numerous stints on Ministry and Counsel. Edward continued to serve Westerly Monthly Meeting until the last weeks of his life. Though he was ill, he agreed in January of 2017 to serve a three-year term on Ministry and Counsel. He took the minutes of the monthly business meeting in October and was still offering sought-after guidance on Quaker practice two weeks before his death. He had been interested in doing more when he retired, not knowing then that managing cancer would turn out to be a full-time job. He did this job without being sad, without pitying himself, but by simply asserting that this was a challenge he had been given. As he stoically endured the final degenerative stages of his disease, he communicated simply with eye contact or a pat on the shoulder. We will always appreciate the gallantry he showed toward the end of his life.

At the memorial meeting, Edward's daughter Sarah read a poem Edward wrote in April of 2017, while sitting on his back porch, which captures the essence of his spirit:

*Not Knowing What to Expect*

Not Knowing what to expect  
I would never pack light  
For trips to the West

Shoes were the worst;  
Of course I'd want my work boots  
Because that's who I am

But I'd also want my Bean  
Boots, in case of mud.  
And some slip-ons for around the house

I'd want some shoes easy to  
Put on and take off in the  
Airport (pack my pocketknife in the luggage).

Not knowing what to expect  
I'd want to pack my computer and some music  
And a book of puzzles in carryon

There's a trip I'll be taking soon  
Without an overhead bin I need to  
Unpack. I won't be able to take anything with me.

Still, not knowing what to expect  
It's hard to pack light  
For a trip to the unknown.

Finally, at Edward's memorial meeting, a dear Friend quoted a line from Dawna Markova's poem "I Will Not Die an Unlived Life":

...to live so that which came to [us] as seed  
goes to the next as blossom,  
and that which came to [us] as blossom,  
goes on as fruit.

Edward Draper Baker lived in such a way as to bring seeds to blossom and blossoms to fruit. We are deeply saddened by his loss but, even more, grateful to have known him.

APPROVED BY WESTERLY MONTHLY MEETING, FEBRUARY 11, 2018

APPROVED BY RHODE ISLAND-SMITHFIELD QUARTERLY MEETING, MARCH 18, 2018

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John Albert Blanchard  
October 15, 1930 – March 21, 2017

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Though I play at the edges of knowing,  
truly I know  
our part is not knowing,  
but looking, and touching, and loving,  
which is the way I walked on,  
softly,  
through the pale-pink morning light.  
~Mary Oliver

Born on October 15, 1930, in Erie, Pennsylvania, John Albert Blanchard was the youngest of three children of Roy Osborne and Mary Eleanor (Hoke) Blanchard. At his memorial meeting on May 20, 2017, his sister, Dorothy Wiggins, remembered him as independent-minded from an early age. He was not one to stand passively by in the face of a perceived injustice, whether vigorously protesting as a very young boy his sister's impeding his will or as an adult refusing to acquiesce to racial, social or economic injustices. It was John's meditation practice to start the day quietly with his tea and by reading one of his favorite poets. It was also how he lived his life until the end: gently entering each day, taking time to listen carefully and to deeply appreciate what lessons could be learned.

After graduating from Pennsylvania State University with a major in horticulture, John became a conscientious objector during the Korean War and did his alternative service at a boys' home in Georgia. After two challenging years there, he resumed his plan to pursue a divinity degree, which he did at Vanderbilt University. This then led him to further language training at Cornell University in preparation for doing overseas missionary work for the Methodist Church. At Cornell he met and married Mary Alice Kesler and, following the training, together they went to Sarawak on the island of Borneo where they developed an agricultural ministry in a remote rural area, work that was both life-changing and frustrating. There, their two oldest children, Neil and Nathan, were born. John ultimately came to feel that the Methodist Church was insufficiently sensitive to the cultural and agricultural realities of the local population and he became ever more aware of the ways in which the local people were being exploited by the larger rubber companies. After four years, John and Mary opted not to renew their commitment and returned to the United States.

They first returned to Ithaca, New York where their third child, Katherine, was born. Then John took a small Methodist parish in Columbia Falls, Maine, where he hoped to devote his energies as a pastor to addressing the economic and social needs of the community. The need to instead devote his energies to fundraising and recruiting new members of the congregation, however, led to his decision to step down as pastor so he could be freed to do what he really felt called to do. He and Mary built and started a laundromat in nearby Machias which allowed him to feel a more direct part of the community. While there, he nurtured his passion for cooperative economic systems and sustainable agriculture, visions that remained at the forefront of his work for the rest of his life.

After four years in Machias, the family moved to Framingham, Massachusetts, to live at an ecumenical communal house, but soon found that the house did not suit their needs. They searched for another spiritual home, first attending the local Methodist Church, then the Roman Catholic Oblate Center in Natick, before settling in at Framingham Preparative Meeting in 1972. In 1984, John joined Framingham Friends Meeting as a member.

John was devoted to living a life congruent with his deeply held values; he was never driven by personal economic gain. Once settled in at Framingham Meeting, for a period he worked with the New England Regional Office of the American Friends Service Committee on developing economic

alternatives for displaced workers. His energies were later devoted to learning as much as he could about sustainable living and renewable energy, and he sought to bring these values fully into his own life. He was drawn to the example of the worker-owned cooperatives of Mondragon, Spain, and shared this story as widely as he could, visiting the town later in life with Lani. He was involved in the fight against corporations having the same legal status as people, was active early on in promoting single-payer health care, was a steady presence on Natick Common witnessing for peace, and was active in supporting workers' rights. He continued to be involved in promoting sustainable agriculture and was the farmer for a year at Stearns Farm (community-supported agriculture) and was an active member of the Northeast Organic Farmers Association. As a strong promoter of renewable energy, John led the way at Framingham Meeting in using first an electric bike, then an electric car.

John had a rich bass voice and loved to sing. He was a member for more than 20 years of the Broadmoor Chamber Singers in Natick where he met his second wife, Lani Vance Eggert, whom he married in 1995. His family circle then expanded beyond his own children to include Lani's children, Heather Eggert Honekamp and Don Warren Eggert, whom he warmly embraced and who in turn embraced him.

John served Framingham Friends Meeting on multiple committees including Peace and Social Concerns, of which he was co-clerk for two years, First Day School, Ministry and Counsel, and Nominating. He was also active on New England Yearly Meeting committees, serving on Peace and Social Concerns for six years, for two of which he served as clerk and co-clerk, and on the Racial, Social, and Economic Justice Committee for three years.

At his memorial meeting, there were many messages highlighting John's gentleness, sincerity and passion for peace and racial, social, and economic justice. We at Framingham Friends celebrate his undying spirit and remain inspired by the clarity of vision and purpose with which he lived his life.

APPROVED BY FRAMINGHAM FRIENDS MONTHLY MEETING, SEPTEMBER 17, 2017

ENDORSED BY SALEM QUARTERLY MEETING, OCTOBER 22, 2017

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Jean V. Blickensderfer  
November 11, 1946 – June 16, 2017

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Among Dover Friends, Jean was the flash of gold in the morning, a welcoming soul others naturally confided in, a faithful worker who eventually filled nearly every organizational position, from children's teacher and treasurer, to co-clerk and finally presiding clerk.

Raised Unitarian-Universalist in Methuen, Massachusetts, she came to Friends in the early '80s after she and her first husband, Dean L. Davis, had settled in Eliot, Maine, and were seeking the right church for a family that included daughters Thaedra May and Sarah Joy. They were quickly entrenched among us.

Jean was twice widowed. She married Dean the day after his graduation from the Maine Maritime Academy in 1967, and then managed their home during his long assignments at sea. During his interludes ashore, they built their own post-and-beam house on the banks of the Piscataqua River and could often be found boating, sometimes to visit other Quakers upstream, or on his motorcycle, which they rode to meeting in good weather. He died in a freak automobile collision in 1992, an accident his wife and daughters survived unscathed.

In 1998 she married Del Blickensderfer and worked as his partner at Del's Service Station until his passing from lupus in 2006.

Deeply grateful for the mentoring she received from seasoned Friends, Jean was a stickler for Quaker process and, over time, became the memory of the Meeting's business itself. She sought to walk a line between holding her tongue and being direct, when needed. A witness to the movement

of Christ in our midst, Jean's infrequent vocal ministry could be powerful. Her skills as a professional typist assured the Meeting's minutes were of archival quality and, combined with her business-school training, led to the "Blue Books" for committees and their clerks detailing their responsibilities. She was particularly fond of drawing on the Advices and Queries from London Yearly Meeting's 1994 edition of Quaker Faith and Practice as guideposts for our own action. An avid knitter, she took comfort in seeing others do needlework during our business deliberations, their patience reflecting the work before us. In time, a midweek knitting circle became what she called a "wicked good" time of refreshment, nurture, and fellowship.

More pressing obligations had precluded her attending Yearly Meeting sessions, a "bucket list" item she resolved to achieve. All along, she warmly welcomed the wider world of Friends to Dover.

Other delights in her life were yoga, visiting with neighbors, shopping and dining with dear friends, walking the beach, doting on her Pomeranian, Sumi, and especially being with her grandson Jonah. His living in Albuquerque, New Mexico, did not prevent her from accompanying much of his childhood and youth, from celebrating birthdays and holidays to attending his piano recitals, to cheering him on in mountain bicycle races, whenever she could.

