

North Pacific Yearly Meeting Annual Session 2018

University of Puget Sound, Tacoma, WA

Minutes of Action and Record--Ninth Plenary Session (DRAFT)

July 29, 2018; 10:00 am – 10:45 am

This plenary session was preceded by 15 minutes of singing led by Tom Rawson.

We began in a spirit of worship. Presiding Clerk Lucretia Humphrey read a passage written by Pacific Yearly Meeting in 1967 in which the writer reminded us that the warmth of encounter with God in our meetings is to be balanced with service to that love.

Announcements

Our clerk read a letter from Friends Committee on National Legislation introduction Riley Robinson, who has been representing that organization at our meeting this week.

Olympia Monthly Meeting will be hosting a workshop created by People's Institute Northwest: For Survival and Beyond, Undoing Racism. The goal of the workshop is to build community, create a visceral learning experience and in-depth understanding of systemic racism, and inspire engagement to create change. The workshop will occur this fall—exact dates pending.

Political action opportunities are scheduled in Seattle in protest regarding the proposed Youth Jail and along the Canadian border to draw attention to the impact of immigration rules on farm workers.

Report from NPYM Ministry and Oversight Committee

In the nature of unity voices rise in numerous ways.

Many Friends meetings have historically had a committee called "Ministry & Oversight." For some Friends the word "oversight" is a hurtful reminder of enslavement; for others it inaccurately suggests a hierarchy; others just wonder what it means.

Our NPYM committee has found that many monthly meetings have already been led to other names to describe the committee's responsibilities. At Friday's meeting of the clerks of these committees, we listed over a dozen different names already in use in NPYM.

We have been deeply moved by the vocal ministry in Saturday's plenary, which affirmed our sense that now is the time to change the name. It is past time for us to have our language match our actions.

Because our Committee on the Discipline had heard those voices, our new Faith and Practice uses the term "Pastoral Care" to describe the kinds of work done at the monthly and quarterly levels by what we call Ministry and Oversight at the yearly meeting level.

We will ask our Ministry and Oversight Committee to select a new name to propose to the yearly meeting's Coordinating Committee in October. We intend that the new name reflect the work that we are asked to do. We realize that this means revising all NPYM's documents, including our entire website. But the Spirit is calling us to this work at this moment. We ask that meetings reflect on their own names for this work and hold this committee in the Light.

Reading of Our Epistle (Pablo Stanfield, Amanda Franklin, Sakre Edson)

The epistle is read, not for approval but for acceptance. The epistle is written for other Quakers, of many varieties, not for us. There was not unanimity about every word, but there was unity among the

committee members. The committee was trying to speak for the people in this meeting as they represented the sense of us as a community.

We were invited to listen intentionally, with forgiveness and love, to our message to the world.

The epistle was accepted as read, with gratitude for the work of the committee.

The text of the epistle is attached to these minutes.

Registrar's Report

Attendance this week: 33 children, 20 Junior Friends, 231 adults. Total is 284 people, the highest number we have had in a long time. There were 41 first-time attenders. This seems to be a meaningful increase. A more detailed report will be available for Coordinating Committee in October.

Abundant Financing Report

Our presiding clerk recognized the members of the *ad hoc* Committee on Abundant Financing Margaret Coahran, Laura Arcidiacono, Clint Weimeister, and Jonathan Brown. Approved by Coordinating Committee in April 2017. We began this experiment by deciding to create a budget that did not show a shortfall. NPYM was to support the effort with funds if needed.

We published an estimated cost for both residents and commuters. People were invited to pay that amount, more, or less.

We do not have all the costs accounted for yet. The income for annual session has come from monthly meetings and worship groups, fees individuals paid, and donations from individuals. The bank account shows income of approximately \$76,000. Costs will probably be approximately \$69,000. Friends were asked to comment on Abundant Financing in the evaluation.

Additional Announcements

Children's Program will not have epistles for us because of their new design. We may not receive an epistle from Junior Friends.

