



# 2021 Minutes

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

Three Hundred Sixty-First Year  
August 7–12, 2021



## Table of Contents

Sessions.....	4
Schedule .....	4
Elders Serving to Support Ministry at Sessions This Year. ....	5
2021 Sessions Coordinators, Officers, Speakers and YM Staff .....	5
Minutes.....	6
Minutes of the Annual Sessions.....	6
Appendices to the Minutes .....	30
FY22 Approved Budget .....	56
Approved Nominating Slate .....	59
Annual Reports .....	63
Staff Reports .....	63
Committee and Board Reports.....	66
Reports of Representatives to Other Quaker Organizations.....	76
Memorial Minutes.....	79
2021 State of Society Report.....	100
Epistle .....	103
Index .....	104

# 2021 Annual Sessions Schedule

Saturday, August 7–Thursday, August 12 • via Zoom teleconference

	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
7:00 AM			7–8 Early Morning Worship	7–8 Meeting for Healing Early Morning Worship	7–8 Early Morning Worship	7–8 Early Morning Worship	7–8 Meeting for Healing Early Morning Worship
8:30 AM					8:30–9 Bible Half Hour		
9:00 AM					9–9:30 Worship		
10:00 AM		10–11:30 Opening Celebration					
10:30 AM			10:30–noon Worship Together		10:30–noon Business Meeting		
12:00 noon					noon–1:00 Lunch		
1:00 PM	a	1–2:30 Saturday Plenary			1–2:15 Home Groups Option 1		
2:30 PM		2:30–6:30 Space for Local Gatherings	2:30–4 Business Meeting	2:30–4:30 time for reflection and rest	2:30–4:30 mutual support for BIPOC participants	2:30–4 Business Meeting	2:30–4:30 Closing Celebration
4:30 PM					4:30–5:45 Home Groups Option 2		
5:30 PM					Dinner		
6:00 PM					6:15–6:30 Vespers		
6:30 PM		6:30–7:30 A gathering to close the day	6:30–8 Memorial Meeting	6:30–8 Monday Plenary John Galvi		6:30–8 Coffee House	6:30–7:45 Home Group (family)
7:00 PM	7–8:30 A pre-Sessions gathering for BIPOC attendees and their families.				7–8 Interactive Experience Hanifa Nayo Washington		
8:30 PM					8:15–9:30 pm Home Groups Option 3		
					Open informal gatherings (online) Sunday thru Wednesday for those not in Home Groups		

## Elders Serving to Support Ministry at Sessions This Year

In Friends tradition, an elder supports, encourages, and challenges the minister and helps them to be faithful. During preparation and during our week together, these individuals are holding and grounding specific Friends in their work and ministry.

**Elder for gkisedtanamoogk and Shirley Hager:** Maggie Edmondson

**Elders for Jay O'Hara:** Susan Davies, LVM Shelton, Anna Lindo, and Charlee Gorham

**Elders for John Calvi:** Marshall Brewer, Julia Forsythe

## 2021 Sessions Coordinators, Officers, Speakers and YM Staff

Accounts Manager	Frederick Martin*
Bible Half Hour Speaker	Jay O'Hara
BIPOC Space Coordinator	Emma Turcotte
Children & Family Ministries Coordinator	Gretchen Baker-Smith
Clerks	Bruce Neumann (presiding), Peter Bishop, and Kathleen Malin (recording), Adam Kohrman and Gina Nortonsmith (reading)
Events Coordinator	Elizabeth Hacala*
Home Group Planning Team	Holly Baldwin and Fran Brokaw
Off-Screen Family Activities	Janet Dawson
Office Manager	Sara Hubner*
Pastoral Care Team Leader	Sarah Bickel
Plenary Speakers	gkisedtanamoogk and Shirley Hager (Saturday), John Calvi (Monday), Hanifa Nayo Washington (Tuesday)
Sessions Committee Clerk	Rebecca Leuchak
Technology Team	David Coletta, Elizabeth Hacala, Sara Hubner
Yearly Meeting Treasurer	Robert Murray
Vespers Coordinators	Lianna Tennial, Don Peabody, and family
Worship Coordinator	Sarah Sprogell
Yearly Meeting Secretary	Noah Merrill*

\*Staff

## Minutes of the Annual Sessions

*Clerk's note: Because of the global COVID-19 pandemic, New England Yearly Meeting Annual Sessions in 2021 were again held online. Zoom video-conferencing software was used to enable connections from Friends' households.*

*Minutes 2021-8 through 2021-23 were approved during Sessions; the remaining minutes were approved by Permanent Board at their September 2021 meeting.*

### Saturday, August 7, 2021

#### 2021-1 Welcome and Introductions

Bruce Neumann (Fresh Pond), Presiding Clerk, opened with a prayer and then welcomed Friends to the 361st Annual Sessions.

The Clerk introduced the rest of the Clerks' Table: Recording Clerks Peter Bishop (Northampton) and Kathy Malin (Smithfield) and Reading Clerks Adam Kohrman (Beacon Hill) and Gina Nortonsmith (Northampton), as well as the worship elders for today: Allison Randall (Keene), Fran Brokaw (Hanover), and Marian Baker (Weare). He also introduced the Pastoral Care Team: Sarah Bickel (Beacon Hill), Elizabeth Szatkowski (Portland), Laura Hoskins (Putney), and Carolyn Stone (Wellesley).

#### 2021-2 Land Acknowledgment

Leslie Manning (Durham), clerk of Permanent Board, shared with us her reflections on the theme of this year's Sessions, "A Time for Healing," and offered an acknowledgement of the land:

We, the people of New England Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, acknowledge with humility that the land we occupy is and was the home of Indigenous people for thousands of years before our ancestors arrived; and that many remain, but not all, of the people, tribes, clans, bands, and nations whose names we will never know and whose sacred songs will never again be sung. Although their lands and children were stolen, their language and culture eradicated, cut to the roots, many survive despite this intentional erasure and extermination.

I say this as the great granddaughter of a Dubliner who emigrated here, enlisted in the U.S. Army and served decades in the Indian Wars of the later 1800s; another oppressed person who became the oppressor. May God have mercy on our souls.

We mourn the lives that were taken and honor the resilience of those who remain, resist and rematriate their lives and traditions. We are deeply grateful for their love and care for Turtle Island, which is home to us all and for their prophetic witness. We seek to become better neighbors and relations by rejecting our systems of domination and learning new ways of living together on this earth, our mother.

She closed with a prayer from H. Silver Fox Mett , of the Cherokee people:

Creator,  
I speak to YOU from within my Soul and within my Body,  
asking that I may be an instrument of peace.  
May others join together to honor Earth Mother,  
to keep the skies clean and clear,  
that She may be nourished.

May all creatures of the earth benefit  
from the water which is Her blood,  
flowing through Her arteries and veins  
on the surface and within Her body ...

May all creatures within the soil,  
within the water, on the land, in the trees  
and in the air prosper,  
May They and We be of service to Her good health  
for future generations.

Creator, shine through us as we join in Your Spirit.  
Help us all remember, one by one, that we are created  
of the Earth, and powered by Your Spirit.  
In this remembering, the separation will end  
and we will unite in Spirit to restore and care for  
our Earth Mother, all Her life forms  
and for ourselves.

### **2021-3 Junior High Yearly Meeting**

Gretchen Baker-Smith (Westport), the Children & Family Ministries Coordinator, introduced Martin Eller Fitze (Portland), and Alice Peabody (Burlington), who read the Junior High Yearly Meeting State of Society report. The report is on page 102.

### **2021-4 Padlet**

Honor Woodrow (Putney) introduced a software tool called “Padlet” which will be available to Friends all week to record and share their reflections on their condition and on our time together.

### **2021-5 Worship and Singing**

We were led into worship with a recording of *Choose Me, Lord* performed by the Free Grace Undying Love Full Gospel Quaker Choir Sing and Be Saved (Sara Burke [Beacon Hill], John Fuller [Beacon Hill], Alana Parkes [Beacon Hill], Eden Grace [Beacon Hill], Judy Anne Williams [Hanover], Chuck McCorkle, Frederic Evans [deceased], and David Coletta [Three Rivers]).

We settled into worship, which was closed with Frederick Martin (Beacon Hill) and Katherine Fisher (Beacon Hill) singing the song, *You Are an Acorn*.

### **2021-6 Roll Call**

The Reading Clerks read the names of each of New England’s monthly meetings, preparative meetings, and worship groups by quarter. Friends were invited to wave and say hello as well as to enter their names and affiliations into the “Chat” window.

Visitors, families with new members, and first-time attendees were welcomed.

### **2021-7 Reflections from the Sessions Clerk**

Rebecca Leuchak, clerk of the Sessions Committee, shared her excitement about the week before us, encouraging us to engage as deeply as we are able.

## **Sunday, August 8, 2021**

### **2021-8 Opening and Welcome**

The Presiding Clerk, Bruce Neumann (Fresh Pond) opened the 2021 Business Sessions with prayer.

## 2021-9 Clerks' Table

Bruce Neumann introduced the (virtual) Clerks' Table: Recording Clerks Peter Bishop (Northampton) and Kathy Malin (Smithfield), Reading Clerks Gina Nortonsmith (Northampton) and Adam Kohrman (Beacon Hill).

## 2021-10 Noticing Patterns

Polly Attwood (Cambridge), clerk of the Noticing Patterns of Oppression and Faithfulness group, spoke about their work.

Since Sessions of 2018, the Noticing Patterns of Faithfulness & Oppression Working Group [sic] has had the charge to observe, name, and reflect back to the body long-standing patterns and practices, unseen by many but long seen by others, that result in our complicity in oppression. We are called to engage from a place of love and a desire to learn together. We invite and encourage all of us to notice and name patterns of faithfulness among us to strengthen our shared journey in the Spirit as we seek to free ourselves from empire and the culture of domination. Friends have a range of experiences with this process; all of us have much to learn and much to offer. The most important tool we have to do this work is the deep love we hold for each other as we learn and practice together.

We encourage Friends to use these sentence starters to name what we are experiencing in a way that gives equal value to emotions, physical reactions, inner knowing, witnessing, listening and curiosity about assumptions and messages being spoken:

I feel . . .  
 I hear . . .  
 I know . . .  
 I see . . .  
 I wonder . . .

It is challenging to be called to work that will never be finished. Blessings on all of us and on this essential spiritual work.

## 2021-11 Visitors

Visitors were invited to share their name and affiliation by sending them to any of the tech hosts, as Zoom's "Chat" feature is broken. Visitors through the week included the following:

Pamela Williams, Germantown Friends Meeting, Philadelphia YM  
 Ruth Gaston, Warwick, Central England Quakers, Britain YM  
 Nils Klinkenberg (Beacon Hill), Beacon Hill Friends House  
 Buffy Curtis, Mohawk Valley Friends Meeting, New York YM  
 Karen Way (Middlebury), New York YM  
 Jen Higgins-Newman (Beacon Hill), Beacon Hill Friends House  
 Alex Wilson, Friends Committee on National Legislation  
 Sally Zelasko, Orchard Park Friends, New York YM  
 Joann Neuroth, Red Cedar Friends, Lake Erie YM  
 Jan Stansel, Nashville Friends, Southern Appalachian YM and Association  
 Sandi Meyeroff, Patapsco Friends Meeting, Baltimore YM  
 Margaret Cooley (Mt. Toby), Woolman Hill Conference Center  
 Terry Grant, Red Cedar Friends, Lake Erie YM  
 Lyle Miller, Everence  
 Keith Harvey, American Friends Service Committee  
 Jeffrey Barr, Fredonia Friends Meeting, New York YM  
 gkisedtanamoogk, Kairos Ecumenical Initiative (Toronto) and the Upstanders Project (Boston)  
 Nicole Santos, Friends Committee on National Legislation  
 Holly Baldwin (Fresh Pond), Albuquerque Friends Meeting, Intermountain YM



Corlette Moore McCoy, Needham, MA  
 Shelley Costa, Swarthmore Friends Meeting, Philadelphia YM  
 Sharon Pero, Middleborough, MA  
 Oscar Malande, Friends Theological College, Kaimosi, Kenya  
 Mike Shell (Worcester) Jacksonville Friends Meeting, Southeastern YM  
 Jesse Grace, West Richmond Friends Meeting, New Association of Friends  
 Katie Green (formerly Worcester), Clearwater Friends Meeting, Southeastern YM  
 Julie Peyton, West Hills Friends, Sierra Cascades YM of Friends  
 Jayant Singh, Bethpage Preparatory Meeting, New York YM  
 Rebecca Hecht, Friends Meeting at Cambridge  
 Steven Willett, Manchester & Warrington Area Meeting, Britain YM  
 Barbara LeSage, North Columbus Friends Meeting, Lake Erie YM  
 Jane Goldthwait (North Sandwich), Southern Appalachian YM and Association  
 Jacqueline Stillwell (Monadnock), Right Sharing of World Resources  
 Liz Oppenheimer, Bear Creek Meeting, Iowa YM Conservative  
 Sharon Gunther, Swarthmore Friends Meeting, Philadelphia YM  
 Anne Pomeroy, New Paltz Monthly Meeting, New York YM  
 James Underberg, New York YM  
 Lu Harper, Rochester Monthly Meeting, New York YM  
 Laura MacNorlin, Atlanta Friends Meeting, Southeast YM  
 Miledys Batista Sintes, Cuba YM  
 Odalys Hernandez Cruz, Cuba YM  
 Norge Alvarez Ramirez, Cuba YM  
 Kenya Casanova, Cuba YM  
 Anthony Stover, Quaker Life Council  
 Cynthia Mara, Harrisburg Meeting, Philadelphia YM

### 2021-12 Tech Team

David Coletta, tech host, introduced the rest of the tech team: Cornelia Parkes (Cambridge), Bre-anne Brown (E. Sandwich), Emily Neumann (Cambridge), Bob O'Connor (Vassalboro), Jennifer Swann (NEYM/NYYM), Becky Ray (Beacon Hill), Jen Higgins-Newman (Beacon Hill), and Jane Jackson (Cambridge).

David asked for the prayers of the body as the tech team does their important work, which needs not only their bodies and minds but also their connection with Spirit.

### 2021-13 Introduction to the Week's Business

The Clerk explained way we are approaching business this year will be a bit different. Today we are considering a few structural items of business, and that will be done in the usual manner where proposals are presented, there is discernment, and then the proposal is approved or not.

Other items later in the week will be handled differently. The Letter of Apology, the proposal concerning No Way To Treat a Child, the Earthcare Ministry minute, and our relationship with Friends United Meeting all connect with Empire, and our challenge will be to consider them not as separate, small agenda items but as aspects of the domination of Empire in our world. During tomorrow's business meetings we will hear the business but we won't do discernment until the following day. This may be challenging, as people will naturally want to speak to these issues, but open discernment will be held over until meetings on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday.

Sessions will not be recorded this year, but the Clerk asked permission to capture the closed captioning transcript just long enough for the Clerks to use in finalizing the minutes. No objection was raised.

### 2021-14 Elders

The Clerk then introduced the elders holding today's business in prayer. Through the week, the following are serving as elders for one or more business sessions: Ann Dodd-Collins (Portland), Carl Williams (Plainfield), Kathy Olsen (East Sandwich), Allison Randall (Keene), Fran Brokaw (Hanover), Suzy Klein-Berndt

(Northampton), Karen Sanchez-Eppler (Northampton), Joyce Gibson (Durham), Leslie Manning (Durham), and Margaret Marshall (Narramissic Valley).

### **2021-15 NEYM Annual Budget**

Scott Drysdale (Hanover), clerk of Finance Committee, spoke about the budget. Last year the budget was approved by Permanent Board after Sessions because there hadn't been time during Sessions for the body to approve it. This year the agenda is also packed, so the Presiding Clerk asked for permission to do the same this year. No objections were raised.

This will not be a permanent practice. Once we are meeting in person again, we will go back to approving the budget during Sessions.

Friends with questions about this year's budget are invited to a listening session on August 28, or they may email [finance@neym.org](mailto:finance@neym.org). Friends are also welcome to attend the Permanent Board meeting on September 25, when the budget will be deliberated on and (hopefully) approved.

### **2021-16 YM Secretary Sabbatical**

Leslie Manning, clerk of Permanent Board, announced that Permanent Board has approved a sabbatical for Noah Merrill from October of this year through February 2022. Preliminary thoughts about a sabbatical in 2020 were tabled because of COVID, but Noah and the PB agree that at this point we can manage without him for a few months. We give great thanks for his service and care.

Sarah Gant (Beacon Hill), former clerk of Permanent Board; and Nia Thomas (Northampton), the Quaker Practice and Leadership Facilitator, have agreed to step into Noah's role. Friends were asked for prayers and loving support of these Friends as they care for the community together. We are grateful that each has accepted and we look forward to working with them in the coming months.

### **2021-17 Clerk of Permanent Board**

Leslie Manning has agreed to serve one additional year as clerk of Permanent Board. She expressed her joy in being able to serve the community that way.

Friends are all welcome to join Permanent Board at their meetings.

### **2021-18 Clerks' Table Nominations**

The Yearly Meeting's financial year begins on October 1, but the operational year begins at the rise of Sessions. After discernment and prayer, Clerks' Table Nominating presented the following slate of nominations:

Bruce Neumann (Fresh Pond), Presiding Clerk  
 Rebecca Leuchek (Providence), Rising Clerk  
 Kathy Malin (Smithfield), Recording Clerk  
 Peter Bishop (Northampton), Recording Clerk  
 Adam Kohrman (Beacon Hill), Reading Clerk

—leaving one vacancy for Reading Clerk.

Friends approved these names. It is hoped that a second name for Reading Clerk will rise this week, but if not, the second Recording Clerk will be approved later by Permanent Board.

### **2021-19 Proposed Changes to Nominating**

Jackie Stillwell (Monadnock), clerk of Nominating, presented the proposed changes to the Yearly Meeting nominating committees outlined on pages 5 and 6 of the Advance Documents. The suggested changes would consolidate three separate nominating committees at the Yearly Meeting level (NEYM Nominating, Internal Nominating, and Clerks' Table Nominating) and merge them into a single, integrated Nominating Committee. (See page 30.)

There are actually four proposals:

1. To approve the revised Purposes, Procedures, and Composition to create an integrated NEYM Nominating Committee.
2. To allow the creation of a Naming Committee whenever vacancies in the Nominating Committee need to be filled.
3. To integrate the Permanent Board Internal Nominating Committee and the Clerks' Table Nominating Committee's charges, and the Friends currently serving on those committees, into the integrated NEYM Nominating Committee.
4. To lay down the separate Permanent Board Internal Nominating Committee and Clerks' Table Nominating Committees.

Friends asked many clarifying questions about the proposals:

Why create a new Naming Committee when the goal is to reduce the number of committees? Will the Nominating Committee still try to get representatives from every monthly meeting? Will the workload be too heavy for the reduced number of people?

Jackie Stillwell replied that in any healthy organization, individuals in positions of power should not be the only ones granting positions of power to others; that the total number of committee members will be reduced by about half, but it is hoped that monthly meetings will suggest names to the Naming Committee; and that she hopes the new system will be more efficient.

A Friend noted that it was very difficult for some to understand the Nominating Committee proposal without some sort of visual chart, and we were reminded that accessibility of information to Friends of different cognitive styles is important. There was an acknowledgement from Jackie that a chart would have been helpful.

Friends approved the four proposals.

Jackie Stillwell asked if Friends would be easy with allowing the Nominating Committee, in light of the questions asked, to edit the phrasing of the written proposals for clarity without changing the substance. No objection was raised.

### **2021-20 Unity Agenda**

The Clerk clarified two points about the Unity Agenda presented on page 6 of the Advance Documents:

The revised Purposes, Procedures and Composition for the Archives Committee in the Advance Documents gives two different descriptions of how the clerk is chosen. The clerk will be appointed by the Nominating Committee. (See page 32.)

There is no mention in the revised Purposes, Procedures & Composition for the Finance Committee in the Advance Documents of how the clerk of the Finance Committee is to be nominated. Again, it is the new integrated Nominating Committee that does this in consultation with the Finance Committee. (See page 32.)

Friends approved the Unity Agenda.

### **2021-21 Noticing Patterns**

The Noticing Patterns of Oppression and Faithfulness group asked us to consider how we can live more faithfully into what we have committed to doing. They noted that the competition between chronos and kairos is very real, but space still needs to be made. For instance, we approved Rebecca Leuchak as Rising Clerk but there was no opportunity to see her or learn anything about her, and we have a deep yearning to know of her gifts. Friends have been strongly urged to read the Advance Documents more closely, and while that is important to do, there remains the need to make time for people to ask questions.

### **2021-22 The Session closed with worship.**

## **Monday Morning, August 9, 2021**

### **2021-23 Epistle**

We heard the epistle from New York Yearly Meeting.

We gathered this year during the pandemics of racism and the coronavirus from our homes, where COVID-19 keeps most of us sheltering in place. We have found that God covers our meetings here online too and allows us to enter into a profound space of Spiritual nourishment and transformation.

### **2021-24 Introduction**

Bruce Neumann, Presiding Clerk, and Adam Kohrman and Gina Nortonsmith, Reading Clerks, introduced the day's activities and reviewed procedures.

### **2021-25 Elders**

The Clerk introduced the elders for today's Sessions.

### **2021-26 Our Use of Time**

This year's agenda sets aside four business sessions for open discernment. While Friends like to engage with the business before them, we must recognize that time spent on specific structural items is taken away from our time devoted to the really weighty topics. The Clerk's goal this year is to protect that time so that we can have a deep and open sense of discernment about the whole question of who we want to be as a people, not just the momentary issues at hand.

### **2021-27 Legacy Gift**

Mary Link (Mt Toby) and Susan Rockwood (Midcoast), co-clerks of the Legacy Gift Committee, described the work of that committee. Since the Legacy Gift Fund was established in 2014 its support has reached Friends in 40 of 62 meetings, ranging from New Haven Meeting to Cobscook Meeting in Whiting, Maine, plus 25 related Quaker groups, with over 100 grants totaling over \$580,000 to date. So far this year, a total of \$66,959 has been awarded to 10 applicants and there is one more cycle coming up at the end of this month.

Legacy Gifts have helped Friends answer urgent calls to witness against oppression, discrimination, and pollution of the earth, or to attend conferences with our Time-Sensitive Grants. Sometimes supporting a small, simple step in faithfulness to an initial leading has led to bigger projects and further leadings. Other grants have enabled finite projects, such as helping meetings install solar panels, mini-splits, or more efficient windows to reduce their carbon footprints, or to repair a roof on a historic meetinghouse. Committee members often hear how NEYM's Legacy support has encouraged Friends across New England beyond the financial support.

Over the course of the next few days, a few of the Legacy Gift grantees will speak about their leadings and experience of being supported by Legacy Funds. Andy Grant will speak of his leading toward right-relationship with Indigenous people, culture, and land, and Beth Collea will tell of Dover Meeting's calling to offer sanctuary and the Legacy grant supporting meetinghouse renovations to make that corporate ministry possible. Orianna Reilly and Christopher McCandless were expected to speak as well, but time and circumstances did not permit.

Mary and Susan thanked Friends for creating this legacy of Spirit through the Legacy funds. Friends are reminded of the upcoming August 30th application deadline and asked to reach out to either of the co-clerks with any questions.

### **2021-28 Faith and Practice Revision**

Phebe McCosker (Hanover) described the work of the Faith and Practice Revision Committee and presented a new chapter on "Personal Spiritual Practices."

The process of writing a new Faith and Practice is about the engagement of the Yearly Meeting in naming where we are as a community in a way that encourages spiritual vitality and growth. The committee presents each new draft chapter, followed by listening sessions, input from the monthly meetings, a rewrite, and more input from Friends.

This week the committee is bringing the chapter “Personal Spiritual Practices” back for preliminary approval. Our faith community depends on the vitality of the personal spiritual lives of its members. This chapter asks Friends to examine how they keep their spiritual lives vibrant. It encourages Friends to explore the breadth of opportunity for spiritual depth that lies before them in their everyday lives. As usual, the chapter has a series of extracts following the text to bring into greater clarity the power of Friends’ practice.

Members of the committee read several extracts and queries.

Phoebe informed the body of opportunities for listening sessions and an intention to bring a revised Personal Spiritual Practices chapter back to the body at the end of the week.

### **2021-29 Right Relationship Resource Group**

Suzanna Schell (Beacon Hill) presented a report from the Right Relationship Resource Group, consisting of Suzanna, Andy Grant (Mt Toby), Don Campbell (Mt Toby), Sara Smith (Concord), Kim West (Cambridge), and Leslie Manning (Durham, clerk of Permanent Board).

This group was appointed by Permanent Board in September 2020 to support monthly meetings as they reflected on the draft Apology to Native Americans. While the group’s role was not to wordsmith the Apology, they have considered suggestions and questions they received and incorporated some but not all of them. A number of meetings have minuted their support for the Apology, while other meetings are just beginning or have not yet engaged. You can read all of the responses on the NEYM website (<https://neym.org/right-relationship-indigenous-peoples-local-discernment-and-action>).

Although the search for Truth is an arduous path, it opens the way for a restoration of balance and greater joy. Together we are on the journey of a lifetime, and this letter is one step.

Andy Grant (Mt Toby) then read the Apology to Native Americans. (See page 39.)

Friends received the Apology; discernment on approving it will happen later this week.

### **2021-30 No Way To Treat a Child**

The Presiding Clerk urged Friends to listen to one another with open and tender hearts, recognizing that for some it is very important for the quarterly meeting minutes on the mistreatment of Palestinian children to be heard in full, while others will find the messages they carry very disturbing.

Carl Williams (Plainfield) read the Northwest Quarter minute regarding “No Way to Treat a Child.” Jim Matlack (Midcoast) read the Vassalboro Quarter minute on the mistreatment of Palestinian children.

Friends received these minutes. Discernment on approving them will happen later this week. There was a Pastoral Care breakout room at the end of this morning’s session for anyone who wanted help grounding after these intense messages.

### **2021-31 NEYM Earthcare Ministry Committee**

Kim Stoner (New Haven), Margaret Marshall (Narramissic Valley), and Reb MacKenzie (Quaker City Unity) read the 2021 Minute of Support for Survival of the Earth and Her Inhabitants. (See page page 40.)

## **Monday Afternoon, August 9, 2021**

### **2021-32 Introductions**

Bruce Neumann (Fresh Pond) again introduced the Clerks’ Table, the Noticing Patterns group, and the elders for this afternoon.

For decades, Quakers in New England and Cuba have sustained a “Bridge of Love”—also called the Puente de Amigos—through mutual support, prayer, and visitation. This year, despite the enormous hardship Cubans are experiencing, several Friends from Cuba, including Kenya Casanova Sales, Jorge Luis Peña Reyes (pre-

siding clerk of Cuba Yearly Meeting), and Miledys Batista Sintes, are joining us at Sessions as they are able through the facilitation of a dedicated tech and interpretation team.

### **2021-33 Underlying Truth**

The Clerk expressed that what we seek this week is to find some underlying Truth that we might miss in considering topics individually, but which might emerge as we look at them together. What we did this morning, hearing items of business but holding off on our discernment process, is part of that process.

### **2021-34 Noticing Patterns**

The Noticing Patterns group reminded us that the work of owning and responding to the ways the culture of empire has harmed us can feel overwhelming.

Those of us who carry marginalized identities are particularly challenged to find a way to carry our responses to oppression while still carrying on with our daily lives. To hear and feel the weight of several ways this oppression has played can feel overwhelming, and without space to breathe and regroup ourselves in the divine presence some of us are not able to find the balanced place of discernment. Our dominant culture does not teach us to take the space that would allow us to find God in these moments.

They asked that we take time in prayer throughout our business, observing that while it may seem that it would slow us down, “it is actually a way to regroup ourselves in spaciousness and in the infinite.”

### **2021-35 NEYM’s History with Friends United Meeting**

The Clerk called on Frederick Martin (Beacon Hill), one of our representatives to the FUM General Board, to introduce the issues surrounding the relationship between NEYM and FUM. The text of his remarks follows:

FUM is an international association of Quaker yearly meetings that represents one “branch” or “flavor” of the Quaker faith. The various branches of Friends all grew out of the core revolutionary Quaker movement that started in England in the 1650s, but in 19th-century England and America, religious changes swept through the whole culture—not just Quakers—and Quakers split into four or five different branches. One of these branches was more activist, more involved in abolitionist work and social reform, more Bible-oriented, and began holding programmed worship services and supporting pastors. New England Quakers were almost all part of this branch.

In 1902, this branch organized itself into what they called the Five Years Meeting, which later became Friends United Meeting. New England Yearly Meeting was a founding member. They were trying to strengthen a kind of mainline Protestant theology against the growing evangelical revivalist movements that were sweeping Quakerism along with the rest of the country.

New England Quakers, even in the early 20th century, were not part of the more liberal Friends General Conference. Only in the 1940s did some newly independent meetings in places like Cambridge, Providence, and Hartford start working with FGC.

Another element, separate from FUM, was a missionary effort of Quakers from the United States to East Africa. In 1902, NEYM sent two representatives to the Board that organized this effort separately from FUM. It was taken under the care of FUM a couple of decades later. Kenya now has the largest number of Quakers anywhere in the world, and they are members of FUM. The Board and staff have been working to decolonize the organizational structures of FUM for a number of years, but that’s another story.

Today, FUM is an association of 37 yearly meetings, 20 of them in Kenya. Four or five FUM-affiliated yearly meetings in the United States are also affiliated with Friends General Conference, including us. The umbrella of FUM’s organizational structure includes Friends Theological College in Kenya, several other programs in East Africa that support Friends, Ramallah Friends School in Palestine, and the Belize Friends School, programming for Friends in North America, and an international conference every three years called the Triennial.

Like any nonprofit organization, FUM has a personnel policy. Most of it is about ordinary things like staff benefits, but it includes what is called a Personal Ethics section, which says that staff are expected to lead lifestyles in accordance with Friends testimonies. Susan Furry, a New England Friend who wore a pink triangle to FUM gatherings in the 1970s, has described the “long-standing but unwritten and unspoken policy: no Gay Friends could work for FUM.” An incident in the 1980s caused a firestorm of protest when a gay Friend applied for a position and was rejected. This prompted the Board to adopt the current policy in 1988.

I know this is painful, because it’s the policy that New England is demanding change. I’m going to read the part that matters here:

Staff and volunteer appointments and promotions are made without regard to sex, race, national origin, age, physical disability, or sexual orientation. It is expected, however, that intimate sexual behavior should be confined to a traditional marriage, understood to be between one man and one woman.

Susan Furry points out that this policy “did have the advantage that (though discriminatory) it would actually be possible for a Gay or Bisexual Friend to serve in Friends United Meeting.” She goes on to say, “I did not feel the policy was the will of God. I strongly believed and still believe that it was and still is God’s will that the policy must ultimately change. But I knew clearly that this was the best that this particular group of Friends could do at that time.” She also asked us to bear in mind that in 1988 only six of the monthly meetings in NEYM had approved same sex marriage, most of them just year, one in 1987, and one in 1986. One other note: part of the intent of the policy was to promote gender equality in Africa by restricting patriarchal leadership by men with multiple wives.

New England representatives to FUM hoped this personnel policy would be the start of incremental change, but unfortunately it became frozen in time while our country has only grown more polarized.

Twenty-four years later, in 2012, the personnel policy had to be updated for legal reasons in the state of Indiana. When it came to the section on Personal Ethics, a number of representatives, including those from NEYM, were not in unity with it. Unfortunately, when there was no agreement on a new policy, the usual Quaker practice left the existing one in place. A note was included in the new personnel manual that the Board is not in unity with that section of the policy.

So from a factual standpoint, this is where we still are.

Because FUM is governed by a Board made up of yearly meeting representatives which worked by Quaker process, change can be held up even when the ground has been shifting for FUM’s member yearly meetings in North America.

Out of eleven FUM yearly meetings in the U.S. in 2009, only four were LGBTQ-affirming. Since then, two yearly meetings have split, with one side affirming and one side non-affirming in each case, and four more have either adopted affirming policies or been open to their monthly meetings doing so. This prompted many anti-affirming meetings to leave. So, the U.S. yearly meetings in FUM overall have become more affirming.

While concerns about the policy had been voiced earlier within New England Yearly Meeting, the issue came to the fore in Sessions 2009 when it was clear that some Friends felt we should disaffiliate, while others felt we should stay in relationship. A few of them felt that they could not allow any portion of their money to go to FUM—even through their donations to their monthly meetings, which in turn donated to NEYM, which donated to FUM.

The withholding mechanism was established as a sort of 11th-hour way to move forward. It let us stay in relationship while allowing those whose conscience would not let them donate to FUM remain in relationship with their monthly meeting and NEYM. Some members of Wellesley meeting resigned as they felt that even this measure was not enough.

Yet despite multiple commitments to engage with everyone and seek a better way forward and multiple renewals of the withholding plan, as a body of Friends we've mostly avoided deep engagement. Some Friends have engaged in intervisitation with yearly meetings and are convinced that, while slower than we could wish for, one-on-one relationships built over time are the way we change people's hearts.

At Sessions in 2019 we considered the withholding policy again after a five-year hiatus, and the Clerk's sense of the meeting was that we did not have unity to continue the withholding plan. It had been written with a sunset clause, so without unity to reaffirm it, the mechanism ceased to exist. It was allowed to extend to October 2020 to allow monthly meetings to take this into account in their budgets. Then the COVID pandemic came. The Clerks' Table saw that we couldn't discern this at our first Zoom Sessions, and Permanent Board authorized a further one-year extension to October 2021.

### **2021-36 Monthly Meeting minutes regarding Friends United Meeting**

Over the past year we have received twelve minutes from monthly meetings regarding our relationship to Friends United Meeting. The Clerk asked that these minutes be read to the body. Brief summaries of each one follow. The full texts can be found beginning on page 41.

Partway through the reading of the monthly meeting minutes, a Friend stopped us and asked that Friends consider whether it is necessary to read aloud the excerpt from the FUM policy over and over again, as it is acutely painful to hear it. The Clerk recognized that this Session has been particularly difficult for the LGBTQIA+ Friends among us. He concluded with "I hope you will hear the love and affection that your meetings feel. You are us. We are glad you're here. You are beloved."

*[Editor's note: Text which is indented in the following is an excerpt from the monthly meeting minute.]*

### **2021-37 Minute from Fresh Pond Monthly Meeting**

While observing that the FUM personnel policy is "inconsistent with the divine community to which we aspire ... Fresh Pond Meeting has experienced and affirms the many ways Friends United Meeting effectively witnesses other Quaker beliefs and testimonies." Fresh Pond Monthly Meeting accepts our membership in and financial support of FUM.

### **2021-38 Minute from Hartford Monthly Meeting**

Hartford Monthly Meeting, recognizing "the complexity of this issue given that Friends United Meeting is an international body representing members from many cultures," is committed to "the fullest inclusion in our ministry and expression of their humanity" of the LGBTQIA+ community and others. The minute states their intention to withhold FUM-related funds, and to reallocate those funds to LGBTQIA+ organizations.

### **2021-39 Minute from Midcoast Friends Meeting**

Acknowledging the moral frailty of all of us, nonetheless we believe that [failing to excise the offensive language in FUM's personnel policy] causes grievous harm, moral injury, and imminent danger to LGBTQ+ persons and their communities. Unless FUM changes its policy, we ask NEYM to withdraw from membership at its 2020 Annual Meeting. Our energy is best invested by partnering elsewhere, and working on behalf of the LGBTQ+ community.

### **2021-40 Minute from Middlebury Friend Meeting**

LGBTQ+ persons have suffered too long being discriminated against or worse, imprisoned and killed. As Quakers ... we should be at the forefront of those welcoming our LGBTQ+ family as truly and fully, our family.

When New England Yearly Meeting halts its contribution withholding practice, Middlebury Friends will allow its members to express their conscience on FUM's hiring policy by designating a percent of their contributions destined to FUM as a contribution to another benevolence. Meeting will still pay its full dues to NEYM.



**2021-41 Minute from New Haven Friends Meeting**

New Haven Friends believe NEYM should remain engaged with FUM and continue exerting influence on our Friends at FUM with the hope of changing hearts and minds. “We want to support the good work FUM does around the world as they provide a form of outreach that NEYM meetings are not able to do. We also appreciate how FUM has worked to change the power dynamics within FUM away from white supremacy. Let’s not throw out the baby with the bathwater!”

**2021-42 Minute from Northeast Kingdom Quaker Meeting**

We recognize that continuing to support this policy causes moral injury, not only to those who are excluded, but especially to those of us that participate in excluding them. We support individuals who can not in good conscience contribute monetarily to Friends United Meeting until this policy is changed. We recognize that FUM does important and valuable work and that we are all part of one Spiritual community. We also understand that individual acts of conscience can be the beginning point for creating awareness and challenging us to struggle together as a community to choose a just and moral way forward.

**2021-43 Minute from Putney Friends Meeting**

Putney’s minute asks that we “eliminate the funding mechanism which offsets withheld contributions to Friends United Meeting,” and “explore avenues for funds that would have gone to Friends United Meeting to be redirected to support for the needs of LGBTQ people everywhere.”

**2021-44 Minute from South Starksboro Friends Meeting**

We want to ensure that our monetary contributions do not go through NEYM to support organizations which discriminate against LGBTQ people, or those in a non-heterosexual or unmarried relationship. For example, while we continue to support communication and dialogue with Friends United Meeting (FUM) we do not wish that any monies we send as a meeting to NEYM be used in support of FUM as long as they continue discriminatory hiring practices.

**2021-45 Minute from Weare/Henniker Monthly Meeting**

Some Friends questioned why a discriminatory condition of employment such as this is in FUM’s policy at all. At the conclusion of our third session, some Friends felt that we do not know enough about the inner workings of FUM and the possible consequences of change to fully understand its perspective. While the frustration of Midcoast Friends Meeting speaks to some of us, there is no sense of the meeting at this time that our community is prepared to follow their path. In fact, we feel it is important to pay dues and remain members of NEYM and FUM if we want to have any say in changing policies.

**2021-46 Minute from Wellesley Friends Meeting**

The minute requests the reinstatement of the withholding policy, noting that it “provides a tangible way to recognize that Friends United Meeting’s personnel policy falls short of the Quaker revelation that there is that of God in every individual,” and observing that “It is not intended as financial leverage, but rather as a witness of faith and conscience.”

**2021-47 Minute from Westport Monthly Meeting**

Westport Monthly Meeting, observing that past discernment around FUM has been contentious and divisive, notes that “we are clear that the path to unity is through listening and being willing to change if that is what we are called to do.”

### **2021-48 Minute from Worcester Friends Meeting**

Daron Barnard (Worcester) reading a minute from Worcester Monthly Meeting, shared that the meeting engages in “work to promote social justice in our home community [which] includes initiatives supporting LGBT people, some of whom are asylum seekers fleeing the pervasive and even legislated homophobia in their home countries.”

We propose, therefore, that NEYM consider reinstatement of a revised form of the withholding option, specifically an option for Meetings to redirect those funds which would be donated to FUM to an alternate organization working for the benefit of LGBT people in Africa.

## **Tuesday Morning, August 10, 2021**

### **2021-49 Epistle**

We heard the epistle from Intermountain Yearly Meeting:

Following our faith into action will present many challenges. If, as our faith tells us, there is that of God in everyone, how will we challenge racism in our midst? How will we do so as “a motion of love”? This kind of work can only be sustained if our faith and our meetings are strong. To that end, time spent at our yearly gathering offers opportunities for nurturing one another and building community. ... Our community is maintained through faith and fellowship with each other as we wait in the Light for the unity that draws us together.

### **2021-50 Introductions**

The Clerk introduced again the Clerks’ Table and today’s elders and expressed appreciation for the Friends from Noticing Patterns who meet daily with the Clerks’ Table.

The Clerk shared: “Yesterday was a heavy day, with a lot to listen to that was hard to hear. We feel that weight also. As I reflected this morning it came to me that the Sessions Planning Purpose and Procedure, which is on the agenda, is not the work that is before us today. We really want to begin open discernment.”

### **2021-51 Pastoral Care**

In response to yesterday’s reading of the minutes from monthly meetings about the FUM personnel policy, the Pastoral Care Team set up an alternate Zoom room for those of us who are LGBTQIA+ who wanted to step away from business for support.

### **2021-52 Noticing Patterns**

The Noticing Patterns working group (NPWG) reported that they are working together and with Spirit to hold all that is arising in business, across the Yearly Meeting, and through the Noticing Patterns email.

They’ve received several dozen emails, many of them very long and searching, and they thank you all for your heartfelt reflections and noticings. This is stretching them and suggests needs for connection and community that are beyond their scope and capabilities. They hope Friends can be gentle and patient with them! Please know they are praying over all that is arising, and knowing each of them and each of you sees or knows or feels the parts we do. NPWG does not have nor seek simple answers or noticings on this journey with Spirit and all.

Those on NPWG are also feeling and processing individually what is arising within them and in the body, as they sit together to hear what Spirit is asking of them as they seek to be faithful to their charge. There is much stirring. They are feeling stretched in spirit-held ways and, at moments, up to the limits of their capacity.

As they seek to listen for what they have to offer, they wonder about what is the Spirit-filled and Spirit-led container that all of us here gathered can co-create together, that can hold all at Sessions as we seek to feel, see, hear, know, and wonder what God is calling us toward?

As John Calvi shared last night, *all* can be *healed*, and yet not all will be healed in our time, in this time. Thus, part of what the Working Group wonders is what may need to be different about this Sessions container in relation to time? What allows us to recognize that clock time is at play while reaching and opening to God's time, and to how Spirit is moving among us at this time?

In closing, they shared this prayer from Niyonu Spann of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, and the source of the Noticing Patterns of Oppression and Faithfulness framework.

May I meet you where you are,  
 May I never lose my center.  
 May I meet you where you are,  
 May we never lose our center.  
 Reaching back for truth,  
 Bringing forth the healing;  
 Healing for the future born of living from the heart right now.