In all, her presence, generosity, and deep and lively spirit were a gift. With loved ones at her bedside through the final days of her cancer, she passed at age 70, peace and grace abundant

APPROVED BY DOVER MONTHLY MEETING, JULY 16, 2017

ENDORSED BY DOVER QUARTERLY MEETING JULY 31, 2017

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Mary Connie Lyon Comfort  
1935 – May 21, 2016

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Mary Connie Lyon Comfort died May 21, 2016, at home in Essex Meadows, Connecticut, at age 81. Mary Connie is perhaps best described as fierce. She was fierce in her intellect, in her clarity and communication, in her integrity, in her love of justice and, most importantly, in the love she gave to those around her.

She married William Wistar Comfort of Haverford, Pennsylvania, in May, 1957. She was clear and intentional in her role as Wis' wife and was a solid contributor and sustainer of Wis' career, supporting his lifetime of academic achievement and making his career possible. Together, they raised two children, Martha Wistar Comfort and Howard Comfort III.

Over their years together, Wis and Mary Connie lived in many places, including Cambridge, Massachusetts; Rochester, New York; Montreal, Canada; Athens, Greece; Florence, Italy; and Middletown, Connecticut. Mary Connie was an active contributor to her community wherever she lived in a wide variety of ways. She was part of an early feminist collective and helped to establish the first family planning clinic in Middletown, serving as its first director. She served as a corporator for Middlesex Memorial Hospital, she was the president of the Parent-Teachers Association for the Independent Day School, she established a 4-H club, she served as a career counselor at Wesleyan University, and was a technical advisor the Connecticut Council on the Humanities. In her last years with Wesleyan she directed the Honors College, supervising the Wesleyan Prose and Poetry reading series housed at the Russell House. She specifically added to her own obituary that in 1981 she finished the East Lyme Marathon in under four hours.

A "convinced" Friend, Mary Connie was active in Quaker meetings in Rochester, New York; Amherst, Massachusetts; Vassalboro, Maine; and Middletown, Connecticut. She served for many years as a board member of the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) New England Region, and as a member of the Permanent Board of New England Yearly Meeting.

As a member of Middletown Friends Meeting, she was known for her eldering and her direct style of addressing issues. She was a gifted writer, doing minutes, letters, State of the Society reports, and letters to AFSC. She raised challenging questions about other cultures and our own stances on issues, and she did pioneering work in education, social and cultural venues, and the arts, especially drama and theater. At the last meeting for business she attended, Connie was quite ill. Nevertheless, she took the minutes for the meeting with her oxygen machine running. Toward the end of the meeting, as we were off-topic and rambling, she said, “Just so you know, in 15 minutes your recording clerk is going to run out of oxygen, and you will need to close this meeting or find someone else to finish the minutes.” Such was her dedication, clarity and wit.

Mary Connie was clear and direct in her vision and her speech and could recognize underlying truth. She often “called the question” and called us all to seek truth in a deeper way, personally and collectively. She performed true outreach to connect with new attenders as well as regular members. She affirmed others with absolute faith. Mary Connie was a force of nature, a force to be reckoned with, and capable of direct and forceful speech. She was a servant leader by example and recognizing gifts in others and encouraging them to express those gifts, even when they lacked confidence. She brought order out of chaos and nurtured the gifts of others, both of individuals and of the Meeting. We deeply miss her light, her truth, and her force.

APPROVED BY MIDDLETOWN FRIENDS MEETING, JANUARY 28, 2018

ENDORSED BY CONNECTICUT VALLEY QUARTERLY MEETING, FEBRUARY 4, 2018

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William Wistar Comfort  
April 19, 1933 – November 28, 2016

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Wis was raised at the nexus of Quaker tradition in America. His family, his community, and his education were all tied to Haverford College. His father had been head of the Classics department and his grandfather, for whom he was named, was a noted Quaker scholar and president of the college for 23 years. Wis attended the college as an undergraduate before going to the University of Washington for his PhD in mathematics.

Wis married Mary Connie Comfort in 1957, a woman who enjoyed dramatic moments and challenging orthodoxy. Their two children, Martha and Howard, were raised in the Middletown Friends Meeting until they left for school elsewhere. Wis and Mary Connie were married for 59 years, a marriage of contrasts and mutual benefit. Though Wis sometimes displayed a quiet irony about their differences, he clearly loved and appreciated this woman with her many talents and vivid personality.

As the weightiest Quaker in our Meeting, to whom we turned when faced with quandaries, he cautioned us against being too influenced by the forms of the Society of Friends. He made it clear that we should attend to the spirit of the tradition. He would also use his wry humor to point out the flaws in the endless discussions that Quakers are prone to in their search for unity. Sometimes these conversations are helpful and sometimes, he would indicate, they are not.

He was a member of the New England Yearly Meeting committee that revised the edition of *Faith and Practice* that was published in 1985. He served as clerk of the Middletown Friends Meeting several times, most recently relieving a clerk who was unable to serve her term because of health issues. He joked about his status as the “ad-hoc, pro-tem, pseudo, co-clerk” because he had never been formally nominated or approved. His willingness to serve in this way was characteristic of the humility with which he undertook his obligations.

Wis took time to think questions through, never answering in haste and often pausing as he sought the right words to express his thoughts clearly. He was a man of few words, but showed great

wisdom gained in a life of reading, contemplation, and integrity. He was a truly humble human being, given neither to bragging about his accomplishments nor complaining about the physical ailments that became ever more evident in the last few years.

He was a tremendous intellectual, following his career path as a mathematician for five decades, even consulting on papers from his hospital bed in his last few weeks. In addition to the numerous publications that already bear his name, there will be a posthumous paper published that represents this collaboration.

He was also intensely athletic, as a runner and tennis player. He formed deep ties with many people, doing what he enjoyed and cared about, but at a level that carried forward over time. Many spoke at his memorial meeting about the kindness, care, and concern that he conveyed in every interaction. He had a devoted worldwide circle of friends and colleagues.

Wis played the trombone in various Dixieland groups in both Connecticut and Maine. He also performed vocally with a resonant bass. He was an enthusiastic participant in the pep band that played for Wesleyan football games. At our annual Christmas party, we all enjoyed his performance of carols with musical skill and verve.

Wis' memorial meeting was followed by a New Orleans tradition, a somber march from the Wesleyan chapel to the site of the reception. As his son and daughter led the mourners, a Dixieland band played sorrowful dirges that gradually became more upbeat—not a typical end to a memorial meeting in the manner of Friends. We were all quite sure that Wis would have enjoyed this departure from tradition. We walked with a slow pace and danced gently in celebration of a dear Friend who gave us deep counsel, steadfast support, and a chance to share the beauty and truth conveyed in music.

APPROVED BY MIDDLETOWN FRIENDS MEETING, JANUARY 28, 2018

ENDORSED BY CONNECTICUT VALLEY QUARTERLY MEETING, FEBRUARY 4, 2018

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Georgana Falb Foster  
May 15, 1928 – July 2, 2017

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Georgana (Gee) Falb Foster grew up in Elgin, Iowa, daughter of George Henry Falb and Myrtle Marie (Kerr) Falb, both second-generation immigrants. In sharing her spiritual journey at Mount Toby Meeting in 2001, she said she thought of it “in terms of the communities of Christian faith which I have been a part of. These nourished me and gave me the company of others who were trying to discover how they could have comfort and the companionship of others and then perhaps reach out to the world.”

In that talk she described some of these communities and how they nurtured her: a childhood in the Methodist Church in a small Iowa town, mentors in Campfire Girls, her college years with the Wesley Foundation and the Methodist student movement, her time in India with a cohort of Methodists who were short-term missionaries, and the sisterhood there of the feminist missionary women and a number of British universalist Quakers. It was also in India that she met “my life’s spiritual partner and lover, John Foster.” Finally came the community of several Friends meetings, mainly Mount Toby, which she helped found and where she worshipped for over 50 years.

She and John Foster married under the care of Providence Monthly Meeting (Providence, Rhode Island) in 1954. When they married, she became part of a long line of New England Quakers, one where, in John’s words, “women did things.” Gee joined Friends shortly after and began a lifelong interest in Quaker history, particularly the role of women in that history.

When they settled in Leverett, Massachusetts, in 1956 they quickly became active in the Middle Connecticut Valley Monthly Meeting of Friends and dedicated themselves to building a community for their children and the children of many local attenders from Amherst, Northampton, Greenfield,



and other area towns. Even though Quaker families lived far from each other, monthly gatherings and picnics were useful in helping them all come to the realization that a single meeting and a meeting space was their goal. The Fosters' two sons, Ethan and Joshua, were among the children who benefitted from the creation of a single Friends meeting in the Amherst area, as it developed into Mount Toby Monthly Meeting of Friends, the name it took when its meetinghouse was completed in 1964.

Gee appreciated the gradual progress of building a Quaker community in the Amherst area and had a passion for relating this evolution to more recent members and attenders of Mount Toby Meeting. Eventually she wrote *The History of Mt. Toby Meeting, Volume 2: 1954–1990s*, continuing Helen Griffith's *History of the First Twenty Years of Mt. Toby Meeting (1939 to 1959)*, which expanded into *The History of Mt. Toby Meeting, Volume 1*.

