

2016

MINUTES

of the

North Carolina  
Yearly Meeting

of the

Religious Society  
of Friends

(Conservative)

The 319<sup>th</sup> Session

**Minutes of the  
North Carolina Yearly Meeting  
of the Religious Society of Friends  
(Conservative)**

**1. Opening of the Annual Session**

*The 319th session of North Carolina Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Conservative) convened at Guilford College in Greensboro, North Carolina, from the fourteenth of Seventh Month to the seventeenth of the same, 2016. Out of our gathering worship, Clerk Nancy Craft read from Ephesians 4:14-16*

That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But by speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

**2. Visitors**

*Visiting Friends introduced themselves and were welcomed:*

*Toni Etheridge, American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) Greensboro Office Staff, and AFSC Intern*

*Ashley Mike*

*Mark Wutka, Nashville M.M., Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting and Association  
Deborah Fisch, Paulina M.M., Iowa Yearly Meeting (Conservative)*

*Martha Davis, Decorah M.M., and Carol Winkleback, Iowa City M.M., Iowa Yearly Meeting*

*(Conservative)*

*C. Wess Daniels, Camas Friends Church, Northwest Yearly Meeting*

*Sarah Miller and Nathaniel Corwin, Old Chatham M.M., New York Yearly Meeting*

*Rex Sprouse, Friends General Conference visitor from Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting*

*David Eley, Ohio Yearly Meeting and minuted friend of North Carolina Yearly Meeting (Conservative)*

*Ayla Perkins, seeker*

*Bonnie Arnold, friend of Friends*

*Traveling minutes and letters of introduction were read for Deborah Fisch, Martha Davis, Carol Winkleback, Wess Daniels, and Rex Sprouse. Friends approved that the clerk to write endorsements for each of these minutes and letters received.*

**3. Minutes of the Interim Body**

*The Minutes of the Interim Body of North Carolina Yearly Meeting (Conservative) of Fourth Month 23, 2016 were read. Friends approved that the Interim Body minutes for both Fourth and Tenth Months be included in annual session minutes.*

Minutes of the Interim Body of North Carolina Yearly Meeting (Conservative)  
Tenth Month 24, 2015

The Interim Body of North Carolina Yearly Meeting (Conservative) convened at Davidson Meeting in Davidson, North Carolina on the 24th of Fourth Month, 2015. The meeting gathered following worship and lunch. Gratitude was expressed to those at

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Davidson who prepared our morning refreshments and midday meal and to Davidson Meeting for hosting us today. Out of the worship, the clerk read 2 Corinthians, 2:2 – 5.

*For if I make you sorry, who is he then that maketh me glad, but the same which is made sorry by me?*

*And I wrote this same unto you, lest, when I came, I should have sorry from them of whom I ought to rejoice; having confidence in you all, that my joy is the joy of you all.*

*For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears; not that ye should be grieved, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you.*

*But if any have caused grief, he hath not grieved me, but in part; that I may not overcharge you all.*

Wess Daniels, new Director of Friends Center at Guilford College, introduced himself. He is a member of Camas Friends Church, Northwest Yearly Meeting, and newly relocated to Greensboro, N.C. Elizabeth Rolph, an attender at Greenville who is new to Friends, was also welcomed.

Anne Olsen presented the Nominating Committee report:

*Kristen Olson-Kennedy is still able to go to the Friends World Committee for Consultation gathering in Peru in 1st month but another person is needed as soon as possible or the space will be given to someone outside of our yearly meeting. Rachel Miller and Emily Stewart were intending to serve as our second representative and back up but neither are able to go.*

*Nominating recommends the following positions be filled as follows:*

*Friends World Committee for Consultation:*

*Rachel Miller (Greenville) term ending 12/31/2018*

*Emily Stewart (Durham) term ending 12/31/2018*

*Youth Planning Committee: The committee will reach out to youth on a consultative basis but specific youth are not formally appointed at this time as ages needed may vary.*

*Web Page Committee: Melindy Poole (Fayetteville) has agreed to serve as convener.*

*AFSC Corporation: Toby Berla (Durham) with Ruth Childress continuing as a representative and two positions remaining available.*

*Quaker House Board: Pat Darenau (Wilmington Meeting) and one more Friend is needed.*

The report was approved with a reminder that some additional vacancies still need to be filled.

