NPYM Ministry & Oversight Report 2017

*The Ministry and Oversight Committee of North Pacific Yearly Meeting, serves the Yearly Meeting, fostering the spiritual life and good order of the Yearly Meeting as a whole and at Annual Session.*

Like most yearly meeting committees, Ministry & Oversight starts our time after Annual Session with the old committee and then changes to the new. We said good-by to two members in September and welcomed three more in October.

We also spend time in the Fall looking back at the previous Annual Session. How did it go? What went well? What could we do better?

During Annual Session we meet with Ministry & Oversight Clerks of Monthly Meetings. We sent a follow-up letter to these clerks and received favorable responses and many suggested topics for phone consultations.

We reviewed our job description. We realized we had not been faithful to our responsibilities with other standing committees. We set up a structure to liaison with these committees.

Incorporating input from Meeting Ministry and Oversight Clerks, we chose the top of “eldering” for our January phone consultation. Twenty-four of us considered queries, including:

- How do we recognize or discern who among us has the gift of eldering? How is this different from being a seasoned Friend?
- How do we hold the spiritual center of our meetings in troubled times?
- What is our role as elders in helping Friends discern their calling?

Ministry & Oversight’s work is often unpublished and not discussed. For example, during the past year we did pastoral care, such as:

- Working with individuals and committees at Annual Session;
- Supporting Junior Friends at Annual Session as they grappled with issues;
- Sharing information about individual Friends;
- Discussing concerns that arose from Monthly Meetings and Worship Groups;
- Considering Monthly Meetings’ seasoning of the gender inclusivity minute and considering our committee’s role in the process;
- Discerning how to be supportive following our country’s national election.

Throughout the year, we held a concern for our State of Society Reports. We post them at Annual Session but realize that many Friends do not have time to read them. We proposed posting the reports on the NPYM website. We took this suggestion to Coordinating Committee in the Fall and received permission to post reports.

In the Spring, State of Society Reports are sent to Quarterly Meetings who send them on to us for Annual Session. (We do request some reports directly from Meetings.) As we started to gather the reports we realized we were not comfortable posting reports on the website. We decided that this year we would ask each Meeting for permission.
We have received permission from most Meetings and you will find many reports on the website. https://www.npym.org/?q=content/state-meeting-reports

The subject for the May 2017 phone consultation was “How to Stay Grounded in Today’s World.” Queries included:

- Are there habits or practices that help our Ministry committee become/stay grounded?
- Has our Meeting found a positive way to deal with the needs that give rise to messages that seem to be reactive and lacking in spiritual grounding?
- How does our committee handle disruptive expressions of anger or fear in our Meeting? In Worship or in other times?
- In these eventful times, have we made room in our Meeting’s practices to share the hope that is within us? How have we done that?

While we felt the conversation was valuable, only two Friends other than our committee were present.

For the past two years we have held phone consultations in January that have been well-attended. Consultations later in the Spring have not drawn many Friends. We are not sure why.

Ministry & Oversight meets monthly by telephone. In March we met in person in Olympia the same weekend as Coordinating Committee. We do appreciate that most of us were able to get together in person, but are mindful of the environmental and other costs.

Jay Thatcher will be NPYM’s 2017 visitor to Northwest Yearly Meeting (NWYM).

NWYM will not be sending a visitor to our Annual Session this year, and there is some question about the likelihood of future visits given their restructuring. While this is a time when evangelical Friends in the region are preoccupied with their own internal challenges, we wish to continue connections among all Quakers in the Pacific Northwest. We hope that as time unfolds we will continue to find productive avenues for reaching out to and knowing one another.

Ministry and Oversight continues to be a committee comprised of older Friends. Most of us are retired; some of us work for a living. We are five women and one man. The committee is enhanced by the presence of our wise and wonderful Presiding Clerk and our thoughtful Rising Clerk. We work well together and do our best to serve our yearly meeting.

Respectfully submitted: Nancy McLauchlan, Clerk.

Ministry & Oversight Committee: Melody Ashworth, Lucy Fullerton, Dorsey Green, Tom Head, Betsey Kenworthy, Nancy McLauchlan.