Over the decades, Gee served Mount Toby Meeting on many committees: Meetinghouse, Ministry & Worship, Peace & Social Concerns, Trustees, and Newsletter. Her deep interest in Meeting history guided her in her later years in the work of the History and Records Committee in collecting and storing Meeting records. For the 50th anniversary of Mount Toby Meeting, she led the History and Records Committee in telling the story of the founding of the Meeting, to the delight of newcomers and old-timers alike. A parallel interest in the lives of individuals at Mount Toby led her to create a bulletin board where she regularly posted clippings with news of what both children and adults were doing in our wider communities. We appreciate the variety of ways she connected us to our history, to our activities outside the Meeting, and to each other.

She also nurtured our connections to the broader Quaker world. Her many years as the liaison to Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) and as an attender with John at FCNL annual meetings kept us abreast of political issues needing our action. She and John were also faithful attenders at New England Yearly Meeting (NEYM) Sessions and kept us informed of NEYM activities. Her presentations at NEYM on the history of Quaker women offered the fruits of her own research and experience among Friends.

Beginning in 1974, she served for six years as NEYM's representative to the Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC) at a moment when the world body was increasing its awareness of Friends in the whole Western Hemisphere. FWCC–Section of the Americas was so named in these years, and the FWCC Triennial in 1976 was held in Canada. Gee was involved in planning a pre-conference to that Triennial in China, Maine, with the topic, "The significance of Rufus Jones."

Gee's work with Methodists in India led her to an awareness of the tradition of Hindu goddesses, which became a profound interest throughout her life. She was intrigued by their representation in statues and folk art, which she collected. To better understand the iconography and art history of the items, she took a number of courses, eventually earning a second bachelor's degree with a self-designed program in the worship and depiction in folk art of the Hindu goddesses. Her senior project was an exhibit, "Faces of the Goddess: Folk Images of the Female Divinity in India," which was installed by Mount Holyoke College in 1988. Other items from her Hindu goddesses collection of folk art, now housed at the University of Iowa, have been displayed in seven museum exhibits.

Gee enjoyed the life of the Meeting in all its forms. She consistently participated in monthly meeting and provided her perspective on a wide range of agenda items brought forward for discernment. She enjoyed her role as "the memory of the Meeting" and shared her love for the community by telling stories from our history. In her messages in worship, she often provided an historical perspective to the issues of the day. Gee had an unforgettable personal style: without pretense, forthright, often opinionated, and warm.

APPROVED BY MOUNT TOBY MONTHLY MEETING, APRIL 8, 2018,  
ENDORSED BY CONNECTICUT VALLEY QUARTERLY MEETING, MAY 6, 2018

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Paul George Gardescu  
December 5, 1928 – January 3, 2017

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*When you respect the truth of the world, the truth of the world will work through you.*

Framingham Friends Meeting nestles into a glorious landscape of trees, shrubs, and open spaces created for and with us by our dear Friend Paul Gardescu. The vital natural environment and the simple building have brought gatherings and retreats from all over New England. Paul's stewardship of the physical setting was equally reflected in the community that he cultivated for over fifty years. We, in turn, have cherished him.

Born Paul George Gardescu in 1928 to Ionel Ion Stephan Gardescu and Pauline Scanlon, he visited his ancestral Romania several times. By his side was his wife, Betty Howlett Gardescu, whom he married at Friends Meeting at Cambridge in 1962. The couple has been a mainstay of our monthly meeting, sitting together on their customary bench without fail for decades, providing the fundamentals for potlucks and building improvements, and adding their terse wisdom with a few wry words when occasions warranted.

They started attending Framingham Preparative Meeting in December 1965. In 1979 Paul transferred membership along with others from Friends Meeting in Cambridge. He served as clerk from 1972 to 1975, and again from 1999 to 2002. He wrote the history of our building, Schoolhouse No. 7, and built delicate architectural models of the structure. There are touches of Paul everywhere. He designed and supervised construction of the addition, the space for the lift, the paving of the parking area, and he served on the committee for the kitchen addition. The seedlings he planted have matured, the Memorial Circle Garden has become our burial ground, and the witch-hazel tree, which blooms in February snow, has grown to accompany our worship.

Paul's contributions to New England Yearly Meeting date back over 40 years. From 1965 to 1970 he served on the New England Friends Home Committee, including terms as recording clerk and committee clerk; from 1980 to 1991 he was on the Finance Committee, serving as clerk from 1986 to 1990; from 1991 to 2001 he was on Permanent Board; and from 2007 to 2009 he was on the Committee on Aging.

Paul had four children: Sana, born in 1955 by his first wife, Ruth; Sarah, born in 1963; Jon, born in 1964; and Stephen, born in 1966. When Stephen died suddenly in 1989, the members of our Meeting gathered around Paul and Betty with care. Paul himself broke our silence in the first meeting for worship after the tragedy. He rose to tell the story of how Anansi, the Spider of African myth, brought death into the world. "But, I give you something to help you with the grief," he said. "I give you community."

Paul understood the art of placement, and how things could thrive together. His career in landscape architecture went back 60 years. At his memorial meeting, colleagues from Sasaki Associates shared how Paul had inspired them personally and guided them professionally for decades. He retired early and turned his attention to hand planting around the meetinghouse and digging with the Wayland Archeological Group. We heard stories from many who were often amused, sometimes puzzled, and ultimately informed by his relentlessly incisive vision.

We came to appreciate Paul's way of stewardship. It was to honor the earth, to notice what existed that could be nurtured, celebrated, perpetuated and shared, and to allow it to flourish as it would. With people too, when he saw a need he responded with simple presence. From the early years of the Meeting, he accepted our disparate personalities. Margaret Welsh and Penelope Turton, our matriarchs, depended on him. Many of us were inspired by him. Some were healed. In the end,

he was dignified and generous through the diminishment of Alzheimer's disease, sustained by Betty's care for him as the man of accomplishment she knew and loved.

For years they arrived at meeting early each week. He found a flower, stem or "weed" to arrange in his small handmade vase at the top of our stairs, and then took his place to set the roots of the worship that greeted us as we entered. That quiet presence didn't impose itself; it simply respected the truth of the world. Paul Gardescu's place is empty now, but we feel his legacy. It continues to accompany us in spirit and nourish us in the environment.

APPROVED BY FRAMINGHAM FRIENDS MONTHLY MEETING, SEPTEMBER 17, 2017

ENDORSED BY SALEM QUARTERLY MEETING, OCTOBER 22, 2017

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Ann Cotton Levinger  
January 21, 1931 – June 21, 2017

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Ann Cotton Levinger died on June 21, 2017, in Amherst, Massachusetts, with her family gathered around her. Ann was serenaded by George, her husband of 65 years, who sang "Let me call you sweetheart, I'm in love with you." George was to die 12 days later.

A memorial meeting for Ann and George was held on September 9, 2017, at the Wesley United Methodist Church in Hadley, Massachusetts, under the care of Mount Toby Friends Meeting. The large hall was filled with family, friends, and fellow activists from across the country.

Ann was born in Laurel, Mississippi, on January 21, 1931, to William and Marjorie Cotton, who had moved there from the North. In her spiritual journey recounted to Mount Toby in 2014, Ann described herself as "a very much wanted baby" who, in turn, very much wanted the two sisters, Jane and Nancy, who followed. Of these early years, Ann said, "I think about the changes, growing up in a very rigidly segregated society. Each deviation from those boundaries seemed like a spiritual breakthrough."

The story Ann tells of her life is full of revelation, beginning at age four in Presbyterian Sunday School, when she learned that God's children were of many colors, and extending through the morning of her talk, when she and George delighted in "the wonderful squirrels and birds" at their backyard feeder.

Revelation is mixed with struggle. As a senior in college, Ann struggled with her anxiety about marrying a man with a different religious background. George's Jewish family had fled Germany in 1935 to escape the Nazi regime. Love prevailed; Ann and George married in 1952, just as Ann was graduating from the University of Michigan with a dual degree in psychology and education. Ann and George found a common spiritual home in Quakerism, first in Ann Arbor, Michigan, and then in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, joining Radnor Meeting in 1957.

Ann taught fifth grade for several years before becoming the full-time mother of what the family has described as "four boisterous boys." In recalling this period of her life, Ann joked that she "found the social norms of the 1950s most helpful." Once the family moved to Cleveland, Ohio, in 1960, where George taught social research at Western Reserve University, Ann's life became one of continuing community service and social activism. The issues in Cleveland included fair housing, civil rights, and the anti-war movement. Ann was in charge of the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) Inner City Work Corps.

With George's appointment as Associate Professor of Psychology at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, Ann and George moved to Amherst in 1965 and began their 52-year association with Mount Toby Friends Meeting. They took part in weekly anti-war vigils on the Amherst Common and Ann volunteered as a draft counselor, assisting young men who wished to apply for conscientious objector status. During this time, Ann returned to school, earning a doctorate

in counseling from the University of Massachusetts School of Education in 1982 and becoming licensed as a clinical psychologist.