Clerk Lucretia spoke of our gratitude to Vanessa Julye for inspiring us to be courageous. She is also humbled by the spirit of the planning committee and the work of her support team.

We will be at Pacific University, Forest Grove, Oregon, next year, again during the last week in July. Our Friend-in-Residence will be Jay O'Hara.

From this plenary session we moved into our Closing Worship.

Prepared by Angie Alexander, Recording Clerk

Greetings to Friends Everywhere:

The nearly 300 Friends gathered at the University of Puget Sound in Tacoma, WA, send you our hopes for building a world where bigotry is uprooted and equality of justice is the basis of all our social relations – a Commonwealth of Divine Peace. We have shared a taste of that under hot, sunny skies at the foot of Mount Rainier, land traditionally occupied by the Puyallup People (/spujələpabs in Lʷšūtsijd Coast Salish). In our 45th Annual Session we worshipped and shared together, while considering our role in the racism that afflicts our society.

We are grateful for the ministry of our Friend in Residence: Vanessa Julye, from Friends General Conference's Ministry on Racism, who lovingly rebuked Quakers for upholding white privilege over the centuries up to the present day, and called our largely white gathering to undo the powerful silent forces which actively keep other Friends away. There was an enormous range of emotional responses. As Vanessa reminded us, "we live in a world of traumatized people, harmed by the effects of White Supremacy" – harm done to people of all colors. White Friends especially often feel anxious, powerless to respond, and baffled as to how to "do it right."

How **do** we make it right? Our Friend in Residence warned against seeking to be comfortable: white people should not confuse one's discomfort with lack of safety; at this the room quaked with a gasp of recognition. Language is often a sore point: we wish to be authentic and speak the truth of our experience, but in ignorance we use words that wound others. We know we will make mistakes even as we go forward in a brave way and feel exasperated by that reality. In follow-up workshops Friends considered how to deal with the manifestations of cultural and systemic bias. We are thankful for the Friends of color that offered resources and open insights while supporting each other in healing. We began to look at a proposed minute supporting engagement to uproot racism. Our worship group discussions helped us look more deeply into the privileges of our educated, Euro-American majority, and to empathize with the sufferings of vulnerable people at the corner of invisibility and exposure.

Friends considered a variety of other topics in interest groups. Many Friends spent time discussing responses to world climate change and its underlying causes. Other concerns and Quaker organizations also received Friends' attention and support. The xenophobia and racism in the U.S. immigration system siezed many Friends' attention. [We appreciate their many good actions and opportunities for our involvement.] After laboring all day, the music ministry by Anna Fritz soothed our spirits in the evening.

Junior Friends Yearly Meeting (high school age teens) were most visible in taking part in small worship groups, and in leading a plenary session with a game to highlight the issue of privilege or lack thereof, including race, gender identity, sexual orientation and dis/abilities. We were reminded of our commitment made last year to welcome transgender and gender non-conforming people.

In a time when the outside world's business roils and breaks our hearts, the gathering's business rolled out lightly and smoothly. Our children's program, traveling ministry program and other initiatives give us hope for the future. The new Abundant Financing funding ["Pay as you are led"] brought in more attendance and opened doors for some who otherwise might have been burdened by costs. Overall our Yearly Meeting's local meetings find themselves spiritually grounded, though with diminishing numbers and aging members, which leads to difficulty in Nominating Committee's filling all 97 positions at the YM level. This is not a new difficulty for our YM nor for other Quaker meetings: a sign not of lack of commitment but of flagging energy and fewer new, young members.

We are challenged to make effective witness, to uproot racism from our hearts and our communities now. This is not the time to talk about our ideals; it is the time to act to bring forth actions that manifest ideals we cannot yet see. The Spirit is working among our Beloved Community, leading us to recognize past failures, to acknowledge our progress, and to live up to the Light we now have.

In peace,

Signed among and for Friends of North Pacific Yearly Meeting

Lucretia Humphrey, presiding clerk