Proposal for a “Virtual Worship Group” for Young Adult Friends
For NPYM Coordinating Committee October 2013

The following idea arose from conversations during Annual Session 2013. It is presented here for preliminary discussion and general guidance around “is this concept worth developing further?”

The current situation: A number of Young Adult Friends (YAFs) within NPYM are not members of the Religious Society of Friends — they identify themselves as Quaker, they see the value of membership in the abstract, but they are not closely enough connected to any Monthly Meeting in NPYM to apply for membership themselves. Some NPYM YAFs grew up in meetings but college or university study took them elsewhere. Some NPYM YAFs grew up without a viable connection to any Monthly Meetings, as Isolated Friends or as Worship Group attenders. A few are fairly active in a Monthly Meeting but also feel a strong tie to the rest of the YAFs. For many YAFs, their primary spiritual connection is to other YAFs, especially or exclusively at Annual Session or the New Year’s Gathering.

The vision: We envision inviting NPYM YAFs to become part of a “Virtual Worship Group” that would meet in person as often as feasible at Quarterly Meetings and Annual Sessions and would stay in contact through the internet at other times. Participation could be rather like taking a class online with everyone logged in to a site at once, as well as other discussion formats in social media. This WG would have a clerk or convener like every other location-based WG.

An established Monthly Meeting (preferably one with strong participation at Annual Sessions) would have care of the Virtual Worship Group and, as way opens, encourage membership in the Society—accepting applications, naming clearness committees, etc. Some clearness committees might be able to operate online or by conference call, some might prefer to meet in person during Quarterly Meetings or Annual Session. The Monthly Meeting would hold the memberships of members of the Virtual Worship Group, as it would for any other Worship Group under its care.

The benefits: A Virtual Worship Group could function in a way that would deepen the spiritual connections among YAFs and at the same time forge closer bonds with the rest of the Society. Taking the steps needed to establish a Virtual Worship Group would be a very tangible demonstration of NPYM’s mission of

- Fostering leadership (YAFs would be in charge of the WG activities),
- Creating opportunities for service and spiritual enrichment, and
- Nurturing spiritual development and a sense of community for our children and young people, and supporting their transition to adult participation in the life of Friends.

There will undoubtedly be many questions and challenges. The question to Coordinating Committee is: does this concept warrant discussion and further development as a new avenue for participation in North Pacific Yearly Meeting?