Lloyd Lee Wilson presented the Discipline Revision Committee's report. The report has been distributed to monthly meeting liaisons.

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*The Discipline Revision Committee is pleased with the rate of progress on this project. We thank all the monthly meetings for the time and attention they have contributed to bringing the Discipline up to date. We have a sense of the various parts of the yearly meeting settling into a rhythm for processing and seasoning the various parts of the Discipline through the revision process. With your continued active participation, we expect to achieve even more in the coming year.*

*The various sections of the Discipline in progress at this time are as follows:*

*Section 1 - Organization & Procedures (has received first approval)*

*The committee is ready to circulate a text for second approval that incorporates new language concerning dual affiliation and substitutes “guide” for “train” at one point elsewhere in the section. We want meetings to be aware of the new language. While no action is necessary by monthly meetings on this section until yearly meeting sessions, any monthly meeting that has concerns about the new language needs to be in communication with the Discipline Revision Committee about those concerns in a timely manner. The committee previously reported it was considering making an audio recording of this section available to yearly meeting members. Way has not been open for us to undertake this task. If any monthly meeting feels led to do this, we would welcome the opportunity to post a copy on the yearly meeting web page.*

*Section 2 - Membership (has received first approval)*

*The committee is ready to circulate a text for second approval that incorporates language to correct an internal contradiction in the text approved at last summer’s yearly meeting sessions. We want meetings to be aware of the new language. While no action is necessary by monthly meetings on this section until yearly meeting sessions, any monthly meeting that has concerns about the new language needs to be in communication with the Discipline Revision Committee about those concerns in a timely manner.*

*Section 3 - Special Occasions (Submission draft is ready to circulate)*

*The committee is ready to circulate a proposed submission draft for first approval consideration at the upcoming yearly meeting sessions. We want meetings to be aware of the new language. While no action is necessary by monthly meetings on this section until yearly meeting sessions, any monthly meeting that has concerns about the new language needs to be in communication with the Discipline Revision Committee about those concerns in a timely manner.*

*Section 4 - Historical Sketch*

*The committee has circulated a proposed draft for monthly meeting comment, with responses requested by 1/1/2016. We hope to circulate a submission draft sometime next spring.*

*Section 5 - Policies and Procedures Manual*

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*The committee has circulated a proposed draft for monthly meeting comment, with responses requested by 1/1/2016. We hope to circulate a submission draft sometime next spring.*

*The committee has begun work on Section 6 - Introduction, Section 7 - Queries & Advices, and Section 8 - Doctrines and Testimonies. We currently have no timetable or expectation for when discussion drafts on these sections might be ready to circulate.*

*All texts and draft material will be circulated through the monthly meeting liaisons, as is our regular practice.*

*Discipline Revision Committee: Patty Levering, Deborah Shaw, Lloyd Lee Wilson, Andrew Wright*

Lloyd Lee Wilson presented the Treasurer's Report. The balance sheet documenting income and expenses was distributed to the Finance Committee and is available on the yearly meeting website.

*Income during the first quarter this year included \$3,517.00 from monthly meetings, down from the first quarter last year. Income from the 2015 yearly meeting sessions is shown on this report, amounting to \$13,432.00, approximately the same as last year. The checking account is reconciled through the 9/30/2015 statement.*

*Expenses recorded during the first quarter do not include most yearly meeting expenses, since the treasurer has not received an invoice from UNC-Wilmington. The yearly meeting clerk is our contractual point-of-contact with UNC-Wilmington. Both she and Friends in Wilmington meeting have been informed of this situation.*

*The only donations this quarter was to the Bolivian Quaker Education Fund.*

*Administrative expenses this quarter included the annual rental of our post office box in Greensboro and the cost of printing the yearly meeting directory. An advance of \$1,200 was made toward future FWCC travel expense.*

*Fund Balances as of 9/30/15 are as shown on the Balance Sheet. [Total Assets \$63,380.34]*

Andrew Wright provided an updated report on the discernment of a Regional Youth Ministry Committee.