Ann served Mount Toby in many roles over the years. She served several terms on Ministry and Counsel/Ministry and Worship, as well as several terms on Overseers (now Care and Counsel). She was a member of the Refugee Resettlement Committee (later named the Cambodia Support Committee) from its inception in 1982 until her death. She served several terms on the Nominating Committee. She was a member of the Gay and Lesbian Concerns Committee and of the Draft Counseling Committee from its creation in 1982 until it was laid down. She was assistant clerk. She edited the newsletter and coordinated the Fall Fellowship Weekend. She served on several oversight and marriage clearness committees. She was a member of the Library Committee and of the History and Records Committee. In 1969, Ann urged the Meeting not to pay the telephone tax, since this tax supported the Vietnam War. The Meeting approved and for several decades did not pay the 'phone tax. In the early '70s Ann served as overseer for the Hampshire College Meeting for Worship. Until the last decade of her life, Ann regularly attended meeting for business.

Ann had a particular commitment to young children. She was on the Nursery/Child Care Committee for many terms. In 1977, she and Ruth Hawkins ran a series of parent training sessions based on the idea of systematic equality for all people, including children. In 2006, she was appointed to the Ad Hoc Committee on Safe Practices for Working with Youth, which helped Mount Toby develop explicit practices for ensuring the safety of the children. She co-authored an article in the Newsletter urging Friends to refrain from laughing when cute young children first got up the courage to say their names during introductions.

Friends remember Ann with great fondness. One person who worked with Ann on several committees says it was always very energizing to work with her on a committee. Another remembers her perpetual cheerfulness and good humor. Another notes that she was very active with Alternatives to Violence, going into the prison for years and hosted meetings at her home. She was loved, this person says, by the inmate trainers and participants. Another fondly remembers her climbing up to re-shingle the meetinghouse roof.

The Keeper of the Plantings writes the following: "The redbud that was planted five years ago in the center of the oval was planted after several years of gentle nudging by Ann—'A redbud would really be nice out here'—despite the somewhat unsuitable soil. Friends can be reminded of Ann whenever they pass this beautiful small tree, especially when it blooms in late spring."

APPROVED BY MOUNT TOBY MONTHLY MEETING, DECEMBER 10, 2017

ENDORSED BY CONNECTICUT VALLEY QUARTERLY MEETING, FEBRUARY 4, 2018

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George Klaus Levinger  
February 5, 1927 – July 3, 2017

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We share heartfelt remembrances of George Levinger, of one intimate in his care for Mount Toby Friends Meeting where we received his loving kindness. He was born February 5, 1927, to the Jewish Levinger family in Berlin, Germany. George's route to the United States was difficult. At eight, in 1935, with his family he escaped the persecution of Jews in Nazi Germany, traveling from Switzerland to London, and at 14, to Ellis Island.

At 16, he entered Columbia University, followed by training in Japanese ("because I spoke German") to serve in the Army Counter-Intelligence Corps in Japan. He did graduate work at Columbia University and the University of California, Berkeley, and earned his Ph.D. in social psychology at the University of Michigan. He held professorships at Bryn Mawr College of Social Work and Social Research; at Western Reserve University in social work; and in 1967, at the

University of Massachusetts psychology department, retiring in 1992. The internet has postings of many of his publications and academic activities.

George and Ann met in California in 1950 at the Lisle Fellowship, which promoted international understanding among young adults. After wending their way through several faith-related gatherings, they found the link between their Jewish and Presbyterian traditions in the Quaker meeting at Ann Arbor, Michigan, where simplicity, equality, dignity, and lack of formal doctrine led to their Quaker spiritual journey, spurring their commitment to nonviolence and social activism. They married on June 14, 1952.

During 52 years of living Quaker testimonies at Mount Toby, they helped resettle Cambodian people in Amherst and continued to expand those relationships. They joined the development of the Alternatives to Violence Project at the Somers, Connecticut, medium-security prison. George promoted means for low-income people to have affordable housing. He analyzed federal budgets with the National Priorities Project. In 1961, he had authored "The Use of Force in International Affairs," and into retirement continued to publish articles on the psychology of conflict and peace. He maintained a constant interest in Woolman Hill Quaker Retreat Center in Deerfield, Massachusetts, with his attention to board responsibilities and work projects.

It is possible to share interesting facets of George's international, professional, and academic background; however, it is his personal affections that remain. His pocket calendar was always handy to arrange sociable visiting. He loved to have conversation dates. George and Ann continually opened their home to guests of the Meeting and to others needing accommodations. At the Levinger's breakfast table, without getting up from his chair, George would turn pancakes on an adjoining grill, all the while fully attending to guests.

George presented his spiritual journey at Mount Toby on February 6, 2000. His spirituality emphasized "energy." He wanted his life to be an energetic search for meaning in his relationship with the world of humanity and nature. He believed that the world has an underlying community where we see God as the Light in all.

In June of 2017, George reprinted the chapter "Ann & I" from his 2011 memoir, *After the Storm* (2011), with a postscript "to honor Ann ... no longer her former self." In the original chapter, he wrote: "As I matured, I became calmer and more encouraging as a husband and father. I felt less driven than earlier. It was also helpful that I worked with female colleagues and graduate students, who pushed me toward a greater appreciation of gender equality, probably reducing struggles Ann and I might otherwise have had... . What counts in making a happy marriage is not so much how compatible you are, but how you deal with incompatibility."

Their family and retirement years included immersion in other cultures and the natural world. "In choosing most of our travels, we have emphasized activities like biking, camping, canoeing, and hiking or challenges to our intellectual capacities such as learning other languages or teaching in a different culture."

In his postscript, devoted to Ann, he wrote: "We had been close partners who took good care of each other, now I became Ann's main care giver with less and less return from her. Today Ann still smiles and repeatedly says she loves me, as I say to her. Hugging each other is still a great pleasure."

George died, at 90, in Amherst, Massachusetts, on July 3, 2017, 12 days after the death of his wife Ann, aged 86. Their memorial meeting on September 9, 2017, was attended by all four of their sons and their wives, Bill and Tracy, Jim and Leah, Matthew and Cristin, and David and Angela; his brother Bernie; and many of their eight grandchildren.

APPROVED BY MOUNT TOBY MONTHLY MEETING, DECEMBER 10, 2017

ENDORSED BY CONNECTICUT VALLEY QUARTERLY MEETING, FEBRUARY 4, 2018.

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Constance Sattler  
February 27, 1927 – April 12, 2016

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A lady of gardening and music, strength and vulnerability, humor and outrage, with a fierce determination to fight for Quaker causes, Connie was strongly independent and willing to explore new experiences.

As a Jewish child growing up during Hitler's rise to power, she was sent as a 12-year-old with her younger sister out of Germany by train on the Kindertransport. Arriving in England, they were lodged with several different families where, in addition to taking care of her sister and adjusting to cultural differences, she found herself with numbers of other refugee children in the household. Years later she found her parents in South America and the family resettled in the United States.

She married Bill Sattler and they had two children: Valerie, who lives in Germany and plays cello in the Neurenberg Symphony Orchestra; and Walter, a gifted violinist who died when a young man. The family eventually moved from New York City to Moodus, Connecticut, where they farmed and raised sheep.

Connie played and taught violin. She studied music in Cleveland, Ohio, and New York City and taught in the public school system in Hartford, Connecticut. She traveled to Japan to meet Suzuki and learn his method for teaching violin to children, and later opened her own studio in Moodus. In addition, she played violin in a Gilbert and Sullivan orchestra and with the New England Chorale, and the viola da gamba with a Renaissance group. Her students continue to affirm that she was inspirational to them as a musician and as a person.

Connie brought passion and spirit to all of her endeavors. Many of the children she encountered—now adults—comment on the sense that she was magical and brought delight and spirit to their lives, whether that was through music, nature, or storytelling.

Mal Benjamin, Bill's college roommate, was her loyal friend for 67 years. After Connie's and Mal's spouses died, the two of them maintained their friendship. They commuted back and forth between Moodus and Philadelphia until Mal finally moved to Connecticut. Mal said their relationship was "pretty close to perfect" because they loved each other. Connie created wonderful flower and vegetable gardens in Moodus, and the Meeting enjoyed yearly picnics there. She also brought beautiful flowers to our meetings for worship almost weekly.

Connie's Quaker activities included working with Dorothy Day on the Catholic Worker, picketing for peace, participating in American Friends Service Committee Connecticut programs, promoting Habitat for Humanity, starting a soup kitchen in Middletown, and working at Woolman Hill. At times she was the only one holding a vigil for peace in Middletown. One experience about which she was particularly proud was being arrested and jailed in New York City during a Vietnam War protest march. As the story goes, once when she and her son were on a crowded bus traveling past the women's prison in New York, he piped up in a loud voice, "Hey Mom, wasn't that where you were in jail?" evoking alarmed looks from the entire bus.

Middletown Meeting will greatly miss Connie's participation and spiritual strength, along with her caring kindness.

APPROVED BY MIDDLETOWN FRIENDS MEETING, JANUARY 28, 2018

ENDORSED BY CONNECTICUT VALLEY QUARTERLY MEETING, FEBRUARY 4, 2018

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Joyce Kay Wilson  
July 31, 1948 – October 7, 2016

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Wilderness Friends Meeting lost a dear member on October 7, 2016, when Joyce Kay Wilson passed away at her home after an extended illness. She was surrounded by her devoted family throughout.

Joyce was born July 31, 1948, in St. Louis Park, Minnesota, the daughter of Walter Anderson and Ethel Lindberg Anderson. She attended Wheaton College in Illinois, majoring in education. Her enthusiasm and skill as a downhill skier brought her to Stowe, Vermont, for the first time and in 1970, she was hired (sight unseen) as a teacher in the Orange School District near Barre, Vermont. She and her college sweetheart, Lee, were married in September 1972, a marriage that lasted for the rest of her life.