### 2021-53 Legacy Gift Recipient: Beth Collea

Beth Collea (Dover) shared the journey of Dover Meeting becoming a sanctuary congregation. The project began in 2017, when some Indonesian neighbors were threatened with imminent deportation. Dover Meeting responded with lightning speed to say "Yes" to becoming a sanctuary congregation and then turned to other area houses of worship for partnership, forming the Seacoast Interfaith Sanctuary Coalition (SISC).

The spiritual affirmation of the Legacy Gift Committee helped them to receive and stand in God's grace and guidance. And the generous funding made a monumental task seem a little less daunting.

At this point they have activated their building permit and are ready to begin stage one construction. The whole process has been bumpy with twists and turns, but as they look back, all those times of doubt and stuckness drew them together into deeper waters of prayer and patience together.

Beth shared with us five spiritual learnings that have come out of this work:

1. Respond to stuckness by standing in the Light and waiting. Make space and time for grace to work.
2. Frame the leading as a collective testimony, asking What is the truth we are called to share?
3. Utilize fully every opening. By leaning into openings as they appeared, they found the Holy One offered a fuller measure of grace. Opening kept inviting them to another opening and another.
4. Signal to others the experience of living into a leading. Other people of faith are eager to hear how we are changed by taking faithful action together.
5. Let this reveal itself over time. Dover Meeting and the SISC are working with other worship groups in Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine. Any individual detained in those states is automatically sent to Immigration & Customs Enforcement in Dover, NH, which is only six miles from Dover Meeting. It has been providential that they can be a safe haven and the first jumping-off point for those released from detention.

### 2021-54 Clerks' Table Nominations

Friends raised a concern that names were offered as nominations for Rising Clerk and Recording Clerk without the opportunity to hear anything about the nominees. In response, Judy Goldberger (Beacon Hill) from Clerks' Table Nominating, Bruce Neumann, and Honor Woodrow each spoke about their experiences working with the nominees and their sense of the gifts they bring to these positions.

### 2021-55 Proposal from the FUM Committee

Kristina Keefe-Perry (Fresh Pond) of the FUM Committee presented a report and proposal from the FUM Committee. The full proposal can be found in the appended documents.

The committee reaffirmed NEYM minute 2009-53, which reads, "Just as Friends have historically witnessed to the Light present among all races and genders, we witness that the Light is present among people of all sexual orientations and gender identities or gender expressions. We experience our sexuality and sexual identity as integral components of who we are as children of God"; and also reaffirmed minute 2019-58 that said

“We unite unequivocally in our love and care for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer Friends, and hold a particular concern for their lives and ministries.”

The proposal included three new initiatives:

1. Collaboration and witness with other open and affirming yearly meetings
2. Establishing a fund (tentatively called the Bayard Rustin Fund) to support LGBTQIA+ organizations in East Africa, Central and South America, India, the Caribbean, and North America
3. Examining the ways that homophobia and transphobia lives in the broader culture, in our meetings, and in us, examining and changing our practices and gatherings to become more inclusive.

The full proposal is appended on page 48.

### **2021-56 Introduction to Open Discernment**

The Clerk reminded us that at heart, every business meeting is a meeting for worship. We need to hold back from the urgency of naming the thing that is rising quickly and instead settle into worship and treat this as a meeting for worship.

We have seen minutes on No Way To Treat a Child, we have the Apology to Native Americans and minutes on FUM and Earthcare Ministry and a chapter from Faith and Practice. These are parts of the big picture but not the whole of it. We are looking for the underlying Truth that supports them all.

As we enter into worship with a concern for business, the Clerk offered these queries:

*Who do we want to be? And what is God calling us to?*

This is an experiment for all of us.

### **2021-57 Open Discernment**

Through the rest of our Tuesday morning session, continuing Wednesday morning, and much of our Wednesday afternoon sessions, Friends engaged deeply with the concerns at hand and the queries proposed by the Clerk. Friends responded with messages expressing specific points of view about particular agenda items, with vocal ministry which reflected the underlying connections and concerns, and with prayer.

Friends expressed both frustration that we still belong to an organization (FUM) whose personnel policy discriminates against LGBTQIA+, and a deep desire to stay in relationship with that body. Friends expressed their sense that the Apology to Native Americans was an important step in acknowledging our participation in generations of wrongdoing and is an important step in building trust. We heard both deep reservations about AFSC's No Way to Treat a Child campaign, as well as concern for the violence and injustice that happens to Palistinian children as well as children here in the U.S. and around the world. We heard concern for our planet.

Threaded through much of what we heard were themes of communication and engagement with those we disagree with, and humility, recognizing that we have made mistakes in the past.

While much of this open discernment is reflected in specific minutes on Thursday morning, for a more detailed summary of the views expressed and messages heard, see the “Clerks’ Table Summary of Open Discernment” on page 50.

## **Wednesday Morning, August 11, 2021**

### **2021-58 Epistle**

We heard the epistle from Aotearoa/New Zealand Yearly Meeting. This epistle was chosen to reflect their relationship with their Indigenous community, the tāngata whenua.

We rejoiced in the opportunity to be fully present “with each other” after 2020’s online-only meeting for worship. While giving thanks for the privileged position of Aotearoa/New Zealand, we were reminded of the perilous state of other nations, especially as we heard of the serious impact of Covid-19 in India.

The value of connection was strongly felt among Friends and we heard how the new use of technology had enabled the Quaker community, as never before, to extend its reach to remote and unwell Friends. ...

Like the tōroa [albatross], we now go back to our Quaker communities enriched by the aroha [love] that has embraced this Yearly Meeting, and its attendees, both present and remote.

### **2021-59 Introductions**

The Clerk again introduced the Clerks' Table and the elders.

### **2021-60 Legacy Gift Recipient: Andy Grant**

Andy Grant (Mt Toby) spoke about his journey of learning about Native peoples and coming to a deep sympathy for their wisdom and their pain. He spoke of being a white settler descendant through and through. He is learning to love his ancestors, to stand with them in good and bad, and bringing their deeds to light is part of that process as he works to move from being an occupier to being a neighbor with legitimacy. His meeting met him in this leading and ministry, giving him a clearness process and an oversight committee. Through the grant he has been able to supplement his limited income to pursue this work.

Recently he was able to attend and provide supplies for a Pokumtuk homelands festival in Turner's Falls, a place where an atrocity was committed that has now been restored as a place of peace and a gathering place of tribes from across the Northeast, helping to sow the seeds for a future work of deep listening and friendship over time. He shared with us his definition of faith: "I lift my foot, and the path is revealed."

### **2021-61 The Work of Transformation**

The Clerk acknowledged that all that we have heard has been a lot to take in. It is hard work, and part of why it is hard is because the Clerk has asked us to consider the whole rather than the parts.

The questions we have been asking are *Who do we want to be? What does God want us to do?* We have heard about our relationship with FUM, we've heard a proposal from the FUM committee, a couple of minutes about the No Way To Treat a Child campaign, the Apology to Native Americans, and a minute from the Earthcare Ministry Committee. These provide some shape and impetus to the work but the real work is the underlying transformation of hearts, to become a people more aligned with the way God wants us to be. We are being molded by the Divine.

This approach is challenging. And yet, time and again Friends have come together to discern, and we are eager to engage deeply in that process.

In our usual practice at business sessions, we get drawn into the details. Today we are asked to lift our vision and try to imagine a different way of being. The Clerk's vision is that if we can begin to see this new way, the challenges that we feel around individual concerns can begin to fall away and through the day we will begin to see where we want to move as a body.

Friends returned to a period of worshipful open discernment.

### **2021-62 Open Discernment**

Friends continued with open discernment. (The Clerks' Table Summary can be found on page 50.)

## **Wednesday Afternoon, August 11, 2021**

### **2021-63 Epistle**

The Reading Clerks read the epistle from Baltimore Yearly Meeting out of the silence.

What is ours to do is grounded in our relationship with each other. Our work is not just making decisions, but the act of "being" a yearly meeting. Being in conflict in community takes on an aspect of holiness because we labor together, as if "together" is the only option. Community builds hope and, like courage, hope is contagious.

## 2021-64 Introductions

The Clerk opened the afternoon session with a prayer and a Cuban song and introduced this afternoon's elders.

## 2021-65 Messages from Cuban Friends

Most Friends are aware that we have a long and vibrant relationship with Cuba Yearly Meeting. Because of the COVID pandemic, they have been unable to travel to be with us this week, but we have several Cuban Friends with us over Zoom. Our translation team shared with us a message from Kenya Casanova Sales, and Benigno Sanchez-Eppler translated the following message from Jorge Luis Peña. Friends were touched by the deep caring and concern that Cuban Friends show for one another.

2 Corinthians 4:7-10

But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us. We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed—always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body.

Dear brothers and sisters, it is not easy to understand what Cuba is experiencing in the midst of what all humanity is living. I want to give you this message that the Lord inspired, I trust that you can understand and go deep in it.

Cuba had incomprehensible scarcities of basic necessities, but now that the world is turned upside down, it has become even more difficult for us to survive. In order to get by, we have learned to speak without words, to laugh and make fun of our own obstacles.

As Quakers we have built bridges and found ways around the hatred between our governments, because although the sea lies between us, we never believed in borders.

We need change, including a change in our own minds—a change that translates into a clear understanding of God. Although in these times we cannot feel free from threats of all kinds, we can still believe in the promises of the living God. We can smell the stench of death and still yearn for life. We can still feel walls and dream of bridges.

Jorge Luis  
 Presiding Clerk of Cuba Yearly Meeting  
 Early Morning of August 11, 2021

## 2021-66 The Puente de Amigos Committee

The Puente Committee is proposing a minute which is intended as a tool for our collective voice as New England Yearly Meeting to speak against the decades of cruel and coercive policies enacted by the United States government against Cuba, and to bear witness to the humanity of our beloved neighbors to the south.

The United States blockade against Cuba, as well as the recent executive actions of the previous administration, deny the Cuban people access to food, medical supplies and other essential resources and have exacerbated the humanitarian crises of poverty and pandemic. Our Quaker faith compels us to make an urgent appeal to our own government in hope that we can move forward with love and respect for all.

New England Yearly Meeting calls upon the Biden administration and the United States Congress to immediately end the blockade against Cuba, as well as immediately rescind the 240-plus executive actions held over from the previous administration, which are an affront to human rights and dignity. Furthermore, we urge the United States government to initiate a normalization of relations between our two countries.

Approval of this minute will be with the assumption that we will send it to the Biden Administration. We will also send it out widely to the monthly meetings and members of New England Yearly Meeting so that they, in turn, can forward it to their own Congress members.

Friends approved.

### 2021-67 Letter from the Presbyterian Church Office of Public Witness

The Clerk shared a letter that he and the Yearly Meeting Secretary recently received from the Presbyterian Church Office of Public Witness addressing concerns in Cuba. The Clerk and Secretary have signed it on behalf of New England Yearly Meeting, feeling it was fully in line with previous minutes and policies. The letter has also been signed by a range of faith-based organizations, including the Friends Committee on National Legislation and Friends United Meeting.

The text of the letter is appended on page 53.

### 2021-68 Open Discernment

The Clerk thanked Friends for a grounded meeting this morning. There was much to be heard and absorbed. He reminded us of the foundational question, *Who are we called to be*, and of some of the answers we have heard: *we need healing; we are encouraged to be finely tuned listeners, strange, truthful, and annoying; if not here, where? If not now, when?*

Friends continued with open discernment. (Summary on page 50.)

### 2021-69 Closing

Prayers were shared and Friends closed with worship.

## Thursday, Morning August 12, 2021

### 2021-70 Epistle

We heard the epistle from South Central Yearly Meeting.

We are challenged to be bold and love fiercely as we sought guidance from the Spirit to address the crises of today that we, as people of a shared faith, must meet with integrity, unity, love, and peace.

God has richly blessed and ordained our work, we continue to be in community with you, each other, and friends all over the world as we work with that sacred time when peace may prevail on earth and in the hearts and minds of those who inhabit it. Sandra Cronk once wrote, Peace is a gift, but it does not come magically through our passivity. Only in our faithful response to God's call, do we receive God's peace.

### 2021-71 Introductions and Announcements

The Clerk apologized for what he recognized as his poor eldering the other day. Someone had been reading a prepared statement in a business meeting. In other circumstances he would have recognized that as calling for a one-on-one conversation, not a calling-out. Also, while we hope that Friends speak from their heart in worship and business, the line between preparation and spontaneous speaking is fuzzier than we might like to think.

He introduced this morning's elders, expressed gratitude for the presence of our visitors (although, sadly, there wasn't time to recognize them individually) and for the tech team, without whom we could not make these Zoom Sessions happen.

### 2021-72 Noticing Patterns

The Noticing Patterns working group reported on their work and *some* of what they had heard during Sessions. (See full text on page 54.) The working group expects to make a more thorough report sometime in the fall.

They expressed gratitude for the deep and faithful engagement of Friends in this work. Examples of faithfulness were legion during our Sessions. They also noted themes, drawn from many Friends' emails, that reflect patterns that fall short of faithfulness. The themes identified were:

- NEYM Friends hold groups of people in prayer and in their hearts, yet a polarity between preferred groups and other groups is often noted.
- NEYM Friends notice language that impacts groups negatively.
- NEYM Friends are concerned about insensitivity to the needs of, or the poor accommodation of, neuro-divergence.
- NEYM Friends are concerned about expectations and rules of engagement being unevenly applied by the Clerk in meeting for business.
- NEYM Friends are concerned about inappropriate uses to which beliefs, values, or practices of certain groups, traditions, or cultures are put.

The Working Group noted the challenge of trying to change the dominant culture in which we all are steeped. Noting the grief that we have experienced from old wounds, as well as the pain that comes from being complicit in a culture that uses wounding to control others, the Working Group invited us to consider sharing our grief with one another rather than denying or hiding it. They asked us, in the words of Ross Gay, “What if we joined our sorrow? What if that is joy?”

Finally, the group invited us to let go of our perfectionism and concern with appearances, to turn to one another instead in humility and love. They invited us to let go of our quarrels, given that we cannot yet clearly see our goal. They invited us to be guided by the inner teacher to do the next right thing; to enter a process of healing for our most teachable selves; to proceed in faith, one step at a time, in our journey toward reconciliation and Truth.

### **2021-73 Faith and Practice Revision Committee**

The Faith and Practice Revision Committee brought back the chapter on Personal Spiritual Practices, with some revisions. Phrases were added about spiritual writings and wisdom from other traditions, and one extract was rewritten.

Several people sent the committee extracts, which they appreciated. There had been a suggestion to include extracts from very young children, but most of those will fit better in the chapter on Families and Children.

Friends approved the chapter. As with all of the chapters, this is preliminary approval. Friends are asked to use it in place of the 1985 Faith and Practice so that the committee can receive further feedback before they bring the chapter back for final approval when the whole book is ready.

### **2021-74 Sessions Committee Purposes, Procedures, and Composition**

Recognizing that we have not had a chance to get back to the Sessions Committee proposal, the Clerk intends to ask Permanent Board to grant one-year approval so that the work of planning next year’s Sessions can happen. The proposal will come back to Sessions next year for approval by the body.

### **2021-75 Earthcare Ministry Committee**

Friends approved forwarding the Earthcare Ministry Committee’s minute to monthly meetings for their consideration. The minute appears on page 40.

### **2021-76 FUM Personnel Policy**

The Clerk observed that several of the monthly meeting minutes about FUM suggested they might correspond with the General Board, but he also noted his understanding that the Board does not consider minutes from monthly meetings, only yearly meetings. The Clerk named his willingness to write to the FUM Board, expressing our sense of dismay at the continued existence of the offensive portion of the personnel policy and our understanding of the Light in all.

Friends approved.

It was suggested that in addition to sending the letter, that it be hand-delivered by one or more of our Board representatives, allowing the possibility of conversation.



## 2021-77 FUM Committee Proposal: Bayard Rustin Fund

The Clerk brought our attention to the proposal from the FUM Committee suggesting the establishment of the Bayard Rustin Fund. This fund would be held by NEYM and would accept money from individuals and monthly meetings to be distributed to organizations working towards LGBTQIA+ wellbeing. He also noted that if Friends also approve a mechanism for directing contributions away from FUM, then those monies would go to this fund.

A Friend pointed out that FGC also has a fund called the Bayard Rustin Fund that is very different. Should this one have a different name? (The Clerk clarified that we're approving the creation of the fund. If it's determined by Permanent Board that it should have a different name, they can change it.)

The more direction Permanent Board can receive, the better they can carry out the work. The Clerk of Permanent Board asked the FUM Committee to meet regularly and report to them at least once.

Friends approved the proposal as it appeared in the Advance Documents:

The Bayard Rustin Fund for Support and Action:

- The Yearly Meeting will establish the NEYM Bayard Rustin Fund for Support and Action. Rustin (1912–1987) was a pillar of the Civil Rights movement in the United States. Raised a Quaker, Rustin studied nonviolence with Gandhian activists in India, organized the first Freedom Rides, co-founded the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (with Dr. King), and helped to plan the 1963 March on Washington. Rustin's leadership was often behind the scenes because, as a gay man in the 1960s, he was often discredited for his sexuality. Rustin worked tirelessly for civil rights for all people until his death and is a fitting namesake for this fund.
- This project of the Yearly Meeting will be funded at an initial amount as determined by the Permanent Board in consultation with the Treasurer and the Finance Committee, and can receive additional monies from individual Friends and meetings. This proposal is for a "revolving" fund, where the full amount contributed in a given year is available for distribution as a grant or grants, rather than a permanently endowed fund.
- A working group of five people (including at least one Yearly Meeting (YM) FUM Board representative and four others with gifts and experience of encouragement, support, and prophetic witness) will direct the donations of this fund, while working carefully with the YM Treasurer, Finance Committee, and YM Staff.
- The donations will be used to support LGBTQIA+ organizations in East Africa, Central and South America, India, the Caribbean, and North America. The fund might assist monthly meetings in their witness as well as target support to initiatives that resist current anti-trans youth legislation by increasing the visibility of efforts and opportunities for collaboration across NEYM.
- Individuals and meetings can make gifts to this fund.

## 2021-78 Clerk's Proposal Regarding FUM Funding

The Clerk summarized for us the context of this proposal. We have heard 12 minutes from monthly meetings, in all of which we heard the pain felt over the discriminatory aspect of the FUM personnel policy. We also heard that a number of these monthly meetings feel the need for a way to express their conscience and keep any part of their NEYM contributions from going to FUM. Division over this exists within many monthly meetings, not just between them.

Where the previous 2009 withholding mechanism was ambiguous as to its intention regarding withholding for conscience' sake or as financial leverage, and where it withheld funds from FUM but did not specify the use of those funds, this minute is clear that the purpose is solely to allow a mechanism for those who cannot in good conscience support FUM, and directs funds to be used for the benefit of LGBTQIA+ Friends and others.

In a sense, this proposal is an act of pastoral care for those who are in pain and feel they cannot have any of their money go to FUM.

While a change of the FUM personnel policy would be welcome, a change that is based on financial leverage without the change of heart would be a hollow victory. The following proposed minute, if approved, would allow monthly meetings to redirect funds which would otherwise go to FUM. The minute names that

this is for conscience' sake. While the old withholding mechanism provided a separate fund to make up the difference, the Clerk's best sense is that Friends do not feel the need for this now; any individual can give to FUM at any time.

The proposed minute follows:

Since at least 2009 NEYM has struggled to find unity regarding our membership and the nature of our relationship with Friends United Meeting (FUM). While there are multiple issues, the heart of our struggle is FUM's personnel policy which does not allow LGBTQIA+ and other Friends in active relationships to be employees of FUM.

On several occasions we have minuted our love and respect for LGBTQIA+ Friends in our midst, and have celebrated their service to our own Yearly Meeting. Yet we remain deeply divided on continuing our membership in an organization with such a discriminatory policy. Some would prefer that we disaffiliate, while others observe that staying in relationship allows us to stay in conversation and work for change.

Lacking unity on this fundamental question, we seek a way to stay in relationship within NEYM, to honor our differences, and to express that our love for each other is greater than our disagreement. Out of concern for individuals and monthly meetings who, as a matter of conscience, cannot contribute to the financial support of FUM, NEYM will allow monthly meetings to direct that some portion of their contribution to the Yearly Meeting that would otherwise have gone to FUM, go instead to a new fund, provisionally named the Bayard Rustin Fund. As further expressed in minute 2021-77, these funds will be distributed annually to organizations working for the well-being of LGBTQIA+ people, including Friends. The accounts manager will subtract from NEYM's annual remission to FUM the total amount diverted to the Bayard Rustin Fund.

On remittance of contributions to NEYM, the monthly meeting treasurer should include a letter to the Yearly Meeting Treasurer expressing the desire for this, and naming the amount to be directed to the fund, which should not exceed the percentage that NEYM's budgeted contribution to FUM is, of the line named "Total expenses" in a given fiscal year's budget.

This mechanism for directing funds will remain in effect until the personnel policy changes, or until Friends find a new way forward.

We ask our FUM Board representatives to continue to work towards changing this policy, remembering that it is Spirit that changes hearts, not our own efforts. We also recognize the need for Friends in New England to continue to examine what faithfulness and integrity require of us.

There is strength in our diversity, and deep love and integrity in our shared will to honor our differences.

Many Friends were happy with the proposed minute. One described it as "a balm to my soul" that would allow her to continue to give money to the Yearly Meeting and her monthly meeting without contributing to what she considers a homophobic organization. Others felt that the issue is our association with a group that discriminates, and nothing we do with money addresses that. Some Friends felt that we're doing what Empire has taught us when we use money as a tool of persuasion. A Friend challenged us, asking if those of us exercised enough to witness by withholding funds would also witness through visitation and listening, as John Woolman did when he visited slave owners. Friends expressed at the end that they had felt us beginning to move from a place of rigidly held beliefs toward a place of humble self-reflection.

Seeing hands still raised, the Clerk reminded us that this proposal is imperfect. It does not commit us to doing any other work, externally or internally, but it is his sense that this is what we need right now. This work is not done. Approving this minute allows monthly meetings to breathe. It allows Friends to stay in relationship with FUM. It allows us to move forward and continue to consider what it is that we are led to do.

Friends approved the minute with a few Friends standing aside. Further discussion clarified some points of the minute but did not change the Clerk's sense that the minute had been approved.

Reasons given for standing aside included the sense that approval of the minute had been a little rushed, frustration that the mechanism does not include a second fund for making up the difference, and a continued concern over using money as a tool of empire.

### **2021-79 FUM Committee Proposal: Collaboration with Other Yearly Meetings**

The Clerk brought to our attention a second proposal from the FUM Committee which encourages collaboration and witness with other open and affirming yearly meetings. Several Friends voiced the opinion that collaboration with open and affirming yearly meetings is not enough, but we also need to be reaching out more widely. The Clerk noted that there is not time for further refinement of the minute. He asked if we can approve it as it stands.

Friends approved the proposal as it appeared in the Advance Documents:

Collaboration and Witness with Other Yearly Meetings: The four united yearly meetings—Baltimore YM, New York YM, Canadian YM, and New England YM (those affiliated with both FGC and FUM)—have expressed support for LGBTQIA+ Friends, families, and their gifts. In the last decade, new groupings have emerged in North America and joined FUM with the explicit stance of affirming the sacred worth of all: The New Association of Friends in the Midwest and North Carolina Friends Fellowship. In addition three older FUM-affiliated groupings: Wilmington YM, Great Plains YM, and Western Association of the Religious Society of Friends, have Open and Affirming stances. These meetings and associations are all affiliated with Friends United Meeting and share an interest in coordinating and collaborating in their efforts. This proposal directs our FUM Board Reps to convene a meeting of representatives of these Yearly Meetings and Associations for the purpose of mutual encouragement, support, strategy building, and development of a plan for wider intervisitation.

### **2021-80 Apology to Native Americans**

Andy Grant (Mt Toby) of the Right Relationship Resource Group (RRRG) read the Apology to Native Americans, which includes revisions suggested during open discernment. The full Apology can be found on page 39.

Andy was clear that the work of the RRRG continues. The letter is not an endpoint; it is a commitment to a permanent change in our attitudes and our behavior. Exploring how to move forward will be an ongoing process, without which the Apology would be meaningless.

We were reminded that not all Quakers share European ancestry and Friends with varying racial and ethnic identities will have different standpoints in relation to the Apology.

Friends approved the Apology with one Friend standing aside. The Clerk will consult with the Right Relationship Resource Group about next steps and then communicate with monthly meetings about how to move forward.

### **2021-81 FUM Committee Proposal 3—Transforming Internalized Homophobia within New England Yearly Meeting**

We were invited to examine the ways that homophobia and transphobia live in the broader culture, in our meetings, and in us. The faithful call of our time is to continue to learn how gender justice, sexuality justice, racial justice, and climate justice are interconnected and how we can interrupt patterns of separation, exclusion, and oppression to work for equity.

We were not able to fully engage with this concern during our time together. The Clerk expects to explore with Coordinating & Advisory and perhaps Permanent Board whether there's work that we want to engage in.

### **2021-82 No Way To Treat a Child**

Regarding the two quarterly meeting minutes on No Way to Treat a Child, the Clerk sensed a concern for children, not only in Palestine but in the U.S. and abroad, but did not sense any unity about the two quarterly meeting minutes or any other work the body might be led to right now.

There is a newly established working group under Permanent Board, the Israel-Palestine Working Group (IPWG), charged with helping Friends in New England live into the minutes in 2017 and 2019 about the Middle East. While we have not approved these quarterly meeting minutes, the concern and need for engagement is not going away and Friends can expect to hear more from the IPWG.

### **2021-83 Clerk's Closing Remarks**

We came together with grief in our hearts. From a year-and-a-half pandemic and the multitude of ways that has influenced us, we sat together and heard a lot of difficult minutes and we have done some really good work together. Thank you, Friends, for showing up. Thank you for listening. Thank you, God, for the way that you speak to the body through individuals. I think our work for 2021 is finished.

We closed with a moment of silent worship and a prayer.

Holy Spirit you have engaged with us deeply this week, We felt your work among us. Thank you for your presence in the faces, and the voices, and the smiles of those who are here.

## **Thursday Afternoon, August 12, 2021**

### **Closing Celebration**

#### **2021-84 Clerk's Welcome and Introduction**

The Clerk welcomed us all to the closing celebration for the 2021 Sessions of New England Yearly Meeting. He introduced the elders for this afternoon.

#### **2021-85 Songs**

The Wayfare Singers (Jennifer Hogue, Susan Davies, Debbie Colgan, and Sandy Sweetnam [all from Cambridge]) shared several songs with us.

#### **2021-86 Worship**

Friends settled in for about twenty minutes of silent waiting worship.

#### **2021-87 Reports**

Sarah Sprogell, who filled the new position of Worship Coordinator, shared her reflections on this role, the experience of working with the planning team, and the joy of bringing together Friends to anchor our times of worship.

Fran Brokaw, who along with Holly Baldwin served as Home Group facilitator, shared her impressions of how Home Groups served the Friends who joined them.

Emma Turcotte, filling another new position, Coordinator of BIPOC opportunities, spoke of how meaningful these several opportunities were for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color in attendance at Sessions.

Elizabeth Hacala, Events Coordinator, shared some numbers and her impressions from behind the scenes of Sessions planning.

#### **2021-88 Junior Yearly Meeting Epistle**

Willard Peabody, Abbie Haineswood, and River Bachand-Price read the Junior Yearly Meeting Epistle, written during the pre-sessions JYM retreat. (See page 103.)

#### **2021-89 Friends Camp Report**

Given the unreliability of internet service at Friends Camp, Anna Hopkins submitted a video report, with many images of kids having a great time.

#### **2021-90 Reflection on the Week**

Honor Woodrow shared some reflections based on the Padlet exercise she had introduced in our opening celebration, and read some further reflections posted in Zoom chat.

**2021-91 Gratitude**

David Coletta, Gretchen Baker-Smith, Gina Nortonsmith, and Elizabeth Hacala shared their appreciation of the near-countless people who played a role in helping Sessions to happen.

**2021-92 Slide Show**

We watched the slide show Nia Thomas had put together for the opening celebration, with some additional pictures.

**2021-93 Song**

Peter and Annie Blood-Patterson sang *If Not Now* by Carrie Newcomer.

**2021-94 Closing**

Out of a few minutes of grateful worship, Presiding Clerk Bruce Neumann closed our 361st Annual Sessions with the words “Purposing to meet again, August 6, 2022, Friends closed with worship. Go in peace, Friends.”

## Appendices to the Minutes

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### Proposed Changes to Nominating

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At Sessions in 2019, Friends approved a recommendation in the Clerking Structures and Practices Working Group's report to "redesign nominating processes in a cohesive, consolidated manner."

Since the approval of that report, groundwork has been laid to integrate NEYM Nominating, Internal Nominating, and Clerks' Table Nominating Committees. The Presiding Clerk, Nominating Committee Clerk, Permanent Board (PB) Clerk, Yearly Meeting Secretary, and Quaker Practice and Leadership Facilitator (former clerk of the Clerking Structures and Practices Working Group) have had lengthy meetings looking at the "big picture" of NEYM's nominating work. This group, in consultation with members of existing committees and with Coordinating and Advisory, explored initial points of integration and increased coordination.

After much seasoning and discernment, Permanent Board recommends approval of the following:

- The revised Purposes, Procedures and Composition for a more integrated Nominating Committee (see below)
- The creation of a Naming Committee (see below)
- The integration of the PB Internal Nominating and Clerks' Table Nominating Committees' charges, and the Friends currently serving, into the integrated NEYM Nominating Committee
- The laying down of separate PB Internal Nominating and Clerks' Table Nominating Committees

### Purposes, Procedures, and Composition Yearly Meeting Nominating Committee

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#### Purpose

In order to help Friends answer God's call, the Nominating Committee identifies, encourages, and nominates Friends with the gifts and skills needed to serve in a wide variety of volunteer roles on behalf of the Yearly Meeting. In this work, the Committee seeks to remove barriers to the full expression of the spiritual gifts and skills given through each Friend, for the building up and thriving of local Friends meetings.

This work includes, in its fullness, understanding the vision of the Yearly Meeting and what is needed to live into it; leadership development and capacity-building; nurturing a culture of healthy evaluation and feedback; and expressing gratitude and recognition for faithful service in its many forms.

#### Procedures

Through a consultative and integrated process, the Committee considers both the explicitly stated qualifications (gifts, skills, experience) necessary for particular service, as well as the current conditions and needs relating to a given aspect of the Yearly Meeting's mission. Care is taken to nurture emerging leaders and to create pathways for Friends to grow in their service. Particular attention is given to succession planning, including the preparation of rising clerks and other servant leadership positions.

The Nominating Committee uses sub-groups to delegate aspects of their work. The sub-groups will meet as needed to do the work delegated to them, returning to the wider Committee for consultation and guidance.

The Nominating Clerk facilitates the delegation of the work, creating or dissolving sub-groups, and appoints Nominating Committee members to convene and/or clerk sub-groups. In doing so, the clerk and Committee will pay attention to continuity of good process, practice, and institutional memory; care for relationships with nominees; and the specific gifts and experiences needed for the work a sub-group might be charged to undertake.

The Nominating Clerk clerks meetings of the full Nominating Committee, occurring seasonally or as needed, as well as Nominating Coordination meetings (with the conveners or clerks of the nominating sub-groups and the Quaker Practice and Leadership Facilitator) occurring about every six weeks or as needed. Other members of Coordinating and Advisory may also participate in Nominating Coordination meetings.

In recommending Friends to the Yearly Meeting for service, the Committee strives to share both a sense of the gifts, skills, and experience of the Friends being nominated, as well as to help those who are approving the nominations to understand how the nominated Friends' gifts relate to the work to be done.

In all their work, the Committee and sub-groups seek to ground their discernment in waiting worship and prayerful consideration, seeking to be led. The Committee seeks to hold its conversations tenderly, taking care that—unless otherwise necessary—information regarding who has been considered, and what considerations have been, not be shared beyond those directly involved in the discernment.

A “shepherd” will be appointed for each committee or position under the care of the Nominating Committee. The shepherd should be familiar with the Purposes, Procedures, and Composition of the committee or description of the position they are shepherding. The shepherd serves as the primary point of contact between the group or individual and the Nominating Committee. The shepherd is responsible for supporting healthy service, and if difficult challenges arise, communicating them promptly to the Nominating Clerk, who may seek additional support from the Coordinating and Advisory Committee.

While the Committee strives to bring nominations for approval by Annual Sessions, it is more important to faithfully find the right Friend with the right gifts for each role. Nominations may also be brought to the Permanent Board for consideration and approval between Sessions.

### **Composition**

- Up to 15 at-large members are named by the Naming Committee and approved by the Yearly Meeting for 3-year, staggered terms, renewable once. Care shall be taken to ensure the Committee includes Friends from a broad range of monthly and quarterly meetings.
- The Nominating Clerk is named by the Naming Committee for a 3-year term, renewable once. In the year prior to current Nominating Clerk's term ending, the Naming Committee shall also name a Rising Nominating Clerk to work with the Nominating Clerk for one year preceding a clerking transition.
- Monthly meetings are encouraged to recommend (to the Naming Committee) representatives for 3-year terms, renewable once.
- The Nominating Clerk serves ex-officio as a member of Coordinating and Advisory Committee, and is appointed by the Yearly Meeting.

Gifts, skills, and experience needed for Nominating Committee members:

- Diplomacy in inviting Friends to serve on a committee, working group, or role
- Understanding of the particular work for which they are nominating Friends, and of the gifts, skills, and experience needed to help this work be fruitful
- Knowledge of, and relationship with, Friends in their local and regional areas
- Organizational skills, including the ability to follow through on assigned tasks
- Time throughout the year for listening in encounters with Friends to understand the spiritual gifts, skills, and experience they might bring to service
- Reliability in attendance at meetings

## **Purpose, Procedures, and Composition**

### **Naming Committee**

#### **Purpose**

The Naming Committee identifies Friends with the gifts, skills, and experience needed to serve as Yearly Meeting nominators (including Nominating Clerk, Nominating Recording Clerk, and Nominating Rising Clerk), invites them into service, and brings their names to the Yearly Meeting for approval.

#### **Procedures**

The Naming Committee shall work with the Permanent Board clerk to host a meeting or other consultative process to identify needs for the next Nominating Committee and Nominating Clerk as well as to gather suggested names. This consultation shall include the perspectives of current Nominating Committee members, members of Coordinating and Advisory, and Friends whose current primary service is with their local meetings.

This naming process shall also result in the nomination of a Rising Nominating Clerk to serve for one year prior to an expected transition in the Nominating Clerk service. The Naming Committee shall be trained in use of the collaborative nominating tracking tool to ensure awareness of ongoing conversations between individuals and other nominators about service within NEYM.

While the Naming Committee strives to bring nominations for the Nominating Committee members for approval by Annual Sessions, it is more important to faithfully find the right Friends with the right gifts for service. Names may also be brought to the Permanent Board for consideration and approval between Sessions.

### **Composition**

Annually, or as needed to allow for intentional transitions in service, the Presiding Clerk and the Permanent Board Clerk shall appoint a 3- to 5-person Naming Committee who shall name the Nominating Committee members to be approved by the Yearly Meeting

Gifts, Skills, Experience:

- Knowledge of the various aspects of nominating work
- Awareness of and commitment to inclusive leadership development
- Care for how the nominating work of the Yearly Meeting can strengthen the life of local meetings

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## **Unity Agenda Items**

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### Revised Committee Purposes, Procedures, and Composition

#### **Archives Committee**

##### *Purpose*

The Archives and Historical Records Committee is responsible for the care of records, correspondence, and other manuscript material of the Yearly, quarterly, monthly and preparative meetings, Yearly Meeting committees, New England Friends institutions, and individual members of the Yearly Meeting.

This work is an aspect of our testimony of stewardship.

Recognizing that Friends' faith is a noncreedal 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, biographical, or other questions historical in nature.

##### *Procedures*

By agreement, the repository for the records is the Special Collections and University Archive (SCUA), W.E.B. Du Bois Library at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, 154 Hicks Way, Amherst, MA.

- The Committee advises meetings on the care of their records, encourages both meetings and committees to deed these records to the Yearly Meeting archives on a regular basis.
- The Committee maintains a Collections Policy.
- The Committee appoints and prioritizes the work of an Outreach Archivist.
- The Committee works with SCUA to maintain an accurate guide to which records have been deposited in various repositories, and in what format.
- The Committee meets monthly by videoconference for one hour, as well as meeting in person annually at New England Yearly Meeting sessions.
- The Committee annually reviews the working relationship with SCUA as outlined in the Memorandum of Understanding between NEYM and SCUA.

##### *Composition*

- The Committee consists of six to eight Friends named by Yearly Meeting Nominating Committee and approved by the Yearly Meeting. Friends are named for skills and perspectives relevant to the work of the Yearly Meeting Archives, as well as the Outreach Archivist. These skills and interests include library and archival professions, records management, Quaker history, and genealogy. Friends are named to staggered 5-year terms.



- The Committee is supported by the NEYM Office Manager.
- The clerk of the Committee is appointed by the Nominating Committee in consultation with Archives Committee.
- The Yearly Meeting Secretary is responsible for overseeing the contract with the Outreach Archivist.
- The clerk of the Committee is appointed by the Committee, in consultation with Coordinating and Advisory Committee. The Yearly Meeting Secretary is responsible for overseeing the contract with the Outreach Archivist.

## Coordinating and Advisory

### *Purpose*

The Coordinating and Advisory Committee (C&A) shepherds the work of the Yearly Meeting in alignment with the core purpose and the priorities articulated by the Yearly Meeting, and advises and coordinates the various committees, quarterly meeting leadership, staff, and other initiatives within the Yearly Meeting.

The members of this Committee hold a particular responsibility to build a culture of inclusive and sustainable leadership development.

### *Procedures*

- The Committee meets once a month, either in person or by electronic communication.
- The work of the Committee may require confidentiality as it discerns with tenderness how to proceed with an issue.
- C&A is responsible for supervising and evaluating the work of the Yearly Meeting Secretary. The Committee delegates day-to-day supervision of the Yearly Meeting Secretary to the Supervisor of the Yearly Meeting Secretary, who ensures completion of the annual performance review of the Secretary.
- C&A, in cooperation with the Quaker Practice and Leadership Facilitator or other relevant parties, helps to ensure that current and emerging clerks of quarterly meetings, monthly meetings, and Yearly Meeting committees (including ad-hoc and subcommittees of the Permanent Board) are provided with relevant leadership development trainings, resources, and guidance.
- The Committee refers some matters to other bodies for review, discernment, and action. C&A is accountable to the Permanent Board and to Sessions.
- C&A strives to prevent duplication of effort and facilitate efficiency and effectiveness in the work of the Yearly Meeting.
- With a goal of ensuring alignment with Yearly Meeting priorities, C&A will regularly review each committee's Purposes, Procedures, and Composition (PP&C), ensuring that every committee is reviewed at least once within a 3-year period. C&A will do this work in consultation with the Committee. The PP&Cs are approved by the Yearly Meeting.
- The C&A Committee plays a key role in the annual Funding Priorities Process for the Yearly Meeting, discerning recommendations which are approved by C&A and then presented to the Permanent Board by the Yearly Meeting Secretary, in keeping with the process approved by the Yearly Meeting.
- The Presiding Clerk may invite other committee clerks or knowledgeable Friends to participate as needed to support the Committees discernment; otherwise, given the sometimes sensitive and confidential nature of C&A's work, its meetings are not open.
- The Presiding Clerk reports regularly on the activities of the Committee to Permanent Board and annually to Sessions.

### *Composition*

The Committee is entirely ex-officio, made up of the current holders of these various positions: the Yearly Meeting Presiding Clerk, the Yearly Meeting Secretary, the Supervisor to the Yearly Meeting Secretary, the clerk of Permanent Board, the clerk of Ministry and Counsel, the Yearly Meeting Treasurer, the clerk of Finance Committee, and the clerk of Yearly Meeting Nominating Committee.

The Committee is clerked by the Presiding Clerk.

## Faith and Practice Revision

### *Purpose*

The Committee is charged with revising our 1985 Faith and Practice and in the process, encouraging “substantive engagement” with perennial issues essential to the spiritual health of our monthly, quarterly, and Yearly Meeting.

### *Procedures*

The Committee meets for a full day seven times a year and for two overnight work sessions. In addition, it forms smaller working groups as needed. It presents drafts of each chapter to NEYM Sessions and invites comments from committees, meetings, and individuals. It considers these comments and brings a revised draft to NEYM Sessions either for additional comment or for preliminary approval. Its work will be completed upon final approval of all sections and the publication of the revised book. It welcomes input at any time from committees, meetings, and individuals.

### *Composition*

The Committee consists of up to 16 Friends from local meetings in New England.

Nominations are made by Internal Nominating, and approved by Sessions. There are no term limits.

## Finance Committee

### *Purpose*

The Yearly Meeting Finance Committee stewards the financial resources at all levels of the Yearly Meeting (YM). This involves care for the intake and expenditure of money through the development of an annual budget, the establishment of policies for the faithful and transparent carrying out of that care, and the communication of this to the wider body of New England Yearly Meeting. The Finance Committee serves as a resource on good practice in financial management for monthly and quarterly meetings and other groups under the care of NEYM. By providing consultation, education, and resources to treasurers and others, the Committee seeks to assist in the effective stewardship of monthly, quarterly, and YM financial and property resources.