*Both PFFYM and NCYMC have given their support to spend a year of discernment developing the possibility of a shared Regional Youth Ministries Committee. Both bodies of Friends have put forward names to participate in this committee. The committee has still not met, even though it has been nearly a year.*

*It is important to note, though, that opportunities for youth from the region to meet together have been occurring despite the lack of a formal regional committee to support and strengthen these activities. It is also important to note that there is already a plan to develop a more formal Regional Youth Ministries Committee. As mentioned above, there are Friends interested in working on this committee.*

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*Andrew Wright intended to be the organizing leader to pull this group of Friends together, but he has not found the time and energy to make this happen. In order for this work to move forward, Friends are asked to circulate in their monthly meetings that there is a need for a strong convener and clerk to lead this committee. The main work of this person will not be to organize and lead actual youth events and activities, but to connect with and lead Friends in the region who are interested to work on this committee that will provide support and oversight for youth events and activities.*

*While the committee has not yet been formalized, there are examples of joint gatherings of youth from NCYM-C and Piedmont Friends Fellowship and Yearly Meeting monthly meetings, such as a recent camping retreat for 5th through 8th graders with seven girls and five boys.*

Kent Wicker provided an informal update from Durham Meeting on the discernment process relating to their relationship with the newly established Piedmont Friends Yearly Meeting. The meeting's Ad Hoc Committee on Affiliations is considering all affiliations, both Quaker and non-Quaker, to gain understanding and a larger context.

Barbara Gosney presented a report from Yearly Meeting Planning Committee. There is unusually good progress at this time. The proposed theme, "I love to feel where Words come from," is the interpreters translation of words spoken by Delaware Indian Papunehang as recalled by John Woolman in his Journal (Woolman, 114).

The following individuals have agreed to serve on the program:

5th Day evening – Jim Fernandes of Friendship Meeting, who is an American Sign Language interpreter and husband of Guilford College President Jane Fernandes.

6th Day evening – Friends Center Director Wess Daniels on hearing Friends words today.

7th Day evening – Mark Wutka of Nashville (Tennessee) Friends will lead an intergenerational evening using music.

The report on progress thus far was approved.

Gwen Gosney Erickson presented a report from the Minutes Committee. The recording clerk convenes the committee which proof reads the penultimate draft of the minute book prior to publication. Thanks were given to Bob Cooper, Connie Keller, Susan Lees, and Carole Treadway for their assistance. The book was printed for \$655.40 this year, a reduction from \$954.03 last year. Directories were printed prior the Seventh Month yearly meeting sessions for \$245.77 (compared with \$246.56 the previous year). Monthly meeting clerks were asked in the spring to estimate how many published copies of directories and minute books were needed for their meetings and print runs adjusted accordingly for cost savings. Interim Body members are asked to consider how many printed copies are needed with availability of the minutes on the yearly meeting website. Interim Body approved the recording clerk distributing the directory via PDF attachment for those who wish to have an electronic rather than print copy. While print editions will

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continue, further reductions might be made to limit printing costs and use of paper resources. The recording clerk will work with the Minutes Committee and communicate with monthly meetings to clarify recommended best practices for reports received for yearly meeting sessions (and inclusion in the yearly meeting minutes) and report on this work at the Interim Body Meeting in 4th Month.

Lloyd Lee Wilson traveled in the ministry last summer and returned with endorsements from those groups he met with in California and Ohio. Margie Dingman read these endorsements and Lloyd Lee shared about his experiences. He met with a Young Adult Friends Retreat held at Berkley Friends Meeting and also spoke at Pacific Yearly Meeting and attended their sessions. He found a desire, especially among the Young Adult Friends, to learn more about our traditions and the experience of North Carolina Yearly Meeting (Conservative). Sid Kitchens joined Lloyd Lee on his travel to worship with Cincinnati area Friends at a workshop sponsored by Community Friends Meeting in Ohio and he expressed the importance of the additional opportunities afforded by traveling with a companion. An endorsement was also read from Broadmead Friends Meeting. Lloyd Lee was asked to come speak with them from his Pendle Hill pamphlet on radical hospitality and took the opportunity to remain open rather than overly preparing a formal presentation.