Though Joyce had been involved in teaching children and later in adult education, she went on to become one of the first female Internal Revenue Service officers in Vermont and was employed as such for 25 years. For many of us, she put a thoughtful, gentle face on the IRS.

Joyce and Lee moved to North Shrewsbury from Starksboro, Vermont, 39 years ago and came to love the town for its people and its natural highland beauty. She was active in the local community, volunteering to serve at the Shrewsbury library and as treasurer of both the cooperative at Pierce's Store, where she was also an original board member, and the Shrewsbury Outing Club. She also served the town as an auditor for six years.

Joyce was a deeply compassionate person whose energy was invested in benevolent organizations both near and far. She was deeply committed to VAMOS (Vermont Associates for Mexican Opportunity and Support), which educates, feeds, and provides medical, dental, and psychological care for roughly 700 impoverished children and many of their mothers in Cuernavaca, Mexico. A visit there with one of her daughters was a dream she never forgot.

Locally, she participated in the Thresholds/Decisions Program for several years, going into the Marble Valley Correctional Facility in Rutland to reflect with prisoners who were nearing release about their past and present choices, and to help them in developing a workable plan for transitioning back into society. Some of them kept in touch with her long after they were released. She, in turn, found this work very meaningful, so that after the program at the prison ended, she volunteered at the Rutland Dismas House (a halfway community for convicts returning to society) to help to prepare a dinner once a month, participate in fundraising on the phone, and contribute in other ways.

Becoming acquainted with Kate and Art Brinton, who were among the founders of Wilderness Friends Meeting, had a significant influence on Joyce, and the Meeting became her Quaker home. She took spiritual sustenance from the Meeting, served as an anchor for it, and for a number of years served as clerk. She would faithfully show up for meeting for worship even when she would possibly be alone.

Joyce embraced and lived the Quaker testimonies of peace and simplicity, and she saw that of God in everyone. She believed that the core of Christianity, as she put it, "is compassion and seeing myself in other people. Quakers often quote George Fox, 'Be patterns, be examples in all countries, places, islands, nations, wherever you come; that your carriage and life may preach among all sorts of people, and to them. Then you will come to walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in every one.' I just try to live and respond to others with compassion. That's enough of a challenge for me. I have so many questions that I can't begin to promote a particular belief."

Most likely due to her deep connection to nature, Joyce seemed to have a sense of timing when we members needed a hike in the woods or a picnic in the hills. She seemed to know, correctly, that these outings would lift our spirits and bring us closer together. She was always kind, patient, and

quick with a smile and word of encouragement for any and all. She led a life of genuine goodness and was a gift to all who were lucky enough to have known her.

In the last months of her illness, our Meeting members met for silent worship with her, Lee, and their daughters in her hospital room and then in her and Lee's cheerful home, times that were uplifting, peaceful, and mutually fulfilling for all present.

She is survived by her husband, Lee; their three wonderful daughters, Hannah, Linnea, and Ingrid, and their husbands; and two grandsons, Matteo and Linden, in whom she took particular delight. Her brother, James Anderson of Arden Hills, Minnesota, also survives her.

APPROVED BY WILDERNESS FRIENDS MEETING, AUGUST 14, 2017

ENDORSED BY NORTHWEST QUARTERLY MEETING, SEPTEMBER 10, 2017



## 2018 NEYM Nominating Slate

### Permanent Board (50)

#### 2019

Gant, Christopher (Bhill)  
 Harrington, Ian (Cam)  
 Walkauskas, William (NHav)  
*Gant, Sarah (Bhill), clerk*

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#### 2020

Guaraldi, Benjamin (Bhill)  
 Radocchia, Anna (Law)  
 Rein, Carole (Nshor)  
 Zimmerman, Rosemary (Benn)

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#### 2021

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

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#### 2022

Drayton, Darcy (Weare)  
 Forsythe, Hannah (Bhill)  
 Nortonsmith, Gina (Nham)  
 Smith, Sara (Con)  
 Szatkowski, Elizabeth (Port)  
 Kantt, Elizabeth (Fpon)  
 Belcher, Travis (Monad)

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#### 2023

**Taber, Will (FPon)**  
 Blood-Forsythe, Martin (Bhill)  
 McCandless, Jean (Burl)  
 Mair, Ed (Ames)  
 Bishop, Peter (Mtoby)

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### Archives and Historical Records (9)

#### 2019

Cazden, Betsy (Prov)  
 Doyle, Tom (Mtob)  
 Slator, Nancy (Mtob)

#### 2020

Forsythe, Carol (Put), clerk  
 Quirk, Brian (Law)  
 Crosby, Eileen (Mtob)

#### 2021

Schmidt, Macci (Nham)

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### Board of Managers of Investments and Permanent Funds (10)

#### 2019

Pang, Andrew (Well)  
 Tierney, Joe (Cam)

#### 2020

McKnight, Jeanne (Well)  
 Spivey, Rowan (Brun)

#### 2021

Chicos, Roberta (Cam)  
 Spivey, Robb (Brun)

#### 2022

Hackman, Matthew (Prov)  
 Malin, Kathy (Smith), clerk

#### 2023

*Harrington, Ian (Camb)*  
*Mair, Ed (Ames)*

**Development (9)**

**2019**

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**2020**

Bennett, Dulany (Han)  
 Gant, Chris (Bhill), clerk

**2021**

*Chase, Deanna (West), co-clerk*  
 Moyer, Pat (Fpon)  
 Quoos, Thayer (Nhav)  
 Reuthe, John (Vass)

**Earthcare Ministry (15)**

**2019**

Bennett, Mary (Worc), co-clerk  
 Coehlo, Mary (Cam)  
 Haines, Christopher (Fpon)  
 Klinkman, Paul (Prov)  
 Salmon, Shara (Bel)  
 Warner, Ben (Cam)

**2020**

Gerould, Sarah (Fpon)  
 Holcombe, William (Sand)  
 Lightsom, Fran (Wfal)  
 Stoner, Kim (Nhav)

**2021**

Gates, Stephen (Wfal)

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**Finance (15)**

**2019**

Sazama, Jerry (Stor)

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**2020**

Gentile, Ralph (Law)  
*Murray, Bob (Bhill), clerk*  
 Sanchez-Eppler, Elias (Nham)  
 Drysdale, Scot (Han)

**2021**

Savery-Frederick, Carol (Hart)

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**2022**

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**2023**

Forsythe, Hannah (Bhill)  
 Stern, Roland (Well)

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**Friends General Conference Committee (15)**

**2019**

Rush, David (Cam)

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**2020**

Nutting, Peter (Vass)  
 Riendeau, Michelle (Well)

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**Friends United Meeting Committee (12 Tri Reps, 9 appointed)**

**Representatives to 2017 Triennial; Committee Term 2019**

Baker, Marian (Weare) (Tri '17)  
 Keefe-Perry, Kristina (Fpon) (Tri '17)

Stillwell, Jackie (Mon) (Tri '17)  
 Vargo, Tom (Nham) (Tri '17)

Weiss, Fritz (Han) (Tri '17)

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**FUM General Board Representatives (3)**

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Martin, Frederick (Bhill)

Keefe-Perry, Kristina (Fpon)

**Friends World Committee for Consultation–New England (12)****2019**

Humphries, Debbie (Hart), co-opt  
 Leuchak, Rebecca (Prov)  
 Weaver, Hal (Wells)

**2020**

Goldberger, Judy (Bhill), co-opt  
 Grannell, Dorothy (Port)  
 Guaraldi, Rachel (Bhill)

**2021**

Hopkins, Mary (Fpon), co-opt  
 Jorgenson, Christel (Cam)  
*Woods, Greg (Cam)*  
 Zomora Rodriquez, Yanire

**Legacy Gift Committee (9)****2019**

Jensen, Craig (Mon)  
 Wilson, Morgan (Fram)

**2020**

McCandless, Jean (Burl), co-clerk  
 Rockwood, Susan (Midcoast)  
 Schell, Suzanna (Bhill), co-clerk

**2021**

*Mair, Ed (Ames)*  
**Link, Mary (Mtob)**

**Ministry and Counsel At-Large (12)****2019**

Olsen, Kathy (Sand)  
 Parkes, Cornelia (Cam)  
 Spencer, Sarah (Bhill)  
 Williams, Carl (Plain)

**2020**

Shelton, LVM (Plain)  
*Woodrow, Honor (Fram), clerk*

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**2021**

Brokaw, Fran (Han)  
 Cappa, Eleanor (Mon)  
 Hough, Janet (Cob)  
 MacArthur, Hugh (Han)

**Puente de Amigos (9)****2019**

Cadwallader, Len (Han)  
 Cadwallader, Mary Ann (Han),  
*Fogarty, Maggie (Dov), co-clerk*

**2020**

Kinsky, Deena (Matt)  
**Low, Diego (Fram)**  
*McManamy, Martha (Ames), co-clerk*

**2021**

Smith, Jennifer (Con)  
 Provencal, Mary (Dov)  
 Szirbik-Groft, Andrea (Dov)

**Racial, Social, and Economic Justice (12)****2019**

Dicranian, Diane (Wint)  
 Walton, Sarah (Vass)