*For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. (Matthew 6:21)*

### *Procedures*

- The Committee provides oversight, advice, and support to the Treasurer as well as any others who may be responsible for sub-accounts within the YM operating funds.
- The Committee reviews and recommends updates to the job descriptions of the YM Treasurer.
- The Committee consults with Nominating Committee about that committee’s nomination for Treasurer.
- The Committee generally meets every few months, including meeting at Annual Sessions. Meeting times and places are determined by the Clerk in consultation with the Committee.
- The Committee may designate subcommittees to organize and perform certain tasks, the results to be brought before the full Committee for action. Budget is the only subcommittee that currently exists.
- Early in the calendar year, the Committee begins the development of a draft budget for the ensuing fiscal year. This is done in consultation with the Treasurer, YM Secretary, and others. The YM Secretary is responsible for estimating expenses for the YM staff and office, Youth Retreat Programs, and Annual Sessions. The Committee takes into account the financial priorities recommended by the Permanent Board.
- The Committee solicits specific input from the YM Secretary and others regarding the estimated capacity within the YM community for contributions and from the YM Secretary regarding estimated expenses and revenue for Annual Sessions in developing the draft budget.
- The Committee solicits budget requests from all YM committees to support the work of those committees.
- The Committee presents the YM budget to the Permanent Board at its May meeting for information and feedback.
- The Committee presents the final YM budget to Annual Sessions for final approval. Between Annual Sessions, budget updates and any necessary requests for action are presented to the Permanent Board.

- The Committee annually prepares a minute authorizing designated individuals to sign checks, open and close accounts, and otherwise manage the financial “housekeeping” of the Yearly Meeting. Sessions approves this minute.
- The Committee conducts workshops on various financial topics and fields specific questions from monthly meeting officers on managing monthly meeting finances.
- The Committee will from time to time review YM policies in financial matters and make recommendations to the Permanent Board for continuation, discontinuation, or adjustment of those policies.

The Committee maintains a handbook documenting the policies and procedures of YM financial matters, regularly reviewing and updating it as needed. A detailed description of how the Friends Camp budget is handled appears in the Friends Camp Good Governance document.

#### *Composition*

Finance Committee composition is as follows:

- Up to 10 members are appointed by the Yearly Meeting for terms of up to five years. In consultation with the Nominating Committee, members may be re-appointed for a second consecutive 5-year term. While not required for Friends to make a significant contribution to this work, longer terms of service recognize the detailed context of this work, and support greater continuity and institutional memory on the Committee.
- The Treasurer, Accounts Manager, and Yearly Meeting Secretary are ex-officio members.

Committee members do not necessarily need any prior experience with accounting or financial management, but should be comfortable (or interested in learning how to become comfortable) looking at, talking about, and praying over both specific numbers as well as broader policy matters concerning the finances of the Yearly Meeting. Committee members should be able to notice and be willing to ask tough questions when numbers don't seem to make sense or add up. All members are expected to relate financial matters to Divine guidance and Quaker principles.

Additionally, while no single member is expected to bring all of the following to the Committee's work, the Committee as a whole will, ideally, possess at least two informed perspectives on the following topic areas: (a) each area of work done by the Yearly Meeting as an organization; (b) Yearly Meeting governance procedures, and (c) common principles of financial management. The Committee also needs one or more members possessing the necessary skill and energy to (a) use charts, spreadsheets, and financial management software; and (b) draft policy proposals when it becomes clear our policies or procedures should be changed.

In order to fulfill God's will for the Yearly Meeting in financial matters, the Finance Committee aims to be representative of the wide range of Friends that make up NEYM. Recognizing the importance of sharing power in financial decisions with those whose voices are often marginalized, the Finance Committee aims to be diverse in age, gender, race, sexual orientation, class, and any other identities that are less privileged.

The Clerk of Finance Committee serves ex-officio on the Coordinating and Advisory Committee, on Permanent Board, and on the Board of Managers.

### **Legacy Gift Committee**

#### *Purpose*

“The purpose of the Legacy Gift Funds is to support the ministries of New England Yearly Meeting Friends, both within and beyond our region.

“Guided by our living testimonies, we seek to strengthen our Witness through the funding of public and released ministry, beginning with attention to Racism and Climate Change and understanding that this is a starting point and concerns beyond these may also be funded.

“We seek to nurture our beloved community through the support of education, outreach, released ministry and meetinghouse projects. The Legacy Funds will serve as potent seeds to help Friends answer God's call in our time and to strengthen the new life that is already rising up in our Yearly Meeting.” Minute 2015-27

The purpose of the Legacy Gift Committee is to fulfill this Minute by distributing the funds that are in their care, and to seek additional ways to release and support ministry in New England and beyond. Its role is clearly defined in Minute 2014-62.

#### *Procedures*

The Committee sets application deadlines and processes in accordance with minute 2014-62. A detailed application process appears on the NEYM website at <https://neym.org/legacy-gift/legacy-grants-apply-now>. The Committee meets regularly throughout the year, for the purpose of soliciting and reviewing grant applications to two funds. The NEYM Future Fund, available to individuals and meetings, is to be released until all of its money is expended. In the case of the NEYM Witness and Ministry Fund, the Committee distributes only the available income from the relevant funds, as determined by current NEYM investment policies. This entire process will be reviewed by the Yearly Meeting in 2024, or sooner, depending on need and as approved by Sessions.

From time to time, the Committee may invite guest reviewers to participate in the review process.

The Legacy Funds are not limited to existing balances but can receive additional donations to support the work.

The Committee is required to report back to Sessions directly every year during a meeting for business and is encouraged to offer workshops to promote the work of the Committee, the relationship of money to our spiritual condition and to highlight the ministry and witness of the recipients of these funds.

Legacy Gift Fund recipients are expected to report annually to the Committee for the duration of their grant, and to consult with the Committee if there are significant changes to their budget or schedule after approval.

#### *Composition:*

- The Committee consists of up to nine members, named by the NEYM Nominating Committee and approved by the Yearly Meeting. Members serve for renewable, staggered 3-year terms. Friends may be appointed for a second term, after which they should take a year off.
- The Yearly Meeting Presiding Clerk and the Permanent Board Clerk serve as ex-officio members.
- Yearly Meeting Nominating Committee, in consultation with Committee members, names the clerk or co-clerks of Legacy Gift Committee. This nomination is approved by the Yearly Meeting.

Members of the Legacy Gift Committee may include Friends who:

- bring gifts in spiritual discernment;
- bring experience in grant writing or awarding;
- are previous recipients of the Legacy Gift funds;
- are able to commit to the time expectations of the Committee's work;
- can actively reach out to applicants, and whenever possible meet them in person;
- will respond to applicants in a fair, timely and supportive manner;
- are able to help the group make decisions about competing priorities; and
- share a bold vision of the possibilities of what these funds could support.

## **Puente de Amigos**

#### *Purpose*

Puente de Amigos Committee (Bridge of Friends) fosters a spiritual relationship, based on mutual respect, equality, and love between New England Yearly Meeting (NEYM) and Cuba Yearly Meeting (CYM) to which both meetings have been corporately called. Since 1991 the relationship with Cuba Yearly Meeting has been an important part of the religious life of New England Yearly Meeting, and the Committee works to support the continuation of this ministry.

#### *Procedures*

The full Committee meets for business 2–4 times during the year, including meetings at Annual Sessions.

Puente de Amigos has an Executive Committee that makes needed decisions between committee meetings.

There are also ad hoc Orientation and Discernment Committees formed to work with New England Friends interested in representing NEYM in Cuba that can bring recommendations to the full Committee, as there is a rigorous discernment process for those seeking a religious visa.

The Puente de Amigos Committee builds relationships with Cuban Quakers by arranging exchanges of religious visitors between the two yearly meetings and encouraging ongoing connection through pairings of Cuban and New England monthly meetings called sister meetings.

The Committee arranges for delegates from Cuba Yearly Meeting to attend NEYM Annual Sessions and to visit local meetings and participate in other Friends activities. It provides simultaneous Spanish interpretation at NEYM Annual Sessions, and offers a number of activities that highlight our relationship with Spanish-speaking Friends, such as hosting a “Puente table” at meals for those interested in meeting the visitors from CYM and facilitating a Spanish-language anchor group. When possible, the Committee also invites Cuban Friends who are in the United States on other business to visit New England. This work is supported by relationships with other Friends’ organizations that are interested in knowing Cuban Friends, such as the Friends United Meeting, the Miami Friends Church, and the Friends World Committee for Consultation-Section of the Americas. The Committee works to maintain relationships with these organizations.

Intervisitation pushes us to seek discernment and to learn from others. When gathered together with Cuban Friends—our siblings—members of the Committee wrestle with emotional topics such as the balance between truth-telling and confidentiality and the implications of material wealth on relationships with beloved Friends who have fewer economic resources. Together we participate in programmed and unprogrammed worship, which may include singing, Bible reading, and vocal prayer, as we invite God’s presence to guide us.

The Committee is explicitly authorized by the Yearly Meeting to raise funds to cover costs involved in religious visitation between the two yearly meetings. They may address needs for material assistance as identified by Cuban Friends (such as medicine and eyeglasses). These efforts should be coordinated as part of the development efforts of the Yearly Meeting as a whole. Any commitments which may have legal ramifications, such as an application for a travel license or a representation of Yearly Meeting commitments in support of a Cuban traveler’s visa application, must be authorized by the Clerk of Permanent Board, the Presiding Clerk, or the Yearly Meeting Secretary. In such cases the Committee is responsible for understanding the situation and providing advice and recommendations to the Permanent Board or the Presiding Clerk.

#### *Composition*

- Puente de Amigos Committee has nine members serving staggered 3-year terms. Members may serve a second consecutive term. It has been the stated practice to have anyone who has served six years in a row to take at least one year off.
- Clerks are appointed for a 3-year term. The clerk’s term on the Committee may be extended to permit them to serve the full 3 years.
- The Committee establishes an executive committee of past clerks and emeritus members who can make time-sensitive decisions at the clerks’ request between Puente Committee meetings. The decisions are then brought to the next Puente meeting. The executive committee is confirmed annually by the Committee.
- Because of the special skills needed by clerks of Puente (Spanish, familiarity with the law and procedures involved in sending representatives of NEYM to Cuba) it’s advisable for the clerk to have been involved with the work of the Committee before they are named. It is helpful to select and train a rising clerk from within the Committee. The Nominating Committee will consult with Puente members before the Nominating Committee names an individual to serve as the rising clerk.
- The Committee collaborates with the Yearly Meeting Nominating Committee in finding members for the Committee. Sometimes there are Friends who are willing to stay on the Committee, and/or have asked us to be on the Committee, whom we recommend to be nominated.
- The Committee collaborates and has linkages with Permanent Board and with the FWCC and FUM Committees, and with the Yearly Meeting body as a whole.

### **Youth Ministries Committee**

#### *Purpose*

The Youth Ministries Committee serves to support the work of nurturing the faith life, spiritual growth, and leadership of children and youth of New England Yearly Meeting. The Committee sees children as fully spiritual beings and advocates for this perspective within the Yearly Meeting (YM). The Committee works to ensure 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. This work happens in the context of both family and community, in same-age and in multi-generational groups.

It is the Committee's intent that the youth work under its care enable young people to grow into adulthood with a full sense of belonging to both a local circle of Friends and the Yearly Meeting as a whole. The Committee ensures that the programs we support offer a foundation of Quaker faith and experience, fostering an active spiritual life. The purpose of the Youth Ministries Committee is to support programs and practices that empower the young people of NEYM to live with grounded integrity, and that help them speak to the condition of the world.

Note: Friends Camp, a vital youth ministry of New England Yearly Meeting of Friends, is additionally guided by the Friends Camp Committee and by distinct standards for State of Maine licensing and accreditation by the American Camp Association.

#### *Procedures*

The Committee acts as stewards to discern needs for youth programming, all the while listening for fresh inspiration within and beyond NEYM.

- The Committee supports local meetings and NEYM youth ministry staff and volunteers in the implementation of such programming.
- The Committee consults on the right ordering of administrative aspects of NEYM youth programs: health, safety and welfare of children; policy and procedures; and ethical and legal issues.
- The Committee ensures that NEYM programs are a partnership between youth workers, parents, and our wider spiritual community. The Committee advocates for the needs of NEYM youth, families, and youth workers. The Committee ensures that programming is vital and relevant to current needs.
- The Committee is responsible for conducting an annual review of the NEYM Child Safety Policy and its implementation.
- The Committee supports the staff in their youth ministries work. The Yearly Meeting Secretary supervises the youth program staff. Youth staff attend Committee meetings to communicate the reality and needs of youth work in NEYM.
- The Committee meets regularly, virtually or in person, as the needs of the Committee dictate. The Committee reports annually to Sessions on the health of the programs, status of the Child Safety Policy, and other issues in our care.
- For local meetings, the Committee offers resources, collaboration, and guidance for the health and welfare of children; policy and procedures; ethical and legal issues; program design and curriculum; outreach and networking.

#### *Composition*

Committee membership should reflect the diversity within the Yearly Meeting. Gifts that we seek for the Committee include skills in pastoral care for children and families, skills in youth programs and youth work, including program evaluation and planning. Committee membership should include people with familiarity with the NEYM retreat programs.

Members are named for 3-year terms, two people in each class for a total of six named members. Friends may be appointed for a second, consecutive 3-year term, after which they should take a year away from the work. Members are named by the Yearly Meeting Nominating Committee.

The youth ministry staff—Junior Yearly Meeting/Junior High Yearly Meeting Coordinator, Young Friends Events Organizer, the Quaker Practice and Leadership Facilitator, and the Friends Camp Director—are ex-officio members of this Committee. Because of the high level of staff participation in the work of this Committee, YMC needs to remain mindful of the risks of over-burdening staff.

Yearly Meeting Nominating Committee, in consultation with the Committee members, names the Clerk of Youth Ministries Committee. This nomination is approved by the Yearly Meeting. The Youth Ministries Committee coordinates with and has linkages to Ministry and Counsel and Permanent to Board.

### Bank Resolutions

The following resolutions are brought by the Finance Committee:

1. That Robert Murray be appointed New England Yearly Meeting Treasurer for the ensuing year or until a successor is appointed and qualified.
2. That Robert M. Spivey be appointed Friends Camp Treasurer for the ensuing year or until a successor is appointed and qualified.
3. That Robert Murray, Yearly Meeting Treasurer; and Noah Merrill, Yearly Meeting Secretary, be individually authorized to open and close bank accounts in the name of New England Yearly Meeting of Friends as needed.
4. That Robert M. Spivey, Friends Camp Treasurer; and Anna Hopkins, Friends Camp Director, be individually authorized to open and close bank accounts in the name of Friends Camp as needed.
5. That Noah Merrill, Yearly Meeting Secretary; Robert Murray, NEYM Treasurer; Bruce Neumann, Presiding Clerk; Sarah Gant, while serving as Acting Secretary for Pastoral Care and Governance; and NiaDwynwen Thomas, while serving as Acting Secretary for Programs, be designated as alternate signers, individually, of all bank accounts of New England Yearly Meeting of Friends, except those checks for greater than \$10,000, which shall require the signatures of two signers from the list above.
6. That Anna Hopkins, Friends Camp Director; Robert M. Spivey, Friends Camp Treasurer; and John Reuthe, Friends Camp Committee Clerk, 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.

### 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 2021.

### Apology to Native Americans

To the Algonquian peoples of the Northeast whose homeland we live within and benefit from: the Abenaki, Aquinnah Wampanoag, Eastern Pequot, Golden Hill Paugussett, Herring Pond/Manomet Wampanoag, Mahican, Maliseet, Mashantucket Pequot, Mashpee Wampanoag, Massachusetts, Mi'kmaq, Mohegan, Narragansett, Nehantic, Nipmuc, Norwottuck/Nonotuck, Passamaquoddy, Pennacook, Penobscot, Pocumtuck, Pokanoket, Quinnipiac, Schaghticoke, Tunxis, Wangunks, Wappinger, Wolastoqiyik/ Maliseet, Woronoco—and others whose names we do not know but wish to acknowledge.

As participants in European colonization and as continuing beneficiaries of that colonization, Quakers have participated in a great and continuing injustice. For too long and in too many ways, we as a faith community have failed to honor that of God in you, the original peoples of these lands. We are deeply sorry for the suffering we caused in the past and continue to cause in the present. Today we acknowledge that injustice and apologize.

We acknowledge that Quakers participated in and benefited greatly from colonization. We stole your land, we displaced your ancestors. We caused genocide and participated in cultural erasure. We know that the injustice of displacement and disrespect continues. We also see the ways that we continue to benefit from broken treaties and genocidal policies. We have much work to do to attain right relationship.

We are sorry for our advocacy of the Indian Industrial Boarding Schools which we now recognize was done with spiritual and cultural arrogance. Quakers were among the strongest promoters of this policy and managed over 30 schools for Indian children, mostly boarding schools, during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. We are deeply sorry for our part in the vast suffering caused by this system and the continuing effects.

On behalf of Quakers, in this wide landscape that was claimed as “New England” by the ancestors of many of us, we offer this apology. We commit to continuing our efforts to learn, to see more clearly the implications of settler colonialism in our own lives, and to work toward right relationship with you and all of Creation. We hold ourselves open to suggestions and to dialogue, holding no expectations of you. We commit to following

your lead, standing alongside you in your struggles for sovereignty, in protection of the land and waters, and in seeking justice and reparations for your people. We will continue to pray for guidance and to seek divine assistance in the transformation we know is needed within each of us, and in the world.

Signed at the direction of New England Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Annual Sessions, August 12, 2021,

Bruce Neumann,  
Presiding Clerk

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### 2021 Minute of Support for Survival of the Earth and Her Inhabitants

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*Brought by the Earthcare Ministry Committee*

“Together, the world’s people have been granted stewardship over the Earth, to enjoy it briefly, then to surrender it to succeeding generations. The Earth is not a possession but a trust. Those dramatic photographs from the moon showed us all what is ours to care for—a green and blue jewel shining in the blackness of space.” Friends World Committee for Consultation, June 1978 (from *NEYM Faith and Practice*, 1985)

As Friends we believe that the Earth and all life on Earth have inherent rights to existence that should be protected and revered. We believe that right relationship with Earth is critical to our testimony of stewardship.

How, then, should we respond to the current climate crisis? Despite our recognition of the damage caused by fossil fuels, we keep a death grip on the steering wheel, right foot firmly on the accelerator of our fossil-fuel-powered economy. Our children and grandchildren are along for the ride. *We must awaken from our fume-induced slumber.*

We reaffirm our commitment to Spirit-led action that supports the survival of life on earth. From that we draw hope. And because scientists tell us we must radically change our emissions in the next ten years if we are to avoid the worst impacts of climate change, we gain the will to take action *now*.

**Therefore, we call upon Friends to discern what actions we, individually and together, will take now, while there is still time.**

To help in our discernment, the Earthcare Ministry Committee offers some specific queries that Friends may wish to consider:

- Overall, what does Spirit call us to do that will have the most impact on the climate crisis over the next ten years?
- What is our responsibility toward the people who have been most harmed by the climate crisis? All of us are vulnerable as part of God’s creation and it is difficult to open our eyes, minds and hearts to those already suffering, but how can we address the harm that the poor, people of color, indigenous communities, and others have already suffered?
- How can we get involved in public policy at every level—local, state, federal, and international—to push for rapid evidence-based action to end the emission of greenhouse gases, to create nature-based solutions, and to remediate the damage already done? *We may have a small window of opportunity due to current political dynamics, so focusing on this is especially important at this time.*
- How can we best support Friends who take Spirit-led direct action to stand in the way of the construction, expansion, or continuing operation of fossil-fuel infrastructure?
- How can we address the fact that our militarism is one of the greatest causes of greenhouse gas emitters?
- Are our personal and corporate monies supporting pension funds, banks, and insurance companies that invest, fund, and insure fossil-fuel companies and operations?



- What can we do that will continue to reduce our own and our meeting's footprint?

We trust that Friends will listen deeply to what Spirit compels us to do on behalf of the Creator's creation and environmental justice, which are inextricably entwined. May we all open our hearts. All creation depends on our faithful actions.

**Let us take action together!**

*Supporting information for this minute will be placed on the NEYM site after Sessions.*

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## Monthly Meeting Discernment Regarding the Friends United Meeting Personnel Policy

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### Fresh Pond Monthly Meeting Minute Approved 7/13/14, reaffirmed 5/5/19

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Fresh Pond Monthly Meeting seeks to live in the power of God's inclusive love, which surpasses the many distinctions, including race, religion and gender, that humankind has imposed on itself over the course of history, and continues to enforce today.

Over the years, Fresh Pond Monthly Meeting has been blessed by, and continues to be blessed in, its search for divine community, as expressed, for example, in our 1994 minute of support for same-sex marriage.

We are fortunate that New England Yearly Meeting, the larger body of Friends with which Fresh Pond Monthly Meeting chooses to identify, has a similarly inclusive position.

New England Yearly Meeting, and by extension Fresh Pond Monthly Meeting, are members of Friends United Meeting, an association of twenty-six yearly meetings from North America, Africa and the Caribbean. Friends United Meeting as a body has not found unity on the subject of same-gender relationships and unions. This disunity is the source of ongoing dialogue within FUM, including its member yearly meeting, New England Yearly Meeting.

Members and attenders at Fresh Pond Monthly Meeting are acquainted to varying degrees with the Richmond Declaration and with Friends United Meeting's personnel policy that precludes any unmarried person in a sexually active relationship from serving in a paid or volunteer staff/leadership position with Friends United Meeting. This policy is especially onerous for same gender couples who may be barred from marrying or whose marriages are not recognized by FUM, including same gender marriages that have been allowed by and are under the care of Fresh Pond Monthly Meeting. Our meeting is clear that this personnel policy is inconsistent with the divine community to which we aspire.

Despite this inconsistency, Fresh Pond Meeting has experienced and affirms the many ways Friends United Meeting effectively witnesses other Quaker beliefs and testimonies. In addition, Fresh Pond Friends familiar with FUM describe what they see as a greater openness at FUM to the spirit that has guided Fresh Pond and NEYM with respect to affirming same-gender relationships and unions. We believe that by remaining a participating member of FUM, New England Yearly Meeting serves the purposes of the all-embracing love by which we hope we are guided.

Fresh Pond Monthly Meeting accepts New England Yearly Meeting's membership in, and financial support of, Friends United Meeting, trusting in our Guide, in mature relationship and in faithful dialogue with valued Friends as we continue to discern a path forward.

### Hartford Monthly Meeting Minute Approved 6/20/2021

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We at Hartford Monthly Meeting reaffirm our Minute of March 15, 2020 on the issue of the Friends United Meeting Personnel Policy which states:

*Our commandment from God is to love God and one another. A personnel policy that discriminates against people on the basis of their sexual orientation ignores the Light of God found equally within all loving persons and their relationships." (Minute submitted to New York Yearly Meeting from Manasquan Monthly Meeting, November 2015)*

*While the personnel policy of Friends United Meeting "affirms the civil rights of all people," it also states "It is expected however that intimate sexual behavior should be confined to traditional marriage, understood to be*

*between one man and one woman.” Hartford Monthly Meeting finds this policy profoundly contradictory because it denies our beloved LGBTQ+ Friends and others the fullest inclusion in our ministry and expression of their humanity.*

*Hartford Monthly Meeting recognizes the complexity of this issue given that Friends United Meeting is an international body representing members from many cultures. We hold New England Yearly Meeting in the Light during the ongoing efforts to resolve this issue lovingly.*

There is something disconcerting about our Quaker faith if we only speak but do not act on behalf of the oppressed, some of whom worship in our midst. For more than thirty years Hartford Monthly Meeting has affirmed “the goodness of committed, loving relationships, celebrating marriages and ceremonies of commitment without regard to sexual orientation.” We at HMM continue to affirm holding true to our Quaker values by acting in unity to support, as stated in the above minute, “the fullest inclusion in our ministry and expression of their humanity” of the LGBTQ+ community and others by the following actions:

- We disagree with FUM’s Policy on Personal Ethics, specifically the statement, “It is expected however that intimate sexual behavior should be confined to traditional marriage, understood to be between one man and one woman.”
- We will withhold all estimated FUM-related funds from HMM’s annual contribution to NEYM. These withheld funds will be reallocated to a designated HMM fund to support local, national, and international LGBTQ+ organizations and causes.
- The Clerk of our meeting will send an annual letter to NEYM explaining why HMM has withheld funds and will request that this letter be forwarded to Friends United Meeting along with NEYM’s annual contribution. The letter will describe how our meeting has reallocated the withheld funds in support of LGBTQ+ organizations and causes.
- We request that NEYM not replace any funds designated as being withheld by Monthly Meetings from NEYM’S annual contribution to FUM. If individuals wish to donate to FUM, we ask that NEYM request they do so directly and not through NEYM.

### Midcoast Monthly Meeting 1/26/20 Minute Affirming Minute of 4/21/19

We at Midcoast Monthly Meeting reaffirm our Minute of April 21, 2019, which states:

“At Midcoast Meeting of Friends we believe that the central premise of Quakerism is that the Light shines in every person. We fully support equality in all forms. It distresses us that FUM has a policy of discriminating against LBGTQ persons and do not wish to support an organization that discriminates in any form. While acknowledging that in Africa the socio-cultural history is quite different, we nonetheless hold to our core values of equality as espoused by George Fox. We ask whether Listening Sessions might form the beginning of a reconciliation of this issue and hope to see change. Therefore we choose to support withholding funds from FUM as a symbolic gesture.”

We request that the FUM Board excise the language in its personnel policy regarding sexual ethics, namely, “It is expected however that intimate sexual behavior should be confined to traditional marriage, understood to be between one man and one woman,” and that FUM stop supporting discriminatory behavior.

Acknowledging the moral frailty of all of us, nonetheless we believe that doing otherwise causes grievous harm, moral injury, and imminent danger to LBGTQ+ persons and their communities. Unless FUM changes its policy, we ask NEYM to withdraw from membership at its 2020 Annual Meeting. Our energy is best invested by partnering elsewhere, and working on behalf of the LGBTQ+ community.

\*Historical note: Colonization brought with it many harmful prejudices, including homophobia and discrimination against the existing LBGTQ community. African history actually supported LBGTQ societies and in Uganda late 1800’s the king was gay (King Mwangali Bugunga 1890s). Like other indigenous peoples they actually revered people of two spirits. Africa was colonized and that’s when “the norm” changed and prejudice started.

### Middlebury Monthly Meeting Minute Approved 6/28/2020

In following Friends deeply rooted testimony of equality and call to love, respect and care for our neighbor as ourselves, no exceptions, Middlebury Friends Meeting is in unity in objecting to Friends United Meeting's hiring policy which maintains a discriminating bias against employment applicants on the basis of sexual orientation and non-marital sexual relationships. We refer specifically to the sentence in the Personal Ethics Policy,

It is expected however that intimate sexual behavior should be confined to traditional marriage, understood between one man and one woman.

While we recognize that the FUM Board has moved over the years towards being more inclusive in its hiring policies and appreciate the Board's efforts to sustain unity among its members in the face of deeply held differences, we wish to urge FUM to recognize in its hiring and volunteer policy that sexual orientation and non-marital sexual relationships should not, in themselves, be a cause to refuse employment nor an expectation about how love should be sexually expressed. As a member Meeting of FUM, we ask the Board to prayerfully consider how the Quaker testimony of equality and experience of continuing revelation speak to this bias and hope that way may clear for this sentence to be removed from the hiring policy manual.

LGBTQ+ persons have suffered too long being discriminated against or worse, imprisoned and killed. As Quakers, whose testimonies and way of living have been guided by Biblical understanding, listening to the One Spirit and common sense informed by the love that evolves from these sources, we should be at the forefront of those welcoming our LGBTQ+ family as truly and fully, our family.

When New England Yearly Meeting halts its contribution withholding practice, Middlebury Friends will allow its members to express their conscience on FUM's hiring policy by designating a percent of their contributions destined to FUM as a contribution to another benevolence. Meeting will still pay its full dues to NEYM.

### New Haven Monthly Meeting Minute Approved 2/16/2020

Our meeting has threshed the FUM sexual ethics personnel policy off and on for over 20 years. Three of our members, Thayer Quoos, Cathy Day and Kim Stoner, served for 5 years on a NEYM spirituality and sexuality working group in the 1990s. That group wrote and submitted a document to NEYM which failed to be accepted. We questioned whether this issue continues to have a life in our community.

New Haven Friends would like NEYM and our meeting to remain engaged with FUM. There was agreement we also want New England Friends to continue exerting influence on our Quaker Friends at FUM with the hope of changing hearts and minds. We want to support the good work FUM does around the world as they provide a form of outreach that NEYM meetings are not able to do. We also appreciate how FUM has worked to change the power dynamics within FUM away from white supremacy. Let's not throw out the baby with the bathwater!

No middle-way resolution has been found. One Friend questioned whether this issue can be resolved, while others expressed "cautious pessimism" about way opening.

The FUM General Board's inability to reach unity in 2011 when changes to the challenging final paragraph of the Personnel Ethics Policy were considered (see October, 2019 letter from General Secretary Kellum to Shearman Taber, Treasurer NEYM) was generally interpreted as a positive sign that movement may be happening.

It was noted that this July, 2020 the FUM Triennial will be held in Kenya. We wondered if our meeting would consider financial support, should someone from our New Haven meeting be led to attend, to listen to African Friends' positions and to speak our truth. While no one at our session self-identified an interest, it is possible that meeting may consider providing financial support should someone come forward. We in New Haven feel far removed and not well informed about our African Friends who have different positions on sexual ethics than ours, and the information we receive about FUM's sexual ethics policy is frustratingly second or third hand.

Financial considerations:

- Should this issue of human rights and dignity be linked to money? New Haven Friends seemed to prefer shifting focus away from finances and instead have direct discussion with FUM about the pain their

Personnel Policy has caused to so many for so many years, in the hope that this can better speak to and change hearts and minds.

- Every year NEYM's pledge to FUM has been completely fulfilled despite the withholding policy. As some New England Friends withhold funds out of conscience, others fill in the void. NEYM's withholding policy appears to a number of New Haven Friends to have been ineffective in shifting FUM policy, and disingenuous to those Friends who choose to withhold, while other Friends have been enabled to make up the shortfall. What does this do to the spirit of those who chose to withhold but every year see their Yearly Meeting continue to fully fund FUM as budgeted?
- Two New Haven Friends strongly reacted to the fact some Friends in Africa proselytize that homosexuality is un-Godly and not Christian. They found this unethical and consequently do not want to give financial support to FUM. Concern was also expressed that contributing to FUM is contributing to spreading the message that Quakerism is a religion that promotes discrimination. We discussed the possibility of making restricted financial contributions to specific FUM projects (schools) rather than funding the FUM General Fund. While New Haven Friends Meeting has always given to FUM (via NEYM) without withholding funds, some of us were intrigued with the concept of making restricted contributions and may explore this further.

### Northeast Kingdom Monthly Meeting Minute Approved 5/24/2020

We feel pain and sorrow that the Friends United Meeting Personnel policy continues to discriminate against LGBT individuals and people who do not meet the narrow definition of marriage outlined in the policy. We hold that the Living Spirit does not discriminate when distributing gifts in the Ministry and that it is right and just to honor the Light within each person and the gifts each person brings, regardless of their sexual orientation. The policy as it stands puts human prejudice at the center of our spiritual meeting. The Spirit leads us to be inclusive and honor everyone's gifts. We ask that the board and executive director of FUM engage in prayer and compassionate threshing to find a way to craft a policy that recognizes the Light within all people and chooses staff based on their capacity to fill the positions and their gifts in the ministry, rather than on the basis of their sexual orientation or marital status.

We recognize that continuing to support this policy causes moral injury, not only to those who are excluded, but especially to those of us that participate in excluding them. We support individuals who can not in good conscience contribute monetarily to Friends United Meeting until this policy is changed. We recognize that FUM does important and valuable work and that we are all part of one spiritual community. We also understand that individual acts of conscience can be the beginning point for creating awareness and challenging us to struggle together as a community to choose a just and moral way forward.

We are deeply concerned that this issue is dividing Meetings and making many Friends feel unwelcome or devalued. People involved in perpetrating any form of oppression would like to have the voices of the people they oppress and their allies go silent, but we can not be silent as long as harm continues to be done in our names as members of the wider Friends United Meeting community.

We ask that New England Yearly Meeting continue to support people and Meetings who feel morally unable to contribute financially to FUM as long as Friends United Meeting maintains a hiring policy that discriminates against LGBT people.

We call on New England Yearly Meeting's representatives to the FUM board to continue to advocate for this policy to be changed and all Friends involved in the management of FUM to prayerfully reconsider the policy which excludes so many of our dear and gifted Friends.

### Putney Monthly Meeting Minute Approved 2/21/21

Putney Friends Meeting after many months of discernment has offered the following guidance for consideration by the New England Yearly Meeting (NEYM) regarding the withholding of Putney Friends Meeting funds from Friends United Meeting (FUM). Our concern is about Friends United Meeting's personnel policy

and what we have discerned to be its unacceptably discriminatory position on Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) people.

We wondered what our goal should be. We realize we want to both DO GOOD and also AVOID DOING HARM. We recognize that sending financial contributions to FUM has done harm to LGBTQ people in FUM meetings abroad and it has done harm in our own meeting. We wish to take actions necessary to avoid being a perpetrator of harm whenever we can. We recognize that taking this stance does mean that possibly some good things are not going to happen – good things that are funded by FUM.

Though we struggled mightily to find a way to meet both goals, it became clear to us that we have to choose between two competing goods, and we have discerned that the way forward for us is not to do any more harm.

We advance the following recommendations:

7. We ask that New England Yearly Meeting eliminate the funding mechanism which offsets withheld contributions to Friends United Meeting in protest of the discriminatory policy. Our withholding should be actual withholding.
8. We ask that New England Yearly Meeting explore avenues for funds that would have gone to Friends United Meeting to be redirected to support for the needs of LGBTQ people everywhere.

### South Starksboro Monthly Meeting Minute of February 2020

South Starksboro Friends Meeting supports all relationships that encourage the process of continuing revelation in seeking to live in the Light. We support the individual's right to engage in intimate relationships, regardless of public commitment, and support all unions and committed individuals under our care. To this end we want to ensure that our monetary contributions do not go through New England Yearly Meeting (NEYM) to support organizations which discriminate against LGBTQ people, or those in a non-heterosexual or unmarried relationship. For example, while we continue to support communication and dialogue with Friends United Meeting (FUM) we do not wish that any monies we send as a meeting to NEYM be used in support of FUM as long as they continue discriminatory hiring practices. Should any of our members wish to donate directly to FUM, they could, of course, continue to do so

### Weare/Henniker Monthly Meeting Minute Approved 8/18/21

Over the course of three sessions this spring and early summer, Friends at Weare/Henniker Monthly Meeting have engaged in discussions related to the correspondence we have received from NEYM, which included:

- Midcoast Friends Meeting Minute, January 26, 2020
- Letter from Midcoast Friends Meeting Minute, April 18, 2021
- Correspondence from Bruce Neumann, NEYM Presiding Clerk, May 2021
- NEYM “Experience of Unity among Friends” Discussion Guide
- Letter of Introduction from NEYM Working Group, February 17, 2021
- Graphic Historical Chart of Quaker Traditions/Branches; Quaker Organizations (printouts from PPT slides)

From these various documents, we have discerned that, ultimately, NEYM wants to identify a means of achieving unity concerning the long-standing issue of FUM's personnel policy regarding LGBTQ persons. NEYM seeks help from its working group and from monthly meetings to explore means of achieving unity with the intent that those means could then be used to address the conflict as well as the consequences of an unresolved impasse on the various affected parties.

We have noted that material related to one of the conversations suggested by the NEYM Working Group, concerning “identity”, was withdrawne. With respect to the suggested conversation about “unity,” since we are a very small meeting and do not have active committees, we did not have the opportunity to follow the structures for discussion suggested by the Discussion Guide (e.g., timed break-out sessions). We attempted to follow the spirit of the Working Group's guidance within a format that is more free-form and consistent

with the size of our community. That said, we are pleased to report that our discussions were held in Good Order and Friends attended to the Light Within and were open to worshipful, respectful dialogue and patient listening. We have clarity about the process of seeking spiritual harmony (as opposed to secular consensus) as a primary objective of our meetings for worship and business.

We initiated our discernment process by attempting to better understand the complex history and current status of the four major traditions/branches of Quakers (and their primary staffed support organizations such as FGC and FUM); the relationships of monthly, quarterly, and yearly meetings; and the roles of the many other Quaker organizations that have developed out of the leadings and ministries of Friends to address challenges in the community and the world. This discussion was helpful in leading us to a better understanding of both the diversity and commonalities of Quakers in theology and in practice.

In our second session, our discussion focused on attempting to understand how FUM leadership might embrace Friends' testimonies while holding fast to a policy that seems to be at odds with them. Weare/Henniker Meeting Friends are in unity with NEYM's statement in its February 17, 2021, letter concerning the belovedness of LGBTQ people in the sight of God. We listened carefully to descriptions of the possible justifications of the FUM policy, which appear to be that: (1) it may arise from a doctrinal interpretation of Old Testament scripture, and/or (2) it may be a pragmatic necessity for FUM meetings and organizations to carry out humanitarian and educational ministries in Africa and elsewhere in which patriarchal and homophobic cultures still predominate. We also learned, anecdotally, that some Friends in FUM leadership positions are personally in sympathy with LGBTQ people, which adds to the sense of paradox in FUM's position. Some Friends questioned why a discriminatory condition of employment such as this is in FUM's policy at all.

At the conclusion of our third session, some Friends felt that we do not know enough about the inner workings of FUM and the possible consequences of change to fully understand its perspective. While the frustration of Midcoast Friends Meeting speaks to some of us, there is no sense of the meeting at this time that our community is prepared to follow their path. In fact, we feel it is important to pay dues and remain members of NEYM and FUM if we want to have any say in changing policies.

### Wellesley Monthly Meeting Minute Approved 4/9/2020

In 2008 Wellesley Friends Meeting wrote a Minute Against Discrimination; our community remains in unity with this Minute which states:

As Friends we believe that there is that of God in everyone. Early Friends' testimony of equality led them to reject discrimination based on gender, and in later years, on the basis of race. In this spirit, and after years of discussion, worship sharing, and discernment, Wellesley Friends Meeting approved two minutes: the first welcomed gays and lesbians to the Meeting and agreed to care for those who had been married under the care of other Meetings; the second affirmed that the Meeting will joyfully take under its care the marriage of couples cleared for marriage "regardless of gender."

Because of our strong witness against discrimination, we are deeply disturbed by the personnel policy of Friends United Meeting which discriminates against gays and lesbians.... It is our experience that God calls us to service regardless of our sexual orientation. The injustice and cruelty of this policy has shaken us and spiritually wounded many in our own community whom we hold dear.

Wellesley Friends Meeting is grateful for the work, care and love that led to the acceptance of a FUM withholding mechanism (Minute 2009-54) at the 2009 Sessions of the New England Yearly Meeting (NEYM). The withholding mechanism acknowledges the role of individual conscience. It provides a tangible way to recognize that Friends United Meeting's personnel policy falls short of the Quaker revelation that there is that of God in every individual, including those who find love outside of marriage as defined by the FUM personnel policy.

The withholding mechanism accomplishes multiple purposes.

- It sends a clear message that the personnel policy is not acceptable to us.
- It allows those who cannot contribute to FUM in good conscience to continue to contribute to our monthly meeting and to NEYM.
- It allows those who wish to support FUM financially to continue to do so.
- It allows monthly meetings to stay in relationship with our Yearly Meeting.
- It avoids incurring further losses of Friends from our Meeting community.

The sunset of the FUM withholding mechanism could have posed an existential crisis in Wellesley Meeting. This issue had already caused a schism in our community. Instead, our threshing sessions and small group discernment have highlighted our deep love for the Wellesley Meeting community and for each other, as well as our shared desire to respect the diverse witnesses held within our Meeting. Through hard work and tender engagement with each other, we have arrived at a unity that we know to be true: we all disagree with the personnel policy. We express that disagreement differently. We honor our differences with love for one another.

Withholding has, at times, been misunderstood. It is not intended as financial leverage, but rather as a witness of faith and conscience. We wish to draw a clear distinction:

- The ability to withhold honors the witness of those who cannot in good faith support an organization that has a harmful policy.
- We do not believe in using money as a tool of coercion.

We took faith during the era of the FUM withholding mechanism that there was a commitment by NEYM to hold the FUM personnel policy in the Light and work unceasingly to reach a broader unity on that of God in all Friends, gay and straight. NEYM has not engaged enough in this difficult work. With the non-renewal of the Withholding mechanism, we fear that it will be assumed that NEYM is comfortable with the policy as it stands and we will lose the fundamental Truth that our LGBTQ siblings are created and loved as they are, and God does not expect or want them to be other than they were created to be.

We at Wellesley Friends Meeting are united in supporting vigorous engagement with FUM about the personnel policy. We pray for a wider understanding throughout New England of the importance of a means to tangibly bear witness against the policy. We seek a way to accommodate this tangible witness, insufficient as it is. To that end, we request that the Yearly Meeting continue the FUM Withholding mechanism, with the only end date being when FUM removes from their personnel policy the expectation that “sexual intercourse should be confined to marriage, with marriage understood to be between one man and one woman.”

There is strength in our diversity, and deep love and integrity in our shared will to honor our differences. As a Meeting we unite with this minute as an expression of God’s love.

### Westport Monthly Meeting Minute Approved 6/27/2021

Westport Monthly Meeting recognizes that discernment around the Yearly Meeting’s position on the FUM personnel policy has, at times, been contentious and divisive. Friends process for discerning a way forward is a process of Truth-seeking. It is inner work we do with openness to divine guidance to be moved to a new understanding and revelation to the Truth. So it is that our corporate process of business, our seeking a way forward, is a Truth-seeking process. As we have prayerfully considered how to move forward as a meeting and as a yearly meeting, we are clear that the path to unity is through listening and being willing to change if that is what we are called to do. We commit to bringing this awareness to NEYM Sessions with humility and an intent to hold the discernment process in prayer.

### Worcester Monthly Meeting Open Letter to the Presiding Clerk

February 23, 2020

Worcester Friends have met on several occasions this year to prayerfully and deeply consider the issue of New England Yearly Meeting’s financial contribution to Friends United Meeting. Eleven years ago, our Meeting chose to engage

in NEYM’s option of withholding donations to FUM, as we did not feel comfortable financially supporting an organization with a personnel policy that discriminates against LGBT people and unmarried people in relationship. We continue to feel this same discomfort. Our work to promote social justice in our home community includes initiatives supporting LGBT people, some of whom are asylum seekers fleeing the pervasive and even legislated homophobia in their home countries. We cannot, in good conscience, contribute to a Quaker organization with policies that are harmful to individual human beings based on whom they love.