Deborah Shaw, Director of the Quaker Leadership Scholars (QLSP) Program at Guilford College, introduced Wess Daniels as the incoming Director of Friends Center. Wess provided an update on Friends Center's work. Forty-seven young people are now enrolled in the QLSP program. This fall Wess co-taught two half-term courses with outgoing Friends Center Director Max Carter and is teaching a course solo. The Friends Center Director reports to the President and now serves as a member of her senior staff cabinet. Friends Center is responsible for encouraging the strategic priority of "putting Guilford first" and facilitating a sense of abundance on campus as a community working together. Wess invited all to attend a public lecture by British Friend Ben Pink Dandelion on 11th month 18, 2016. Friends were invited to engage with Friends Center as they think of ways to make connections with the wider world of Friends, both in the United States and globally, and to bring more Quaker students to the programs at Guilford College.

Susan Lees asked for clarification regarding preferences for how the Documents Committee might share the epistles the yearly meeting received with our monthly meetings. As all epistles have thus far been received electronically, Susan will share by forwarding to the monthly meeting clerks by e-mail.

Susan Lees reported for the Financial Review Committee that she and Bob Cooper met to conduct a review of the yearly meeting's finances and found all to be in good order.

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Following announcements and a brief period of waiting worship, the meeting closed, proposing to meet at Durham Friends Meeting in 4th month if consistent with Divine Will.

Nancy Craft, Clerk and Gwen Gosney Erickson, Recording Clerk

### Minutes of the Interim Body of North Carolina Yearly Meeting (Conservative) Fourth Month 23, 2016

The Interim Body of North Carolina Yearly Meeting (Conservative) convened at Durham Meeting in Durham, North Carolina on the 23rd of Fourth Month, 2016. The meeting gathered following worship and fellowship over lunch. Gratitude was expressed to those who prepared our midday meal and to Durham Meeting for hosting us today. Out of the worship, the clerk read Matthew, 11:28 – 30.

*Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*

*Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls.*

*For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.*

No visitors, but a good number of yearly meeting representatives, were present. Interim Body Minutes of Tenth Month were read.

Following the Interim Body Meeting in Tenth Month, the Nominating Committee forwarded for consideration the name of Greenville Meeting member Elizabeth Rolfe to be our representative to the Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC) Peru gathering. The Travel Support Committee has made a recommendation that involves transferring budget amounts from General Travel to FWCC to cover more of Kristin Olson Kennedy and Elizabeth's total expenses. The FWCC travel funds have been depleted. The amount of the Travel Support Committee's recommendation is \$1,200. These actions were approved by e-mail.

The question was raised about how best to handle issues arising between our scheduled meetings. It was recognized that it works best to have all business conducted during our face-to-face meetings but this is not always possible. Friends are advised to consider what choices might be acceptable. Are we able to practice discernment via e-mail or other tools to connect virtually? What guidance do we have for our clerk and for one another to be present if needed between our sessions?

Gwen Gosney Erickson provided an update on the work of the Minutes Committee. The full committee has not met since Tenth Month. Meetings are reminded to respond to e-mails that will be sent to them in Fifth Month in preparation for our yearly meeting sessions. The directories and minute books will continue to be produced both in paper



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and electronically. However, the number of minute books will be further reduced based upon distribution of the 2015 booklet.