**2020**

Eppchez (Nham)  
 Morrill, Beth (Hart)  
 Rhodewalt, Scott (Mtob)

**2021**

Varner, James (Oro)  
 Carey-Harper, Rachel (Barns)

**Sessions Committee (Nominating appointments)**

Manning, Leslie (Dur), clerk (2019)  
 Carole Rein (NShor), recording  
 clerk (2019)

**2019**

Schwoppe, Martha (Well)  
 Vargo, Susan (Nham)

**2020**

Colby, Peter (Fram)  
 Haines, Christopher (Fpon)

**Youth Ministries (9)****2019**

Lippincott, Doug (Fram)  
*Sanchez-Eppler, Karen (Nham), clerk*  
 Dawson, Janet (Fram)

**2020**

Matchette, Abby (Burl)

**2021**

Stone, Carolyn (Well)  
 Heath, Harriet  
 Carpenter, Helen (Bhill)  
 Woodrow, Honor (Fram)

**Representatives to Other Friends Organizations****American Friends Service Committee Corp. (5)****2019**

Nash, Anne (Well)  
 Simpson, Charles (Burl)

**2020**

Foster, Melissa (Fram)  
 Rhodewalt, Scott (Mtob)

**2021**

Bennett, Dulany (Han)  
 Woodrow, Peter (Port)

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**Friends Committee on National Legislation (6)**

**2019**

Leuchak, Rebecca (Prov)

Schultz, Bob (Han)

**2020**

Cazden, Betsy (Prov)

Whinfield, Steve (Nhav)

**2021**

Harrington, Ian (Cam)

Gorham, Charlotte (Nhav)

**Friends Peace Teams Project (1)**

Shippen, Nancy (FPon)

**Quaker Earthcare Witness (1)**

Haines, Christopher (Fpon)

**William Penn House (1)**

Will Jennings (Bhill)

## 2018 State of Society Report

*Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord. (Amos 8:11)*

The words of the Lord are justice, love, mercy, patience, service, comfort and joy. We find them inscribed deep in our yearnings, suffering, hope, and imagination, often unaware they are a sacred gift. Through them we enact our lives, inhabit our bodies, and work with the materials of the world and of culture. Reminders echo around us in the wordless language of the land, the creatures, and the rhythms of the cosmos. Some of us are reached in one way, some of us in another; at bottom the hunger is the same—to be available, filled up, transformed so as more and more to speak, act, and live as children of the Light. We feel the words as divine intention and a call to follow where it will lead in this time of fear—and hope.

As we have reflected and prayed about the spiritual condition of our Yearly Meeting, we have heard in visits, meeting reports, newsletters, minutes of concern, and prophetic witness that Friends are seeking to live more fully according to the gifts of the Spirit that we are given. The hunger for knowledge and for better access to the wisdom of our community are leading to a widespread desire for adult religious education. The recognition of this need, or desire, in turn is calling out gifts of teaching, writing, and organizing in many meetings. The results take many forms—book groups, forums, retreat attendance, and more. Groups of Friends called to ministry are gathering more frequently for mutual encouragement and guidance to better service. The gift of eldership, which can liberate the life and service of individuals and of meetings, is more widely understood, encouraged, and put into action. We rejoice in the freshness of the life that rises. It stands in bold contrast to the tenor of our times that leaves us at times cold and lost.

The longing for justice, for right living, and for peace that is more than the absence of war is bearing fruit in acts of witness. Friends reach for the commonwealth of God when we stand with the Earth in a time of climate change; stand with refugees, immigrants, and Native Americans in a time of xenophobia; and stand with those who bear the burdens of the economic and social systems in which we are all embedded. One Friend's gift of money to every meeting in New England stimulated the power of imagination, and enabled many meetings to take steps to strengthen their work or presence in the community.

There are, in truth, as many challenges before us as ever. Some meetings feel themselves in decline; some Friends feel isolated in meetings which have not taken the risk of seeing and encouraging the gifts of their members. A number of meetings have made an effort to increase their connectedness within their meeting community and thereby reduce the sense of isolation that some may feel. This has often been coupled with outreach to the communities which surround them. The work to know and see each other more deeply and to reach out to non-Quakers has resulted in a clearer sense of who we are as Friends. It has also been important when meetings have actively shared resources with each other within their quarters and beyond.

There is a constant pressure from the culture and society around us to live individualistically. We feel the invitation to judge, separate, and make distinctions within our communities. Friends struggle to turn the invitation aside and claim instead the blessing of true community so that the common life can flow freely. We are learning that when we allow the Spirit to keep our individualism in check, fuller life and vitality in the meeting are unleashed. Investing in the common life brings blessings that are, for some, surprising and unfamiliar. In true community,

the individual's uniqueness, voice, agency, and gifts are affirmed and refreshed with new meaning.

We have been led as a people to walk further and further out on the limb of faith, taking risks in our commitment to address the seeds and practices of white supremacy within us and to respond prophetically and actively to the climate crisis. We see that taking a risk, even a small one, encourages more risk-taking, and as we have read all the news of the Yearly Meeting, risky questions arise: *What is the foundation of our hope? How can we speak with confidence about the springs from which our witness, our endurance, our experiments and our joy take their strength?* We see that where we are alive to the springs of life, are willing to be foolish in the eyes of the world, to be children in the Spirit, our faith takes us into hard places. In these hard places we see our true condition more clearly. This demands of us both deep inner work and deep outer work. *Where will we find courage and capacity to tell that story, and to share what wonders we have found?*

## Epistles

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### General Epistle

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*We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair;  
Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed;  
For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;  
(II Corinthians 4:8-9, 17)*

To Friends Everywhere,

Greetings from the 358th New England Yearly Meeting Sessions. We sit on lands once cared for by Abenaki ancestors and appropriated by European settlers centuries ago. Today this is the home of Castleton University and dedicated to our use for five days.

Green mountains surround us. The many trees on campus drink in the intermittent heavy rainfalls. It is hot and humid. And we have struggled with this evidence of climate change: The unusual has become usual.

We are 620 Friends, including 109 children and youth and 56 young adults. We are queer and straight, physically challenged and able-bodied, trans- and cis-gender, are descended from the peoples of most continents of our globe, and are of various income levels. Each of us, in our own way, strives for blessed communion of family, old friends, and newly encountered friends.

We are renewed in our connectedness to the wider Quaker world, through visitors and epistles and our own travels. We affirm our commitment to the life of the Religious Society beyond our Yearly Meeting, and we grieve that the US government prevented our Cuban Friends from joining us this week.

Our Session theme is: "In Fear and Trembling, Be Bold in God's Service."

We are struggling with our own contribution to the white supremacy that has formed a blood-drenched thread in the fabric of this country, since the beginnings of its colonization by Europeans: contributions to systemic racism by us as individuals and by us as the body; assumptions, priorities, and practices of New England Yearly Meeting.

The unusual becomes usual as we bring our margins—particularly those people of color among us and those economically challenged—to the center of our attention.

And we are afraid for our future: the future of the earth that our domination is making uninhabitable and the future of our society, whose government manipulates us into fear by its lies and dysfunction. In dynamic tension with our affliction is our love and commitment to each other. We hope and pray that this difficult process of repair and renewal becomes an opportunity for transformation, swelling into the flood tide of Grace.

Our day begins early. Two Friends head across the lawn to early morning worship—a decades-long tradition for this pair. A member of Sessions Committee carries material for a photo frame. Memories of this time together. Golf carts emerge to carry some to early breakfast. A fleet of kids on scooters sails by. Life ordinary and Life extra-ordinary at Sessions.

Friends testify to the nature of God and our world, to help us in these challenging times. Sometimes, our God is a subtle God, who nudges us from the margins in a quiet voice. We have been learning to listen at those margins. And we are reminded that the enemy is no person, no matter their position, but within each of us. The norms and values of our culture (the system) hold us all in thrall.

Our business sessions have been challenging and have served as a microcosm of the work we are called to do as a faithful people. We have heard from our Development Committee and the ad-hoc Challenging White Supremacy Working Group. Their reports have begun to reveal the extent to which the orientation of our Yearly Meeting manifests the culture of white-centeredness and middle-class values in which we sit. Both Friends of color and white Friends have named these examples from their own experiences. We are struggling to honor and begin to assuage the real pain felt in the moment by Friends of color, as well as the fear of loss of privilege felt by white Friends. We see that we are teachable. We are not where we were three years ago. Nevertheless, we must accept and acknowledge that real healing is long-term work.

Healing is spiritual work. Even if salvation comes as sudden epiphany, the cross must be taken up daily. We must turn our whole selves over to God, letting every nook and cranny of our culture and expectations be illuminated.

We have been reminded over and over again this week that the heart of our faith is paradox—that while we struggle we will not be paralyzed. Growing our faithfulness inwardly and being faithful to our outward work in the world are equal imperatives.

In social action, particularly about immigration and climate change, we are gaining coherence and momentum, working together as a body across our region. Friends with strong calls, in these and other concerns, are providing leadership to our Yearly Meeting to manifest the Kingdom of God, in new working groups and in revitalized committees. For these gifts and this boldness we rejoice.

The fire of the week has brought us closer together in love. Our deepening unity is based on ever more shared knowing of one another, and we find such sweetness together in our struggles to be faithful. We are tearing apart and rebuilding a ship at sea. The new ship may not look like the one we came here in, but it will be built with the strong timbers of our tradition.