NEYM's withholding policy gave opportunity for Meetings to decline to direct funds to FUM based on differences of principle. With the imminent sundowning of the withholding option, we respectfully request NEYM to consider the following option that transforms withholding to an opportunity for positive social change.

We are deeply moved to support anti-homophobia work. Recognizing that FUM's international work largely takes place in Africa, it feels relevant to create an option to support LGBT people on that continent. We propose, therefore, that NEYM consider reinstatement of a revised form of the withholding option, specifically an option for Meetings to redirect those funds which would be donated to FUM to an alternate organization working for the benefit of LGBT people in Africa. One such organization, which we put forth as a potential recipient of NEYM redirected funds, is Friends Ugandan Safe Transport Fund. FUST, a grassroots project of Olympia (WA) Monthly Meeting, supports people working underground in Africa to provide safe passage of LGBT people out of Uganda, where they would be at risk of harm or death based on their sexual orientation. Over the past 6 years FUST has enabled about 2000 individuals to leave Uganda safely. The work of FUST is supported by donations from individuals as well as more than 30 Friends Meetings from around the globe and other Friends and religious organizations.

We recognize that NEYM is led to continue its relationship with FUM for historical, theological, and social reasons. We also recognize that continuing to be part of FUM provides an opportunity for ongoing dialogue and growth for all of us. We recognize the deep commitment of FUM to humanitarian work, and know that some in NEYM would like to financially support FUM. Our proposal would allow for parallel donation of monies to FUM or FUST, or both, based on the clearness of each Meeting. The option remains, certainly, for individuals to provide contributions in addition or in parallel to the collective decision of their Meeting.

We understand that other Meetings are currently wrestling with the question of financial support to FUM, and collectively ask that NEYM consider this or other options that allow a new way forward.

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### **Towards Greater Inclusivity and Safety for LGBTQIA+ Folk and Families**

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*Brought by the 2020-21 FUM Committee (Representatives to the FUM Board and Triennial)*

The author adrienne maree brown reminds us of the following:

- attention is one of our most valuable resources.
- in your own life, attention is what determines the quality of your lived experience. if your attention stays on what's wrong, on your powerlessness and pain, ... that will grow.
- if your attention is instead on gratitude, collective power, experimentation, curiosity and celebration, these things will grow in your life ...
- *Wherever there is a problem, there are already people acting on the problem in some fashion. Understanding those actions is the starting point for developing effective strategies to resolve the problem, so we focus on the solutions, not the problems. —allied media network principles*

The FUM Committee proposes that the Yearly Meeting undertake three new initiatives supporting our LGBTQIA+<sup>1</sup> siblings and their families in the Yearly Meeting, the Religious Society, and beyond. While continuing work on changing FUM's discriminatory personnel policy, we hope to focus our collective attention on creating possibilities for celebration, experimentation, and liberation.

We celebrate and re-affirm that New England Yearly Meeting has already found unity in the following:

(Minute 2009-53) Friends in New England Yearly Meeting experience the varieties of love in our community as gifts of God. We are all children of God, and we all have the same potential to reflect the Divine Light in our lives. Our hearts resonate deeply with the biblical injunctions to "love God" and to "love your neighbor as yourself." Just as Friends have historically witnessed to the Light present among all races and genders, we witness that the Light is present among people of all sexual orientations and gender identities or gender expressions. We experience our sexuality and sexual identity as integral components of who we are as children of God. We are grateful for the fruits of the Spirit and the blessings of ministry and leadership that God has sent our spiritual community through the hands and lives of all Friends, regardless of their sexual orientation or identity.

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1. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and/or Questioning, Intersex, and Asexual and/or Ally



(Minute 2019-58) states that “We know that every person is deeply beloved in the eyes of God. We unite unequivocally in our love and care for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer Friends, and hold a particular concern for their lives and ministries. We continue to seek the ways we can best support these Friends in New England, around the country, and around the world ...” And, “All of this we hold to be true, and yet we *also* unite in our desire to continually engage with the wide diversity of Friends worldwide. We are a part of FUM, we love FUM, and we wish to live in our community with love and integrity.”

Building upon this foundation of unity we have already found, we long to move away from what we are *against* and put our energy into what it is we are *working for* with hopes that we might achieve greater faithful wholeness in the Religious Society of Friends. We believe that this work will allow us to be patterns and examples of faithfulness in building the world that God longs for all of us.

Friends in New England commit to engaging in work for the full inclusion, respect, safety, and flourishing of LGBTQIA+ Friends and their families among the Religious Society of Friends, and in the world at large. This commitment will require us to use and engage different strategies to reach this goal. We welcome the chance to connect with Friends across the country and around the world who are equally committed to such equity.

This proposal has three parts:

1. Deepen our connections with, support of, and collective work alongside other Open and Affirming Yearly Meetings and Associations within FUM (and beyond) while encouraging intervisitation and relationship in the broader Religious Society;
2. Establish the Bayard Rustin Fund for Support and Witness;
3. Provide resources (human and curricular) to monthly and quarterly meetings so that we can engage in the work of self-reflection upon how centuries of internalized homophobia might yet be present, and at work, in us; in order to do the work of becoming truly inclusive.

### Collaboration and Witness with Other Yearly Meetings

The four united yearly meetings: Baltimore, New York, Canadian, and New England (those affiliated with *both* FGC and FUM) have expressed support for LGBTQIA+ Friends, families, and their gifts. In the last decade, new groupings have emerged in North America and joined FUM with the explicit stance of airming the sacred worth of all: The New Association of Friends in the Midwest and North Carolina Friends Fellowship. In addition three older FUM-affiliated groupings—Wilmington and Great Plains yearly meetings and the Western Association of the Religious Society of Friends—have Open and Affirming stances. These meetings and associations are all affiliated with Friends United Meeting and share an interest in coordinating and collaborating in their efforts. This proposal directs our FUM Board Representatives to convene a meeting of representatives of these yearly meetings and associations for the purpose of mutual encouragement, support, strategy-building, and development of a plan for wider intervisitation.

### The Bayard Rustin Fund for Support and Action

The Yearly Meeting will establish the NEYM Bayard Rustin Fund for Support and Action. Rustin (1912–1987) was a pillar of the Civil Rights movement in the United States. Raised a Quaker, Rustin studied nonviolence with Gandhian activists in India, organized the first Freedom Rides, co-founded the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (with Dr. King), and helped to plan the 1963 March on Washington. Rustin’s leadership was often behind the scenes because, as a gay man in the 1960s, he was often discredited for his sexuality. Rustin worked tirelessly for civil rights for all people until his death and is a fitting namesake for this Fund.

This project of the Yearly Meeting will be funded at an initial amount as determined by the Permanent Board in consultation with the Treasurer and the Finance Committee, and can receive additional monies from individual Friends and meetings. This proposal is for a revolving fund, where the full amount contributed in a given year is available for distribution as a grant/grants, rather than a permanently endowed fund.

A working group of five people (including at least one FUM Board representative and four others with gifts and experience of encouragement, support, and prophetic witness) will direct the donations of this fund, while working carefully with the Yearly Meeting Treasurer, Finance Committee, and staff.

The donations will be used to support LGBTQIA+ organizations in East Africa, Central and South America, India, the Caribbean, and North America.<sup>2</sup> The Fund might assist monthly meetings in their witness as well as target support to initiatives that resist current anti-trans youth legislation by increasing the visibility of efforts and opportunities for collaboration across NEYM.

Individuals and meetings can make gifts to this fund.

### Transforming Internalized Homophobia and Transphobia within New England Yearly Meeting

It has been opened to us, in the last five years especially, that the seed of empire grows in us and our institutions as the tangled web of racism, colonization, planetary exploitation, and misogyny, *as well as* homophobia and transphobia. Just as we are wrestling with a Letter of Apology and attempting to decolonize our meetings, as we are examining our racism and considering reparations, as we declare climate emergency and examine our complicity—we are invited to examine the ways that homophobia and transphobia live in the broader culture, in our meetings, and in us. The faithful call of our time is to continue to learn how gender-justice, sexuality-justice, racial-justice, and climate-justice are interconnected and how we can interrupt patterns of separation, exclusion, and oppression to work for equity. We commit to examining and changing our practices and gatherings to become more inclusive. A report will be made at Annual Sessions 2023 on the work that has been done in this area.

We know that there is pain that many meetings and individual Friends continue to experience around the FUM personnel policy, as evidenced in minutes sent by ten monthly meetings to the Yearly Meeting since the 2019 Session. We are keenly aware that at least three North American yearly meetings and a number of Protestant denominations have broken apart in recent years because of their inability to resolve differences over sexual ethics and theology. We value deeply all individual Friends and meetings that make up our New England Quaker family. We believe it is possible for New England Friends to remain in compassionate and respectful communion with each other without being torn asunder—even as we continue our loving search for unity. We know that Friends who care deeply about these issues will continue to seek for new creative possibilities to help us move towards fuller unity as a Yearly Meeting. And we are excited by the opportunities for our Yearly Meeting to live into active witness to and engagement with LGBTQIA+ inclusion in our meetings and flourishing in our Society and world.

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### **Clerks' Table Summary of Open Discernment**

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#### The FUM Personnel Policy

We heard unequivocal love for LGBTQIA+ Friends and were united in our condemnation of the discriminatory personnel policy of FUM. We also heard deep love expressed for those of us whose lives are nourished by our connection with FUM.

Many Friends spoke of how hurtful the discriminatory FUM personnel policy is to them personally. For some of us, just hearing the policy read out loud was acutely painful. We recognize the important work being done by FUM around the world in places like Ramallah and Cuba and Kenya, but many Friends felt that supporting FUM in doing that work was using “evil means toward good ends.” Contributions of money to FUM was the most controversial aspect of this issue, but some felt money to be a side issue. For them, our continuing association with a discriminatory organization was unacceptable regardless of funding and the withholding policy was only a panacea, a way for us to feel better without solving the issue.

Many Friends found the words “cultural humility” spoke to them this week. The phrase appears in the Apology to Native Americans, but the idea is also woven through the report from the FUM Committee. A Friend who works with Quaker women in Africa said she hopes we can change our attitudes toward African Friends and not think about them just as causing problems. She spoke of times that change came in Africa, not by putting pressure on the men but by working with women and youth (who often have a very different

2. Possible Organizations might include: The Gay And Lesbian Coalition of Kenya, the National Gay & Lesbian Human Rights Commission (of Kenya), Uganda Safe Transport, The Trevor Project, The Transgender Emergency Fund of Massachusetts, OneIowa, The LGBTQ [sic] Center of Northern Indiana, The Indiana Youth Group, Seacoast OutRight (NH), etc.

attitude toward LGBTQ+ Friends than the older men do). She is concerned that in diverting funds from FUM to an alternate fund, American Quakers will show the typical American attitude of “We know what’s best,” sending money to groups doing good work but then ignoring the African Quakers or putting them down.

One Friend spoke of hearing a death threat against gays, lesbians, and their allies while attending the second FUM General Board meeting in Kenya in 2006. Although he felt as clear a leading then as he had ever felt about speaking in meeting, he said nothing. He apologized to us now for his unfaithfulness. What kept him in his seat was that he was afraid of his anger and did not know how to say loving words while shaking with anger.

By the end of the week, we could feel movement from a place of rigidly held moral beliefs towards a place of humble self-reflection. The theme of engagement was strong throughout Sessions. If we’re not leaving FUM, then we need to engage. We directed the Clerk to write again to the FUM Board about their personnel policy. While we approved the minute from the FUM Committee asking our FUM Board representatives to reach out and build relationships with other welcoming and affirming yearly meetings, we were reminded of the importance of reaching out to Friends in Indianapolis, Des Moines, or North Carolina. Those are the Friends we’re most likely to stereotype as generic Protestant evangelicals, while they in turn often stereotype us as east coast elites.

Friends who’ve served on the FUM Board made it clear that the lack of visible movement on the FUM Board doesn’t mean that no work has been done. A Friend compared our situation now to that of the Israelites making their sixth trek around the walls of Jericho, feeling like it wasn’t working and wondering why they were still trying. We heard that the FUM Board was set to bring the personnel policy to the Triennial in Kenya in 2020, but that meeting was postponed and then made virtual, with a drastically minimized agenda. The policy got dropped from the agenda, but FUM had demonstrated willingness to listen. The African Board has also publicly condemned violence against gays and lesbians.

Again and again, we were reminded that many Friends here in Sessions identify with FUM, and FUM Friends everywhere are kin. “Don’t other us,” we were told. A Friend with a travel minute described himself as our “living letter,” invested with a spiritual and historical authority to carry our concerns as he visits other parts of the FUM family. He is “out” with them as gay-affirming and finds himself invited into their praying hearts. Sometimes he is pulled aside by the parent of a gay child in a homophobic yearly meeting and finds himself baptized in their pain as they are baptized in the comfort that comes through him. He begged us not to “defang the power of Spirit” in his Travel Minute by walking us out of the family.

Other Friends reminded us that FUM is not a monolithic organization making decisions disconnected from us. It is not that we are in disagreement with them; it is the diversity of Friends around the world with which we’re laboring, a diversity which shows up in our monthly meetings and in our NEYM Annual Sessions.

We were challenged: Those Friends who want to break connection with FUM, is this what God is calling us to do? Or is this something we can do because it puts us on the right side of history and makes us feel better?

We were challenged: Those of us exercised enough to witness by withholding funds, would we also witness through visitation and listening, as John Woolman did when he visited slave owners?

We were challenged: Can we find a way to give voice to our objections without using the means of Empire? How can we reject the tools of power on the one hand and use them on the other?

We were challenged to keep from making this into a political convention, but to sink down to the seed and listen for the often-messy guidance of Spirit.

A great many Friends welcomed the reinstatement of a withholding policy and the new proposal to redirect moneys that would otherwise have gone to FUM to a fund (tentatively called the Bayard Rustin Fund) which would support work to help LGBTQIA+ people. One Friend described the FUM Committee’s proposal as a balm to her soul that will allow her to continue giving money to the Yearly Meeting and her monthly meeting without contributing to a homophobic organization.

A number of Friends spoke against allowing individuals to “make up the difference” and let NEYM still make its full contribution to FUM. The minute that we approved will reduce NEYM’s contribution to FUM by the amount withheld by monthly meetings. Individuals are still free to contribute to FUM directly on their own.

A Friend talked about the asylum work she has been involved with. We are giving resources to help people get out of Uganda but once they get to the U.S., they don’t necessarily have a welcoming network. They need a place to live without it costing money while they seek asylum, and NEYM could create a network to provide this, showing our support and care in other ways besides struggling within the Quaker movement.

It's hard to hold all these things together in their contradictions and complexities but we're urged not to cut ourselves off. We are reminded that it is Spirit that changes hearts, not our own efforts.

### Apology

Much of the open discernment was also about the Apology to Native Americans. One Friend who identified herself as Native American told us that in her tribal community there's a need for such an apology. It's not going to be perfect, but if we don't start now, then when and where? If approval of the Apology languished for another whole year, it would break her heart.

Another Friend talked about how, though her grandmother was Lakota Sioux, it was only a few years ago at a Pendle Hill Conference that she learned about pieces of her culture that had been lost to her. She finds comfort and strength in the saying, "They tried to bury us. They didn't know we were seeds." She came to Sessions because she respects the work that we're doing here. "It's no easy thing, and you're doing it, and I am grateful."

A Friend who works with the Wabanaki people told us that when she attends public hearings or goes to rallies that she's been invited to, what she hears over and over again is, *What matters is that you're here, that you're standing with us. We see you.*

### No Way to Treat a Child

Friends did not find unity on AFSC's No Way to Treat a Child campaign. One Friend objected that the "children" aren't really children; the youngest is 14 and most are 16 or 17. He compared the accusation that Israel is the only country that tortures children to the antisemitic language in times past, and called it an exaggeration to say that verbal abuse and questioning without parents being present are torture. Another Friend who was a former staff person of AFSC reminded us of a Minute from several years ago (2017-46) which asked us to support organizations that bring Israelis and Palestinians together and to examine the antisemitism and Islamophobia that underlie the conflict. She expressed her concern that the AFSC campaign we've been asked to endorse will increase the antisemitism of our culture.

Another Friend expressed concern that the quarterly meeting minutes on No Way to Treat a Child did not adequately recognize how trauma begets trauma. What's happening in the Middle East is complex and cyclical and as people largely of white European descent and Christian backgrounds, we are not the experts.

Another Friend who identifies as a Jew with deep commitments to Israel, shared a message which made connections between several of our business items: "So I know that we can make mistakes. And I know ... that Israel can make mistakes. We may be wrong in what we decide today and tomorrow but I'm hoping that we can hold together that commitment to stay in loving supporting dialogue with FUM, that we can take responsibility for the harm that we've done to Native peoples, that we can join in the voices that ask Israel to live up to its promise to be a Promised Land and a place of hope and care for all of its people, and that we can continue to work to support the LGBT and questioning Friends in our community and all over the world including in Cuba, Kenya, and Uganda."

### Earthcare Ministry

We were urged to remember that, while we are holding heavy messages this week, our very planet is in danger. Given the magnitude and urgency of climate change, Friends urged us to listen to the plea from the Earthcare Ministry Committee and to examine our own carbon footprints as well as the big picture of climate change.

Who are we?

The Clerk asked us several times throughout the week, *Who do we want to be? And what is God calling us to?* Some of the answers included:

- We are a Yearly Meeting with deep historical roots. As we come together to labor over contemporary issues, we have role models to look to from 300 years ago.
- We are a founding member of FUM.
- We hope we can be a meeting that centers both the love of God and the love of our neighbor.
- We're called to be the people who pause and ask questions: *Who is in this room and who is not? Who is being ignored? Who is not being treated like a valued child of God?*

- We are all called to be people who listen for a Truth that the cultures around us aren't telling us.
- Who are we called to be? We're called to be strange and truthful and annoying and finely tuned listeners to the voice of Spirit, and to the voice of our friends who are listening to Spirit.

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### Letter from the Presbyterian Church Office of Public Witness

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President Joseph R. Biden  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20500

August 11, 2021

Dear President Biden:

The unprecedented social outburst in Cuba last month has called attention to the difficult situation on the island. We are deeply concerned about the worsening humanitarian crisis that is causing needless suffering and death for the Cuban people. Our partners in the Cuban churches—congregants, ministers, and their communities— have expressed their distress concerning the severe shortages of basic medicines, food, and other vital materials amidst the COVID-19 battle.

As faith-based denominations, organizations and partners, many of whom have a long history of work on the ground in Cuba, we are writing to ask you to prioritize the well-being of the Cuban people, irrespective of political considerations, by taking immediate humanitarian steps, and suspending U.S. regulations that prevent assistance from reaching Cuba and the Cuban people.

In Cuba, we hope that the Cuban government will respond to these protests with dialogue and action; as in other countries, we condemn heavy-handed responses to protest by security forces, and we urge the government to release all those detained for peacefully protesting or reporting on the protests.

We know that Cuba's economic crisis has been caused by numerous factors. However, it is clear that the U.S. economic embargo – intensified by the Trump Administration — is contributing to the worsening humanitarian situation the island is facing. We believe your administration should take the necessary steps to remove all obstacles preventing families and communities in the U.S. from helping families in Cuba.

Specifically, we urge you to:

- Lift all restrictions and caps of family and donative remittances that could help Cubans purchase food and medicine on the island
- Re-staff the U.S. embassy in Havana and reinstate consular services
- Remove the requirement for specific licenses to send medical supplies to Cuba and the “end-use verification” requirement for humanitarian imports, both of which vastly increase the red tape in sending aid to the island from the US, and which discourage both donors and sellers
- Lift all restrictions on banking and financial transactions related to humanitarian aid as well as restrictions on the percentage of US-made material used in foreign-produced medical supplies that inhibit the purchase or distribution of humanitarian aid internationally.

We hold you in our prayers and hope your administration can act immediately on this urgent request. Our faith partners in Cuba are reaching out to us for assistance. We hope that you will hear their plea.

Sincerely,

Alliance of Baptists, American Friends Service Committee, The Armenian Orthodox Church, Christian Reformed Church Office of Social Justice, Church of the Brethren Office of Peacebuilding and Policy, Church World Service, Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd U.S. Provinces, Cuba Partners Network–Presbyterian Church (USA), The Episcopal Church, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, The

Florida Council of Churches, Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL), Friends United Meeting, Global Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the United Church of Christ, Latin America Working Group, Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns, Mennonite Central Committee U.S., National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd, The National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA, New England Yearly Meeting of Friends (Quakers), Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries, The United Methodist Church—General Board of Church and Society, Washington Office on Latin America

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### Noticing Patterns of Oppression and Faithfulness Working Group

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#### Noticings during 2021 NEYM Virtual Sessions

The wise ... trust people who are faithful,  
and they trust people who are unfaithful.  
There is power in trust.  
(Lao Zu, Tao Te Ching Verse 49, interpreted)

All members of the Noticing Patterns of Oppression Working Group feel gratitude for the engagement of the body of NEYM Friends in our work. Our hearts overflow because of the tender and faithful listening and vulnerability that Friends have given one to another.

Forty-four emails from thirty-five Friends expressing concerns or inquiries have been received as of Thursday, 12 August.

Examples of faithfulness were legion during this week of Sessions.

Themes of oppression include the following:

NEYM Friends hold groups of people in prayer and in their hearts. The noticings that arise express a polarity that holds between a preferred group and another group. Examples include:

- Friends in FUM, Cuban Friends, or more fundamentalist Friends are placed in opposition to LGBTQIA+ Friends
- African Friends are placed in opposition to North American LGBTQ+ Friends
- Israeli people and authorities are placed in opposition to Palestinian youth

NEYM Friends notice language forms that impact groups negatively. Examples include:

- Saying “call a spade-a-spade”
- Use of “dark” or “darkness” to mean evil or other negatives
- Using “Congressmen” rather than “Congresspeople”
- Ignoring or mis-using personal pronouns.

NEYM Friends are concerned about insensitivity to the needs of, or the poor accommodation of, neurodivergence. Examples include:

- divergent learning styles
- divergent mental or emotional health.

NEYM Friends are concerned about expectations and rules of engagement being unevenly applied by the Clerk in Meeting for Business. Examples include:

- first-time attenders not feeling welcome/safe to speak in business
- some Friends admonished for reading their message while other Friends are allowed to

NEYM Friends are concerned about inappropriate uses to which beliefs, values, or practices of certain groups, traditions, or cultures are put. Examples include:

- commodifying Indigenous American spirituality
- equating abbreviated gestures with the fullness of American Sign Language.

In *The Book of Delights* by Ross Gay, there is a wondering we might hold:

“What if we joined our sorrows, I’m saying. I’m saying: What if that is joy?”

Challenging the Culture of Domination in which we live is hard. Yet letting go of this culture’s reactions, leanings, and suppressed values within each of us is harder still. For the Culture of Domination is also us.

This week, as we wrestle with forms of witness and truth speaking we find ourselves in much pain and grief. We each feel the pain of our long-standing wounds. And, we feel the pain of being complicit in a culture that uses wounding to control its members. Finally, as we come to feel the diverse and many ways intersecting forms of privilege—including the privilege—or perhaps curse—of not having heretofore faced squarely how privilege has distorted perception of ourselves and others, we grieve.

And grief is not a cradle language for those privileged in race, wealth, education, or social position. Can we learn to share our pain and suffering, rather than keeping it invisible and unspoken? Can we learn not to scapegoat what shames us? Can we share our emotional and material burdens with one another as easily as we share our abundant gifts?

Moreover, can we let go of perfectionism and concern with appearances and face each other in humility and love? Can we let go of quarrels about the nature of a goal none of us sees clearly and do the next right thing that the inner teacher that abides in each of us dictates? Can we enter a process of healing as our most teachable selves?

Can we be a diverse community that employs all of itself in the search for Truth?

This week we have begun journeys toward reconciliation—with the earth, with fellow Quakers, with peoples living among us, and each of us with parts of ourselves. Can we continue, one step at a time, in faith?

For there is power in faith.

## FY22 Approved Budget

NOTE: The Budget was approved by the Permanent Board on September 25, 2021; it is presented here for information only.

Category	FY2020		FY2021	Δ FY21 to FY22 Budgets	FY2022 Proposed Budget	Notes
	Actuals	Budget	Budget			
<b>Income</b>	<i>(italics = affected by pandemic)</i>					
<b>4010 Individual Contributions</b>						
General Fund Contributions	165,252	194,500	204,225	-	204,225	
Equalization Contributions	31,109	21,000	26,000	-	26,000	
<b>4010 Individual Contributions Total</b>	196,361	215,500	230,225	-	230,225	
<b>4020 Monthly Meeting Contributions</b>						
General Fund Contributions	317,721	350,000	350,000	-	350,000	
Equalization Contributions	16,361	27,000	23,000	-	23,000	
<b>4020 Monthly Meeting Contributions Total</b>	334,082	377,000	373,000	-	373,000	
<b>4030 Organizations Contributions</b>	1	0	0	-	0	
<b>4050 Interest and Dividend Income</b>	9,487	9,000	9,000	-	9,000	
<b>Total 4070 Books &amp; Other Sales Income</b>	1,143	17,000	17,000	-	17,000	
<b>4080 Retreat Program Fees</b>	17,172	50,000	47,000	-	47,000	
<b>4085 Sessions Program Fees</b>	47,145	201,000	211,050	10,250	221,300	
<b>4090 Change in Fair Market Value</b>	-724	0	0	-	0	
<b>4099 Net Assets Released To/From</b>	1,815	0	0	15,000	15,000	1
<b>Total Income</b>	606,482	869,500	887,275	25,250	912,525	
<b>Expenses</b>						
<b>5000 Staff</b>						
Total 5000 Staff	402,514	406,231	431,519	20,593	452,112	2
<b>5100 General &amp; Administration</b>						
<b>5110 Administration</b>						
5120 Bank Expense	5,296	6,000	7,000	-	7,000	
5130 Contracted Services	30,830	31,896	30,900	1,000	31,900	2
5135 Accounting Services	4,000	4,000	2,500	-	2,500	
5140 Legal Services	5,262	5,250	2,500	-	2,500	
5145 Infrastructure			5,000	-	5,000	
5150 Liability Insurance	5,240	4,000	5,100	150	5,250	
5160 Payroll Service	5,266	4,500	5,200	-	5,200	
5170 Recruiting Expense		0	0	-	0	
5180 Rent	9,350	9,350	9,350	-	9,350	
5190 Misc. Expense	634	0	0	-	0	
<b>Total 5110 Administration</b>	65,878	64,996	67,550	1,150	68,700	
<b>5200 Office</b>						
5220 Archives Office Expenses		0	0	-	0	
5220 Cleaning Services	265	265	265	-	265	
5230 Maint - Equip & Hardware	0	1,250	1,250	-	1,250	
5240 Postage	5,226	3,750	3,750	-	3,750	
5250 Office Equipment	1,043	3,250	3,250	-	3,250	
5260 Office Supplies	921	2,000	2,500	-	2,500	
5270 Printing & Copying	5,402	14,500	14,500	-	14,500	
5280 Software & Updates	12,609	7,000	7,000	-	7,000	
5290 Telephone	3,502	4,500	4,500	-	4,500	
5295 Misc. Office	174	0	0	-	0	
<b>Total 5200 Office</b>	29,142	36,515	37,015	-	37,015	
<b>Total 5100 General &amp; Administration</b>	95,020	101,511	104,565	1,150	105,715	



Category	FY2020		FY2021	Δ FY21 to FY22 Budgets	FY2022 Proposed Budget	Notes
	Actuals	Budget	Budget			
<b>5300 Travel &amp; Conferences</b>				-		
5310 Travel - Committee	1,276	2,500	3,000	-	3,000	
5320 Travel - Clerk	792	4,000	4,500	-	4,500	
5330 Travel - Programs	1,328	4,600	3,700	-	3,700	
5335 Travel - Representatives Travel	3,115	10,000	6,700	-	6,700	
5350 Travel - Staff	7,514	17,500	17,000	-	17,000	
5360 Travel - Ministries	500	400	400	-	400	
<b>Total 5300 Travel &amp; Conferences</b>	<b>14,525</b>	<b>39,000</b>	<b>35,300</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>35,300</b>	
<b>6000 Programs</b>				-		
6110 Sessions Room & Board	11,115	175,950	181,140	5,710	186,850	
6112 Retreats - Room & Board	0			-		
6114 Room Rental	8,063	20,000	20,000	(2,470)	17,530	
6150 Food Expense	5,613	18,000	18,000	(570)	17,430	
<b>Total 6112 Retreats - Room &amp; Board</b>	<b>13,676</b>	<b>38,000</b>	<b>38,000</b>	<b>(3,040)</b>	<b>34,960</b>	
6125 Program Expenses	0			-		
6105 Honoraria - Speakers/Wkshp Ldrs	11,563	19,500	22,000	15,000	37,000	1
6115 Equipment Rental	0	6,000	6,000	-	6,000	
6121 Supplies and Other Expenses	5,630	9,300	9,300	-	9,300	
6165 Pre-Sessions Expense	56	1,000	1,000	-	1,000	
<b>Total 6125 Program Expenses</b>	<b>17,248</b>	<b>35,800</b>	<b>38,300</b>	<b>15,000</b>	<b>53,300</b>	
6130 Committee Expenses - General	3,035	11,950	6,350	-	6,350	
6134 Childcare	180	2,000	2,000	-	2,000	
<b>Total 6130 Committee Expenses - General</b>	<b>3,215</b>	<b>14,450</b>	<b>8,350</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>8,350</b>	
6160 Program Support	0			-		
6163 Friends Camp	2,355	2,220	2,220	-	2,220	
6167 Religious Education & Outreach		0	2,000	(2,000)	0	3
<b>Total 6160 Program Support</b>	<b>2,355</b>	<b>2,220</b>	<b>4,220</b>	<b>(2,000)</b>	<b>2,220</b>	
<b>Total 6000 Programs</b>	<b>47,608</b>	<b>266,420</b>	<b>270,010</b>	<b>15,670</b>	<b>285,680</b>	
6140 Books & Other Sales Expense	0	0	0	-	0	
6142 Books	0	15,000	14,500	-	14,500	
6147 Consignment Sales	36	0	0	-	0	
<b>Total 6140 Books &amp; Other Sales Expense</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>15,000</b>	<b>14,500</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>14,500</b>	
<b>6200 Support of Other Organizations</b>				-		
6310 FGC	13,075	13,075	13,075	-	13,075	
6320 FUM	10,992	13,075	13,075	-	13,075	
6325 FWCC	13,075	13,075	13,075	-	13,075	
<b>Total 6310-6325 FGC+FUM+FWCC</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>39,225</b>	<b>39,225</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>39,225</b>	
6328 Ramallah Friends School	100	100	100	-	100	
6335 AFSC	300	300	300	-	300	
6340 FCNL	750	750	750	-	750	
6345 QEW	300	300	300	-	300	
6350 Friends Peace Teams	100	100	100	-	100	
6355 FWCC 3rd World Travel	500	500	500	-	500	
6360 QUNO	200	200	200	-	200	
6362 Quaker Voluntary Service	100	100	100	-	100	
<b>Total 6330 Friends' Organizations</b>	<b>2,350</b>	<b>2,350</b>	<b>2,350</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,350</b>	
6590 Ecumenical Organizations	0			-		
6592 State Councils of Churches	3,172	4,000	4,000	-	4,000	
6594 Natl Council of Churches	150	150	150	-	150	
6596 NE Ecumenical Network	150	150	150	-	150	
6598 World Council of Churches	100	100	100	-	100	
<b>Total 6590 Ecumenical Organizations</b>	<b>3,572</b>	<b>4,400</b>	<b>4,400</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>4,400</b>	
<b>Total 6200-6590 Support of Other Organizations</b>	<b>43,064</b>	<b>45,975</b>	<b>45,975</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>45,975</b>	

Category	FY2020		FY2021	Δ FY21 to FY22 Budgets	FY2022 Proposed Budget	Notes
	Actuals	Budget	Budget			
<b>6600 Publications</b>				-		
6610 Yearly Meeting Minute Book	0	1,000	0	-	0	4
6620 New England Friend (Sessions Issue)	0	3,000	4,000	(4,000)	0	
<b>Total 6600 Publications</b>	0	4,000	4,000	(4,000)	0	
<b>Total Expenses</b>	602,766	878,137	905,869	33,413	939,282	
<b>Net Operating Income</b>	3,716	-8,637	-18,594	(8,163)	-26,757	
<b>Other Income</b>						
9940 Other Income - Transfers from other funds	18,721					
<b>Total Other Income</b>	18,721					
<b>Other Expenses</b>						
9950 Other Expense - Transfer to other funds	29,000					
<b>Total Other Expenses</b>	29,000					
<b>Net Other Income</b>	-10,279					
<b>Net Income</b>	-6,563					

**Notes:**

- 1 Finance Committee proposes phasing in funding of the Honoraria Supporting Volunteer Leadership over three years; for FY2022 the full \$15,000 would come from reserves, in FY2023 \$10,000 and in FY2024 \$5000 would come from reserves. The expense will be tracked in a new subcategory "Honoraria - Volunteer Leadership" not shown here.
- 2 Most of the increase addresses the priority for support of monthly meetings and ministers by increased support staff; this increase can be used in either 5130 Contracted Services or 5000 Staff Salaries & Benefits. Small COLA increase.
- 3 Supporting the 2022 Nurturing Faithfulness program priority using reserves as a one-time Continuing Project rather than in the operating budget.
- 4 Publication of New England Friend Sessions Issue now tracked in 5270 Office: Printing & Copying.

## Approved Nominating Slate

### Permanent Board (50)

2022

Belcher, Travis (Mon)  
 Drayton, Darcy (Wear)  
 Forsythe, Hannah (Bhill)  
 Nortonsmith, Gina (Nham)  
 Smith, Sara (Con)  
 Szatkowski, Elizabeth (Port)

2023

Bishop, Peter (Mtoby)  
 Forsythe, Martin (Bhill)  
 Mair, Edward (Ames)  
 McCandless, Jean (Burl)  
 Taber, Will (Fpon)  
 Vargo, Thomas (Nham)

2024

Chase, Deana (West)  
 Gant, Christopher (Bhill)  
 Harrington, Ian (Cam)  
 Manning, Leslie (Durh)\*  
 Reuthe, John (Vass)  
 Schwopo, Martha (Well)

2025

Hanson, Beth (Wrly)  
 Lightsom, Fran (WFal)  
 O'Connor, Bob (Vass)  
 Radocchia, Anna (Benn)  
 Rein, Carole (Nshor)  
 Weinholtz, Donn (Hart)  
 Weinholtz, Diane (Hart)  
 Wilson, Morgan (Fram)  
 Wooten, Kathleen (Fpon)

2026

*Allen, Kimberly (Durh)*  
*Davies, Susan (Vass)*  
*Gibson, Joyce (Durh)*  
*McCandless, Christopher (Burl)*  
*Sakulich, Aaron (Worc)*  
*Zwirner, Mary (Bhill)*

### Archives & Historical Records (6)

2022

Cazden, Elizabeth (Prov)  
 Doyle, Thomas (Mtob)

2023

Quirk, Brian (Law)  
 Forsythe, Carol (Put)\*  
 Crosby, Eileen (Mt Toby)

2024

*Maxine Schmidt (Nham)*

### Board of Managers of Investments & Permanent Funds (10)

2022

Hackman, Matthew (Prov)  
 Malin, Kathy (Smith)\*  
 Tierney, Joseph (Cam)  
*Chicos, Roberta (Cam)*

2023

Harrington, Ian (Cam)  
 Mair, Edward (Ames)

2024

Philbrook, Erik (Well)\*<sup>1</sup>

2025

McKnight, Jeanne (Well)  
 Taber, Shearman (Nham)

2026

**Wernette, Tim (Win)**

<sup>1</sup> Eric is being brought forward as co-clerk of the Board of Managers

**Earthcare Ministry (15)<sup>2</sup>**

2022

Marshall, Margaret (Nar)  
Melix, Gail (ESan)\*

2023

MacKenzie, Reb (QCU)  
Wallis, Timmon (Nham)

2024

**Finance (15)**

2022

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\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2023

Forsythe, Hannah (Bhill)  
Stern, Roland (Well)  
**Savery-Frederick, Carol (Hart)**

2024

Maurer, Philip (Nham)  
Sprogell, Sarah (Durh)  
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2025

Drysdale, Robert Scot (Han)\*  
Olsen, Kathryn (ESan)

2026

**Keith, Doug (Hart)**  
**Corindia, Thomas (Han)****Treasurer: Robert Murray (Bhill)****Friends General Conference (15)**

2022

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2023

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2024

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\_\_\_\_\_**Friends United Meeting (12 Tri Reps, 9 appointed)**

2022 (Triennial Reps)

Blood, Peter (Mtob)  
Collea, Beth (Dov)  
Fogarty, Maggie (Dov)Olsen, Kathryn (Sand)  
Sheldon, Martha (Durh)  
Weiss, Fritz (Port)**FUM General Board Representatives (3)**

Martin, Frederick (Bhill)

Keefe-Perry, Kristina (Fpon)

**Friends World Committee Representatives (7)**

2022

Hal Weaver (Well)

2023

Leuchak, Rebecca (Prov)

2024

**Williams, Carl (Pfld)**  
Goldberger, Judy (Bhill)  
Hopkins, Mary (Fpon)**Legacy Gift Committee (9)**

2022

Jensen, Craig (Mon)  
Evans, Kristna (Durh)

2023

Gant, Sarah (Bhill)  
Rockwood, Susan (Mid)\*

2024

**Link, Mary (Mt Toby)\***


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<sup>2</sup> New members are not being appointed to this committee because it is currently under review.

**Ministry and Counsel At-Large<sup>3</sup>**

2022	2023	2024
Keefe-Perry, Callid (Fpon) Olsen, Kathryn (Sand) Dulin, Anna (Vass)	Dickinson, Jeremiah (Dov)*	

**Puente de Amigos (9)**

2022	2023	2024
<b>Hopkins, Mary</b> Lindo, Richard (Fram) Kay, Bruce (Stor) Smith, Theresa (Mon)	Lopez, Felice (Fram) McManamy, Martha (Ames)* <b>Toomey, Marybeth (Well)</b>	<b>Fogerty, Margaret (Dov)</b> <b>Stone, Carolyn (Well)*</b> <b>Kinsky, Deena (Matt)</b>

**Racial, Social, and Economic Justice (12)<sup>3</sup>**

2022	2023	2024
Blanchard, Neil (Fram) Dicranian, Diane (Midc) Shoop, Nur (Dov)	Morrill, Beth (Hart)*	

**Sessions Committee<sup>3</sup>**

2022	2023	2024
Leuchak, Rebecca (Prov)*		

**Youth Ministries (9)**

2022	2023	2024
Dawson, Janet (Fram)* Weiss, Fritz (Han)	West, Kim (Camb) Matchette, Abigail (Bur) Sanchez-Eppler, Karen (Nham)	   

**Representatives to Other Friends Organizations****American Friends Service Committee Corp. (4)**

2022	2023	2024
	Rhodewalt, Scott (Nkin)	Steele, Rebecca (Port) <b>Woodrow, Peter (Port) *</b>

**Friends Committee on National Legislation (6)**

2022	2023	2024
Weinholtz, Donn (Hart)	Drysdale, Robert Scot (Han) Weidner, Holly (Vass)	Cazden, Betsy (Prov)

**Friends Peace Teams Project (3)**

Claggett-Borne, Minga (Cam)		
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**Quaker Earthcare Witness (1)**

Haines, Christopher (Fpon)		
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<sup>3</sup> New members are not being appointed to this committee because it is currently under review.

### Nominating (15)

*These Friends currently serve on Nominating, Internal Nominating and Clerks' Table Nominating, and pending Sessions approval of the new Purpose, Procedure and Composition for Nominating Committee, would constitute the newly consolidated Nominating Committee. Membership of the Nominating committees is under the care of Permanent Board and has already been approved.*

#### 2022

Evans, Kristna (Dur)  
 Hough, Janet (Cob)  
 Gant, Sarah (Bhill)  
 Fisher, Katherine (Bhill)  
 Radocchia, Anna (Benn)  
 Vargo, Susan (Nham)

#### 2023

McDonald, LouAnne (Hart)  
 Mair, Edward (Ame)  
 Sanchez-Eppler, Karen (Nham)

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#### 2024

Stillwell, Jacqueline (Mon)\*  
 Weiss, Conor (Han)  
 Taber, Will (Fpon)  
 Goldberger, Judith (Bhill)  
 Weiss, Fritz (Han)  
 Woodrow, Honor (Fram)

## Staff Reports

### Accounts Manager

My last annual report was filed just after the first wave of the pandemic began to hit New England and as the mass protests for Black lives were beginning to sweep the country last summer. As I noted in that report, a financial manager's role in times of uncertainty and quick change is to provide the stability and "steady clarity about finances that can enable Friends to face risks and shift plans." That summer's work was very different than most years: our "virtual" Sessions had much simpler finances than an in-person event, yet my time was fully used implementing responses to the pandemic's economic consequences. Among the federal government's programs, several were applicable either to local meetings with staff or buildings, or to the Yearly Meeting as an organization, including Friends Camp, and so Friends all around New England involved in the finances of their meetings and organizations were networking with each other as we learned about and implemented the programs. We benefited from similar networking efforts with our fellow member denominations of the state Councils of Churches in our region.

After the first surge receded, during the breathing-space of late summer, NEYM had the good news of receiving Group Exemption recognition from the IRS, and so my major project for the fall was rolling out information to local meetings about joining and using the Group Exemption. So far 24 meetings have completed the two steps needed to join the group; we look forward to helping most meetings in New England gradually transition to using the new system.