Margie Dingman read the Third Quarter Treasurer's Report as submitted by Lloyd Lee Wilson:

*Income is on track at this point in the fiscal year. Durham and Virginia Beach have not yet made their full budgeted donations to the yearly meeting.*

*Expenses are within budgeted amounts except for FWCC travel. At the recommendation of the Travel Support Committee and with the approval of the Interim Body, \$4,400 was spent supporting the travel expense of our two representatives to the First Month FWCC meeting in Peru. Our budget for this year was \$2,000. The \$4,400 actual expense was drawn from this year's budgeted amount for FWCC travel, \$1,200 held in the FWCC Travel Expense restricted fund, and \$400 from this year's budgeted amount for General Travel.*

*I continue to look forward to laying down the responsibilities as yearly meeting treasurer at this summer's annual sessions. I'll bring both paper and electronic documentation to the sessions for transfer to the new treasurer. For those interested, the yearly meeting accounts are presently maintained in Quickbooks Pro 2014.*

The Treasurer's Report was accepted as presented.

Anne Olsen reported that Nominating Committee met. They brought forward the names of three members for the Financial Review Committee: Cheryl Fetterman, Dora Owen (convener), and David Perry. The Nominating Committee continues to work to find replacements for the Assistant Clerk and Treasurer positions and hope to have names to present at the upcoming yearly meeting sessions. Other positions to be filled are yearly meeting planning and hospitality committees for 2017 and several other opportunities for service, especially as representatives to outside organizations. Friends interested in learning more or in offering their services are encouraged to contact members of the Nominating Committee. Friends accepted the report and approved the proposed Financial Review Committee members.

Barbara Gosney provided an update on yearly meeting planning. Patty Levering of Davidson Meeting will be leading the Bible Study, "Receiving the Word." The Program Committee asked the Interim Body to consider the following proposal:

*Our custom is not to offer money to yearly meeting members except in response to need. Therefore, yearly meeting members serving as program presenters will be offered travel, room, and board based on need. A token honorarium is offered to non-members invite to present (i.e. \$200), room and board costs and funds to assist with travel. Speakers may choose to accept or decline the financial offering given to non-members.*

The proposal was approved with appreciation for clarifying what has been our past practice and for offering guidelines for future program committees to consider as they do

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their work. It is noted that that the exact budget amounts for honorarium and travel needs will vary over time and depending upon the speaker but recognize that this proposal gives the Program Committee some guidance as they discern appropriate amounts in the future.

Ray Treadway shared a report on the upcoming yearly meeting session's costs. Individual meal costs are forthcoming from Guilford College and the deadline set by the college for residential registrations is still needed.

*Guilford College has sent to NCYM-C a "Ledger" of costs for the summer 2016 annual meeting. The Hospitality Committee has contacted the Treasurer, the Planning Committee, and the Youth Committee for estimated costs. We have prepared a table, subject to modification, comparing actual costs for the 2014 sessions at Guilford College with the estimated costs for 2016.*

*While adult registrations increased at Guilford College from 2012 to 2014, it is not certain the enrollment will continue to increase for 2016. If we have the same number of adult registrations as in 2014 (74) we would need to charge a registration fee of \$49 to cover costs. Is this amount too high? If we reduced the registration fee to \$45, might we be able to get more adults to attend? Under what circumstances might the yearly meeting agree to absorb some of these costs from the Yearly Meeting Sessions Reserve?*

The Hospitality Committee has the authority to set the registration fee but requests feedback from the body regarding fee increases and costs. Friends encouraged seeking ways to make young adults aware of the financial assistance available to assist them in attending sessions. The Hospitality Committee will set registration to meet costs while also making it clear on forms that all are welcome regardless of their ability to pay. The report was accepted with gratitude.

Andrew Wright presented a report on behalf of the Discipline Revision Committee. The past year has been a very productive time for the Discipline Revision process, and they thank all those Friends and meetings who have continued to be solidly engaged and supportive of this work. The committee has produced five sections of text for consideration at yearly meeting sessions this summer. All of these sections are posted on the yearly meeting web site. In order to accomplish all this during yearly meeting time, the committee requests that the Program Planning Committee schedule two discussion group times for Friends to review the material to be presented to yearly meeting, one on Fifth Day and one on Sixth Day. They also ask the yearly meeting clerk to add consideration of the two items up for second approval to the business meeting agenda for Sixth Day, and consideration of the three items up for first approval on Seventh Day. Some Friends have inquired about a Table of Contents for the new Discipline. The plan at present is to build up a Table of Contents as part of the Interim Discipline, as individual sections receive second approval from the yearly meeting and are added to the Interim Discipline. The report was accepted.