Conversation and reports during our attention to business show the ties that bind our home meetings. Our memorial meeting bathed us in joy and love for those still on earth, as well as those who are present only in the hearts of those left behind. Ministry arose that halted time and made place irrelevant. We were gathered in the Eternal Now.

We have heard prophetic ministry about the meaning of money in our Religious Society. We know that money is not the measure of our faithfulness. Rather, we are called to turn our whole lives over to God.

How much do we hold each other accountable? How much are we able to show our full vulnerable lives to one another and place ourselves in the hands of our meetings, as we struggle to be faithful to God? For example, are we ready to know, hold and support those who are food insecure in our meetings?

Our work challenging white supremacy in our culture and ourselves is difficult, at times jarring and messy. Friends have prophesied boldly. Early Friends were intimately aware of the discomfort of God working in us. A print of Margaret Fell's words appeared on our podium Tuesday: "Friends, let the eternal light search you, and try you, it will rip you up, lay you open. Provoke one another to Love."

We are feeling our way towards repentance, imperfectly and, at times, haltingly, but moving nonetheless. We feel God's mystery working among us, and we know the fear and trembling.

We go forth with a charge to share the good news we have found. In this turbulent week we have known experientially the rock—the Inward Teacher, the Inward Christ, the Little Bird—upon which we can rely. As we labor against the powers and principalities to manifest God's kingdom, we turn our lives over to the still, small voice, finding that we, as a community, have everything we need, that we have been given the time we need in which to do our work, and that God can guide us every step of the way. All we have to do is follow.

We receive ministry. We are humbled. We wait in awe, yearning that "all may be lifted up to thrive and flourish in the shared, Life-giving fellowship of the Spirit."

Yours in God's Everlasting Grace,  
New England Yearly Meeting of Friends

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### Child Care

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Dear Friends,

Welcome from the 18 children of Child Care. We bring to you the Nominating Slate of 2043.

We have healers and leaders and strong, warm-hearted young Quakers.

We want to thank our parents for letting us go, even when we might have cried just a bit.

This was a year of learning: we learned that a shoe can fit down a storm drain (and we learned that we shouldn't do it—more than once). We learned that dinosaur puppets are not scary and can evolve into one of our most favorite toys. We learned how asking a friend to share the toy that we desperately want, can lead to good things.

We enjoyed our visitors including a juggler and a musician and, at least in verse, a dog named Blue. The bubble bottles were the best we ever had, launching glistening spheres of color that floated among us. The "Spot" books were enjoyed over, and over, and over, and over again while settling down to our naps.

Amongst the toys, tents, and scooters we made good friends and practiced waiting our turn.

We want to come back next year.

Yours in peace and joy,

The Child-Care Children of 2018



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 Junior Yearly Meeting K-1
 

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We are New England Yearly Meeting Kindergarten and First Grade children meeting in Castleton, Vermont. We had lots of fun. In the garden we released two Monarch butterflies that came out of their chrysalis. Then, we went on a nature scavenger hunt in the woods and over a stream. We found many treasures: different leaves, moss, sticks, acorns, pinecones, and a big chunk of marble. We saw centipedes, ants, birds, and mushrooms. One of our friends found and passed around an exoskeleton of a cicada. We read stories about all kinds of families, how to fill our invisible buckets and other people's buckets. The ten of us created super -power capes from t-shirts that

showed our super powers. We ran around in the gym because we couldn't go outside. It was pouring rain and thunder and lightning.

Judith and Marion visited us from Kenya and sang songs with us in English and Swahili. Our Grade 5-6 Friends partnered with us to listen to Nancy. She told us stories about the Quaker children that made a quilt in 1997. We found this quilt in storage when we were setting up our classroom. Some of the makers of the quilt are getting married and starting families. We made ice cream with coconut milk. It was really cold to shake and hold. Sometimes we quietly played puzzles, Matchbox cars, built with Legos or drew puzzle people. Some of us made families of puzzle people in different colors and faces. We took turns and worked out how to share wagon rides and building supplies and wait patiently for snacks. We did so many things, even in one day we did so much. Everything we did was fun!




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 Junior Yearly Meeting Grades 2  
through 4
 

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Dear Friends Near and Far,

The Junior Yearly Meeting grades 2, 3, and 4 of New England Yearly Meeting met at Castleton State University in Vermont, US. A group of 23 people attended. We had a terrific time together this hot week. We loved our cool inside spaces and our hot outdoor spaces. Our group explored the theme of "Community, being Bold in God's service." What do we do when we are Bold in God's service? What can we do to be Bold in God's service? Some answers were: Have courage, be brave, see the light within each person, be positive, swim in the pool in water over one's head, dive off the diving board and take off one floaty. Other thing we did relating to service were we made two tie blankets to give to refugees in the Northeast and talked about the meaning of Conscientious Objection and the decision maybe not to serve.

Some of us went to the bookstore and bought beautiful necklaces, chocolate, books, and wooden bowls. We played games. One of them was called Junior Yearly Meeting Ball (JYM Ball), created by one of the staff member many years ago. A new game was developed called, "The Meeting Game," a take-off from the game "Shipwrecked."

A special mini community, built out of recycled boxes and tubes, was fancy with two banana trees. We all met new people and became loving friends during our time together.

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### Junior Yearly Meeting Grades 5 and 6

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Hello Fellow Quakers,

We are the 5th and 6th Grade Group of New England Yearly Meeting. There are 10 kids and our group and we met at Castleton University in Castleton, Vermont, U.S.A. on August 4–9, 2018. Our theme this year was “Listening, Finding Our Gifts, Using Our Voices.”

We listened to each other in the big group and in small groups with 3 or 4 kids. In small groups we talked about how we felt, how our day was going, and told stories about our lives. Some of us talked about our personal meditation practices.

In the big group we played lots of games: kick ball, Capture the Flag, Zen counting, Museum, elbow tag, Ha Ha, Big Bubble Big Bubble, Telephone, Wa, charades, Beanie Babies, and parachute games. We sang a lot of songs including the George Fox Song, Waltzing with Bears, and Sing Hosanna!

We enjoyed making tie-dyed tee shirts and signing each other’s shirts, clay meditation, learning about lobbying from our staffer who was recently an intern at FCNL, volunteering to carry trays for people who could use help in the dining room, using temporary tattoos, making ugly art that didn’t turn out to be ugly, making ice cream, and watching Butterfly Bob emerge from her chrysalis, gain strength, and fly free.

During free time we liked going to the family bookstore, playing pool and ping pong, swimming in the campus pool, a contra dance, talking with each other and eating delicious food at meals. Having a Coffee House for the whole Yearly Meeting allowed us to share our talents and appreciate other people’s skills.

Some of us went to Afternoon Choices and participated in drama group, did finger-knitting or other crafts, did face-painting, read, or played with Legos.

We all like coming here because everyone is so nice. We can be ourselves and be accepted for who we are. We made new friends, saw old friends, and had fun.

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### Junior High Yearly Meeting

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Dear Friends from all ends of the earth,

We the Junior High Yearly Meeting of New England Yearly Meeting met in Castleton, Vermont, at Castleton University from August 4–August 9 2018. Our theme this year was “In fear and trembling be bold in God’s service” and we tried to understand and embody this theme through our actions and reflection this week.

JHYM started of the week by leading intergenerational worship, where we shared anonymous reflections about how JHYM has helped us on our way to overcoming fears. Even though it was often hot we immersed ourselves in many fun outdoor activities like Capture the Flag, badminton, and Tower of Power. Some of us would play on the pool table and most of went to, and enjoyed, the swimming pool through our late-night pool party on Sunday and free swim. We spent time reconnecting with our high school friends so our 8<sup>th</sup> graders could further understand the changes that would come in the coming year of retreats and sessions. On Tuesday we had an abbreviated trip to Bomoseen State Park were we had fun swimming, singing, and playing card games until we were faced with a torrential downpour which we then enjoyed from the comfort of a porch while eating delicious ice cream. We made beautiful and uniquely creative shirts in our t-shirt meditation and participated in a paint blot project that taught us about the intricacies of life.

We spent some time reflecting on a letter we received from an older friend about people chuckling at a Junior Higher’s reflection during Sunday morning worship. As a group we had a wide range of reactions about the letter. We know that the chuckling was not meant to be hurtful. We

immensely appreciate the dedication this older friend put into this considerate letter and it sparked deep conversation within our community over time.

We wrapped up the week with a coffee house talent show with many fun performances. We said goodbye to our 8th graders at a reflective and thoughtful 8th grade circle. Though we will miss our friends greatly we look forward to having more sleep and going back to our communities back home. This has been an eventful and thoughtful week of love and reflection and we look forward to the joys of next year.

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### Young Friends Yearly Meeting

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Dear Friends Around the World:

We, the Young Friends of New England Yearly Meeting gathered at Castleton University, Castleton, VT, August 4th to 9th, 2018. Our theme this year was “In Fear and Trembling, be Bold in God’s Service.”

Over the week, we explored the theme both personally and communally and worked to build a stronger and more inclusive group, and to create for each other a safe learning space full of love, joy, reflection, and personal growth.