In April my second child was born—a pandemic baby!—but two months on we are all thankfully healthy. I am once again grateful to the Yearly Meeting for the flexible parental leave our policies provide, and for the expert substitute bookkeeping provided by Elizabeth Hacala. And I still aspire towards truth in the foundation of tracking our money, which can support the leadings of love in our communities and in our witnesses, which are the fruits of our shared faith.

—FREDERICK MARTIN

### Children and Family Ministries Coordinator

Those who have participated in our virtual programs, or kept in touch via phone, text, or letter, have discovered new ways of being connected. Driven by a need to both make meaning of this time and feel connected, some of our relationships have deeply grown. For those who have been able to connect, there have been joyful reminders that each person contributes to the richness, energy, and depth of Spirit in our Quaker communities.

"I just want to thank you.

"You make me so happy, and I can't wait to see all of you in person." (*5th grader near the end of a JYM retreat*)

However. We lost touch with many youth and families for whom Zoom hasn't worked. Fatigue, unequal access to technology and the internet, the trauma and harm of racism and white supremacy, family stress and illness, isolation, physical and social needs, single-parent challenges, and other factors were prohibitive to many. We yearn for the fellowship of those who were not with us. Honest listening and tender minis-

try will be required to hear and contribute to the healing of their—and our collective—experiences.

Regularly returning to the areas of focus we named last year helped the youth ministries team be more intentional and integrative in our collective work. I have particularly loved the family and local meeting support and connections that have emerged. Collaborating with local Friends on the monthly Family Nights, as well as co-hosting the weekly Parent Conversations with Harriet Heath, has been joy-filled. Acknowledging this growing edge, my job title is shifting to Children and Family Ministries Coordinator.

We owe deep thanks to the volunteer youth staff who not only kept showing up, but who creatively, imperfectly, and joyfully tried new things. A special thanks to Dave Baxter, who came to almost every single hour of every retreat and hangout in the past 18 months. His consistent presence and spirit have been invaluable. Anne Anderson, Buddy Baker-Smith, Emily Edwards, Sara Hubner, Kevin Lee, Janet Dawson, Carol Baker, Anna Lindo, Jana Noyes, Rebecca Edwards, Adam Kohrman, Steve Ball, Doug Lippincott, Harriet Heath, Emily Kelsey (from Denmark), Nora Catlin and Katey Baker-Smith (both in Chicago), and Charlee Gorham (Minnesota) have all been so consistent, helping our youth and families feel seen and known.

With gratitude to the young people for their hope, laughter, and kindness—and for their tenacious presence keeping the communities going; to the parents who have supported every Zoom and made do when mailed packages were late or lost; to my beloved NEYM co-workers for tech support, encouragement, love, and understanding; to every reader of the JYM-JHYM Newsletter; to my family for unending support and humor; and to Spirit for the consistent leading and Light that compelled me forward: Thank you. My heart is full of love.

Returning to how we were should not be our vision. Deeply listening with Spirit for what this time has taught us—and being willing to be transformed by it—may we joyfully walk together towards a new vision of us as a more welcoming, inclusive, truly intergenerational, and anti-racist fellowship.

—GRETCHEN BAKER-SMITH

### Events Coordinator

Dear Friends,

Just over one year ago, two weeks before Sessions 2020, I wrote a poem to the Yearly Meeting staff I entitled, "Normal Times." It read in part:

These are not normal times.

The transition in and out of Sessions is a mouse click.

Rather than wading into the pond this year

we are diving from the high board.

Hands out front, head down, back straight, toes pointed.

Here is to the cleanest entry we can make into the water.

Here is to being together again, joining hands again, and

wading again.

Miss you all dearly.

This was another not-normal year. Although the "not normal" became a bit more normal, normal years have ebbs and flows. There are busy seasons and slack seasons. This year disrupted all that again. Many of the things I typically work on were simply not possible this past year: support for in-person meetings, Living Faith gatherings, the search for possi-

ble future Sessions sites. It was a disorienting year in many ways—in work, in life, in the broader society. The constant uncertainty of what lay ahead was palpable; and then came a vaccine, a hope for time together, a lessening of fear, and a path forward.

Just as last year I was lamenting the loss of physically making the transition to and from Sessions, we found ourselves throughout this year clicking from one context to another, all from our computers, tablets, and phones. For many of us down-time was a thing of the past. For others there was nothing else. Balance seemed impossible, yet we persevered and are gathered again for the 361st Annual Sessions.

Most of my year has been focused one way or another on Sessions. It started with a “plan for planning” and then a plan, then meeting with the team, and now Sessions. I have learned a great deal this year. There were Zooms, and Airtables, and Slack channels, and more. I have learned how much commuting used to give me space for thinking and reflection. I learned how much the old-wood smell of the Worcester meetinghouse felt like home. I learned how special it is to hug a friend or loved one. I learned how to be in this challenging year.

Even now small gatherings, in person, are starting again. We are together to talk about how we are called to heal from this collective trauma. To understand that for each of us, the details and severity of the pandemic were very, very different. Yet we persevered and are gathered here again for the 361st Annual Sessions of New England Yearly Meeting.

To paraphrase a local educator, we need to greet each other in curiosity about how we have each navigated this past year. No two paths are the same. No two experiences are identical.

For me, this has been a year of fatigue, exhaustion, worry, joy, change, and growth. As we look past this month toward the 362nd Sessions, I will meet the year with curiosity and look forward to meeting you then as well. In the meanwhile, I draw inspiration from the words of Amanda Gorman from *The Hill We Climb*: “When day comes we step out of the shade, aflame and unafraid. The new dawn blooms as we free it. For there is always light, if only we’re brave enough to see it, if only we’re brave enough to be it.”

In Love and Light,

—ELIZABETH HACALA

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### Office Manager

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I could complain about the losses and annoyances of the past year, but I am going to try to celebrate gains and growth, instead.

I am grateful for being able to:

- Learn new skills and acquire knowledge
- Become better acquainted with Friends in the process of responding to emails and phone calls, and meeting them on Zoom
- Staff Junior High retreats (without losing sleep!)
- Get to know my coworkers in new ways, as we have supported one another through the challenges of living and working during a pandemic
- Get vaccinated
- Hug f/Friends again

I’ve learned that I need to see my coworkers face-to-face on a regular basis. Although I am an introvert, and cherish—in fact need—time alone, the isolation caused by the pandemic has been just a bit excessive.

I am anxious to see what the developing new normal will look like for staff, for Yearly Meeting, and for the country and world. I look forward to New England Friends being able to meet face-to-face once more.

—SARA HUBNER

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### Quaker Practice & Leadership Facilitator

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People underestimate the importance of diligence as a virtue. No doubt this has something to do with how supremely mundane it seems. It is defined as “the constant and earnest effort to accomplish what is undertaken.” There is a flavor of simplistic relentlessness to it. And if it were an individual’s primary goal in life, that life would indeed seem narrow and unambitious. Understood, however, as the prerequisite of great accomplishment, diligence stands as one of the most difficult challenges facing any group of people who take on tasks of risks and consequence.” (Atul Gawande, *Better*)

As intensely uncertain political and pandemic conditions surrounded each of us, our families, and our meetings, this has been a year of learning to trust that the way ahead will become more clear with each step and mustering the energy, the quiet faith, that daily diligence requires.

As the second wave of the pandemic fell upon us this fall, there were so many things that it prevented us from doing, or at least prevented us from doing the way we had done before. Within the restrictions on travel and physical connection, creative space opened up to experiment with new ways of connecting, and (for some) time was opened up to participate in online workshops and gatherings. Without the need to manage in-person logistics, to budget time for travel, or limit ourselves to Saturdays, we were able to offer a much larger number of adult programs this year. Each month I found myself amazed at the high level of participation in our workshops on topics ranging from multigenerational meeting life and online worship to racial inclusion and Faithfulness Groups. It brought me such joy not only to see high registration numbers (50, 70, 100+ Friends per gathering) but also to see the large number of meetings represented (typically over 25 meetings per workshop) and the beautiful mixture of Friends who have been active in wider Quaker activities for years and Friends who were coming to a Quaker event outside of their local meeting for the first time. I will never know the fullness of the connections that were made, the insights that were shared, or the heart-stirrings that were experienced within the hundreds of Zoom breakout groups I had the joy of click, click, clicking to set up this year, and I sit in awe and gratitude. A shout-out seems due: To all the Friends who stepped beyond their technological comfort zones, who patiently (or only somewhat so) were willing to stretch in order to learn, share, and worship together.

This has been a rich time of growing in our practice of explicitly teaching about our faith and the skills that allow for effective service. This year we have offered three clerk’s trainings, serving more than 80 new and returning servant leaders and expanding our resources on recording and the particular role of committee clerks. Working with Friends from the Nominating Committee, we were able to offer a “Best Practices in Nominating” series: part skill-building workshop, part



consultation among practitioners, part peer-circle for sharing the joys and challenges of nominating. In the coming year, I look forward to seeing this “best practices” approach grow to include other areas of service to our meetings.

Although I am up against the allotted word limit for this report, I would be remiss to neglect lifting up a couple other shiny bright highlights of this last year. It has been such a “cup filler” to co-host check-in calls with local meeting leaders, regularly setting aside time for worship, resource sharing, and reflection with a focus on sustaining Spirit-led service to local meetings. I see meeting leaders growing in their capacity to trust in the “enoughness” of their efforts; trusting that the inevitable incompleteness and temporariness of human service does not take away from the necessity for it. On each of these calls, I am reminded that although there is no “one size fits all” solution to the complex challenges that meetings face, there is real value in the guidance and encouragement we can offer each other.

A final bright spot: The Partners in Spirit discernment series, which I had the pleasure of working on with Callid Keefe-Perry, Emi Link, Brynn Keevil, and Kevin Lee. In many ways, we are still learning how to build authentic, reciprocal, spiritual relationships across generational (and therefore cultural) differences, and along the twists and turns of our spiritual journey. But we do know this: when we follow the intention to nurture each other spiritually, when we enter into relationships with each other lovingly and humbly, when we use the tools our faith has to offer, we can listen for Life, and we can respond.

—NIADWYNWEN THOMAS

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### Young Friends Events Organizer

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Dear Friends,

I want to tell you two stories from the Young Friends program. I’m telling you these because they point to the purpose of this program that gathers the high-school-aged Quakers all in a loving net where they can grow and live into their truth. And more important, I’m telling you because they point to what God is saying in and amongst these teens, which we must hear and heed in this moment.

Both stories take place at the end of April, when a bunch of Young Friends and staff were gathered on Zoom on a Sunday morning for the last session of a weekend online retreat. We held worship and then we talked about the various shapes that the Young Friends program might take next year. Young Friends voiced their questions and hopes and concerns,

naming what they’ve learned from this year of separation and Zoom retreats, and naming what they hunger for from their spiritual community. In this one conversation, which lasted less than an hour, the group faced change with grace and hope.

The first story is about ministry and purpose. At the end of this conversation, it was clear to the group that the ways in which we gather would need to change to more fully live into our truths, after a whole year of huge change. It was a big thing to stomach. At the end of it, in a leap of faith, I called on an older Young Friend to say a blessing or words of wisdom to the group. I had no idea whether she would be up for it. She spoke to her peers that the ways in which we connect are always changing, and will continue to change. The important thing is that we connect at all. It’s our purpose of connection that is most important, and we can figure out how to achieve this in different ways. This Young Friend was speaking from her experience of watching this program shift in its forms over all four years she’d been a part of it, helping to guide it towards better serving the spiritual needs of her peers. She was able to share with the community that over that time, there was a constant thread of love and care grounded in Spirit that she could count on, and I believe this ministry of hers, and this faith in our shared purpose, was integral to the group being able to move forward into more change without fear.

The second story is about the listening and love that is needed as these forms change. At the end of the conversation about next year, I mentioned how heartbroken I would be to say goodbye to seeing a few of our faraway Young Friends as frequently as we’d been able to because of Zoom. I expressed what a miracle it has been to have them with us, and that they will be missed as we move back towards gathering in person. I expressed how important being in person is to the well-being of the whole group, the strengthening of its relationships, and its spiritual nourishment, in order to explain why it is that we won’t be able to see these faraway friends quite as often. After the retreat ended, I heard feedback from a Young Friend from far away that they felt seen and heard by this conversation, and they felt loved knowing that we would miss them. It became clear to me that this was all that was needed to allow us to move through tough decisions with grace: the opportunity to be heard, to receive an honest explanation of our shared purpose, and the reminder that we are loved.

Love,  
MAGGIE NELSON (SHE/HER/HERS)

## Committee and Board Reports

### Permanent Board

Shout it aloud, do not hold back.  
 Raise your voice like a trumpet.  
 Declare to my people their rebellion  
 and to the descendants of Jacob their sins.  
<sup>2</sup> For day after day they seek me out;  
 they seem eager to know my ways,  
 as if they were a nation that does what is right  
 and has not forsaken the commands of its God.  
 They ask me for just decisions  
 and seem eager for God to come near them.  
<sup>3</sup> “Why have we fasted,” they say,  
 “and you have not seen it?  
 Why have we humbled ourselves,  
 and you have not noticed?”

Yet on the day of your fasting, you do as you please  
 and exploit all your workers.

<sup>4</sup> Your fasting ends in quarreling and strife,  
 and in striking each other with wicked fists.  
 You cannot fast as you do today  
 and expect your voice to be heard on high.

<sup>5</sup> Is this the kind of fast I have chosen,  
 only a day for people to humble themselves?  
 Is it only for bowing one’s head like a reed  
 and for lying in sackcloth and ashes?  
 Is that what you call a fast,  
 a day acceptable to the Lord?

<sup>6</sup> Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen:  
 to loose the chains of injustice  
 and untie the cords of the yoke,  
 to set the oppressed free  
 and break every yoke?

<sup>7</sup> Is it not to share your food with the hungry  
 and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter—  
 when you see the naked, to clothe them,  
 and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?

<sup>8</sup> Then your light will break forth like the dawn,  
 and your healing will quickly appear;  
 then your righteousness will go before you,  
 and the glory of the Lord will be your rear guard.

<sup>9</sup> Then you will call, and the Lord will answer;  
 you will cry for help, and he will say: Here am I.

If you do away with the yoke of oppression,  
 with the pointing finger and malicious talk,  
<sup>10</sup> and if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry  
 and satisfy the needs of the oppressed,  
 then your light will rise in the darkness,  
 and your night will become like the noonday.

<sup>11</sup> The Lord will guide you always;

he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land  
 and will strengthen your frame.

You will be like a well-watered garden,  
 like a spring whose waters never fail.

<sup>12</sup> Your people will rebuild the ancient ruins  
 and will raise up the age-old foundations;  
 you will be called Repairer of Broken Walls,  
 Restorer of Streets with Dwellings.  
 (Isaiah 58 N.I.V.)

The Permanent Board, appointed by all of us at Sessions, is asked to do the work of the Yearly Meeting between our annual gatherings. In addition, we also take up and prepare issues to come before you, based on the recommendations of our standing committees and working groups. This year has been like no other and the variety of the Board’s work and the results of our discernment are now before you for your own discernment and decisions. We strive to find unity with one another and with Divine Will and spend our time together in listening, challenging, questioning, and seeking the best way forward.

We are blessed with gifted volunteers and dedicated staff who want the best for our beloved community and work to create it. We have a sound financial base and practice effective stewardship; we are seeking to practice inclusive leadership development and continue to be open to our own shortcomings and missteps with love, humor, and forbearance.

We try to practice grace, giving and receiving, whether it is in budget discussions, confirming nominations or in work-groups concerned with the issues that we, as a body, have discerned require our prayerful attention.

I want to thank all of the members of our community who show up, offer service, accept responsibility and seek to hear the voice of the Divine in our daily lives and witness. And to acknowledge that we have a ways to go, to be where we want to be as a faith community whose waters never fail, and whose healing does appear.

Some of our work this year included

- taking the Noticing Patterns of Oppression and Faithfulness Working Group under our care and inviting them into our regular meetings, where we are all invited to notice.
- accepting and implementing the recommendations of the Ministry and Spiritual Life Working Group to set aside Yearly Meeting Ministry and Counsel and begin a series of seasonal gatherings on Spiritual Life and Ministry which began this spring and will continue into August, 2022. This experiment will be reviewed at next year’s Annual Sessions.
- creating the Ministry Transition Team (and laying down Ministry and Spiritual Life) to support the Interim Clerk of Ministry and Counsel in care of the needs of the Yearly Meeting. This team consists of the General Secretary, the former clerk of Ministry and Spiritual Life, the clerk of the Permanent Board, and the Quaker Practice and Leadership Facilitator.
- creating and supporting the Right Relationship Working Group, the Israel/Palestine Working Group, the Call to

Action Working Group and working with the Challenging White Supremacy ad-hoc group in preparation for the work we will be doing here at Sessions.

- providing financial support through the Funds for Sufferings (<https://neym.org/fund-sufferings>); this past year we awarded \$2,500 to Friends Ugandan Safe Transport in support of their life-saving work. (See Minute 2016-62.)

All of our meetings are open and listed on the Yearly Meeting calendar. Please hold us in care and prayer and join us, as led. Please contact me at [pbclerk@neym.org](mailto:pbclerk@neym.org) with any questions or concerns.

With hope,

—LESLIE MANNING, CLERK

### From the Call to Action Working Group

At New England Friends' Yearly Meeting Annual Sessions in 2020, Friends affirmed the Call to Urgent, Loving Action for The Earth and Her Inhabitants. The Call invited Friends into a year of intellectual and spiritual discernment regarding social injustice, including racism and the plight of Mother Earth, to discern actions that can address these systemic and interconnected challenges. A working group consisting of the clerks of Earthcare Ministry (EMC) and Racial, Social & Economic Justice (RSEJ) was convened to provide monthly meetings with the assistance and support they may need as they answered this call. Friends from the wider Quaker community enriched the Call by adding their thoughts and voices.

In the past year, we have undertaken a number of actions. We have contacted each quarter and offered an opportunity for us to conduct a presentation on the Call to Action. To this date we have presented at five of the eight quarters. In October, FWCC also invited us to conduct a presentation on the Call to its northeast regional meeting. Members of our committees have also taken part in supporting and heralding the Call in their meeting communities. Many participants have expressed a good deal of excitement and energy about the Call and some have articulated a great desire to meet and collaborate with others.

We have also created a set of resources on the NEYM web site for the Call, including the video and text versions of the Call, a number of queries for use in worship-sharing, and related reading materials. We led a worship-sharing at East Sandwich Preparative meeting, and are preparing a template for worship-sharing that can be used by other meetings. This template will also appear on the NEYM site.

There have been others in the Yearly Meeting who have taken up the Call from Sessions. We particularly note the efforts of Beacon Hill Friends House. We also have heard of monthly meetings that have independently engaged in the work of the Call.

We have also made an attempt to contact monthly meetings individually, offering our assistance if needed, and asking meetings to share with us what they have done as individuals and corporately on racial and climate justice. That effort, however, led to only 2 responses to 15 letters sent to individual meetings. We await further opportunities to see how Spirit is moving in the monthly meetings on this critical set of issues.

Several things have given us great joy as we do this work. First, we have been uplifted by seeing how the Call has been received, both at Sessions and at individual quarterly and

monthly meetings. Second, we have been inspired by the opportunity to help LJ Boswell prototype their anti-racism workshop. Third, we appreciate the support of Bruce Neumann, Noah Merrill, and NiaDwynwen Thomas, who met with us regularly to help provide guidance, particularly on issues of communication. And we gained real energy from the opportunity of having the Earthcare Ministry and the Racial, Social & Economic Committees work together in crafting and supporting the Call.

At this point we ask that the working group be laid down, not because the work is done, but because the remaining work needs to be done at the monthly meetings.

—STEPHEN GATES AND GAIL MELIX

### Archives & Historical Records

In this extraordinary year, our committee continues to meet every other month. It has been a gift of fellowship while we attended to the work of the committee on behalf of New England Yearly Meeting.

As reported last year, Robert Cox, the director of Special Collections and University Archives (SCUA) at UMass passed away last spring. This year we have reviewed the Memorandum of Understanding with the new director, Aaron Rubenstein, and updated the copy with the names for contacts. He had not read the memorandum before, so was glad of the introduction. Some of us were also able to attend a "town meeting" held by Aaron Rubenstein to get a sense of his priorities as the new director. We were pleased with the clear interest in the NEYM collection as an anchor which attracts both research and other collections. We were also very happy to note that SCUA now offers free copying of materials, which further increases its accessibility.

SCUA has completed the update to the finding aids for all the Yearly Meeting and quarterly and monthly meeting records. An additional 11 online aids have been created for family and organization records that arrived with the NEYM papers at the time of the transfer. This work was completed with the support of the \$7500 grant from NEYM. Some money remains from that grant which will be used to support digitizing bound meeting and vital records making them available online. With the initial processing complete we can now assess for any meeting or quarter what meetings we may want to approach about submitting their records to the Archive.

We have also supported Elise Riley in her role as the Outreach Archivist. She began in this role in January of 2020. Since then, she has coordinated the successful donation of digital records to SCUA for three meetings: Midcoast Monthly Meeting, Putney Friends Meeting, and Northeast Kingdom Quaker Meeting. Between the three meetings, 399 files were donated. I have answered ten reference questions, consulted with two meetings about future archival projects, and met virtually with stakeholders in two different Quaker digitization projects.

An additional six meetings also sent updated records to SCUA.

As a committee we also provided feedback regarding the revised NEYM website regarding the pages referencing the Archives.

—CAROL FORSYTHE, CLERK

## Coordinating and Advisory

The Coordinating and Advisory Committee holds close to our collective heart(s) the condition of the whole body of Friends in New England. Made up (ex-officio) of various leadership positions, we at once have no authority to make important decisions or policy changes on our own, but may take on work as requested by the Permanent Board (PB) or Sessions and may, based on our own discernment, bring concerns or proposals to the Permanent Board. We also serve each other, providing an opportunity for each to share their work and their concerns, giving feedback and encouragement.

Some of the work we engaged with this year:

**Budget priorities:** this is a standing responsibility—gathering input on what Friends consider to be priorities with potential impact on the budget, considering the various options, and making recommendations to PB which in turn makes recommendations to the finance committee as they consider the next year's budget.

**Purpose and procedures:** Another standing responsibility is triennial review of the purpose, procedures, and composition documents of each of the standing committees of the Yearly Meeting. This was on our schedule for last year, but pandemic concerns pushed it to the side. In our considerations we took seriously our charge detailed in Sessions minute 2019-46:

During the triennial review of committee purposes and procedures, Coordinating and Advisory shall pay careful attention to how committee structures can best facilitate effectiveness in the work of our Yearly Meeting. In our current organizational culture it is often very hard for us to lay things down, and much easier to say “yes” to new things. We therefore end up with more structures and projects than we can responsibly maintain. We need to learn to let things go.

Many of the committees whose purposes and procedures we reviewed seemed to fit well with the current needs of the Yearly Meeting and needed only minor adjustments. A few others took more time in studying and considering.

**Nominating:** In addition to the above quote from 2019-46, we considered the report from the Clerking Structures Working Group, in particular “Redesign nominating processes in a cohesive, consolidated manner.” C&A shepherded a process of consideration of our nominating process this year, with input from Yearly Meeting Nominating, Internal Nominating, and Clerks’ Table Nominating. Thanks to Nia Thomas, the Quaker Practice and Leadership Facilitator, for keeping this process moving. A proposal to merge these three committees is on the Sessions business agenda. At a later date we will begin consideration of how the process of nominations for Friends Camp Committee and for the Moses Brown School (MBS) Board of Trustees and the Committee for Nurturing Friends Education at MBS relate to this merged nominating function.

**Sessions planning:** There have been some thoughts, for a few years, that the stated model for Sessions planning does not adequately support the way Sessions planning has evolved. The pandemic both confirmed this thinking and gave us an opportunity to experiment with new forms. With approval from Permanent Board, we are refining a model based on our “Pivot Team” which oversaw Sessions planning in 2020. The model acknowledges that, after initial discernment

about the condition of the larger body, and a naming of theme and speakers, much of the planning work revolves around permanent staff and temporary stipended staff. A more detailed proposal is in the works, but may not be completed in time for Sessions approval.

**Witness committees:** We have had a number of conversations about how witness is (and sometimes is not) supported around the Yearly Meeting. Excited by much of what we hear, and informed by developing practices, we are wondering whether the traditional committee format is the best way to support current and emerging forms of witness. We expect to have something to report on this next year after consultation with Earthcare Ministries and some further discernment.

Less specific in terms of agenda, but important for the Friends serving on C&A, is the listening and support we provide each other. Topics this year included supporting Jeremiah Dickinson as he moved into the role of Interim Clerk of Ministry and Counsel, providing ears and encouragement for Noah as he contemplates the timing of a sabbatical, and giving feedback to the Presiding Clerk about his approach to the Sessions business agenda.

—BRUCE NEUMANN, PRESIDING CLERK

## Earthcare Ministry

Earthcare Ministry is a committee of the Yearly Meeting that focuses on environmental issues that are of concern to Quakers. We have prayerfully considered the plight of the planet Earth, and what we as individuals and meetings can do about that plight.

At 2020 Sessions, we began a new chapter in our journey together by joining with the Racial, Social & Economic Justice Committee to present a Call to Urgent, Loving Action for The Earth and Her Inhabitants. This video and the written text for it are available at <https://neym.org/call-urgent-loving-action-resources-engagement>. On the same page are significant resources we created after Sessions to encourage others in the efforts to address the intertwined issues of racism and climate destruction outlined in our Call. This Call was affirmed by attendees at Sessions, and was the basis for much of our work during the succeeding year. Since the COVID-19 epidemic made in-person meetings difficult, we met together, and with a wide range of Quaker meetings, via Zoom.

We began by offering to address Quarterly meetings about the Call, and did so in five of the eight quarters. Members of the committee then worked with a number of monthly meetings in a variety of formats, including worship-sharing. One of the worship-sharing services was used to create a template for other worship-sharing services, should meetings need it, and shared on the same resources page. And we also shared the Call more widely, including at a northeast region FWCC meeting. We experimented with directly contacting individual meetings to offer support in their responding to the Call, although we received only limited response (two meetings out of more than a dozen contacted).

We have also helped to encourage others, such as Beacon Hill Friends House, as they responded to the call, and supported LJ Boswell’s prototype offering of their workshop on racism to our committee.

During the past year we learned that addressing social justice within a yearly meeting requires relationship-building and comprehensive communications capability. In particular, we

have noted that there does not appear to be a mechanism for regular, yearly-meeting-wide sharing of the Spirit-led actions that individuals and meetings are taking on social justice. We hope to explore and enhance these opportunities for Spirit-led actions going forward.

Our hope is that meetings will come to 2021 Sessions with a post-COVID enthusiasm for taking action on climate and racism.

—STEPHEN GATES AND GAIL MELIX, CO-CLERKS

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### Ecumenical Relations

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The committee has not met since we last met in person as a yearly meeting. Here is a compilation of reports from our representatives to the various New England Councils of churches:

*New Hampshire Council of Churches (Marian Baker, Weare)*

Despite the COVID pandemic, the New Hampshire Council of Churches remained very active via Zoom this year.

We started in early January with an outdoor prayer vigil at night during our nation's crisis.

Jason Wells, our dynamic director kept in touch with heads of denominations all over the state, helping them be aware of the latest COVID recommendations/mandates, and giving them support. Webinars were held on vaccines and how to keep congregations safe, and on ways to do Zoom and virtual worship services,

A book discussion was held with the author of *Addiction Nation*, a book about the opioid crisis.

We kept active setting up a group to teach about loving our neighbors during some anti-Jewish and anti-Muslim incidents in the state.

We worked on issues of racism and supported Poor Peoples campaign, and we did a number of programs to support immigrants within our state.

We gave support to the efforts to stop a "right to work" (anti-union) bill and against a bill trying to stop schools from teaching "divisive topics" (such as racism, white supremacy, sexism).

Thanks to the Friends from other meetings who joined the walks, discussions, and vigils in our state.

Three announcements:

1. Jason will be stepping down to work full-time in two churches on the Seacoast, so we are in the process of finding a new director.
2. The Solidarity March with Immigrants will be held this year in September, not August.
3. If anyone is interested in being a Quaker representative on the N.H. Council of churches—preferably from Northwest Quarter, please let me know. We have a vacancy.

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### Faith & Practice Revision

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Since Yearly Meeting Sessions 2020, like many NEYM committees, the Faith and Practice Revision Committee (F&P) continued its regular meeting schedule by Zoom. We were grateful to be able to offer our usual May retreat in person since all of us had been vaccinated. Two of our members joined the May retreat by Zoom. Our successful experiences with Zoom meetings and Zoom/in-person combination meetings have

encouraged us to plan to do many of our meetings next year on Zoom.

In the fall of 2019 F&P sent a draft chapter on Marriage to the monthly meetings. A number of meetings sent us their responses to the chapter, before COVID-19 disrupted so many meeting schedules. We were able to have a listening session on the chapter at Sessions in August 2020. As we worked with this input, it became clear that the committee needs to develop a new section of the chapter to meet the request for a discussion of faithful sexuality. This work is continuing.

Last spring we took up the revision of the Pastoral Care draft that had gone out to the monthly meetings the fall before. As we looked at the responses to the monthly meetings to Pastoral Care and at their responses to our questionnaire on how their meetings organized the work of Ministry & Counsel, we decided that the chapter on Pastoral Care needed to be better integrated with our work on Ministry & Counsel. We have moved some of the Pastoral Care text into the Ministry & Counsel (M&C) chapter. We then spent most of this year working on M&C, which is likely to be the longest chapter in the revised Faith and Practice. The committee is well aware that the Yearly Meeting is looking at ways to organize the work of the Yearly Meeting M&C to better support the spiritual life of our monthly meetings and the Yearly Meeting. Permanent Board had specifically reached out to F&P asking the committee to write on M&C. We have attempted to write on this topic in a way that does not confine meetings to particular structures. We will send this document to the monthly meetings in September 2021.

Two members of the committee have worked with the Yearly Meeting Office this year to find ways to make the committee's work more accessible. Along with a few articles in the Yearly Meeting monthly newsletter and a survey of Friends interested in talking about their experiences with Quaker organizations, one of our members recorded the Personal Spiritual Practices document which is now ready for preliminary approval. The recording is available on the F&P page on the Yearly Meeting website (<https://neym.org/texts-currently-under-discussion>).

This year the Committee was grateful to welcome a new member. Though our authorized size is 16 members, we continue our work as a committee of 10 Friends.

We continue in faith,

—PHEBE MCCOSKER, CLERK

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### Finance

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Many of the Finance Committee's activities this year were influenced by COVID. We heard reports at each of our meetings (in August, January, and April) about the state of our finances and how COVID was affecting income and expenditures.

We learned about the Payroll Protection Program loans that were issued to the Yearly Meeting and shared with Friends Camp. In the first round we received loans of \$114,000 and \$9,000, both of which were forgiven. In the second round we received \$144,000, which we expect will be forgiven.

We received a letter from Anna Hopkins, Director of Friends Camp, requesting that we use NEYM reserve funds to cover the camp's FY 2020 deficit. Camp could not operate last summer, so had no income from campers, but still needed to support a small staff.) We recommended that the Permanent Board approve this request.

COVID also complicated planning next year's budget. We expect that by next October things will be much closer to "normal," but we expect that there will be many changes in how things are done that will have financial implications. For example, will committees be meeting in person as we did before COVID, or will we avoid travel expenses by using Zoom as we did during COVID? (We foresee some of each.) The budget that the Budget Subcommittee developed and the Finance Committee approved at its April meeting is similar to the budget the year before COVID, but we expect that there will be changes that we have not foreseen.

We tried to be responsive to the Permanent Board's funding priorities. We proposed how to fund the \$15,000 a year that the Inclusive Leadership initiative would cost. (This initiative would provide honoraria of \$3,000 a year to five of the volunteer positions that take large amounts of time.) We also added money to the budget to support ministry in monthly meetings.

Other topics were not influenced by COVID. We met with Elizabeth Reuthe, Finance Committee's shepherd from the Coordinating and Advisory (C&A) committee, about our Purposes, Procedures, and Composition statement. We made and approved a number of changes and have sent the updated statement to C&A.

We met with NiaDwynwen Thomas to discuss finance-related workshops that the Yearly Meeting would sponsor. In past years the Finance Committee has helped organize such workshops, and we hope to continue to do so.

In developing the proposed budget we realized that the amounts of money given to Quaker organizations (including FUM, FGC, and FWCC) and partner organizations have not changed for many years. We thought that the Yearly Meeting should examine these contributions to determine why we were making them and to evaluate the amounts given. However, Finance Committee did not seem to be the appropriate group to do such a review. We asked Permanent Board to create an ad-hoc committee to examine our contributions to Quaker and other partner organizations.

We also discussed a revision to the Funds Policy, which describes how the income from endowment funds should be handled. Investment income (approximately 4% of the principal each year) is allocated to support the purposes of the endowment fund. The policy currently states, "Unspent income shall be reinvested in the fund where it originated." This reduces the flexibility of committees making grants. They cannot, for instance, give a small amount of money in one year of a grant and reserve money to allow for giving a much larger amount in the next year. This "use it or lose it" requirement encourages the committee to spend the entire amount allocated each year, because any amount not spent cannot be carried over for future years.

For these and other reasons we recommended changing the policy to "Any unspent income remaining in the fund at the end of the fiscal year shall remain spendable in the following fiscal year." Permanent Board is considering this change.

—SCOT DRYSDALE, CLERK

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### Friends Camp

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Friends and Yearly Meeting community, as the summer starts, Friends Camp will begin receiving its first campers in nearly two years. This season will be different as we have had to address changes in the number of campers, hygiene, and

other CDC guidelines. The past year and half has been a logistical and financial challenge. We have operated for years with a very tight budget paid for by camper fees. Because of COVID-19 restrictions, we need to operate at 63% of our normal capacity with higher operating costs, staff recruitment challenges, and a facility that has stood idle since September 2019 with additional facility costs. This report is not about the challenges but about your Friends Camp Committee that rose to the challenge with the executive leadership of Anna Hopkins.

Friends Camp Committee has 15 members with 7 subcommittees:

- Building & Grounds: Bob O'Connor, clerk
- Finance: Rob Spivey, treasurer/clerk
- Health & Safety: Karin Wagner, clerk
- Development: Natalie Bornstein and Molly Kaviar, co-clerks
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion committee (new)
- Nominating: Sarah Lafleur, clerk
- Personnel: Carol Baker, clerk

These committees have been meeting on a very regular basis, some weekly, for the last year and half, trying to figure out how to make the Camp work as the pandemic subsides.

Attendance via Zoom has been very high at all the meetings. Some of the highlights of this past year.

- We completed a Friends Camp outside financial review.
- The Financial Manual has been completed.
- We have built two new cabins and modified the other cabins to provide increased ventilation.
- The Health and Safety sub-committee created guidelines and policies addressing the requirements of the Maine CDC for camp opening during the summer of 2021
- We have a full staff (many camps are struggling for staff).
  - Six Rising Leaders from the 2019 class
  - This summer we will have another class of ten Rising Leaders (ages 16 & 17), who will be available for staff in 2023.
- We have instituted assistant clerk and assistant treasurer positions to allow us to help future leaders gain the experience before assuming the position.
- This summer we will have fewer sessions but of longer duration, with a total number of campers around 270.

For the Friends Camp Committee meeting in April, Anna prepared a short video (<https://www.loom.com/share/a5daff78e350456bb3c7712ad83529e6>) which sums up pretty much what has occurred over the past year. The Camp is very fortunate to have an active and engaged committee, staff, and executive.

Faithfully,

—JOHN REUTHE, CLERK

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### Legacy Gift

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The Spirit continues to move among NEYM Friends, opening the way for both newly emerging ministries and creative adaptations for existing leadings among Legacy grantees, despite the changes and challenges brought by the COVID 19 pandemic.

"To turn, turn will be our delight,  
Till by turning, turning we come round right."  
(Simple Gifts)

Although we faced changing methodologies, distanced meeting styles, and new committee co-clerks, way continued to open as we faithfully sought to listen to the movement of the Spirit through our applicants, meetings, Yearly Meeting, and wider world. With an August 30, 2021, Witness & Ministry application round outstanding, Legacy awarded a total of \$66,959 to 10 applicants so far this year, and designated \$5,000 available for Time-Sensitive Applications.

The spiritual impact is wide, having touched about 40 of 62 meetings in New England with grants to individuals or meetings to date. Approximately 25 related groups have also received grants, including Friends Camp, Beacon Hill Friends House, Friends schools, and Woolman Hill. Legacy funding for a meeting's leading to provide sanctuary, interviews with Black Quakers, needed roof replacement for a small meeting, ministries of connection and witness related to climate and right relations with indigenous peoples, and more bring to Life our shared spiritual leadings.

Legacy funds reached a major milestone in 2020, as the Futures Fund was entirely spent. This faithfully fulfilled the original goal of making grants until all Future Funds were put to use. In the final Futures Fund cycle, Friends and meetings that had not yet received a grant were given priority over repeat requests. Over the life of the Fund the value of what remained after each grant cycle increased, making funds available for years longer than originally anticipated—significantly supporting projects and leadings of many more Friends and meetings. The Fund has made a critical difference for meetinghouses, with sustainable energy and other improvements. The Yearly Meeting might consider replenishing the Future Fund as such requests continue. Final grants of \$49,209 in December brought the total Future Funds amount awarded to more than \$550,000.

Time-Sensitive smaller grants, started in 2018 for activities falling outside regular deadlines, drew from Future Funds until 2020 and are now funded using Witness & Ministry funds.

We continued to make grants from Witness & Ministry Funds, which refill annually, with two grant cycles offered in 2020. The next application deadline is August 30, 2021.

Due to Covid, our workshop on Supporting Ministry in Our Meetings shifted to February on Zoom. A panel of Friends shared wisdom from their experience of providing or receiving faithful oversight of ministry. Meaningful reflection in breakout groups followed, involving 73 participants representing more than 39 meetings. Such strengthening of our Quaker oversight processes has been an unanticipated benefit of the Legacy funding program.

A working group is being formed to plan the anticipated 2024 review of Legacy Gift Funds. We feel blessed to engage with the movement of the Spirit as we learn of and support vital leadings, ministry, and witness among us.

—SUE ROCKWOOD AND MARY LINK, CO-CLERKS

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### Ministry & Counsel

While care for the spiritual life and ministry of Yearly Meeting has long been the purview of the Committee on Ministry and Counsel (M&C), it has recently felt that this form was not serving our body as well as we needed it to. Following on the work of the Structural Review Committee and others, and the recommendation of the Ministry and Spiritual Life Working Group under Permanent Board, the M&C Committee has been

set aside for two years to allow space for new life to rise and new initiatives to take shape for the care of the spiritual life and ministry of our Yearly Meeting.

The initial fruits of this experiment are seasonal gatherings to be held three times a year. The first, held May 8, was “Tilling the Soil of Our Monthly Meetings.” Friends engaged around the ways Spirit and ministry move and are nurtured in our local meetings. In large groups and small, 81 Friends worshiped, heard presentations, and explored the factors supporting vibrant faith in our meetings. It was a rich time of sharing and learning. Our next gathering will be on November 13, with a focus on the call to ministry and its challenges. In planning this, the host team acknowledges the tension alive among Friends today between our belief in the equality of all Friends and the importance of naming, raising up, and nurturing each person's unique gifts. One hope for this second session is to better understand the experiences of Friends who have been changed through living into a call to ministry and, through this, better understand our own calls to faithfulness. At this time we anticipate this will be a fully online gathering. We hope you will join us.

Other aspects of work traditionally carried by M&C have already largely been covered by other groups or newly defined roles, e.g. Worship Coordinator for Sessions. You can find further background to this experiment posted here: <https://neym.org/nurturing-ministry-spiritual-life-experiment>.

As we live more fully into this period of exploration and experimentation, I will be watchful for possible unmet needs and additional ways to support and nurture the spiritual life and ministry of our Yearly Meeting. I invite you to join in this experiment, through participation in the seasonal gatherings and through sharing your thoughts and understandings about how we, as a Yearly Meeting, can best live into God's call for us. Please be in touch, [mc-clerk@neym.org](mailto:mc-clerk@neym.org).

—JEREMIAH DICKINSON, INTERIM CLERK

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### Nominating Committee

Nominating Committee calls forth individual gifts to serve our Yearly Meeting faith community. When inviting someone to serve we endeavor to explain what the service entails, what qualities are needed, and what gifts and skills a person could offer. Would you like to offer your gifts in service to the Yearly Meeting? Contact Nominating Committee at [nominating@neym.org](mailto:nominating@neym.org)

Our small team of seven (two of whom are monthly meeting representatives) meets monthly throughout the year and will be delighted to speak with you about possibilities.

In the past year our activities included facilitating virtual consultations in support of monthly meetings on “Best Practices and Challenges of Nominating” and clerking. Check the NEYM website for nominating resources: <https://neym.org/strengthen-your-local-meeting/care-one-another/nominators>, as well as many resources for clerks, recording clerks, virtual clerking. Another aspect of our work is to support healthy committee composition, functioning, and transitions. Interviews are conducted with clerks to gain insights into what works well and what might be needing attention.

New ways of supporting the work of the Yearly Meeting are emerging. There is an increase in the use of working groups and ad-hoc committees, allowing Friends to serve for specific tasks with a shorter time-frame rather than a three-year

committee commitment. Some standing committee structures are in the process of review—Sessions, Ministry & Counsel, Earthcare Ministry, and Racial, Social & Economic Justice committees. How do we best support individual and monthly meeting ministry and witness? These changes are both exciting and unsettling as we discover new ways of being and serving Spirit together.

The clerks of Internal Nominating, Clerks' Table Nominating, and NEYM Nominating committees met several times with the Quaker Practice and Leadership Facilitator. This resulted in two specific actions: implementation of Airtable to better coordinate communication at many levels, and a proposal to consolidate the work of these three committees. After careful consideration with Coordinating & Advisory and Permanent Board, a proposal including a revised Purposes, Procedures and Composition is on the Sessions agenda.