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A concern was raised about the relationship between the monthly meetings and the Discipline Revision Committee. The committee was intentionally established without requiring representation from all monthly meetings. Liaisons were identified for each monthly meeting. Some meetings have closer relationships with the committee than others. Is there a need in the process to increase face-to-face opportunities with meetings who do not have established relationships with individuals on the committee? Are there other ways to facilitate connection and trust between our meetings and the individuals within them who are not able to be as directly involved on the yearly meeting level? Further discernment is needed by the yearly meeting to enrich this process.

Kent Wicker announced availability of the yearly meeting's journal issue #7 that shares how we have dealt with differences amongst us. 250 print copies are available for distribution and the journal will also appear online soon. Donations (suggested \$3) are requested but not required to cover costs.

Kristin Olson Kennedy and Elizabeth Rolfe presented a preliminary heartfelt report from their experiences at the 2016 FWCC plenary in Peru in First Month. Elizabeth shared an overview of the work of FWCC in their work with the wider world of Friends. The gathering was notable for the participation of ninety young adult friends and with representatives from thirty-seven countries. Elizabeth movingly shared how the opportunity to connect with young friends led to her now clerking the Young Adult Friends Committee for Nurturing and Connection. The friendships made are nurturing her spiritual journey and those of other young Friends internationally to make the world a better place. As a result of these connections, she plans to travel to Kenya and New Zealand in the coming year to meet with Friends there and further nurture these relationships. She will also be serving as high school staff for the Friends General Conference gathering in Seventh Month. Appreciation was expressed for the gifts Elizabeth's service as a representative brought, both to NCYM-C and to the wider world of Friends. These seemingly individual experiences have a ripple effect by sharing the faith and practice of our yearly meeting. Kristin noted ways that the opportunities through FWCC can be brought back to our work locally.

Toby Berla attended American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) Corporation meeting for the first time in Third Month as a yearly meeting representative. He expressed gratitude for this opportunity to more closely observe the work and structure of the AFSC. One issue raised by a Friend in attendance was the lack of AFSC programming in rural areas as much of their programming is centered in urban areas. Ruth Anne Childres also attended the corporation meeting as a returning representative. A fuller report will be presented at annual sessions in Seventh Month.

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The clerk reminded Friends that a request will be made at the upcoming yearly meeting sessions for meetings to host the Tenth Month and Fourth Month interim body meetings. Following announcements and a brief period of worship, the meeting closed.

Nancy Craft, Clerk and Gwen Gosney Erickson, Recording Clerk

#### **4. Committees to Write Epistles, Letters, and the Summary of Exercises**

*Toby Berla, Richard Miller, and Nathaniel Corwin were named to work together on the Summary of Exercises. Friends were asked to consider offering their services to draft the Epistle to Friends Everywhere, Epistles to Iowa (Conservative) and Ohio Yearly Meetings, and the Letter to Absent Friends.*

#### **5. Epistles from Iowa Yearly Meeting (Conservative) and Ohio Yearly Meeting**

*Epistles from Ohio Yearly Meeting and Iowa Yearly Meeting (Conservative) Meeting were read by Corena Owens in her role as reading clerk for the Fifth Day morning sessions.*

Epistle to North Carolina Yearly Meeting (Conservative)  
Seventh Month 25, 2015

To Friends in North Carolina Yearly Meeting:

*The unlocking of cosmic power and love can be accomplished if you will become utterly, completely obedient to the Light within you. Cecil Hinshaw*

Greetings from Iowa Yearly Meeting (Conservative) which gathered at Scattergood Friends School on Seventh Month, 22-26, for the 138th annual session of our yearly meeting. During our week together we explored our theme, "Growing in the Light," through worship, Bible study, evening programs, fellowship, service, and play.