We first gathered together on Saturday afternoon and started our sessions getting acquainted and reacquainted. Breaking into our “affinity groups,” we ate dinner together and then joined the rest of sessions for an opening celebration. Sunday evening’s program introduced the theme. The Young Friends analyzed quotes that related to fear and service to God. Young Friends brainstormed queries on the theme.

On Sunday, we joined the plenary meeting for worship led by Junior High Yearly Meeting. We sang familiar, high-energy songs. In the Young Friends morning program, we discussed the ways in which fear both fuels and impedes our activism, how it can affect our lives, and how to recognize and address it. In the afternoon plenary panel, speakers invited us to face our pride, recognize leadings, and test leadings before moving forward. Following the panel, some Young Friends played a hot but energetic game of Intergenerational Capture the Flag. Others did crafts or listened and contributed to a friendly open-mic session in the pop-up NEYM bookstore. At the Young Friends meeting for business, we added members to nominating committee. We then broke into groups for committee work, with committees for ministry and counsel, nominations, dance planning, selection of themes for the coming year, and epistle writing.

On Monday, the Young Adult Friends joined Young Friends for a presentation on Jesus’s life and teachings. Xinef Afriam and Plenary Speaker Adria Gulizia led us through an exercise on Jesus’s teachings in relation to Quaker ideals. They had us imagine ways we would build community around Jesus’s teachings—or, as Xinef was inspired to refer to it, “Yeshutopia.”

After lunch, we joined electives such as yoga, crafts, swimming or napping. Afternoon workshops included storytelling through nature, silk screen design, and a presentation on Friends Committee on National Legislation and lobbying. For some Young Friends, the highlight of the day was our combined program with JHYM where we sang songs, played games, and reflected in small groups about the work Young Friends has done this year to build intentional community and what the transition into Young Friends is like. We wrapped up the day with a joyous all-ages contra dance.

Tuesday Young Friends shared a worshipful morning hearing stories out of the silence of how Young Friends have acted with courage and integrity even when it was difficult. “Theme Team” shared their thoughtful and stellar work for the year’s upcoming retreats. After lunch friends boarded a big yellow school bus and traveled to a nearby lake. A raucous thunderstorm interrupted the trip but the group enjoyed dancing in the rain after returning to campus. Once the lightning drove them

indoors, Young Friends and YAFs stood on the balconies of their respective dorms, singing between the thunder-claps.

We joined the adult business meeting after dinner which brought up various responses from Friends to the need for more inclusive leadership in the Yearly Meeting. Some of our younger members closed the day by joining JHYM lounge.

Wednesday we approved our slate with the added role of media co-clerks. These people will hold the community outside of retreats through social media platforms. In the afternoon, Young Friends attended workshops; some made silkscreen designs, some attended the crowded workshop on clerking, and several joined the workshop titled “Off-white: an investigation of the role whiteness plays in our lives.”

Several Young Friends gave moving performances at the coffee house, and then we joined the Young Adult Friends for a dance in the campus center. The dance committee put a lot of work into decorations, lighting, a photo booth, and a great song selection.

We continue to feel hopeful for our future as a community. We will continue to hold each other with love and care as our community transforms. Just as the Yearly Meeting is seeking to become more inclusive, Young friends are also committed to improving our community with love and compassion for each other.

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### Epístola de Los Amigos (Cuáqueros) en Cuba

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Epístola de la 91 Asamblea de la Junta Anual de Los Amigos “Cuáqueros” en Cuba.

A todos los Amigos y Amigas, buscadores de la Verdad:

Con la entrega de la llave, la Junta Mensual de Gibara abrió sus puertas a la 91 Asamblea de la Junta Anual de Los amigos “Cuáqueros” en Cuba, que tiene por lema: “Una iglesia que crece en amor y procura la Verdad”; inspirado en el texto de Efesios 4, 15: “Sino que siguiendo la Verdad en amor, crezcamos en todo en aquel que es la cabeza, esto es, Cristo”.

La iglesia siente el regocijo de una renovación generacional que comienza a valorar de forma crítica la manera en que realiza su misión, con nuevas propuestas que ayudan a perfilar mejor el trabajo y con mayor compromiso para asumir los desafíos que el contexto nos presenta.

Un motivo de gran alegría es el reconocimiento de los dones pastorales de las hermanas Yadira Cruz Peña y Liyanis Cigarreta Alvarado y el reconocimiento de los nuevos ministros: Jorge Luis Peña Reyes y Kenya Casanova Sales.

Sentimos gozo por la presencia de los hermanos y hermanas de la Junta Anual de Nueva Inglaterra, con la cual hemos construido un “Puente de Amor” desde hace veintiséis años, como respuesta a la Voz de Dios. Para nosotros este Puente es un símbolo de lo que la humanidad puede hacer para construir un mundo de paz, justicia, unidad y amor.

Abrazamos en esta reunión a: Cynthia Ganung y Roland Stern, de la Junta Mensual de Wellesley; Frederick (Fritz) Weiss, presidente de la Junta Anual de Nueva Inglaterra, Len Cadwallader, Co-Presidente del Comité Puente de Amigos, Diego Low de la Junta mensual de Framingham y Bronwen Hillman de la Junta Mensual de México y presidenta del Proyecto de Alternativas a la Violencia Internacional.

Los mensajes nos invitan a reconsiderar esencias que nutren la espiritualidad. Esta cita generó una minuta que reconoce el valor del Puente de Amor entre las Juntas Anuales de Nueva Inglaterra y Cuba; y se opone, a las medidas tomadas por el gobierno de los Estados Unidos que limitan el intercambio entre las dos comunidades de fe.

Que el Señor del Amor y la Verdad nos inspire a ser testimonios vivos de este sentir y que como el viento y el mar capaz de llegar a todas partes, se extienda a todos los hombres y mujeres del mundo.

En la Luz, Junta Anual de Cuba

Epistle of the 91st Assembly of the Yearly Meeting of Friends, “Quakers” in Cuba

To all Friends, seekers of the Truth:

Handing over the key, Gibara Monthly Meeting opened its doors to the 91st assembly of the Yearly Meeting of Friends “Quakers” in Cuba, which has for its theme: “A church that grows in love and seeks the Truth”; inspired by the text of Ephesians 4:15 “Rather, following the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ.”

The church feels the joy of a generational renewal which is beginning to evaluate in a critical way how it carries out its mission, with initiatives that help to improve our work and with a greater commitment to accept the challenges of our context.

The recognition of the pastoral gifts of sisters Yadira Cruz Peña and Liyanis Cigarreta Alvarado, and the recognition of new ministers: Jorge Luis Peña Reyes and Kenya Casanova Sales brought us great joy.

We also feel joy at the presence of brothers and sisters from New England Yearly Meeting, with which we have built a “Bridge of Love” for the past twenty-six years, responding to the Voice of God. For us, this Bridge is a symbol of what humanity can do to build a world of peace, justice, unity, and love.

In this meeting we embrace Cynthia Ganung and Roland Stern of Wellesley Monthly Meeting, Frederick (Fritz) Weiss, Clerk of New England Yearly Meeting, Len Cadwallader, Co-Clerk of the Puente de Amigos Committee, Diego Low of Framingham Monthly Meeting, and Bronwen Hillman of Mexico Monthly Meeting and Clerk of the International Alternatives to Violence Project.

The messages invite us to reconsider essentials that nourish spirituality. This idea generated a minute which recognizes the value of the Bridge of Love between the yearly meetings of New England and Cuba, and opposes the measures taken by the government of the United States which limit the interchange between these two faith communities.

May the Lord of Love and Truth inspire us to be living testimonies of this understanding which, like the wind and the sea that can reach everywhere, may extend to all the men and women of the world.

In the Light, Cuba Yearly Meeting

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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](http://www.neym.org)

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## **Accounts Manager**

Frederick Martin  
508-754-6760  
[accountsmanager@neym.org](mailto:accountsmanager@neym.org)

---

## **Friends Camp Director**

Anna Hopkins  
207-445-2361  
[director@friendscamp.org](mailto:director@friendscamp.org)  
[www.friendscamp.org](http://www.friendscamp.org)

---

## **Office Manager**

Sara Hubner  
508-754-6760  
[office@neym.org](mailto:office@neym.org)

---

## **Junior YM/Junior High YM Coordinator**

Gretchen Baker-Smith  
508-997-0940  
[jym@neym.org](mailto:jym@neym.org)

---

## **Ministry & Counsel Clerk**

Honor Woodrow  
774-249-2805  
[mc-clerk@neym.org](mailto:mc-clerk@neym.org)

---

## **Permanent Board Clerk**

Sarah Gant  
617-543-6985  
[pbclerk@neym.org](mailto:pbclerk@neym.org)

---

## **Presiding Clerk**

Frederick (Fritz) Weiss  
774-415-0719  
[clerk@neym.org](mailto:clerk@neym.org)

---

## **Events Coordinator**

Elizabeth Hacala  
740-478-2539  
[events@neym.org](mailto:events@neym.org)

---

## **Treasurer**

Shearman Taber  
617-965-7042  
[treasurer@neym.org](mailto:treasurer@neym.org)

---

## **Yearly Meeting Secretary**

Noah Baker Merrill  
617-615-6396  
[ymsec@neym.org](mailto:ymsec@neym.org)

---

## **Young Friends/Young Adult Friends Coordinator**

NiaDwynwen Thomas  
978-886-7179  
[yf.yafcoord@neym.org](mailto:yf.yafcoord@neym.org)