Thank you to each of you for sharing your gifts. We look forward to connecting with you and growing together during the coming year.

With gratitude and joyful anticipation,  
—JACQUELINE STILLWELL, CLERK

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

The Committee for Nurturing Friends Education at Moses Brown (CNFEMB) has continued to do substantive and meaningful work throughout the 2020–2021 school year. Below is a brief report of several detailed dimensions of that work to convey specific ways we have worked to live our faith and mission as a Friends school during an exceptionally challenging year.

Over three joint meetings, the CNFEMB partnered with the Moses Brown All School Diversity Committee (ASDC) to discuss the school's continued observance of Columbus Day. The sense of the meeting that emerged was that Columbus Day should be replaced by Indigenous Peoples' Day on the Moses Brown calendar. The Minute was approved by the Board of Trustees in September 2020 and was reflected in the updated school calendar in October.

In addition to adopting Indigenous Peoples' Day for the second Monday in October, Director of Friends Education Jen McFadden and the CNFEMB advocated for the school to recognize the 19th of June as Juneteenth. That change is now also reflected on the school calendar.

Also last fall, Dawn Tripp, the clerk of CNFEMB, was asked to clerk the search team for the next clerk of the Moses Brown Board. This is the first time in the school's history that a Friend has stewarded this process. The search committee was composed of three members of the administration and four current trustees. The sense of the meeting that emerged was to implement—also for the first time in Moses Brown's history—a co-clerk model, which was approved by the Board. Reza Taleghani and Jane Ritson-Parsons will serve as the next co-clerks of the MB Board.

At our March 2021 Board Meeting, the MB Board discussed the possibility of a change to the bylaws to allow for remote participation at MB Board Meetings beyond COVID. This issue had drawn forth concerns in smaller committee conversations at the Executive Committee, at the Governance Committee, and at CNFEMB. While it is clear that remote participation can allow for an increased level of inclusivity and attendance,

some Friends, as well as others, were concerned about a shift away from in-person meetings and how that might change the spiritual experience of decision-making and discernment. Members of the CNFEMB suggested using a query to frame the conversation at the Board. Clerk Dawn Tripp crafted a query about remote participation to present to the Board, along with brief remarks about how queries function in Friends discernment. Out of that discussion in March, a sense of the meeting emerged that would allow for a degree of remote participation for Board meetings, and a by-laws change was approved by the Moses Brown Board and is being offered for consideration and discernment by NEYM Permanent Board.

Moses Brown School's commitment to Friends voices and leadership in governance has intensified over recent years. The CNFEMB is now meeting seven times per year (as opposed to simply five). While the CNFEMB will continue to do the work we have always done, including supporting the work of our Director of Friends Education and nominating Friends to the MB Board, in the coming years we are also committed to continuing our partnership with other committees, including the All School Diversity Committee and the Moses Brown Governance Committee; to explore and implement collaborative changes in school and Board culture; to support new initiatives around Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and the recently hired Director of DEI; and to help create more community-wide fluency in Quaker decision-making, Friends practices, and clerking skills.

To that last point, currently and throughout the summer, a small working group from CNFEMB will be planning the September Board Retreat. The retreat will be a several-hour training in Friends Decision Making for all Moses Brown trustees and members of the MB Administrative Council.

Respectfully submitted,  
—DAWN TRIPP, CLERK

### Moses Brown School Report

Like organizations all over the world, Moses Brown School faced unprecedented challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Reopening in September was an important victory, although with new protocols: masking, one-way foot traffic, plexiglass barriers, desks spaced out in grids. Lower and Middle School students were organized into "pods," spending all day with the same 10–15 peers. Keeping students 3 feet apart meant only half our Upper School students fit on campus at once. Like many schools, MB adopted a hybrid learning model; students alternated in-person and Zoom-based attendance. In every class, one group would be in school, safely spaced, with an omnidirectional camera and microphone, while one group would join by computer at home. Some students attended remotely for the entire school year, including our international students, who were unable to travel here, and dealt with the additional challenge of a 12-hour time difference. Recordings and asynchronous learning opportunities helped bridge the vast distance separating them from their classmates.

Teachers and students needed adaptability, creativity, resilience, and continual assessment: what really matters, and what can I let go? Some reported a new freedom; others worried about the inability to cover all content. Many mourned the loss of desks in circles, physical collaboration, and shared materials. Classes felt unusually taxing for many teachers—engagement feels different when only half the students are



in front of you, and teachers' attention was usually divided between the classroom and the screen. Yet pedagogical and academic creativity was found. Students created artwork, produced music, engineered bridges, solved business problems, conducted experiments, debated, persuaded, listened, and discerned. Student activities continued in modified formats. Athletics seasons, abbreviated and sometimes re-ordered, contributed much-needed community wellness; theater and music continued with creative adjustments to performance format and location.

Meeting for worship happened primarily through Zoom—a change many regarded as unfortunate, but necessary. Over time, students and teachers discovered ways to make worship on Zoom work better, drawing on more programming, such as using queries or objects for reflection. Small, stable groups met in the Providence Friends meetinghouse throughout the spring.

The school saw about 50 COVID diagnoses over the year, and the impacts of these made clear how connected we are. One case with many close contacts led to a one-week closure of the Lower School, which in turn meant that teachers in other divisions needed to be home with their children. Many times, colleagues needed to step in for a peer; from the business office to the catering service, every person responded to the workplace challenges that COVID posed. The shake-up drew us into new patterns of engagement and behavior and made us visible to one another in new ways.

The school year brought numerous other challenges, too. Just a week before the beginning of classes, Upper School Head Elise London was led to resign. Assistant Head for Academic Affairs Debbie Phipps became Acting Head, drawing on her eight years' experience in that role, and her steady leadership helped sustain and support the Upper School community. The campaigns and upheavals of the 2020 elections fostered learning and dialogue, as students and teachers were challenged to forge connections and respect different viewpoints. MB community members of all ages, genders, and backgrounds considered what it means to be antiracist as an institution; upstanders, visionaries, and leaders challenged us to aim higher and be bolder in promoting inclusivity and equity.

Key highlights and achievements that seem especially important to share are:

- Releasing MB's strategic plan for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) (<https://www.mosesbrown.org/about-mb/dei/>), the product of listening sessions, dialogues, and continued commitment on the part of the entire community.
- Adding Luke Anderson as MB's Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion beginning August 2021. Luke will join MB's Administrative Council and work closely with divisional and all-school Diversity Clerks and Directors of Friends Education and of Global Education and Social Innovation.
- Hiring as Head of Upper School Laura Twichell, a longtime leader at Concord Academy whose profound listening skills, vision, planning, and steadfast action are uniquely suited to the demands of Friends school leadership.
- Concluding a 9-year, \$65 million capital campaign which enabled new programs, scholarships, and campus facilities, including a much-anticipated renovation of

our Lower School—which should be open and ready for students in 2022.

- Seeing demographic evidence of progress in the pursuit of our goal to become a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive institution. With 28% of our student body identifying as students of color and 41% of our students on scholarship, the MB student body is more racially and socioeconomically diverse than at any time in our 237-year history.

As we reflect on 2020–2021, we are mindful of our enormous privilege: in spite of inconveniences and frustrations, students still were able to connect and collaborate with teachers, coaches, and peers. Other schools were not so fortunate. Our community's ability to weather the pandemic reflects our unearned privilege as an elite, affluent, majority-white institution. We move forward focused on our values and our identity as a Friends institution, challenging ourselves to channel our privilege to help construct a more equitable, just, and sustainable world.

—JENNIFER MCFADDEN, DIRECTOR OF FRIENDS EDUCATION

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### Puente de Amigos

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This year, our committee mourned the sudden passing of Ramon Gonzalez Longoria while on an extended visit with his son Marcos in Miami. He had been unable to return to Cuba due to COVID-19 travel restrictions. Ramon was a beloved and faithful member of Cuba Yearly Meeting (CYM) who held many leadership roles in CYM and the wider world of Friends. The Friends World Committee on Consultation (FWCC) held a moving memorial service for Ramon, and the recording of this event is available here: <https://youtu.be/BuHXDHT0TYM>.

Along with the rest of the world, our committee's work was deeply hampered by the effect of COVID-19. Visits from the U.S. to Cuba have become impossible due to both the pandemic and the U.S. government's continued prohibition of Cuban visitors to the U.S. This spring, Cuba experienced an upsurge in cases, and many monthly meetings were not able to meet in person. In addition, Cuban citizens felt the economic impact of COVID acutely. They reported that without international trade, they were unable to obtain food, gasoline, and other supplies. Travel became impossible for most, and many have been unable to obtain sufficient basic supplies. In response, the Puente Committee made a donation to CYM for COVID relief. In addition, individuals made generous donations for the pastor's fund established in the name of Ramon, and for additional household supplies.

The committee is working to overcome communication challenges faced by Cuban Friends. Though internet sites are now more freely available to Cubans, the cost of connection is prohibitive to many. The committee is both exploring the logistics of donating funds that Cuban Friends may use to communicate and learning how to use the platform preferred by Cuban Friends, WhatsApp. We have a WhatsApp group called "Amigos Puente de Amor," a platform that will include at least one representative of each sister meeting in New England and Cuba. This platform has been helpful in providing a way to communicate easily and quickly with each other individually and as a group. We have all been learning to use WhatsApp as well as Facebook Messenger, despite the varying degrees of comfort with social media experienced by many of us in New England.

This year we celebrated three new sister meeting connections:

- Portland partnered with Durham in their connection with Velasco Monthly Meeting
- Vassalboro created a new connection with Pueblo Nuevo Monthly Meeting
- Fresh Pond and Framingham Meetings created a new connection with Delicias mission

This brings the number of monthly meetings in New England that have a sister meeting or mission in Cuba to thirteen. There is one monthly meeting and several missions that are still looking for partners in New England, and those interested are encouraged to be in touch with the committee. All sister meetings are finding creative ways to communicate with their partners in Cuba. For example, Hanover Friends held a Cuba celebration on Zoom this winter, and Kirenia, the pastor of Havana Monthly Meeting, was able to make an appearance online. Photographs, letters, and even videos of worship services are being shared on social media.

Administrative tasks this year included the updating of the Purposes and Procedures committee document. In addition, the Handbook for Friends Interested in Travel to Cuba has been updated and is available on the committee website.

This year marks the 30th anniversary of the Puente de Amigos between New England and Cuba. We will consider how to celebrate together with our Cuban Friends, knowing that the loving community lives in that which is eternal, beyond the human limitations which we all experience.

—MAGGIE FOGARTY AND EM MCMANAMY, CO-CLERKS

### **Racial, Social, and Economic Justice**

It has been a year of challenges, isolation, and grief for many. Still, we go on and are heartened as the pandemic has started to release its grip on our country. We also remain aware that we are in a privileged position in the wider world and with privilege comes responsibility. The effects of the coronavirus on Black and Brown people, the poor, and the working class—along with continuing violence against Black people by police—makes clear that work towards equity and justice remains to be done.

We found joy in the collaboration with Earthcare Ministry as together we put out a Call to Action. We hope that others can also share the joy we felt in this collaboration. In working together we can accomplish more than we can in isolation. This year, the Freedmen's Fund provided scholarships to two southern African-American students pursuing degrees in education at \$2,000 each. Additionally, the Prejudice and Poverty Fund supported the work of Dr. Hal Weaver as he creates "Black Quaker Lives Matter! Quakers of Color International Archive." Additionally, we supported the work of the Friends Ugandan Safe Transport Fund through emails and letter-writing. We helped raise funds that cumulatively allowed over 80 LGBT people to escape from Uganda. We also helped support the work of Bulungi Shade Tree Meeting in Uganda. The Bulungi Shade Tree Meeting is an open and inclusive meeting. It has grown from a dozen members to an average of 125-135 people on Sunday. Donations from individuals and a New England meeting helped to purchase a tent for the Ugandan meeting that provided shelter during the monsoon months.

The Racial, Social, and Economic Committee has found itself in a challenging and frustrating position this year. We

have been seriously limited by a lack of membership. It has been many years since the nominating committee has brought forward a member. In the past, we have recruited members on our own but we are finding it increasingly difficult to carry on the work of the committee with our depleted ranks while simultaneously looking for others to help carry on this work.

At the same time, there are a number of parallel groups that are also working on racial justice. We respect and admire the knowledge and energy other groups and individuals have brought to this work. We also feel that that having several working groups and committees is a division of resources. Over the years, attempts have been made to create bridges between the groups. Some of these have been successful beginnings but ultimately we have not united as a single group. We feel that this system is ineffective.

We do strongly feel that there should be a standing committee to act as a resource for those involved in this work, to act as a voice that speaks truth to power—including the power of Yearly Meeting—and to advise New England Yearly Meeting as it speaks in a collective voice to the world at large. Racial, Social, and Economic Justice has been a committee of New England Yearly Meeting for decades and has watched as Friends in New England have become more aware of systemic justice and have begun the work towards healing. However, having a long history does not guarantee a permanent place in the Yearly Meeting's structure. We would ask though, that there remains a standing committee for social justice, however it may be composed and under whatever name fits best. If we want to ensure that racial justice remains a standing concern among New England Friends and not a passing interest, we need to formally carve a place for it. Social justice demands and deserves to have permanent space in our Yearly Meeting structure.

—BETH MORRILL, CLERK

### **Young Adult Friends**

Young Adult Friends have deeply been impacted by the pandemic, especially as many transitioned into or out of college, navigated classes or work spaces that were newly online in or in different formats, experienced a change in jobs, or moved into and out of living situations while negotiating health and safety concerns. During all this uncertainty and hardship, staying connected with other Quakers has been a challenge for many as schedules are in flux and more on-screen engagement tips the scales of Zoom fatigue. And yet, many young adult Friends have found small and creative ways to maintain connections with each other, finding joy and mutual support during the pandemic.

The practices of holding seasonal Yearly-Meeting-organized retreats for young adult Friends has been on pause during the pandemic, but myself and Brynn Keevil have continued to serve in a stipend role coordinating opportunities for young adults.

In the fall, young adult Friends in western Massachusetts gathered a few times in person for worship sharing and assembling care packages for incoming YAFs (recent high-school graduates), sending a physical expression of our continued care. These pre-winter gatherings felt rich and welcomed.

In the colder months, small groups of YAFs gathered biweekly over Zoom for affinity-group-style check-ins, singing,

games, worship, and story time. It was delightful to connect across time zones—even internationally!

In February and March, 25 young adults participated “Partners in Spirit,” a four-week workshop series called Listening for Life: Demystifying Leadings, Vocation, and Discernment, taught by Callid Keefe-Perry and coordinated by myself, Nia Thomas, Brynn Keevil, and Kevin Lee. While only scratching the surface of intergenerational connection and discernment practices, young adult participants found the workshop to be deepening and useful for applying personal and small-group spiritual tools to vocational decisions and other life transitions.

As the weather warms again, it is encouraging to hear of local pockets of young adult Friends gathering for picnics and reconnecting in person.

Overall, this is a challenging time for young adults. In addition to general life-stage transitions amidst the pandemic, we grapple with the weight of the changing climate and what our futures hold for us; witnessing and experiencing violence, systems of oppression, and death, and engaging in social change movements; navigating student loans, ever-growing wealth gaps, and finding affordable housing; and managing our mental and physical health throughout it all. We carry the responsibility of meeting our basic needs while also shifting culture and securing our futures. If you wonder where YAFs are, if you don’t always see younger faces at Quaker meeting on Sunday morning, we are still here, living our faith through social activism and our own rest and healing.

—EMI LINK

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### Youth Ministries

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As we look back on a year like no other, we can see both the challenges and the creation of new ways of connecting. We have struggled with the physical separations imposed upon us by the coronavirus pandemic as well as the emotional separations our world has experienced as we begin to look more deeply at racism. There is a sense of cautious optimism about reopening, but we also sense that how we come together now may be different from how it was before.

During this past year, we have been grateful for the gifts of ministry to families offered by youth ministers Gretchen Baker-Smith, Maggie Nelson, Anna Hopkins, and Nia Thomas.

Youth Programs and Friends Camp have provided youth and families with valuable outlets to stay connected and cared for, even if online. By offering loving and creative opportunities for connection online early in the pandemic, Youth Programs lit a way forward for the wider community to see how connection could be possible despite our separation.

Our committee has sought to lift up the creative and imaginative life growing in monthly meetings that are finding new ways of supporting youth and families and building bridges across generations. These included online gatherings for all ages, outdoor activities, family-centered worship opportunities, and other ways of building relationships between youth and across generations. These experiments taught us the value of fellowship and laughter, that adults often need the same opportunities for play and joy that youth need, that youth and families need direct and structured invitations into worship, and that to truly center youth and families we sometimes need to change our norms. We also held and supported youth workers across the Yearly Meeting who were working valiantly to keep families connected to their monthly meetings. Members of our committee organized three Zoom meetings for Friends engaged in local youth ministries to share their monthly meeting’s struggles and successes and to find support for their work.

As monthly meetings begin the conversation about reopening their doors to in-person gatherings, our committee is looking at how this year has changed youth ministry. We acknowledge with sadness that some families have stopped attending monthly meetings, and we seek to support Friends in finding ways to reconnect with them.

Through care packages containing supplies for “First Day School” activities families can do together, group hikes, show-and-tell, and stories shared over Zoom, new experiments in family worship, and notes of encouragement quietly dropped in the mail, meetings have maintained connections with youth and families during the pandemic in many imaginative ways.

There is a growing awareness of and interest from monthly meetings in multigenerational programming. That our work is about engaging whole families and putting the spiritual life of youth at the center of our meetings. We rejoice at the prospect of being together again, and we look forward to building on what we have learned from our time online. As anyone who has worked in youth ministries knows, you must expect the

## Reports of Representatives to Other Quaker Organizations

### American Friends Service Committee

The American Friends Service Committee's steady emergence as a truly international peace and justice organization became clear during this year's annual Corporation meeting in April. "Our work is global as we seek just peace, just economics, and just migration," reported AFSC's General Secretary, Joyce Ajlouny.

A week-long series of panel discussions led Corporation members, during breakout groups, to share their excitement that AFSC's increasing engagement with Quakers has emphasized antiracism training and focused on prison abolition while also becoming a more globally-connected community. Giving prominence to justice reflects the Quaker testimonies, arising from Friends' belief that there is that of God in everyone. (Note: the series of Corporation presentations is available at <https://www.afsc.org/corpprogram>)

Director of Friends Relations Lucy Duncan wrote: "We want to continue to deepen our roots with Friends, so we can help renew the world we live in and together shift systems of power to bend toward justice."

Monthly meetings can strengthen their ties with AFSC in these immediate ways:

- Sign up for the Weekend Reading email for news about AFSC's most recent work and resources most current to world events.
- Appoint a meeting liaison to receive messages from AFSC.
- Listen to and learn from younger Friends as we encourage them to recommend peers to apply for AFSC's pilot for a new Quaker youth initiative in 2022.

As the organization works to deepen Quaker engagement, there is a simultaneous task of restructuring both staff and governance to better support AFSC's newly adopted strategic plan. Working nimbly is a priority, even as an inevitable tension arises between remaining responsive to local communities while also seeking systemic change through coherent programming across the organization. Might we Friends in New England address the question of agency—how to extend Friends' sense of involvement with AFSC—by pursuing concrete action in our local communities or endorsing its principled advocacy for ending the military blockade of Gaza?

During an hour of programmed worship, Corporation members welcomed Dr. Esther Mombo, a leading Anglican theologian in Kenya and member of Nyanko Monthly Meeting of Highland's Yearly Meeting. Using as her text the biblical metaphor of Jacob wrestling in his sleep, Esther Mombo exhorted that "God sends us to wrestle against historical injustices and current realities." Her concluding assertion that "We will wrestle until we have a radical encounter with the Divine" encourages all Friends to pursue justice. It can also be noted that the Corporation approved Esther Mombo's appointment to the AFSC Board of Directors.

Nyle Fort, a young activist, minister, and scholar, affirmed during this year's plenary that "Social justice is a team sport—use your skill sets, hop on a team, work collaboratively; be sincere, it's okay not to know some stuff, be humble, pursue a serious political education because we can't fix a thing we can't understand!"

—SUBMITTED BY SCOTT RHOEWALT

### Friends Committee on National Legislation

From the FCNL Annual Report to Yearly Meetings:

Our Quaker faith and practice has called us to work for the peaceful, just, equitable, and sustainable world we seek since 1943. Here are just some of the highlights of this year's work. Learn more at [www.fcnl.org/impact](http://www.fcnl.org/impact).

The COVID-19 pandemic shifted both how FCNL works and the urgency of our advocacy to heed God's call to care for people who are vulnerable. Thanks in part to our efforts, COVID-19 relief legislation will cut child poverty in half this year and increase food assistance.

The need to adapt in a pandemic also led to new opportunities. A record 700 people joined in our virtual Annual Meeting, nearly half attending for the first time. This year also brought a crisis for U.S. democracy and faith in our government. FCNL is nonpartisan, but we are not neutral about the harm caused when our government pursues racist, nationalist, and militaristic ideologies and practices. The January 2021 attack on the U.S. Capitol was only one manifestation of the challenges to our democratic system.

The murders of so many Black Americans by police gave new urgency to FCNL's work on racial justice. More than 1,000 people advocated to end police violence. FCNL advocacy helped restore incarcerated people's access to Pell grants and launch new initiatives to address the crisis of missing and murdered Native women. Internally, we began an intensive focus to address systemic racism and white supremacy in our organization.

FCNL also helped move forward efforts to end support for violent conflict. Examples include President Biden's decision to end support for the Saudi-led war in Yemen, lobbying to extend the New START agreement with Russia, and more than 1,500 FCNL Advocacy Team members pushing to repeal the 2002 Authorization for the Use of Military Force.

FCNL continues its decade-long work to press for bipartisan action on climate change. The Biden administration rejoining the Paris Climate Agreement and advancing environmental justice initiatives was heartening. We will build on this progress as the new class of young adult Advocacy Corps organizers will push for bipartisan support for a price on carbon.

We also recognize the dedication of the other people taking part in our Young Adult programs—as Young Fellows, interns, and Spring Lobby Weekend participants. Learn more at [www.fcnl.org/youngadult](http://www.fcnl.org/youngadult).

The FCNL Education Fund assumed responsibility for ownership and operations of the William Penn House, a guest house on Capitol Hill, in September 2019. Recognizing William Penn's history as an enslaver, the William Penn House board approved changing the venue's name to Friends Place on Capitol Hill.

FCNL General Secretary Diane Randall has announced she will leave FCNL at the end of 2021. FCNL has begun a search process to select the next General Secretary. We hope to bring a candidate for approval at Annual Meeting in November 2021.

FCNL's work in the year ahead will be full of challenges and opportunities. Thank you—above all—for your faithfulness.

—IAN HARRINGTON, CHARLOTTE GORHAM, DONN WEINHOLTZ,  
HOLLY WEIDNER, AND SCOT DRYSDALE, REPRESENTATIVES

### Friends Peace Teams

With joy I joined Nancy Shippen in 2020 to represent Friends Peace Teams (FPT) within New England Yearly Meeting. I assumed this work would be a song in the dark during a global pandemic. Not at all! Friends Peace Teams has been quite active and growing.

#### Background

“Friends Peace Teams chooses to be part of the Great Turning toward a transformed, regenerative society. Along with many Quaker institutions, FPT is challenging the organization’s systemic racism and the colonialist legacy of wealthy, mostly white North American and Australian Quakers “helping” people with less privilege. The question of “who is the ‘we’ of Friends Peace Teams?” has kept us focused on the life-giving, people-to-people relationships that are the foundation of grassroots, Spirit-led change for peace and justice,”

says Jonathan Vogel-Borne (he’s famous in my book).

FPT started in 1993 as a Spirit-led global organization reaching out with peace strategies to people suffering from war and violence everywhere. In the last 12 years I’ve watched it evolve to include reconciliation programs, empowerment, and trauma-resiliency workshops. The coordinating body of FPT consists of representatives from 15 Quaker yearly meetings, with most reps from North America Friends. Its work for many years has done amazing nonviolence trainings in Central America, Columbia, and Ecuador; in Kenya, Rwanda, Congo, and Burundi; and in Korea, Australia, Philippines, and Pacific Islands like Indonesia. This is a sampling of locations, but not exhaustive. For the complete program list see <https://friendspeace teams.org/>

#### New Initiatives of FPT

We at FPT are moving toward justice and guided by the Light. Recently several Turtle Island programs are at work. Maida McKenna from Storrs, CT, coordinates Friends Peace Libraries, which is building a powerhouse to teach literacy for Peace and Justice. Yearly Meeting Legacy Grants helped in this ministry. This year workshops on the Power of Goodness have been well attended. I overcame my Zoom fatigue to join three programs, each one led by a team of young people from diverse places like Nepal, Philippines, and Rwanda. I learned how to curb my pushiness, thinking that I know more than Salvadorans. I love hearing the many languages spoken and the smiles melt my heart as we play Follow the Leader on Zoom. The tide is eternal. The tide is turning.

Towards Right Relationships with Native Peoples joined FPT last year and has offered many programs for New England Friends with reflection, education, dialogue, and action. We are addressing over 500 years of genocide, colonization, and forced taking of children away from their Indigenous homes.

#### Invitation to Join FPT

FPT offers many programs with a small budget. Committees carry out tasks such as Peace Ministries, Finance, Communications, Fundraising, and Governance. We offer many empowering workshops online and, refreshingly, in person. We are will-

ing to train facilitators. We need help in spreading the open, affirming, inclusive, searching, justice-bending Good News! If any of our programs moved you, tell me. If you have an hour of help to give, contact us. If you can spend 20 minutes on our website, I salute you. I want to be available to you, not just evangelize our good works. Email [Minga@thebornes.org](mailto:Minga@thebornes.org) or call 617-899-2270.

In gratitude,

—MINGA CLAGGETT-BORNE

### Friends United Meeting

*The following is an abridged version of FUM General Secretary Kelly Kellum’s report to the Triennial (June 17–19, 2021). The full text of his report is available here: <https://bit.ly/3jujcx7>*

In 2021, Friends United Meeting has adopted the theme of “Hope and Light” to reflect the spiritual message we want to convey to our FUM members and the world. The Scriptures remind us, “God is light, and in him, there is no darkness at all.” (1 John 1:5) The people of the world continue to experience the multiple stresses of global pandemic, racial tension, political division, financial inequality, war and violence, and environmental disruption—yet, as a community, FUM affirms a life-giving hope that light will overcome the shadows of darkness and despair. We witness this through the amazing work being done by the members, staff, and ministry partners of Friends United Meeting. This is a season of hope and light.

Ecclesiastes 3:1 says, “To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven.” These ancient words remind us of the natural order and changing circumstances of life. Friends United Meeting is experiencing several significant seasonal changes.

#### Season of Transition

During the last three years, nearly every program and department of FUM has had to re-envision staffing responsibilities, restructure departments, and welcome new team members.

In the Finance Department, Kira Young was hired as Financial Services Manager, and then promoted to serve as FUM’s Financial Services Director. Emonse Muhindi joined the Africa Ministries Office (AMO) staff as the Operations Manager. He works closely with AMO staff and Kira to oversee the daily operations of the office, including financial management.

Global Ministries Department: Eden Grace’s departure created a significant void in our global ministries programs. To provide more support and oversight for these programs, FUM formed the new Global Ministries (GM) team. Colin Saxton returned to FUM to oversee North American engagement. He oversees leadership and spiritual formation among North American Friends, as well as development programs. Karla Jay was hired to serve as the coordinator of the Global Ministries team, and provide administrative support for field staff and team directors, including Kira Young (GM finance), Colin Saxton (GM fundraising), and myself (GM programs and personnel).

#### Season of Service and Generosity

The COVID-19 pandemic has shaped the priorities and ministries of FUM for nearly 18 months. FUM is experiencing the creativity and generosity of our community. Responding to the need for remote learning, friends of Ramallah Friends School donated 125 laptops for teachers, and Friends Theological College launched its new e-learning program. FUM

established the Solidarity Fund, and African Friends formed a collaboration of FUM, Friends Church Kenya, and FWCC–Africa to respond to the humanitarian and spiritual needs of vulnerable communities. Friends gave generously, and FUM distributed \$96,000 for PPE for Friends medical work, flood relief, feeding programs, teachers' support, hospital expenses, funeral expenses, and other emergency needs. We are thankful for the generosity of all those who have enabled FUM to connect the global family of Friends and serve vulnerable communities.

### Season of New Connections

FUM continues its commitment to connecting the global community of Friends to resources that enhance the spiritual life and identity of Friends.

This year FUM has expanded the production of our weekly E-news. This email newsletter is released on Wednesdays, containing highlights from member yearly meetings and associations, field staff updates, program activities, job postings, and much more. The editorial team includes staff members from both the AMO and Richmond offices.

Quaker Life continues to be an important publication for FUM. In this triennium, each issue of *Quaker Life* focused on a single theme of spiritual life. Recent issues have included the topics Hope, Joy, Mercy, Crisis, Peace, Abide, and Light; Community is the theme for the summer 2021 issue. Friends are invited to write Biblical reflections, life experiences, and wisdom around each theme.

### A Season to Energize and Equip Friends

In the coming year, FUM will expand our commitment to energize and equip Friends. In January 2021, we welcomed Colin Saxton back to FUM as the Director of North American Ministries. He is launching a series of new ministries to support the spiritual health of North American Friends. John Muhanji also has a new ministry focus to oversee new leadership development, fundraising, and mission mobilization initiatives among African Friends. Spiritually equipped leaders and energized meetings and churches are God-given pathways for the hope and light of Christ to transform lives and change the world. This is why Friends United Meeting is committing to serve our members in new ways. This is a season of new life for Friends United Meeting, and it is exciting to prayerfully anticipate the possibilities that will spring forth.

### A Season of Hope and Light

My father and I are very different. He is mechanically minded, I am not. He works on cars and motors, I don't. When I was child my job to hold the flashlight while my father worked in dark places. In many ways, my work has not changed as God continues to call FUM to shine Christ's hope and light in the world. Thank you for your partnership in this vital work.

## Quaker Earthcare Witness

Quaker Earthcare Witness holds two Steering Committee meetings each year with representatives from many yearly meetings around the country and Canada, and this year we were blessed by an attendee from Mexico. Work on expanding QEW's reach has continued, and we are welcoming representatives from yearly meetings that have not sent them previously and attracting other interested individuals. As for effectively all organizations in this past year, all QEW business was held online. This allowed us to connect with many Friends who would not have been able to attend in-person meetings. I believe that impact was more significant in the first part of the pandemic and trailed off as people experienced Zoom fatigue.

QEW business between our bi-annual steering committee meetings is carried out by a council of the clerk's table and committee chairs (CCC). I participate in the CCC. The Council, led by our general secretary, frequently addressed higher-level concerns for policy and goals. We have recently made commitments and raised funds to raise salaries for the general secretary and communications director. Work in the past year has focused on racial equity and its connection to earthcare. We also continue to build QEW's visibility within the wider Quaker community and sign on to a variety of position papers and legislative proposals to endorse meaningful change.

I continue to serve as assistant clerk to the Spiritual Nurturance Committee, which works to keep a deep spiritual base for all of QEW's activities and serves the clerk's table during business meetings. We initiated and provide guidance to worship-sharing groups at QEW sessions, and these have become foundational to our meetings together. Spiritual Nurturance is also called upon to find Quakerly solutions to miscommunications and interpersonal problems, and I was involved in two of those sets of discussions this past year. I have also continued to serve as a buddy mentor for new attendees, although the process is not as helpful nor rewarding when it is limited to online interactions. The revival of the Sustainability Faith & Action working group was once again on pause while I find better ways to pursue it and Mey Hasbrook gets more settled after her move to Maine this past year.

Steering committee and council meetings this past year were held over Zoom. Our spring meetings this year focused on racial equity, and we had several very good discussions on the topic. We also had excellent presentations from Quaker Voluntary Service (QVS) and FCNL, looking at their involvement and plans for addressing this issue. My sister Pamela led a session on visioning the world we want with Hayley Hatha-way that was well appreciated

—CHRISTOPHER HAINES, REPRESENTATIVE

## Memorial Minutes

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### Mildred Dumas Alexander October 28, 1930 – September 18, 2020

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Mildred Alexander, long-time member of Durham Friends Meeting, passed from this life on September 18, 2020. She was a resident of Pinkham Brook Road in Durham, Maine, and was born in Lisbon Falls, daughter of the late Louis and Annette (Boulton) Dumas. She was educated in local schools. Mildred married Andrew Alexander in January of 1949, and they spent many happy years together until he passed in 2009. Mildred enjoyed jigsaw puzzles, her cats and, most of all, time spent with her great grandchildren. Mildred was an active member of the Meeting Trustees. While a trustee she was the meeting janitor and went the extra mile to keep the building in good shape. One friend's fond memory of Mildred was that she was good-natured with a great sense of humor: "Once when there was a jug of Babcock's apple cider in the meeting fridge Mildred drank a cup. 'I love cider,' she said. The friend said, 'Especially when it is about to turn.' Mildred replied. 'Me too! Look at us! Drinking hard cider in the meetinghouse!'" Mildred was one of many from the meeting who worked at the Maine Idyll for many years.

She is survived by her sister Laurette Chapman of Lewiston, four grandchildren: Thomas St. Germain of Durham, Carrie St. Germain of Lewiston, Angela Loucka of Tampa, FL, and Johnell Ramos of Costa Rica, four great grandchildren, and seven great-great grandchildren. She was predeceased by a daughter Pauline (Alexander) Harvey in 2006 and three sisters, Annette Tibbets, Beverly Craig, and Bernice Curtis.

DURHAM MONTHLY MEETING

FALMOUTH QUARTERLY MEETING

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### Claire Louise Bateman August 11, 1934 – October 30, 2020

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Claire Bateman was a Quaker even before she found the Religious Society of Friends.

Claire Louise Bateman was born on August 11, 1934, in Johannesburg, South Africa, when it was still a small town. She was sent to boarding school at age 8, and at age 16 to finishing school in America. In her words, finishing school was "a way to polish this very rough tomboy diamond." It was during school vacations spent with an aunt and uncle in West Virginia that Claire was introduced to Quakerism.

Claire credited her aunt with encouraging her to apply to Wellesley College instead of returning to South Africa after graduating from finishing school. When Claire's father demanded she come home after her sophomore college year and refused to pay tuition, Wellesley awarded Claire a total scholarship for her last two years; she graduated with a BA in geography in 1956. In 1979 Claire attended Antioch College in Keene, New Hampshire, graduating at age 56 with an MA in psychology.

In 1957 Claire married Chris Van Peski, a graduate of MIT, and moved to California, where their three children were born. Upon their divorce in 1969, Claire drove with her children across the country to New England, where she had always felt at home. After living for seven years in Amherst, during which she was a member of Mt. Toby Monthly Meeting, Claire bought Running Fox Farm in Worthington, where she lived, with some exceptions, until 2004.

Claire's early years at the farm were spent as an organic farmer with chickens, cows, pigs, grain and vegetable crops, and blueberry bushes. She continued her interest in and support for local agriculture throughout the rest of her life.

In 1981 Claire moved to Washington, D.C. and a new career path as a consultant to non-profit organizations, specializing in the work of boards of directors. She worked with a number of arts organizations, particularly symphony orchestras. In D.C., Claire was an active member of Florida Avenue Meeting.

When in 1991 Claire saw that Nelson Mandela was definitely going to become the president in South Africa, she decided to return and "do my bit in the brave new world we all hoped would develop there." For five years Claire worked with non-governmental agencies in South Africa, training staff and directors in process and management. While there she was a member of Cape Town Meeting.

That year Claire transferred her membership from Cape Town to Northampton Friends Meeting. Northampton Friends were worshipping in a space at Smith College and contemplating building a meeting house.

In 2000, the building known as the former Elks Lodge on 43 Center Street was purchased by a local businessman who conceived it as a mixed-use building—commercial and residential. He attracted Safe Passage, which had outgrown its space; Northampton Friends Meeting, which had been actively looking for space; and the Hampshire County Friends of the Homeless who had spent five years searching for a permanent space for a cot shelter. The rear of the building was extended to provide needed space for the meeting and the shelter, and the fourth floor was planned as residential units. The original developer underestimated the build-out costs and was on the verge of bankruptcy when Claire stepped in and bought him out so the project could be completed, bringing in her own construction team. The project was completed in 2004. For 11 years Claire lived in Unit S on the fourth floor, after which she built her last home, a passive energy house surrounded by gardens in Williamsburg.

While she grew up in privilege, Claire only saw people as equal to one another, starting with the servants in her childhood home and extending to the guests at the homeless shelter. She was a valued and active member of Northampton Friends Meeting. Claire oversaw and managed the meeting's monthly shelter dinner for 15 years. She infused her spirit of equality and service into everything she did. Claire resigned from the meeting in 2005 as a matter of conscience; she said she "had come to understand herself to be an atheist, though she followed Friends' testimonies."

Indeed, her life was witness to Friends' testimonies. Claire's guiding vision was "to leave every place I have lived a little better for my having been there, thus bringing constructive energy to the planet." That Friend speaks our minds.

NORTHAMPTON FRIENDS MEETING

CONNECTICUT VALLEY QUARTERLY MEETING

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**Nancy Booth**  
**May 18, 1922 – November 6, 2020**

Nancy was born Anne Curtis Booth on May 18, 1922, in Wrightstown, Pennsylvania, the fourth of six children born to The Reverend Samuel Babcock Booth and Anna Peck Booth. In her early years she lived in New Hampshire, New Jersey, and Maine, graduating in 1940 from Lincoln Academy in Newcastle. She trained as a teacher at the Lesley College in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and graduated from Teachers' College at Columbia University, where she later earned her master's degree.

Over the years she taught in Colorado, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and Maine. While teaching in Newton, Massachusetts, she began attending Friends Meeting at Cambridge. Quaker meeting then became a lifelong affiliation for Nancy. She moved back to Maine in 1963, where she resided the rest of her life.

Nancy was a passionate member of the Midcoast Monthly Meeting in Damariscotta, from its founding, in which she participated c.1970, until her death. This became a vital connection for Nancy as she provided many new initiatives and leadership. She was a faithful and creative member of the Peace and Social Concerns Committee. One of her projects was to provide stamped postal cards once a month at the rise of meeting, inviting attenders to write to political leaders regarding timely issues, prompted by FCNL advisories or State of Maine affairs. There were visits to senators and Congress members to protest wars, critically before the invasion of Iraq and riding the overnight bus to Washington, D.C., to protest. She attended the meetings of the Friends Committee on Maine Public Policy. The major concerns then were the youth rehabilitation center in Portland and association with the Wabanaki people (the four tribes of Maine).

In 1988, having met in several locations for years, Midcoast Meeting undertook a series of moves. With the meeting growing, a group of Quaker women who met monthly for lunch voiced interest in a permanent home. After a called meeting and skillful leadership, the decision was made to build a meetinghouse. Construction began soon after. Nancy was deeply involved with a newly formed building committee until the meetinghouse was built in 1995. At the same time she was clerk of the meeting from 1990 through 1992 and guided it skillfully through countless decisions.

Following her clerkship, she continued to serve on numerous committees. In the 90s she was on the Meetinghouse Committee, Peace and Social Concerns, and Ministry and Counsel, and attended Vassalboro



Quarterly Meeting. As the new century began, she was on the steering committee for the newly formed Peace Outreach Center, which became a meeting priority, and a member of the Pastoral Care Committee. She was at the center of meeting life for so many years, the woman who reached out to everyone—new attenders and long-time members, the young and the old. Always concerned with others, she often visited members unable to attend meetings due to illness, age, or circumstance. In her final years members were eager to return the favor, enjoying her stories, humor, and her appreciative, loving nature.

With friends from the meeting, Nancy began an arts program, “Treasure Hunt,” that traveled around to area schools bringing art, theater, and music together, with Nancy heading the art effort. This program, funded by a federal grant, was renewed for three years, then picked up by the towns. It became the Volunteer Teachers Resource Center, and invited retired, informed people to work in the schools. This was a program based on educational theory way ahead of its time; she loved and put her heart into it. Having served on the First Day School Committee in the early 80s she helped run a very active First Day School. Another project was the People To People clothing exchange, which continues thriving to this day.

Nancy’s primary interest, peace and social concerns, extended to all of Lincoln County. Active in the Carpenter’s Boatshop, begun in 1979 in Pemaquid, she was close friends with founders Bobby and Ruth Ives. Quaker worship and testimonies undergirded the teachings and work of this major endeavor. Many of the young apprentices came from Quaker meetings in New England and beyond. They often attended our meeting’s First-Day worship, especially in the summer. Several settled in Maine and joined the membership of our meeting.

The well-known CHIP (Community Housing and Improvement Project) was formed in 1984. Nancy was in the leadership and led the effort for our meeting to form a lasting association. After Nancy’s retirement, our meeting has participated in sending an active representative who reports to our meeting.

In 1989, overwhelmed with requests for money for food, members of the Second Congregational Church approached seven local churches to see if an ecumenical pantry could be formed. It was organized as a completely volunteer non-profit organization and remains so to this day. Nancy, as well as other meeting members, quickly became involved and for years people were greeted at the door by Nancy, who donated food and her time to the effort. It is believed that Nancy might have been the first to contribute dog food so that needy pets could be fed as well as their owners.

She was active in the Interfaith Peace and Social Concerns Association, having personal contacts in many of the churches. She initiated the weekly lunches held at the Congregational Church that included the Midcoast Friends Meeting’s provision and organizational aspects: she signed up the volunteers and loved being the greeter. Volunteers from Midcoast Friends Meeting were urged to stay for the meal and to meet and converse with the community’s people in need.

Nancy had a personal connection with St. Andrew’s Episcopal Church, having a close friend whose mission was in Haiti. Her frequent visits to Newcastle were occasions for fundraisers: arts and craft sales and suppers to support the suffering people of Haiti.

She led volunteer efforts on frequent occasions for professing the Quaker peace testimony, such as public demonstrations for Bridges for Peace vigils on a wide network of bridges, including Damariscotta. It was Nancy’s leadership that allowed many members of Midcoast Meeting to “speak truth to power” consistently and urgently.

An avid outdoors person, Nancy was a member of the Sierra Club and a life member of the Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC). She hiked and climbed mountains around the country and abroad, including a trip to the Matterhorn at age 50. She knew the names of many woodland plants and annually greeted and counted the lady slippers on her springtime walks. Nancy took hiking-trail maintenance seriously, helping to clear trails in this and other areas. But maintaining trails was not the end goal. She took many members on hikes on the trails with which she was so familiar, building friendships and making newcomers feel welcomed and a part of the meeting as well as the community.

Nancy is remembered as a tireless volunteer, able to out-climb hikers 20 years her junior, able to connect with strangers quickly and easily, and as an inspiring mentor to many at Midcoast Meeting and the community at large. She always had an ability to reach out to people and to express deeply how she felt. Even when housebound in Newcastle in her mid-90s, she was always eager to know what was going on at meeting. She was a major part of many lives with her indomitable spirit, generosity, and ongoing quest for the next trip or

good time. She will be missed very much by those who knew and loved her. We, her friends, may meditate on how much her love and faith have given to our meeting.

MIDCOAST FRIENDS MEETING

VASSALBORO QUARTERLY MEETING

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**David Cadbury**  
**June 3, 1945 – February 2, 2018**

David Cadbury was one of a kind: a gentle, soft-spoken man of high principles and great optimism. He was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on June 3, 1945. He attended Germantown Friends School and graduated from Wesleyan University in Connecticut. He also attended Maryland Institute, College of Art/ The Peabody Institute in Baltimore, where he received a second undergraduate degree as well as a Masters in sculpture. He completed post-graduate work at the University of Pennsylvania in landscape architecture.

From the early 1970s until the 1990s David lived in Philadelphia and Maine. He worked as a sculptor, producing conceptual installations about natural and environmental systems. He was chairman of the Nexus Gallery in Philadelphia, and had work exhibited at the Corcoran Gallery and at Max Protetch's in Washington, D.C. He also founded two construction companies: one that focused on the historical restoration of 18th and 19th century houses and another for high-end commercial and residential projects.

In 1992 David, his wife Karen, and their two children, Benjamin and Rachel, moved to Maine, where he continued working as an artist and as a building consultant. He began creating beautiful computer-generated images that were exhibited in galleries throughout Maine.

He was a passionate sailor who restored and sailed numerous wooden boats.

David came from a long tradition of Quakers. He took Quakerism seriously and was deeply concerned that the religion not get stuck in antiquated, tradition-bound practices or outlooks. He wanted the practice to be dynamic and relevant to the 21st century. He was born and married in Germantown Monthly Meeting and later became an active member with his family in the Central Philadelphia Monthly Meeting. When he moved to Maine he became a member of the Midcoast Friends Meeting, where he served as clerk.

David is greatly missed by his family, friends, and Midcoast Friends, and he is remembered for his tremendous sense of humor, his wisdom, and his warmth.

MIDCOAST FRIENDS MEETING

VASSALBORO QUARTERLY MEETING

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**JoAnne Chickering**  
**April 28, 1929 – June 24, 2020**

Even as we celebrate the light and love she brought us, we mourn the passing of Jo Chickering, beloved member of Plainfield Monthly Meeting. Jo was first part of our community in the 1960s, returning in the 1990s after she and Art, her husband and life partner, retired. She participated fully, listened deeply, and celebrated with a gusto and love that nurtured and inspired us.

In our monthly meeting as well as the wider community she was exuberant in supporting the movement of the Spirit in both mystical and practical ways. She encouraged the budding ministry of many Friends, as well as supporting Friends who were more sure of their path. She served faithfully on Ministry and Counsel. She contributed the first check towards our meetinghouse. In the community, along with other seasoned Plainfield Friends, she was active in the beginnings of the first Vermont bail fund, the reparative justice board, restorative justice, and later with integrating former inmates back into the community.

Jo's ministry grew from her warm, generous heart. She listened deeply. At her memorial meeting Friends remembered that when in a conversation you "felt as if you were the only person in the room." "She gets to know the life story of anyone she is around," one daughter remembers, "Jo's life story is about making deep connections, whether it be a brief encounter or a lifelong friendship."

In both her professional and spiritual life, Jo's ministry empowered others: supporting blind students entering public school, drawing Headstart teachers into education, following student leads in learning, developing programs in women's studies and Title IX affirmative action programs for college students, and in recognition and inclusion of other races and cultures. The cover of *Sunlight & Shadow: Glimpses into the Life*

of *Jo Chickering*, a memoir by Jo Chickering written with Rachel Walker Cogbill, best sums up Jo's ministry among us. "Jo Chickering, Quaker, but also a Buddhist practitioner... A counselor, educator, and advocate for empowerment, Jo[was] active on many frontiers: education for the blind, women's issues, changes in the justice system, civil rights, and progressive education. She ... spent time in arts: painting, writing, poetry, and making pottery. Nature, outdoor activity, and travel weave through her narrative."

In an old farmhouse they renovated at the end of the road, Jo and Art raised four children together, celebrating and supporting them through times of joy and times of grief. Years later, Jo and Art returned to Chickering Road in a home their family built for them, not far from the old homestead, where a daughter still lives. Art described those later years: "For many years, Jo used her creative talents as a partner, parent, painter, potter, and Ph.D. On February 1, 1999, a stroke eliminated potting, as well as hiking, skiing, and tennis. Then during the 2000s failing vision shut down painting ... poetry became her creative outlet." Jo published two books of poetry; *Saying Yes to Life* was published in 2011 and recommended by Parker Palmer, and *Relationships that Matter* in 2015. Jo said that "the point is that when love grows, fear diminishes" and all around her love not only grew, it blossomed.

Jo found a depth of the Spirit through nature. She wrote, "I sit on the screened-in back porch and savor the sounds of my surroundings: robins, the red-eyed vireo, the white-throated sparrow, finches, and wrens. I know this symphony is too beautiful to be chance. It is the song of the spheres or angels sharing their joy." And dreams were also an important vehicle to Jo's understanding and spirit. She recounted one dream where she was riding a bike with friends Jesus and Buddha walking beside her. We like to think of her that way now, grateful for sharing her path for a while. She was a blessing.

PLAINFIELD MONTHLY MEETING

NORTHWEST QUARTERLY MEETING

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**Harry (Ted) Colwell III**  
**November 3, 1922 – November 28, 2019**

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The Middlebury Friends Meeting community celebrates the life of Harry "Ted" Colwell, a member of the meeting since 1982, after he and his wife, Olive, took up permanent residence in East Middlebury and transferred their membership from Scarsdale Friends Meeting in New York. Ted and Olive became dedicated supporters of Middlebury Friends Meeting and warmly embraced members and attenders, serving on meeting committees and often opening their home to all for special Christmas celebrations. Ted also represented Middlebury Friends as a member of the Middlebury Area Clergy Association and the Addison County Clergy Association. He offered strong support for such local organizations as Addison County Home Health and Hospice, Ilsley Library, Smallholders group, and Friends of the Arts.

Ted was raised in a Presbyterian household, served in the US Air Force during WWII, and earned a BA in Philosophy in 1946 from Dartmouth College. For a short time, he considered a career in the ministry and enrolled in Princeton Theological Seminary. Ultimately, he decided to pursue a career in banking and joined Chase National Bank in 1947, from which he retired as Division Executive of Aerospace in 1981. His time at Chase took him around the world on many occasions.

Ted came to Quakerism through his love for philosophy and wide reading. The works by Rufus Jones, Henry Cadbury, D. Elton Trueblood, and other major Quaker writers brought him to the concept of "continuing revelation" and he found the Quaker leading to go inward in search of one's own spiritual truth a very compelling path. Always deeply dedicated to ethics and the pursuit of leading an ethical life, he sought to set high standards for himself and lead by example. He would always start the day with a spiritual reading, often from the Bible, and always found time for prayer throughout his life. Dorothy Day, Thomas Merton, and Thomas Kelly inspired Ted to embrace a life of service to others and follow the example of Jesus of Nazareth as a model for how to live our lives in the here and now. In his later years, Ted began to study Buddhism and found its teachings an inspiring extension of his Quaker faith. His dedication to peace, justice, and environment stewardship is aptly reflected in his motto: "Small is Beautiful; Less is More; Moderation in All Things." Ted is fondly remembered as a great companion and loyal friend.

Ted was predeceased by his wife, Olive, and his son-in-law, Jack Bouffard. He is survived by his two daughters, Sally of Minneapolis, MN, and Linda of Middlebury, VT, and his son, Win, who continues Ted's active involvement in Middlebury Friends Meeting. He also leaves seven grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

MIDDLEBURY FRIENDS MEETING

NORTHWEST QUARTERLY MEETING

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**David Llewellyn Davis**  
**November 25, 1926 – April 3, 2020**

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*“Two Constants of this World”*

*The constant murmur of spirit deep inside our being  
That of God in each of us.  
Change, the other constant  
oh, yes  
Movement day in day out,  
Hour by hour  
Minute to minute  
Events, wonderful and horrific tumble over us  
Like shells and pebbles in wash of restless water.  
The attentive ear will give pause  
Seek a quiet space where it is  
Delve within, listen to the still, small voice  
Receive strength, solace,  
Yes, peace.*

(Taken from his book, *Ready to be Surprised*)

Dave Davis would not want us to begin a memoir of his life by listing his many contributions and achievements. He was not that kind of man. Our local paper, the *Bucksport Enterprise*, described Dave as “the poet who dwelled and flourished by the river”—the Narramissic River in Orland, Maine, to be precise. He was a gentle man, a humble man, who observed and appreciated all that life brought his way. Dave's collection of poems is titled *Ready to be Surprised*. In his poem “Wishing,” Dave wrote “Tears come to my eyes when I count all blessings. No more will I wish my life away.” His book is full of poems about his family activities with his wife, children, grandchildren, and friends. Poems like “Belly Hockey,” “One More Swing,” “Late Winter Snowfall,” and “Whence Hoo Hoo” describe a man in love with his family. He was also a man with a hint of mischief in his eyes, a ready smile, and a contagious laugh.

The accomplishments of a person who has been married for 70 years are never about just one person. Ginny, Dave's wife and active partner, was beside him and supported him as he participated in many career and community activities. Dave wore many hats: millworker, manager of the Community Development Department of the Cooperative Extension at the University of Maine, and greenhouse business manager. He participated in the local Grange, the Masons, the local Methodist Church, the Orland Historical Society and the Bucksport Bay Area Chamber of Commerce. He and Ginny were also instrumental in starting the Narramissic Valley Friends Meeting in Orland, which has continued to meet since the 1970s. Anyone who knew Dave would agree he lived his beliefs.

Dave was not a person to give unsolicited advice. The closest he comes is a poem in his book *Ready to be Surprised* titled “A Living Marker.”

*On this solstice night  
A winter's moon shines full  
Upon majestic, white pine  
Reminding us all:  
Stand firm, stand tall.  
Faith, tenderness and love will  
Weather all seasons.*

We believe that Dave is still “Ready to be Surprised.”

NARRAMISSIC VALLEY MONTHLY MEETING

VASSALBORO QUARTERLY MEETING

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**Annette F. Donovan**  
**March 10, 1921 – April 28, 2015**

Annette F. Donovan was a beloved member of New Haven Friends Meeting. She died peacefully on April 28, 2015, at Branford Hospice in Branford, CT. She was 94.

Many remember Annette sitting with her husband Ted and a full row of nine children in Connecticut Hall on the Yale Campus, where we met until we moved to our present location on East Grand Avenue in New Haven, CT. Annette always took an interest in everyone who attended meeting regularly, and she called or wrote thoughtful notes to people whom she hadn't seen for a while.

She loved poetry and was known for sharing quotes from poems in meeting for worship, and she participated in a regular poetry group at Elim Park in Cheshire, CT, where she lived in her final years. She also loved watercolor painting and made hand-painted cards for her thoughtful notes while at Elim Park. She and Ted had strong Quaker beliefs and were leaders in all aspects of New Haven Friends Meeting.

She is survived by her children, Mark of Kalamazoo, MI; Ann (Cote) of Bethany, CT; Marty of Berlin, CT<sup>1</sup>; Emily (Patton) of Wilton, IA; Rachel of Glastonbury, CT; Naomi of Green Lane, PA; Greta of Barto, PA; Deborah (Orris) of Colchester, CT; and Christopher of Burlington, CT. She is also survived by a sister Rosemary (Horrigan) of Cheshire, CT, as well as 19 grandchildren and 4 great-grandchildren. Annette, a daughter of the late Mabel (Roberts) and Bernard Fitch, was born in Hamden, CT on March 10, 1921, and was predeceased by her husband, Theodore W. Donovan, in 2001. A memorial service was held on Saturday, May 23, 2015, at New Haven Friends Meeting.

NEW HAVEN MONTHLY MEETING

CONNECTICUT VALLEY QUARTERLY MEETING

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**Margaret (Peggy) Eastman**  
**September 21, 1931 – January 27, 2021**

Margaret (Peggy) Eastman came to Friends in the early 60s and became a member in 1965. She left her former religious affiliation after expressing her concern to the minister that she was not comfortable teaching “fire and brimstone” in Sunday School, and the minister suggested she should leave, so she did. Margaret eventually found her true home with Friends. When she first came to the Yarmouth Preparative Meeting, there were some very weighty friends in attendance, as this was the only active year-round meeting on the Cape at that time (the meeting was officially reactivated in 1955 after having been laid down in 1909). Peggy reflected that the meeting was very active, although small in numbers, with a very lively First Day School, where she often brought her three young daughters. Peggy remembers this as a very wonderful time and reminisced about when they all traveled to the grounds of the East Sandwich meetinghouse for a summer picnic even though that meeting was not active at that time.

Peggy was considered a true “elder” and held in high regard by friends near and far who had the good fortune to know her. She served as co-clerk and then clerk, and sat on committees at Yarmouth Meeting, and as recording clerk for Sandwich Quarterly and often traveled to quarterly meetings, and to NEYM retreats and Sessions events. While co-clerking Yarmouth Preparative Meeting (YPM), she and her co-clerk organized

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<sup>1</sup> Marty passed away, July 2020

a protest on the grounds of the meetinghouse to stand against the invasion of Iraq; over 100 people showed up. For years YPM held gatherings in Friends' homes to share hospitality followed by a presentation. Margaret often hosted such meetings; one memorial gathering was when her uncle Robert Leach, a well-known Quaker who was a conscientious objector in WWII and helped start Pendle Hill, spoke about the history of Nantucket Quakers. Margaret reflected on when she came to the Cape with her uncle when she was about 9 years old specifically to visit the East Sandwich meetinghouse and this experience stayed with her.

During a lengthy career as a journalist, Margaret held many roles, such as editor and political columnist at the *Cape Cod Times*. She felt being a journalist was "somewhat of a calling" and viewed this as an opportunity to "make a difference." Margaret attended the United Nations Conference on Women in Beijing, China, in 1995 on behalf of the *Cape Cod Times* and noted there was a strong contingency of Quaker women in attendance. She often spoke publicly across the Cape about the conference. In her role as a journalist, Margaret was noted by colleagues as a mentor and matriarch by some, and although she had a kind and patient demeanor, she "was not to be underestimated."

When Margaret semi-retired she wrote a gardening column and often wrote a freelance column summarizing her many travels across parts of Europe with traveling companions. One wonderful memory was of the annual New Year's Eve gathering hosted by the East Sandwich Preparative Meeting, Peggy meeting a Friend's mother who discussed her appreciation for Peggy's gardening columns. All of Peggy's work, be it for the newspaper and/or within the Quaker community, reflected her strong belief in speaking truth to power and of her deep faith. As part of her faith, Margaret was a firm believer that there were "angels among us."

In addition to being an active member of Friends and her calling as a journalist, Margaret also found time for advocacy work as a member of Cape United Elders, a former Community Action Committee of Cape Cod & Islands program. Members served as trained ombudspersons, which allowed them to visit nursing homes unannounced to observe the facilities, talk to residents and staff, and to report issues of concern to the State's Department of Elder Affairs when necessary. She stayed involved in this program until it was terminated.

Margaret was truly a "weighty Quaker," and Friends often turned to her for advice and friendship. However, she was not beyond speaking up when she felt it was important to express her deep concerns. We could all aspire to and learn from such an example!

As Margaret's health declined, she spent her last two year in a nursing home, where close Friends had the honor of participating in worship at her residence until the pandemic made this impossible. She died of respiratory failure in the early morning of January 27 at the age of 89, leaving behind her three daughters, Barbara (who was her caretaker) (partner David), Susan Eastman, and Sheila Eastman Jeffrey (husband David Jeffrey) and their two adult children, Kurt and Sara (husband Christopher Damp). Margaret was widowed in 2001.

SANDWICH MONTHLY MEETING

SANDWICH QUARTERLY MEETING

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**John Kevin Gaffney**  
**May 15, 1949 – April 12, 2020**

John Gaffney, a life-long activist for justice and equality and a beloved member of Providence Monthly Meeting, died at his home in Providence, Rhode Island, on Easter morning, 2020.

John was born on May 15, 1949, to John F. Gaffney and Doris N. Simsek Gaffney of Wayne, New Jersey, where he grew up with his younger brother, Richard. As a teenager John attended St. Francis Xavier High School, a Jesuit college preparatory school in the Bronx, New York, where he joined the Junior ROTC program and graduated in 1967. He went on to earn a BA in political science at Fordham University in 1971, and his first job as a field representative for the Civil Rights Division of the New Jersey Department of Law and Public Safety set him on the path he walked for the rest of his life: resolute commitment to the protection of basic human rights for all.

John's work in civil-rights-law enforcement took him to Massachusetts in 1974 to serve as executive director of the Framingham Human Relations Commission. A year later, he moved to Providence, where he served for three years as director of Affirmative Action and Civil Rights Program at Providence Human Relations Commission (HRC). John would serve the city as commissioner on the HRC many times throughout his life; his last appointment from Mayor Jorge Elorza would have expired on January 31, 2021.

The years between 1975 and 1980 would prove to be formative ones for John. During that time he became connected with Providence Monthly Meeting, eventually deciding to join as a member. From his earliest days among Friends, John was a strong, conscientious voice in the meeting. It was during these years that he met and fell in love with Dale William “Bill” Brown, the man who would become John’s soulmate, partner, and husband. And it was during these years that John experienced an accident that changed his life. In the summer of 1978, while on his way home from a Gay Pride celebration and fundraiser, the car John was riding in was struck by a drunk driver. John became paraplegic, and after nearly a year spent recovering in the hospital, he resumed his work for civil rights—but this time as a wheelchair-user. His experiences and challenges navigating the world helped shape his passionate advocacy on accessibility issues and disability rights.

From June 1979 to spring 1980, John served as executive director of the Rhode Island chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union, but the position could not accommodate his need for intensive physical therapy. He left that job to focus on his physical recovery, but soon he was engaging in volunteer work and consulting, building a career in advocacy that would leave lasting impressions across many states, communities, and industries.

One of the great commitments of John’s life was the LGBT civil rights movement, and as he worked to regain his health, he volunteered for the National Gay Task Force (later known as the National LGBTQ Task Force). In his work there, John played a pivotal role in an early victory for gay youth in Rhode Island: In 1980, an 18-year-old at Cumberland High School, Aaron Fricke, asked to take another boy to the senior prom. The principal refused the request, as he had done with a similar case the year before involving a younger student. John learned of the case and reached out to Aaron, encouraging him to file a federal lawsuit and promising to pay the court fees. John connected Aaron with a Boston-based attorney with experience in filing gay rights suits, and a case was brought against the school alleging violation of same-sex couples’ First Amendment rights. The case was successful and the federal court judge demanded that Aaron Fricke and Paul Gilbert be allowed to attend their prom together in May 1980. The victory was a painful one, with both boys suffering harassment and verbal abuse from their community and their peers—but their court win was significant for gay rights in Rhode Island and nationwide. Many today know the names of Aaron Fricke and Paul Gilbert, but few know that it was John Gaffney who set their case in motion.

From 1986, John was deeply engaged in advancing, supporting, and monitoring accessibility initiatives in public life, especially in the domains of housing and transit. He served in the Governor’s Office of Handicapped Affairs in Boston, worked as assistant to the manager of the Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority, and became widely known as a consultant on paratransit issues after the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. John really did (co-)write the book on ADA paratransit service; his 1991 handbook on implementation, published by the U.S. Department of Transportation, ensured that transit operators and planners across the United States heard from the constituency they served: individuals with disabilities, whose voices and experiences had previously been discounted and overlooked in designing, maintaining, and evaluating transit systems. John knew that access to courts was one of the most important developments for people with disabilities; passage of the ADA meant litigation became a crucial tool for expanding access and inclusion. In April 1991 John moved to southern Florida to open an office for Katherine McGuinness and Associates, a Boston-based firm that provided consulting services on ADA compliance, from collective bargaining to access to transportation.

Over the next two decades, John’s influence helped shape policies in the states of Washington, Florida, Virginia and New Jersey, numerous municipal and regional transit systems, universities and institutions, and the U.S. Department of Transportation.

After their retirement, John and his partner, Bill, moved back to Providence from Florida. Their return coincided with important legal developments in Rhode Island and nationally. On May 2, 2013, when Rhode Island Governor Lincoln Chafee signed into law a bill legalizing same-sex marriage in the state, John and Bill had been living together for 33 years. The new bill would make it possible to wed legally in Rhode Island beginning on August 1 of that year, but John and Bill didn’t wish to wait any longer. On June 14, 2013, they held a civil ceremony on the lawn of the Massachusetts State House, where a Friend from Providence Meeting, Debbie Block, officiated. The following afternoon, they became the first same-sex couple to marry under the care of Providence Meeting. Throughout their many decades together, their mutual devotion and steadfast commitment to one another was an inspiration. Those who wanted lessons in how to love freely, fully, and well could do no better than watch Bill and John.

John was not afraid to push, and push hard, for the causes he believed in. His deep, gravelly voice diminished in volume over the years, but the messages he offered were no less resonant. As a gay, married Quaker and member of NEYM, John objected strenuously to Friends United Meeting's policy against employing openly gay staff. He found NEYM's financial support of FUM to be at odds with Friends' commitment to marriage equality, and he actively protested NEYM's continued relationship with FUM, pressing Providence Meeting to play a greater role in changing NEYM's position on FUM's gender inequality. As the sole wheelchair user at Providence Meeting, he urged the meeting to give serious attention to the inadequacies of our meetinghouse. In response to his request for improved access, a wheelchair-friendly ramp was added to the front entrance and a brick walkway was added to improve access to our lower floor. These additions were necessary, but not sufficient. In the recent meetinghouse expansion, the design of doorways and bathrooms prioritized compliance with ADA Accessibility Guidelines, and thanks to the generosity of a NEYM Legacy Grant, the meetinghouse was finally equipped with an accessible elevator in 2018.

In his service on the Providence Human Relations Commission, the minutes of meetings show the same features of John's leadership and advocacy that Friends heard monthly in meetings: his thorough approach, his sharp ears, his incisive commentary, and his resolve to see problems named, diagnosed, and addressed. Whether the topic was entrances, elevators, ramps, curbs, corners, doorways, slopes, fare hikes, route maps, response time, usage surveys, or service satisfaction, John insisted that the voices, perspectives, and experiences of the marginalized be a part of every discussion and decision. After John died, the Providence HRC released a statement containing this comment: "Commissioner Gaffney was a true warrior for equality and equity in the City of Providence, whose deep historical knowledge, passion, and leadership on the commission will be missed."

All of us are challenged in where we draw a line between active protest and divine leading. We often wince when reminders of injustices interrupt quiet meditation. But John knew that inaction can be a disability, and though he faced many challenges, passivity was never one of them.

John invested his entire life in the causes he believed in: ensuring the right of all people to love, to marry, to work, to be safely housed, and to move freely through the world. His life and work left an indelible impression not only on those who knew him, but also on the many people who benefited from his advocacy without ever knowing his name. Through love, commitment, discipline, and action, John Gaffney shaped his world for the better and challenged those around him to do likewise. He was a catalyst for human dignity and equality, and we are enriched by his memory.

PROVIDENCE MONTHLY MEETING  
SOUTHEAST QUARTERLY MEETING

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**Elise Trowbridge Ford Knapp**  
**July 1, 1924 – October 21, 2018**

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Elise Knapp was a beloved member of New Haven Friends Meeting. She died on October 21, 2018, at age 94, at her home in New Haven, CT. A memorial service was held at our meetinghouse May 11, 2019. Friends remember Elise as someone who took an interest in all attenders and loved keeping in touch with people. She is fondly remembered for making soup for meeting attenders who were recovering from illnesses, and she also volunteered regularly at hospice. She loved poetry and enjoyed sharing poems and discussing literature. When she was in her 80s she wrote a memoir about the house her grandfather built in Sagaponack, Long Island. She worked with meeting member Linda Miller for 10 years to complete this project, which was a real gift to her family. It is illustrated by Linda.

Elise Trowbridge Ford Knapp was born in Honolulu, HI, July 1, 1924, to the late Brigadier General William Wallace Ford and Alice Trowbridge Harris Ford. Following her father's many Army postings, she had attended schools in seven states by the time she entered Duke University in 1940. She married Robert Phineas Knapp Jr. of Manchester, CT, at Fort Sill, OK, in 1943 and moved to New York after the war, where Elise became the first married student at Barnard College. She graduated magna cum laude and Phi Beta Kappa in 1949. After living 15 years in Port Washington, NY, the family moved to Redding, CT, where Elise remained active in community affairs. She earned a Master's from Western Connecticut State University in 1971 and a PhD in English from Columbia University in 1975. She went on to teach and head the English Department at WCSU for over 20 years. She was a lifelong lover of English literature. Predeceased by her husband in 2000, Elise is



the mother of David M. Knapp (Pan), Michal Brownell (Bart), Robert P. Knapp III (Eun Soo) and Frederic H. Knapp (Donald).

Elise is survived by 12 grandchildren and 11 great-grandchildren.

NEW HAVEN MONTHLY MEETING

CONNECTICUT VALLEY QUARTERLY MEETING

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**Carl Albert Newlin**  
**May 23, 1937 – October 10, 2019**

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Carl Albert Newlin of New Haven—archivist, artist, poet, illustrator, and teacher of art and art history—died October 10, 2019, at age 82 in hospice care at Yale-New Haven Hospital, following a bout of pneumonia. He was attended by relatives as well as fellow New Haven Friends and the rabbi of Temple Beth Sholom in Hamden. At his death he counted close friends among members of both congregations.

Born in 1937 to Janet and Albert Chauncey Newlin, Carl was the son of a prominent Wall Street tax lawyer who frequently worked with philanthropists to finance projects in the arts and other fields. Brought up in Scarsdale, NY, Carl began his art career at the tender age of 12. He attended the Putney School in Vermont, the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (BFA, 1959) and the School of Art and Architecture at Yale University (MFA, 1964).

The youngest of three sons, Carl was originally named after his father. Customarily, it would be the eldest son who would be named for a father, but this exception in Carl's case was not the first. When he was old enough he took the unusual step of changing his name, dropping Chauncey and adding Carl. This example of independent thought and expression was a recurring theme in his life. Baptized Episcopalian and brought to church each week during childhood, Carl later came to deeply admire Japanese Buddhism in adulthood, but ultimately chose to return to Newlin family roots in Quakerism, embracing principles of tolerance and love.

At New Haven meeting, Carl began attending in the 1970s, became a member and was a faithful New Haven Friend in his later years. He was known for speaking eloquently to Friends at meeting for worship and for his feisty Spirit—in spite of growing physical challenges. Whenever he possibly could he was determined to be with Friends in worship and during fellowship, frequently attending the weekly Bible study group.

New Haven Quakers remember how Carl enjoyed adding to the conversation from his deep knowledge of the Hebrew Bible as well as his extensive training in art history. In addition, he loved to watch all the children enter the meeting showing their natural exuberance for life. Carl also had a special place in his heart for “Boomer,” a Friend's three-legged golden retriever who, belying his name, was “quiet as a Quaker”—and an exceptionally gentle being.

New Haven was Carl's chosen home and he chose it deliberately after many travels and cultural immersions across the United States and the world. Carl studied drawing with George Grosz at the Art Students League in New York and drawing and graphics with Gabor Peterdi. He was also apprenticed for two years in the Sugar Loaf, NY, studio of the Swiss surrealist painter, author, and scholar Kurt Seligman. Eager to soak up all the knowledge, wisdom, and skill he could from other artists and cultures, Carl journeyed in 1959 to the Ehei Zen Buddhist Monastery near Kanazawa, Japan. There, he studied haiku and calligraphy alongside Japanese master Masitoshi Thenz Konishi.

But his greatest artistic influence had come in 1954 when he met Swiss surrealist Kurt Seligman. Carl's self-illustrated book, *The Crow and Other Poems*, published by the Boston Book and Art Shop in 1967, paid careful homage to Seligman and Konishi. In typical Carl fashion he also added another personal touch: the book's introduction was written by his fourth-grade teacher, Helen Lorraine Hultz. Her introduction concluded: “With the crow to guide, enter this domain aware that it testifies to Albert's belief and faith that Art possesses a universal language with power to join mankind the world around.”

Carl's father was exceedingly proud of his son's artistic talent and sought to promote Carl's work. In the spring of 1980 a retrospective exhibit of Carl's work was held at Centre College's Regional Arts Center in Danville, Kentucky, and he spoke about his work at the opening of the month-long exhibit.

Carl also taught art and art history for many years at Albertus Magnus College, Southern Connecticut State University, Yale University and Greater Hartford Community College. During his teaching career he developed a close working relationship with Henri Nouwen, a noted Catholic theologian he met at Yale Divinity School,

and they ended up teaching a course together on Van Gogh. In 1971, he received a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to develop an art history of American minorities.

His mid-life brought with it new examinations and freethinking, leading to Carl's learning Biblical Hebrew and converting to Judaism. On his 50th birthday he celebrated his Bar Mitzvah. It was the beginning of many years of commitment to the Jewish community in New Haven.

Restless for new experiences and challenges, Carl left the safety of a tenured academic position and became archivist of the Jewish Historical Society of Greater New Haven. Perhaps his fondest memory at the Jewish Society, he told family members, was the four days he spent with future U.S. Senator Joseph Lieberman researching the Lieberman family's history.

Within the Newlin family Carl held the reputation of possessing an exacting encyclopedic knowledge of known relatives and family events. Ever on the hunt for a chuckle or a good belly laugh, Carl rejoiced in humorously regaling family and friends with stories of family dysfunction and his own folly. He was a sweet, humble man and a gentle soul.

Carl was predeceased by his parents and elder brothers, George and John, and is survived by his three nephews, a niece, two first cousins and the children of those generation—for whom he had great fondness.

A memorial meeting for worship celebrating the life of Carl Newlin in the manner of Friends (Quakers) was held on Sunday, November 3rd, at the meetinghouse of New Haven Monthly Meeting.

NEW HAVEN MONTHLY MEETING

CONNECTICUT VALLEY MEETING

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**Susan (Sukie) Bellows Rice**  
**November 1, 1945 – July 17, 2020**

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Susan (Sukie) Rice was born in New Rochelle, New York, on November 1, 1945, to Charles D. and Winifred Rice. She grew up in an old farmhouse in the countryside, about an hour by train from Manhattan. There, her love of music, theater, cats, dogs, and the world of nature took root in the warmth of a loving home. In the 1960s, after earning a BA in psychology at Hiram College, she went to work for an advertising agency in New York City. Simultaneously, she immersed herself in the Morningside Heights Friends Meeting.

The Society of Friends became a lifelong source of strength and inspiration for Sukie. As the Quaker values of simplicity, peace, integrity, community, equality, and stewardship grew in importance for her, her work in commercial advertising held less and less allure. In 1969 she left New York City and moved to Cambridge, Massachusetts, where she worked at two Boston area hospitals during the 1970s. Here, she threw herself into a host of nonviolent civil disobedience actions against the Vietnam War, some of which led to her arrest, and one to a couple of weeks in jail. As the Vietnam War was ending, she joined the staff of the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC). There, she allied AFSC with the anti-nuclear Clamshell Alliance and helped train protesters and organize successive nonviolent occupations of the construction site of the Seabrook Nuclear Power Plant.

In 1971 Sukie met and fell in love with Lee Chisolm. Later, they would acknowledge to each other that it was indeed love at first sight. Through Lee she was introduced to Anthroposophy, the spiritual philosophy and teachings of Rudolph Steiner. From that seed, planted early in her consciousness and cultivated through study motivated by her deep love and admiration for Lee, together they formed a shared spiritual path. Steiner's teachings came to be the cord that strengthened and infused their lives as a couple and produced meaning and purpose in their work together in the world. Anthroposophy, along with Quaker faith and practice, became the foundation from which Sukie grew in spirit and presence. And in Lee's own words, "she drew ideas from the ozone. She was a natural conduit for spiritual inspiration."

In the late 1970s Sukie and Lee moved to Maine, where Sukie joined the Durham Monthly Meeting of Friends in 1979. In the 1980s Sukie and Lee moved to Freeport, where they started a family. When their first child, Adam, was not quite three, Sukie and Lee resolved to start a Waldorf School. For the next several years, Sukie worked indefatigably. She held informational and fundraising events, pulling together a nucleus of founding parents, a teacher, and eventually a class. What began as a little kindergarten of a dozen students continues today as a mature K-through-12 school known as the Maine Coast Waldorf School.

As her children grew older, Sukie enrolled in the University of Southern Maine in the 1990s for a degree in music education, and for the next 20 years she was a full time K-through-5 music teacher in the Portland

Public Schools. She also acted with the Freeport Community Players, later becoming their musical director. In this role, she worked on a handful of plays and annual performances of *Amahl and the Night Visitors* for seven years. Stepping away from the Freeport Community Players, Sukie next founded the Greater Freeport Community Chorus, which she directed for six years.

Sukie was an active member of Durham Monthly Meeting of Friends for four decades. She served the meeting in a variety of roles over the years, sometimes wearing multiple hats. For many years she was the music director for the meeting's annual Christmas and Easter choirs. She also served on Ministry and Counsel, Peace and Social Concerns, and Finance committees, and as both recording clerk and presiding clerk.

In 2001 Sukie was inspired by a small group of Quaker women from Kenya who were providing a feeding program to AIDS orphans in their community of Kakamega. Sukie volunteered her time extensively to support this program, ultimately founding Friends of Kakamega, a New England-based program that partners with its Kenyan counterparts to support their grassroots mission. Through her work with Friends of Kakamega, Sukie spent the last two decades of her life helping to support the wellbeing and education of vulnerable children in western Kenya, giving hope to hundreds of young Africans. True to her character, she grew to know, love, and individually connect with both the children served by the project and the Americans who embraced the opportunity that Sukie gave them to help. Her son John has continued that work at the Kakamega Care Center.

Trailblazer that she was, later in life Sukie also devoted time to exploring the topic of death and dying and the spiritual journey of the soul during this final passage. This in turn led her to the next frontier of green burial for herself as well as others. With the assistance of family, close friends, and members of the Durham Friends Meeting, she realized her desire to be buried in this manner and so opened the way for others to follow in the newly dedicated lot for green burials in the Lunt Cemetery.

Sukie's great energy, compassion, and integrity guided her life in remarkable ways. As one Friend described her so well, "Sukie has been the spark and flame of a better life for so many." While her work and life were always filled with purpose and encouragement, particularly memorable was her joy. Sukie asked us to remember her joy. We do, Sukie. We surely do.

Sukie passed from this life on July 17, 2020. She is survived by her husband, Lee Chisholm, and sons Adam, Ian, and John Chisholm.

DURHAM MONTHLY MEETING

FALMOUTH QUARTERLY MEETING

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**Rudolf Siegfried Scheltema**  
**May 27, 1926 – August 5, 2019**

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Coming out of WWII as a foot soldier and newly convinced pacifist, Rudolf Scheltema pursued his love of biology through graduate school. While finishing his PhD, he fell in love with Amelie Haines while they were both doing initial graduate work at Harvard. They would discover the Society of Friends together, as well as a way of life dedicated not only to scientific truth but also the holy perspective of being and doing good gently in the world.

In the mid-sixties, the West Falmouth Preparative Meeting of Sandwich Monthly Meeting had resumed unprogrammed meeting for worship year round without a pastor. Rudolf and Amelie now had two boys to raise and Rudolf had acquired a position at the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution studying planktonic larvae. They had been attending the Falmouth Unitarian Universalist meeting, which at the time was sharing the meetinghouse with the much smaller Friends meeting. Once they discovered Sandwich Monthly meeting, Rudolf and Amelie joined without hesitation. Quaker pacifism and the active commitment to a life of nonviolence and justice was compelling to Rudolf. Also the silent form of worship, where personal responsibility, modesty of expression, and communal support represented the most valid expression of a religious life for him. This became the foundation for the rest of his life, often referred to in conversations with him where religion was a topic.

Quakerism nurtured the whole person for Rudolf. Not only was he a scientist, he was also his own illustrator for his papers. His work included, for him, the necessary component of teaching others. Love for the arts, love for learning, pushed the violent and authoritarian experiences of his youth away from him as a regretted and damaging period. Having experienced what war does to everyone, Rudolf was often involved in counter-recruitment visits to local schools, draft counseling, and peaceful protests. He was also a longtime support-

er and member of veterans for peace movements, except when the fact of being a veteran became a badge of honor and authority. Then his modesty and reason made him step back. For many years he and Amelie sponsored the Veterans for Peace Poetry Contest on Cape Cod, giving voice and encouragement to young people in the schools, and to older voices often marginalized or muffled by a public society obsessed with patriotism and military “service.” However, he rarely if ever made himself the center of a rational critique of war and violence. He felt that good, comprehensive reasons would have weight that other rational people would see and be able to own for themselves. The fact that he was present as a committed Friend made the point more finally than any words could.

When Rudolf traveled in the interests of science, he and Amelie would attend Friends meetings all over the globe. They made lifelong friends among Friends everywhere they went. When he and Amelie sponsored weekly Bible studies (Sharman’s book on synoptic gospel records), they would bring pikelets<sup>1</sup> as a snack, having learned how to make them from scientific and Quaker sojourns in Australia. Their travels brought a cosmopolitan perspective to the West Falmouth meeting, partly because it seemed natural to Rudolf to share time with Friends wherever they went, thus connecting disparate places and experiences. For Rudolf, the worship discipline of the silent meeting was universally understandable and communicative.

Born in 1926 to a Dutch-American family, Rudolf was brought up bilingual. His father was a research librarian for the Library of Congress. He went to war at 18, became a convinced Friend at 40, lived his entire life as a research scientist (even coining a term that is part of the science lexicon, “teleplanic” or far-wandering, to help describe planktonic movement in the oceans), gave himself over to human generosity and scientific rigor, and died on 5 August (eighth month) 2019, at home with his children and grandchildren in attendance.

SANDWICH MONTHLY MEETING

SANDWICH QUARTERLY MEETING

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**Katherine Stillman**  
**October 5, 1943 – July 20, 2020**

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Katherine Stillman moved to Wellfleet in 1972 and became a member of Sandwich Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends on April 7, 1996. She attended Yarmouth Preparative Meeting, where she took on many roles, including once serving as clerk. She also hosted a midweek worship at her home under the care of Yarmouth Preparative Meeting.

Always sociable, Katherine’s home was forever open, whether it be for conversation, companionship, to share a delightful meal, or to simply sit and savor the marsh that abutted her property.

Katherine loved to travel. Two of her many trips included traveling with Quaker Friends to Italy and to India and, as a young woman, taking a month-long trek in the Himalayas. If a Friend needed a traveling companion, Katherine was always willing and ready to accompany. Katherine was a member of Common Voices, a women’s cappella singing group. Friends who attended the concerts always made it a point to connect with Katherine at the receptions following the performances. Katherine’s community involvement included serving as chair of the Wellfleet Library Development Committee.

Katherine was a potter with extensive training. Her repertoire included techniques learned from Acoma Tribe artisans in New Mexico. In her potting shed and shop, Katherine had a small tin where people could leave money for their purchase with a note stating, “If you are in need of money please take some.” In 1988 the Wellfleet Public Library interviewed Katherine, captured in a documentary titled, “Katherine Stillman, The Potter.”

Potting was not her only trade. At various times, Katherine taught at a school for children with special needs, created pastries for a local restaurant, and worked as an outreach coordinator for the Truro Council on Aging.

Katherine remained active in the meeting until her health declined. She died on July 20, 2020, at the age of 76, and will be remembered with love by those Friends who experienced her quiet presence in Quaker meeting and her great joy for life.

SANDWICH MONTHLY MEETING

SALEM QUARTERLY MEETING

*Note: Some information for this memorial minute was published in The Cape Codder Dec. 19–31, 2020, issue.*

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**Edward Franklin Turco**  
**March 23, 1945 – March 28, 2021**

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Truly a Renaissance man, Edward Franklin Turco lived a full and well examined life. He was voraciously interested in this world and the universe beyond, but also delved into the workings of the human mind. He shared those passions with his wife of 40 years, Denise (Prive) Turco. She was constant in her support of him and his unique talents and keen intellect and together they were never at a loss for conversation about their learnings and wonderings. Ed creatively charted his own path in life and from this world. Edward, at 76 years of age, passed away peacefully with his wife by his side at their home in Lincoln, Rhode Island, on March 28, 2021.

Born in Providence, Rhode Island, on March 23, 1945, he was a son of the late Alfred and Delia (DiMeo) Turco. In this family of Italian-American heritage, Ed spent his youth in Warwick and Cranston and later resided in Lincoln for many years. In addition to his wife, he is survived by his son David Bernard Greene Turco and his wife, Lisa, of Cumberland; his granddaughter Emma Rose Turco, also of Cumberland; his brother Alfred Turco and his companion Maureen O'Dougherty of Portland, CT; niece Ellen Schell, and nephew Jeffrey Turco.

Edward graduated from Brown University with a Bachelor's degree in anthropology in 1967 and a Master's degree in English in 1971 and later in life pursued course work in mathematics. He worked at the Brown University Mail Services after graduation and held various jobs before he moved to the United States Postal Service, where he was promoted to the engineering technical unit working with computer software applications, as he was a self-taught programmer. As an adjunct professor in English at the Community College of Rhode Island and as a substitute teacher in secondary schools in the late '90s and early 2000s, Ed was a notable success with students, even if not with bureaucratic administrators.

A meticulous craftsman and a scholar, Ed read widely and was fascinated by the world of numbers and scientific observation. Precision was Ed's thing. And he held strong opinions about things he cared deeply about. Astronomy was his lifelong hobby and passion. He was intrigued by the planets, stars, meteors, constellations, comets, and especially eclipses. His interest with telescopes began when at 13 he received a telescope as a gift and became so fascinated that he wanted another. His father said he could only have a second if he made it himself, and so he did. And continued making ever-more-precise and aesthetically beautiful ones from his early teens onward. Avidly pursuing his interests in high school, he represented Rhode Island in the National Science Fair in his junior year at Cranston West. He was a life-long member of Skyscrapers Astronomical Society in Scituate, Rhode Island, joining in 1961 when he was just 16 years old. Ed gave many talks for the organization, wrote articles often for the Society's publications, and shared his knowledge of telescope-making informally and in formal workshops for many people over the years.

With two high-school friends he started RI Meteor Research Organization (RIMRO) and their observing data was sent to the American Meteor Society. Ed was a contributor to the magazines *Sky and Telescope* and *Amateur Astronomy* and continued to publish regularly. More than 50 years later, he titled his last piece "The Definitive Newtonian Reflector"—a monograph-length technical essay published on CloudyNights.com

When Ed met his future wife, Denise, he wanted her to appreciate his passion for sky-gazing and for crafting fine instrument telescopes. He extended a challenge to her when they were dating, asking her to build one. It was typical of Ed that the plan for it was completely unusual. Made of a bowling ball with coffee cans for the lens tube, a coat rack as its stand, the swivel mount made from a piano caster cup, and a handle fashioned from a porcelain door knob, the telescope nonetheless was a working instrument. Denise fortunately passed the test and they were married on February 14, 1981. Together they raised their son David, who today owns and runs a local landscaping business.

In his home, Ed constructed instruments that were works of art—each requiring daunting microsurgical labor—grinding and polishing mirrors, constructing tripods and (along with much else) crafting the tubes, ranging from fine woods to brightly painted composite materials. Ed was an inventor as well as an exacting, highly skilled craftsman, pushing his expertise into new realms; for example, with the creation of a projector-kaleidoscope made of fine brass, a present for his wife's birthday.

Not a scanner of the skies only, Ed had other enthusiasms as well. He was a pipe-smoking inveterate collector of all sorts of things—of coins, of stamps, of stones, of shells, even old radios. An autodidact, he became interested in chaos theory and, combining his love of music and mathematics, he wrote a computer program that generated compositions of chaos-created music which brought him to the attention of the chairman of

Brown University's Mathematics Department. He was impressed with Ed's work and deeply appreciative of the originality of his explorations.

A lover of both Classical and contemporary music, Ed had a keen appreciation for the life and creative work of the Russian composer and conductor Sergei Rachmaninoff, whose gravesite in Kensico Cemetery, Valhalla, New York, he and Denise visited and where he specially played a recording of one of his favorites of the artist's compositions, *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini*.

It was Ed's love of history that brought him in mid-life to the Saylesville Quaker Meeting along the Great Road in Lincoln for the Christmas Eve candlelit worship in 2000. He was drawn to the early 18th-century building and immediately noted the need for significant repairs. While by temperament skeptical, in mid-life Ed began reading deeply about the Religious Society of Friends and a year later became a Quaker, explaining that he liked the Sunday sermons at the meetinghouse—meaning that there weren't any. Being able to help drew Ed in and he spent months rehabilitating the meetinghouse, making improvements that extended from restoring small interior details to repainting interior walls that had begun to flake, to adding a built-in bookshelf and organizing the basement workshop area. He was a faithful attendee and dedicated himself to service to the meeting for as long as he was able. A hybrid memorial service for him was held there, both in-person and online, on May 1, 2021.

While he never achieved the stable teaching career that he desired, he was ultimately an educator through and through. Ed worked both formally and informally with students on those subjects that fascinated him. The physical challenges of advanced rheumatoid arthritis limited his mobility in recent years but led him to reach out in new ways to communicate those passions with others. When he became housebound, he continued his mentoring and teaching via the internet.

Ed's brother, Al Turco, in his comments at the memorial service, closed with this:

"In his own way, Ed could be a tough customer. He claimed that he did not suffer fools gladly, and thought he had seen quite a few of them. He felt that his achievements were neglected by persons who should have known better. But if he overestimated the extent to which he was ignored by some, he underestimated the esteem with which he was held by others.

"All in all, my brother was a creature of confident doubt. While uncertain that the emergence of life on planet earth was a good thing, he never ceased to value the good things in life. For this reason, among others, Ed Turco will be much missed but well remembered by all of us, because he has become an irreplaceable part of our own lives."

PROVIDENCE MONTHLY MEETING

SOUTHEAST QUARTERLY MEETING

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**Ronald Earle Wain**  
**May 10, 1950 – December 18, 2020**

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The Lord saw fit to introduce Ronald Earle Wain to this world on May 10, 1950. He came to us in humble status, never boastful or with self-centered ego, a man who touched the lives of others in his own unique way. He was a blessing to, and blessed by, those whose lives he touched in his earthly presence.

Life held many challenges and lessons for this treasured soul, and he met them head-on and grew into the person who practiced kindness and faith and love and fortitude in many endeavors. Ron was known for his sense of humor, a helping hand, the willingness to reach beyond a given moment. He was dedicated to family and his callings in life, a man who saw a need or an opportunity for better in this world.

Ron's work-a-day world was met with persistence. His outreach was expansive, for he not only held a job at Central Maine Power as a control-room operator for many years, retiring with dignity, but was a loving family man, a caring neighbor, a faithful friend, and a godly example to fellow beings in his own special way. He met community needs as in leading efforts to support the local family services center. He gave of his time and energy to the greater community in helpful ways like assisting when needed in the service of our local police and fire departments; he performed tax services for many friends and others and would not accept any payment. He and Sandy opened their home for many years to fundraisers for those in need, such as cancer victims or someone who lost their home in a fire. During the holidays their yard was a Christmas wonderland, where the only price of admission was a donation of food for the Windham Food Pantry.

Ron was always willing to lend a hand in his faith community, whether it meant delivering a message of the Spirit in meeting for worship or in manual labors for upkeep of the meetinghouse and, grounds or by participating in suppers, fairs, or yard sales as well as helping to organize a “get acquainted with Friends Meeting” venue which introduced folks unfamiliar with Windham’s Quaker meeting to its history and ways; he also assisted our treasurer so she could spend time with her family in Florida, and he was always a welcoming presence when guests came by. Ron and his beloved wife of 40 years, Sandy, were married at Windham Friends and have been an active part of the life fabric of this Meeting for decades.

Ron was called to his heavenly home on December 18, 2020, and he will be deeply missed here, welcomed there, and reunited with his fellow acquaintances in times to come. We can thank God for all His promises as well as His blessings, for we know as the Good Book says, “Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.” (Ps. 115:15) And we know there will come the fulfillment of Christ’s words in John 14:2,3 that we, as believers, can look forward to eternal life because Jesus promised it.

God has blessed Ron’s family, his friends and neighbors, the Windham Community, and his faith community as well, for the privilege of knowing him, interacting with him, and seeing an example of goodness through him. For all that, we are thankful for the time we shared here. Thank you Ron!

WINDHAM MONTHLY MEETING

FALMOUTH QUARTERLY MEETING

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**Margery Swett Walker**  
**April 14, 1926 – June 12, 2019**

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Even as we are filled with echoes of her warmth and memories of her laughter, our hearts are broken at Margery Walker’s passing. One Friend remembered Margery with an “acute mind, broad experience, warm smile, firm grounding. Margery gave the gift of affirmation for our ... journeys ..., the gust that blows wind in the sails and lends lightness to the foot.”

One of nine children, Margery grew up in the Midwest surrounded by her extended family, and she carried that sense of family through her entire life. Whoever spent time with her felt that familial embrace. When she smiled, Margery made you feel you were the best possible version of yourself. She shone with grace and love, and grace and love would grow inside you, reflected in her presence.

Margery and with her beloved husband Alan were searchers; they found Friends together in the early 1950s and they made their spiritual home amongst us, active in the life of Friends’ meetings wherever they were living: Anchorage, Alaska; Ann Arbor Michigan; Hanover, New Hampshire; Madison, Wisconsin; Richmond, Indiana; as well as Plainfield, Vermont. Writing of a hanging in our Plainfield meetinghouse, Margery reflected, “[I] was drawn to the Society of Friends, Quakers, by this compelling witness to the inherent Good at the heart of creation—the creative force itself residing in every part of creation, universal and personal ... . It is clear that we shall have to work together to bring about the mantle of Light.”

Margery lived a life of service both within and outside of the Religious Society of Friends. She was a founding member of Plainfield Monthly Meeting, shepherding it from its beginnings as a worship group under the care of Burlington Monthly Meeting, and then after her retirement helping the meeting build a home in Plainfield. In Lima, Peru, she and Alan worked side by side with young Peruvians in the *barriadas* (shantytowns) as part of an American Friends Service Committee project (1963–1965). She served as the regional director of the Community College of Vermont (1973–1978) and the dean of rural education for the University of Alaska (1978–1986).

Margery was the director of Pendle Hill (1986–1991) and then on its board until 2000. Margery was deeply involved in the Religious Society of Friends. She sat on the board of the American Friends Service Committee, as well as on the boards of the Quaker United Nations Office, Friends United Meeting, and Friends Committee for National Legislation. In the broader community, her involvement included the Vermont Ecumenical Council, Planned Parenthood, Washington County United Way, and Washington County Mental Health. She was active with the Democratic Party and worked for restorative justice in central Vermont.

Margery lived a life of ministry through her words, her actions, and her counsel. Many thought of her quiet activism and servant leadership as a Quaker ideal. Her ministry during worship expanded and uplifted our understanding. She was active in all aspects of the life of Plainfield Monthly Meeting, Northwest Quarterly Meeting, and New England Yearly Meeting, including serving as recording clerk (1972–1975). She used these

many gifts when she served as chair of the board at Kendal-at-Hanover. And, while her life was punctuated by many accomplishments and honors, she never spoke of them. Many of us didn't learn of them until her passing, when we read her autobiography, *The Treasures in One Another, a Memoir*.

Friends have fond memories of annual summer picnics at the Walker family home on Groton Pond. Lazy afternoons of potluck lunches, warm sunshine on uplifted faces, and cool water during dips in the pond. All covered with Margery's graciousness and Light.

Margery is survived by her five children, eleven grandchildren, seven great-grandchildren, and all of us who find ourselves richer in Spirit for having walked with her.

*... Because they stand,  
Talking, taking pleasure in others,  
with their hands on the shoulders of strangers and the shoulders of each other.  
Because you don't have to tell them to walk toward the light...<sup>1</sup>*

Margery nurtured. She held us steady when the way forward was rocky and celebrated as we walked God's path. We were challenged and shielded by her. We are so blessed.

PLAINFIELD MONTHLY MEETING

NORTHWEST QUARTERLY MEETING

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**Meredith (Marty) Walton**  
**June 30, 1936 – June 11, 2020**

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Marty (Meredith) Walton died June 11, 2020, surrounded by her family and her life partner of 31 years, Linda Lyman. Marty died just a few days short of her 84th birthday (June 30). She was a lifelong Quaker, served on numerous committees, attended many gatherings, and developed countless deep friendships with Quaker connections. Marty's combination of business experience and her volunteer work with committees of Friends General Conference led to her position with FGC as general secretary for six years (1986–1992). During that time, Marty improved FGC's organizational structure and widened its communication focus.

Marty graduated from Earlham College with a BA in geology in 1958. She retained her fascination for geology and nature throughout her life and shared that fascination with friends and family. In college, she met Wayne Vinson and they married the year of her graduation. They had four children together, before a friendly divorce in 1976. In addition to Linda Lyman, Marty is survived by her four children and their spouses, and seven grandchildren.

Marty came from a family with strong Quaker roots. Her mother was one of five Walton sisters who lived on the George School campus with their parents, where their father, George, was head of school in addition to being very active with the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting.

One of Marty and Linda's projects was to document the Walton sisters' history through taped interviews with the two remaining sisters and all of the living children. Linda did the interviewing and Marty did the transcribing. Marty didn't get the next steps of editing and book publishing fully accomplished before her death, but the many Zoom family conferences her last several months around the family history were a source of strength to the extended family and to Marty.

Marty was a founding member of the Association of Personal Historians (APH), and went on to become its treasurer and its operations manager. And APH has sponsored a memorial bench to be placed in Marty's memory at the Laudholm Farm in Wells, Maine.

Throughout her life, Marty was active in social justice issues, both within a Quaker framework and beyond. She volunteered for various political campaigns for candidates with similar convictions. And after moving to Springvale, she found more avenues for service and another comfortable spiritual home in the Sanford UU church.

On a personal note, Marty is fondly remembered for her warm, welcoming smile, which she shared even as her health challenges increased. She always had a way of listening to you that made you feel like you were the only other person in the room. She listened non-judgmentally and saw the good in others. Marty maintained a life-long connection with the natural world which she shared with others. Indeed, the world of nature outside her window sustained her during the final part of her journey. No matter her challenges, she



was always appreciative of others and of the simple joys of life. Our memories of her are cherished, and she is missed.

SOUTHERN MAINE FRIENDS MEETING

FALMOUTH QUARTERLY MEETING

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**Theodora (Dody) Elkinton Waring**  
**March 7, 1927 – August 23, 2020**

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Dody (Theodora) Elkinton Waring died peacefully on August 23, 2020, aged 93, at the home of her daughter in Brunswick, Maine. A member of Putney Friends Meeting in Vermont since 2015, she was a longtime and beloved member of Wellesley Friends Meeting, going back to its very beginning.

Dody and her husband Tom were among the Friends who began worshipping at Tenacre School in 1957 and then became members of the newly formed monthly meeting when it was founded in 1958.

Over the decades, Dody contributed to Wellesley Meeting in numerous ways. She served many times on Ministry and Counsel, was on Hospitality, Nominating, and Religious Education Committees, and also was our recording clerk. She rarely failed to attend meeting for business, expressing her ideas with passion and thoughtful attention to Quaker testimonies. Dody was among the first to give a warm welcome to newcomers and her ministry was heartfelt and memorable, often containing quotes from the Bible.

Already in her eighties when she moved to Brattleboro, Dody quickly became integral to the life of Putney Meeting. She served on the Fellowship Committee and the Adult Religious Education Committee, as well as on a few clearness committees.

Dody spoke often in meeting, and her simple messages touched many members and attenders. Her vocal ministry touched on both thanksgiving and supplication.

She spoke of Friends here and abroad. As part of her ministry she shared both the hardships and joys in her life.

Dody was active in New England Yearly Meeting, attending Sessions as long as she was able, and serving on Yearly Meeting Ministry and Counsel, Moses Brown School Board, and Correspondence Committees. In addition, she gave workshops and was a worship-sharing leader several times.

After moving to Brattleboro, Vermont, in 2012, she transferred her membership to Putney Friends Meeting, where she quickly became a treasured Friend.

Dody was born Theodora Elkinton to an old Quaker family in Germantown, Pennsylvania, a community in north Philadelphia. With the exception of one year, she attended Germantown Friends School, as her mother and grandmother had before her. In 1938 her parents were doing Quaker work in Berlin, so Dody and her older brother spent her seventh-grade year in the Netherlands at a school specifically for German-Jewish children who had been unable to attend school at home during those years due to Nazi anti-Semitic regulations. This experience left an indelible mark on her and the rest of her family. Dody spent summers during her teen years at Quaker work camps.

Dody attended Smith College for two years, and in 1946 she married Tom Waring, who was also from a Quaker family in Germantown. In their first summer together, the newlyweds joined a work crew and boarded a ship to Finland, where they built houses and distributed relief supplies to Finnish families who had been displaced by the Russian invasion during the war.

Back in the United States, Dody focused on raising their five children, serving meals daily for seven (or more, with frequent guests!) with aplomb.

After living in Denver and Doylestown, Pennsylvania, they settled in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and Tom became the Headmaster of the newly founded Cambridge Friends School. Dody created and ran the library at Cambridge Friends School, where her love of children's books and gift for reading aloud shone. During this time she finished college, graduating from Simmons with a BA in 1971, and then an MEd from Lesley in 1972.

Dody and Tom bought land next to Barvel Pond in New Hampshire (near Squam Lake) and spent many weekends and summers building cabins and enjoying rustic wilderness life. Dody continued to go there into her eighties. She delighted in the natural world throughout her life.

Dody described herself as not a particularly devout child, taking her Quakerism for granted. But when visiting her daughter at Earlham College in 1972, she had a profound spiritual experience, what she called

a “baptism of the Holy Spirit.” She felt that she now had a personal relationship with God. This influenced her to go to divinity school, though she knew she could never leave Quakerism, nor did she want to have a church of her own. She says she changed from nominal to serious Quakerism. She received a Master of Divinity degree at Harvard Divinity School, and a Doctorate in ministry at Boston University.

After getting divorced in 1979, and once her children were grown, the next part of Dody’s adult life was full of accomplishments. She worked, traveled, and found ways to serve, as her parents had done before her. Later she moved to Newton, Massachusetts. She worked as a hospital chaplain at New England Baptist Hospital in Boston for 15 years, until her retirement in 1993.

During this time, she served for three consecutive terms as the first woman elected president of the National Association of Hospital Chaplains. After her retirement she continued to conduct marriages, funerals, and baptisms, allowing her to offer guidance and love for many people with no religious connections. Dody had a warm and outgoing nature, loved to laugh, and with older family members or Friends she continued to use the plain language (“thee” and “thy”).

Dody was a life-long learner and traveled widely after her retirement, usually combining travel with service. Examples of her trips were a Biblical Archeological Dig in Israel, Habitat for Humanity building projects in Georgia and Alaska, and a medical mission to Ecuador, which gave her a chance to visit Machu Picchu, Peru, a life-long dream. For many years, Dody was also a faithful participant in Boston’s “Walk for Hunger,” raising money and walking miles in support of impoverished people. She was high-spirited and energetic, befriended people, and told her stories wherever she went. She valued her friendships and maintained connections through letters and visits.

At age 76 she wrote her memoir, *A Sacred Trust*, chronicling the long history of Quaker service and faith in her family since 1816. In her eighties, as an active and involved mother and grandmother, she was a terrific role model and beloved in her family. She is survived by her children, Christopher, Kitty, Nat, Abigail, and Lydia, 17 grandchildren, and 42 great-grandchildren.

Her favorite quotation was from the Bible, Psalm 91:1-2: “He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High, who abides in the shadow of the Almighty, will say to the Lord, ‘My refuge and my fortress; my God, in whom I trust’.”

PUTNEY MONTHLY MEETING

NORTHWEST QUARTERLY MEETING

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**Phyllis May Curtis White Wetherell**  
**May 11, 1936 -- April 25, 2020**

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Phyllis Wetherell was born in 1936 in Portland, Maine, the first child of John and Mary Curtis. She grew up in Durham Friends Meeting and remained a member here all her life—one of our many beloved members of the family Curtis. With many friends in both communities, she oscillated between Durham, Maine, and Richmond, Indiana all her life.

After her first husband, Ira Donald White, and her daughter, Lisa, passed away, she married David Wetherell, the pastor of Durham Friends. They moved to Richmond, Indiana so that David could attend the Earlham School of Religion. After David graduated, they moved to Bar Harbor, where Phyllis and David helped start Acadia Friends Meeting. About a decade later they moved back to Richmond, Indiana.

Phyllis became receptionist/secretary at the Earlham School of Religion, a position she held for 15 years, from 1985 to 2000. Hers was the first face that prospective students, faculty, and staff encountered. She welcomed them and treated them graciously and with a kindness that came from her heart. Phyllis always believed she had “the best seat in the house” at the front desk at ESR. She wrote:

“What an education to listen to people wrestling out loud about their beliefs or lack of beliefs, to see the profound impact a feisty professor has on someone who finally sees and feels the Light, to watch as a programmed Quaker meets head-on an unprogrammed Quaker, when neither one knows anything of the other’s practices. Do you know how exciting it is to listen to folk trying to sort out their beliefs and try and figure out where those beliefs will lead them?”

David passed away in 1990. When Phyllis retired from ESR she came again to live among us in Maine, and then returned to Friends Fellowship in Richmond, Indiana, in 2013 for the last seven years of her life. We were always glad to see her when she came back to Durham Friends.

A bright presence in all places and seasons, Phyllis will be deeply missed by all who knew her. She is survived by her children Susan, Linda, and David John; her sister Charlotte Ann, brother Johnny, and stepdaughter Lynne. Her grandchildren that will carry on all she taught them: Hickory, Ryder, Rossy, Marjorie, Corey, Brandon, Ashton, Nate and Genesee. So, too, her great-grandchildren: Jack, Mason, Max, Samuel, Lumen, and (due in July), Sawyer. Those already passed on include her parents John and Mary Curtis, brother David, daughter Lisa, and the two loves of her life, husbands Donny and David.

Phyllis passed from this life in Richmond on April 25, 2020. Celebrations of her life will be in Richmond, Indiana, and Durham, Maine, later in the year.

DURHAM FRIENDS MEETING

FALMOUTH QUARTERLY MEETING

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**Edith Mary Whitehead**  
**May 22, 1923 – April 18, 2020**

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Edie Whitehead died from natural causes, Saturday, April 18, 2020, at Horizons Living and Rehab Center, Brunswick, Maine, just a month before her 97th birthday.

Edie Mary Lamb was born on May 22, 1923, in Dublin, Ireland, the youngest of three children. After training as a physical therapist, she came to the United States to care for a cousin. She met Macy Whitehead in Phippsburg through a mutual friend, Albert Bailey, and they were married on April 22, 1952, in the manner of Friends at the Quaker meeting in Westtown, in West Chester, Pennsylvania. They shared a commitment to each other, family, and community for 60 wonderful years, raising four children and numerous dogs, cat, and horses. Throughout their lives, they stayed rooted to the simple things.

Her husband's various positions as an ordained minister took them to South Portland (1955–60); Eagle Butte, South Dakota (1960–73); and Kent, Connecticut (1973-78). From Connecticut, they moved to New York while Macy earned a pastoral counseling degree, and Edie supported her family by working in a hospital. In 1982 they moved to Bath, Maine.

She and Macy started attending Durham Monthly Meeting of Friends after they moved to Maine, and after several years among us became a member in 2000. She was active in USFW and in the Durham Friends Woman's Society. We at Durham knew her as an active member who was knowledgeable about Quaker history and the Bible. She had an infectious smile, a wry sense of humor (sometimes irreverent), loved to engage in conversation, and was not afraid to challenge people.

Edie took hostessing very seriously, and put on a spread of food that was delicious, and also beautifully presented, with every detail attended to carefully. Her dishes, the doilies, the little knife for spreading, and of course flowers, were all perfectly arranged. She delighted in doing it and wanted people to remember her for it. Edie was an avid quilter and member of Kaleidoscope Quilt Guild in West Bath for many years. She loved to quilt and shared this gift of hers with the women at Durham Meeting.

She and Macy shared a family camp in Brightwater, which is a summer colony in Phippsburg, and they would hold worship time with family and friends in their summer community which included many hymn sings. Edie is survived by her family: Deirdre, Harris, Heather (Philip), and Tom; Camilla and Carla; five grandchildren, Celia, Kai, Sam, Bevan, and Lionel; and a large extended Irish family.

Edie was a gracious, welcoming and loving person. She was fun to be around—always full of good ideas and projects needing doing. She had a beautiful singing voice and was a creative, talented fabric artist. Her working years involved helping people in need or in creating something beautiful. Her twinkling eyes and capable hands will be sorely missed.

DURHAM FRIENDS MEETING

FALMOUTH QUARTERLY MEETING

## 2021 State of Society Report<sup>2</sup>

### We All Have Been Changed

In 2020, New England Friends, along with people all over the world, faced three major, interrelated challenges: the onset of the worldwide Covid-19 pandemic; reckoning with racial injustices in the wake of George Floyd's murder; and a presidential election season that stoked fear, animosity, suspicion, and resentment across the country.

“I don't think we are ever going to go back to what we were. I think we all have been changed.”

In the face of the pandemic's uncertainty and restrictions, Monthly Meetings across New England Yearly Meeting in 2020 found their communities strengthened and challenged. Nearly every gathering moved from in-person to online. The generally optimistic tone expressed by many Meetings in this process was shadowed by expressions of loss, mourning, and fragmentation.

Some smaller Meetings continued to meet for worship in person with masks and social distancing in their ample meetinghouses or outdoors.

Many others moved online, using the videoconferencing platform Zoom to worship virtually. Friends were grateful for the Yearly Meeting's foresight in purchasing Zoom licenses and making them available to Monthly Meetings. The Yearly Meeting's weekly Zoom calls about worshipping and witnessing during the pandemic offered consistency to a period defined by uncertainty.

Many Friends were afraid that online worship would make it difficult to sense Spirit in our midst, but overwhelmingly Friends found that a sense of the Divine was often present during virtual Meeting for Worship, if not always as palpable as in person.

Many Meetings had frequent visitors to their Zoom Meetings from Friends who had not been able to come to worship because of distance or physical ability. Many Meetings also saw an increase in attendance, especially among those living at a distance, and those with health, hearing, or mobility limitations.

Smaller groups meeting outside of Meeting for Worship built community in significant ways. Committee meetings, breakout rooms before and after Meeting for Worship, outside in-person worship and social gatherings are some examples.

Meetings maintained a sense of community by continuing to practice pastoral care remotely. This took the form of phone calls, visitation, cards, emails, food, and financial support. Meetings paid particular attention to new ways and norms of interacting virtually. Many noted deeper connection and opportunities for personal sharing, including online celebrations.

Still, a few Friends, from almost every Meeting, found online worship unsatisfying and were largely absent from community life in 2020.

Meetings experienced their greatest sense of loss in the dropping away of children and their parents/caregivers from participation in First Day School programs as they went online. The challenges of remote participation were too great for many families. Some Meetings were able to provide a successful online First Day School experience but most were not.

Meetings also mourned the loss of shared meals and other physical connection. This was especially true of online Meeting for Worship where many felt “they lacked the gathered Spirit that settles on those sitting in physical proximity.” This feeling and the lack of resources and/or ease with technology led some Meetings to feel “fractured” and “splintered” by the divide between those for whom online worship was deep and enriching and those who found “no virtue in the virtual world.”

“What have we learned we can do without and leave behind? What new practices do we want to continue?”

Perhaps because of the increased stresses of life with COVID, or because many people had more quiet time in their lives, or both, there was for many Friends a hunger for more time with Spirit in their days and weeks. A number of Friends began or renewed personal spiritual practices that nourished them. Many Meetings organized additional times in the week for worship or worship sharing.

<sup>2</sup> *The State of Society, written by several members of the former M&C Committee, was not heard or received during Sessions, but is included here.*

Many monthly meetings increased their interactions with the wider Quaker community through participation in Quarterly Meetings, Yearly Meeting, and national and international Quaker bodies.

The pandemic also altered the ways meetings were able to witness to the wider world. Many meetings that serve food to their neighbors noted that they were able to continue this work, but the meals were served to-go. They were grateful to offer physical nourishment, while feeling aware that social nourishment was lacking.

Meetings that minister to people in prison were unable to make these visits.

Some individual Friends' leadings and witnesses were able to continue, more or less uninterrupted. These included witnesses for the protection of wetlands and right whales; witnesses for immigration reform and sanctuary; correspondence with Friends of Kakamega; leading Healing Circles; and making face masks for a local hospital.

Some meetings were pleasantly surprised by their communities' joining them in their ongoing vigils for peace. In other cases, Friends felt overwhelmed by the daily work of caring for themselves and their families. Some work was laid down.

The United States presidential election was a source of anxiety and concern for many Friends. Some meetings engaged in voter turnout efforts. Friends were grateful for the Yearly Meeting's online election night vigil. This time of national uncertainty (with ongoing themes of hate, strife, and fear) led both to introspection and to action.

"We await the ways we will be changed by the leadings of the Spirit."

The murder of George Floyd ignited nationwide protests, in which many Friends took part. Some Friends were already aware, through lived experience, that BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) communities were bearing the brunt of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the pandemic of police violence. Some meetings hosted book groups and guest speakers to educate themselves on these topics, when they felt education was needed.

Many meetings reported engaging with the Yearly Meeting's Letter of Apology to Native Americans. This led a number of meetings to deeper engagement with Indigenous people in their own communities.

Meetings expressed gratitude for the Yearly Meeting's leadership in making concrete attempts to begin addressing racial injustices.

"Look! I stand at the door and knock. If you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in." (Revelation 3:20, NLT)

As a society, the Friends of New England Yearly Meeting were creative and experimental in finding ways to respond to Spirit despite unprecedented obstacles. Much has changed, and much remains uncertain. The challenges that defined the year 2020 have by no means been resolved.

Are we learning how to surrender our desire for control over unprecedented circumstances and sink down to the Seed?

What are New England Friends being called to take up or lay down? Is new urgency or new boldness called for?

Where do we find Hope in chaos? What Divine Seeds are emerging from this landscape of devastation? How are Friends called to tend this new growth?

Is our faith and practice supporting our willingness to be transformed, though we don't know what form this will take?

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**Junior High Yearly Meeting  
State of Society, June 2021**

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Each of us has different ways of describing JHYM.

It's Joy.

My own special community to hold onto.

Happiness and people that I can trust.

It's my shelter.

Connection.

Love. 

JHYM has never been a community that spent an entire year together without ever seeing each other in person. This year wasn't all we wanted but what we got helped us get through it. For some, it was nice to get a break from school and our families. Even singing ended up working better than we thought at first.

Some things have been the same. Love. Laughing. Junior high kindness. We've made good friends. We love each other and take joy in each other's existence. As one of us said, "I feel like I can be myself—even online." Another said, "I make friendships that are more important because I don't see them every day." We can look forward to being together because it's such a special thing to see people we don't see every day.

We have missed things. Hugs, capture the flag, warm muffins, comforting people when they can't fall asleep. Looking people in the eyes, 4-square, hearing our voices blend together, cuddle puddles. Playing games in person, green tape, singing while washing dishes, stacking wood at Woolman Hill.

We have been understanding that this year has been hard for everyone. It can be difficult for some people to show up and be able to feel like part of the community. We've lost some people who were part of our community before Covid, and we miss them. If you are one of those people, know that you are truly loved and missed, and we hope to see you soon.

We've sensed grace in everyone's kindness and humor. In vespers. In the sharing of music with each other. In the voice of a survivor of an Indigenous boarding school.

We've grown in so many ways including height! We've learned a lot more about electronics. We've learned how to play different games like scribble io. We've learned we can survive and do way more than we thought we could, to deal with so much at once and still have room to smile. We've learned how to be in a space that doesn't let us physically interact with each other. We've even figured out how to hold hands through a Zoom screen.

Not being able to give people hugs is almost a physical ache, but it almost doesn't matter, really. There are more ways to hold someone close to you than one.

It is HARD to be on Zoom. We don't have our usual ways of connecting—we can't hug other people, we can't hold their hand when they're upset or brush their tears away—so we have to figure out new ways to be even more open with each other. Because being open with one another builds connection better than anything else we can think of, and connection is something we need so desperately.

It's scary, sometimes, being honest, but JHYM is one of the safest places out there. We care so much about each other. This is how we hold each other close.

Junior High Yearly Meeting

NEYM

June 26, 2021

## Epistle

*Note: Friends at Annual Sessions did not write a general epistle.*

### Junior Yearly Meeting 2021 Epistle

Dear Friends,

For the second year, our JYM group came together on Zoom, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Thirteen children and eight staff met twice a day from August 1-4, 2021. Our theme was Healing and Growing, which we explored all together as well as in two smaller groups.

In our large group meetings, we enjoyed meeting new friends and reconnecting with old ones as we introduced ourselves, sang songs, and listened to stories. We enjoyed Vespers in the evenings as a way to end our days together.

The younger group (entering kindergarten-grade 2) talked about how healing and growing can easily be seen on the outside, and how it can also happen on the inside, like growing our kindness, patience, and love for ourselves and others. We had fun doing yoga poses each time we met. We read several books and did activities about listening to the inner voice and sharing ways to be kind to one another. After reading the book *Have You Filled Your Bucket Today?*, we decorated paper buckets, which brought us all happiness. We learned that it is okay to make mistakes, and that God loves us no matter what.

The older group enjoyed planning a morning circle to introduce the younger JYM'ers to some of our favorite traditions. We started out by recalling some happy JYM memories like JYM Ball and climbing Penelope, our favorite in-person climbing tree. We came up with some great ideas to share with the younger kids, but didn't have time for them all. We led a round of introductions, then Lucy and Willard taught everyone Bim Bam, a favorite JYM song. Later in the week, we created a story from a wordless picture book called *Journey* and enjoyed an evening together talking, reading, listening to music, and drawing together on the whiteboard.

Even though we missed being together, we found a lot of ways to have fun. Our glorious instructor Gretchen provided us with packages in the mail, which we all opened together on the first night. Throughout our time together, we enjoyed playing with play-doh, bubbles, pipe cleaners, and other arts and crafts materials that were in our boxes. Each day, we had the chance to enjoy an offscreen activity, like creating spaces to experience JYM from home. As we have learned during the year, being on Zoom means a chance to see each others' homes and get to know family members. We got to meet some cats, dogs, and siblings, including a brand-new baby at Eowyn's house. We even saw River fall asleep during one of our sessions!

Our JYM meeting took place right before New England Yearly Meeting Sessions, which will be August 7-12. We look forward to seeing each other, our staffers, and other Friends at some of the intergenerational events at Sessions.

In Love and Light,

New England Yearly Meeting JYM

Abbie, Amalia, Blue, Calvin, Clara, Eowyn, Gabriel, Graham, Lucy, River, Tobias, Willard, Winter

## Index

## A

- ACCOUNTS MANAGER  
*annual report* 63
- ALEXANDER, MILDRED DUMAS, MEMORIAL MINUTE 79
- AMERICAN FRIENDS SERVICE COMMITTEE  
*representatives' annual report* 76
- APOLOGY TO NATIVE AMERICANS 13, 51  
*approved* 27  
*full text* 39
- ARCHIVES & HISTORICAL RECORDS  
*annual report* 67  
*purposes, procedures, & composition* 11, 32

## B

- BAKER-SMITH, GRETCHEN  
*annual report* 63
- BANK RESOLUTIONS 38
- BATEMAN, CLAIRE LOUISE, MEMORIAL MINUTE 79
- BAYARD RUSTIN FUND 25, 49
- BOOTH, NANCY, MEMORIAL MINUTE 80
- BUDGET 10, 56

## C

- CADBURY, DAVID, MEMORIAL MINUTE 82
- CHICKERING, JOANNE, MEMORIAL MINUTE 82
- CHILDREN AND FAMILY MINISTRIES COORDINATOR 63  
*annual report* 63
- CLERKS' TABLE  
*summary of open discernment* 50
- CLERKS' TABLE NOMINATIONS 10, 19
- COLLEA, BETH  
*Legacy grant report* 19
- COLWELL, HARRY (TED) III, MEMORIAL MINUTE 83
- COORDINATING AND ADVISORY  
*annual report* 68  
*purpose, procedures, & composition* 33
- CUBA  
*letter from the Presbyterian Church* 23, 53
- CUBA YEARLY MEETING  
*message* 22

## D

- DAVIS, DAVID LLEWELLYN, MEMORIAL MINUTE 84
- DONOVAN, ANNETTE F., MEMORIAL MINUTE 85
- DOVER FRIENDS MEETING  
*Legacy grant* 19

## E

- EARTHCARE MINISTRY  
*annual report* 68  
*minute of support for survival of the earth and her inhabitants* 13,

40

- APPROVED 24
- DISCERNMENT 52
- EASTMAN, MARGARET (PEGGY), MEMORIAL MINUTE 85
- ECUMENICAL RELATIONS  
*annual report* 69
- ELDERS 9  
*for speakers and clerk* 5
- EPISTLE  
*Junior Yearly Meeting* 28, 103
- EVENTS COORDINATOR  
*annual report* 63  
*report to meeting for business* 28

## F

- FAITH & PRACTICE REVISION 12, 69  
*annual report* 69  
*chapter approved* 24  
*purpose, procedures, & composition* 34
- FINANCE COMMITTEE  
*annual report* 69  
*budget* 56  
*purpose, procedures, & composition* 34
- FRIENDS CAMP COMMITTEE  
*annual report* 70
- FRIENDS CAMP DIRECTOR 28
- FRIENDS COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL LEGISLATION  
*representatives' annual report* 76
- FRIENDS PEACE TEAM  
*representative's report* 77
- FRIENDS UNITED MEETING 14, 20, 25, 50  
*Bayard Rustin Fund* 25, 49  
*history* 14  
*letter to* 24  
*minute approved* 26  
*monthly meeting minutes* 14, 16, 41  
*report from Kelly Kellum* 77
- FRIENDS UNITED MEETING COMMITTEE  
*proposal* 19, 25, 27, 48

## G

- GAFFNEY, JOHN KEVIN, MEMORIAL MINUTE 86
- GRANT, ANDY  
*Legacy grant report* 21

## H

- HACALA, ELIZABETH  
*report to meeting for business* 28
- HUBNER, SARA  
*annual report* 64

## J

- JUNIOR HIGH YEARLY MEETING  
*state of society report* 102



## JUNIOR YEARLY MEETING

*epistle 103*  
*reading of epistle 28*

**K**

KELLUM, KELLY  
*report 77*

KNAPP, ELISE TROWBRIDGE FORD, MEMORIAL MINUTE 88

**L**

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT 6

LEGACY GIFT 12, 21  
*annual report 70*  
*purpose, procedures, & composition 35*

LEGACY GIFT RECIPIENTS  
*Dover Friends Meeting 19*  
*Grant, Andy 21*

LETTER FROM THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OFFICE OF PUBLIC WITNESS 53

**M**

MARTIN, FREDERICK  
*annual report 63*

MINISTRY & COUNSEL  
*annual report 71*

MINUTE OF SUPPORT FOR SURVIVAL OF THE EARTH AND HER INHABITANTS  
*full text 40*

MINUTE TO AUTHORIZE EDITS AND CORRECTIONS 39

MONTHLY MEETING MINUTES REGARDING FRIENDS UNITED MEETING 41

*Fresh Pond 41*  
*Hartford 41*  
*Midcoast 42*  
*Middlebury 42*  
*New Haven 43*  
*Northeast Kingdom 44*  
*Putney 44*  
*South Starksboro 45*  
*Weare/Henniker 45*  
*Wellesley 46*  
*Westport 47*  
*Worcester 47*

MOSES BROWN SCHOOL  
*annual report 72*

**N**

NAMING COMMITTEE  
*purpose, procedures, & composition 31*

NELSON, MAGGIE  
*annual report 65*

NEWLIN, CARL ALBERT, MEMORIAL MINUTE 89

NOMINATING COMMITTEE  
*annual report 71*  
*naming of 31*  
*proposed changes to 10*

APPROVED 11

*purposes, procedures, & composition 30*

NOMINATING SLATE, APPROVED 59

NOTICING PATTERNS OF OPPRESSION AND FAITHFULNESS 11, 14  
*report from working group 18*

*report to meeting for business 14, 23, 54*

NO WAY TO TREAT A CHILD CAMPAIGN 13, 27, 52

NURTURING FRIENDS EDUCATION AT MOSES BROWN SCHOOL  
*annual report 72*

**O**

OFFICE MANAGER  
*annual report 64*

**P**

PERMANENT BOARD  
*annual report 66*

PUENTE DE AMIGOS 13, 73  
*purpose, procedures, & composition 36*

**Q**

QUAKER EARTH CARE WITNESS  
*representative's annual report 78*

QUAKER PRACTICE & LEADERSHIP FACILITATOR  
*annual report 64*

**R**

RACIAL, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC JUSTICE  
*annual report 74*

RICE, SUSAN (SUKIE) BELLOWS, MEMORIAL MINUTE 90

RIGHT RELATIONSHIP 13  
*resource group 13*

**S**

SCHELTEMA, RUDOLF SIEGFRIED, MEMORIAL MINUTE 91  
SESSIONS COMMITTEE

*purposes, procedures, & composition 24*

SESSIONS STAFF 5

STAFF REPORTS 63

STATE OF SOCIETY REPORT  
*final text 100*

*Junior High Yearly Meeting 102*

STILLMAN, KATHERINE, MEMORIAL MINUTE 92

**T**

THOMAS, NIADWYNWEN  
*annual report 64*

TURCO, EDWARD FRANKLIN, MEMORIAL MINUTE 93

**U**

UNITY AGENDA 11, 32

**V**

VISITORS TO SESSIONS 8

**W**

WAIN, RONALD EARLE, MEMORIAL MINUTE 94

WALKER, MARGERY SWETT, MEMORIAL MINUTE 95

WALTON, MEREDITH (MARTY), MEMORIAL MINUTE 96

WARING, THOEDORA (DODY) ELKINTON, MEMORIAL MINUTE 97

WETHERELL, PHYLLIS MAY CURTIS WHITE, MEMORIAL MINUTE 98

WHITEHEAD, EDITH MARY, MEMORIAL MINUTE 99

**Y**

YEARLY MEETING SECRETARY 10

*sabbatical 10*

YOUNG ADULT FRIENDS

*annual report 74*

YOUNG FRIENDS EVENTS ORGANIZER

*annual report 65*

YOUTH MINISTRIES

*annual report 75*

*purpose, procedures, & composition 37*



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