We are sorry that way did not open for one of our Friends to attend your annual sessions and we missed having someone from North Carolina Yearly Meeting (Conservative) join our sessions this year. We hope that next year our tradition of visiting each other's yearly meeting can be resumed. Please know that you are in our hearts and that we desire to remain close.

We seek to be transformed in the Light, to be changed in our relationships, and to be startled by the miracles that surround us. Hannah Evans, an FCNL program assistant, spoke about the importance of moving out of our comfort zones and seeking our challenge zones where growth occurs. Brant Rosen, head of the Chicago AFSC office, spoke to the imperative of a radical inclusivity, in Israel/Palestine and elsewhere, building upon the common ground among religious traditions. Young Friends discussed gender

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issues and another Friend asked us to consider language that is more inclusive than the male/female gender binary to which we are accustomed.

Kevin Rutledge, Grassroots Education Coordinator of the Des Moines AFSC office, spoke to us about their “Governing Under the Influence” program, which includes “bird-dogging” the presidential candidates that descend on Iowa and asking questions in order to increase the scope and inclusivity of campaign dialogs. Trish and Richard Bruxvoort-Colligan shared music with us one evening and, in a workshop, asked us to deeply consider some key moments in our lives, using those insights to deepen our relationship to God and to those around us.

Scattergood School is our experiment to manifest Love in the world. We are excited to see the increased integration of the farm and academics with a new program in which freshmen and sophomores will spend an academic quarter in project-based learning entirely on the farm in preparation for future engagement in agricultural research projects. Having enjoyed delicious meals, produced by Scattergood Farm and prepared by Scattergood students, we can attest to the tastiness of this labor. This week we discussed our relationship to the school, an extension of a year-long dialog that took place in our monthly meetings. As a yearly meeting, we are decreasing in size and have fewer families with generational ties to the school. Thus we are challenged to transform our support from an assumed to a chosen relationship with this beloved and amazing institution.

Seeking Divine guidance on how to live sustainably is an ongoing challenge. Our Junior Yearly Meeting made and sold beautiful bouquets from the Scattergood Prairie to benefit FCNL’s climate change initiatives as they discussed stewardship of the earth. Jim Kessler, of Grinnell Friends Church, gave us instructions on building native plant and pollinator gardens. We hold our annual session on this idyllic and green campus, and yet we are continually aware of the noise of I-80 just beyond the campus. This juxtaposition seems to exemplify our challenge in right living.

During our Bible study we explored the stories of how God led the Israelites out of bondage in Egypt through the wilderness to redemption and reconciliation. We were invited to share our own Exodus journeys. As God sent a pillar of Light to guide the Israelites, there is the Inward Light of Christ within each of us and the Presence in the midst that can guide us on our journey toward a Beloved Community.

We might consider, however, whether that Presence could come in a form that leads us outside our comfort zone. Is the highway noise a pillar of light that guides us to God? Might it be our relationship with the stranger, the refugee, a child, a person who desires gender-fluid pronouns, the prairie with its wild and “untidy” growth patterns, or reevaluation of an internal life-script that fosters our growth in the Light? We must listen deeply.

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In love,  
Deborah Dakin, clerk  
On behalf of Iowa Yearly Meeting Conservative

Dear Brothers and Sisters in North Carolina Yearly Meeting (Conservative),

*May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him so that*

*you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. Romans 15:13*

*Delight thyself also in the Lord, and He shall give thee the desires of thine heart.*

*Psalm 37:4*

We greet you in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who alone is our hope, our joy, our peace, and fondly reach out to you, lovingly remembering our historical ties, and spiritual connectedness in Christ. It was our joy to be reminded of, and to continue in Christian fellowship with you this year through the presence of Nancy Craft, clerk of your yearly meeting. We cherish the ties that hold us together in Christ, and desire that those ties might remain strong through our loving Savior. Blessed be the name of the Lord!

We have met this year from Eighth Month 4th-9th, 2015 on the grounds of Stillwater Friends Meetinghouse and Olney Friends School, and have enjoyed clear skies and gentle breezes in the verdant, rolling hills of God's creation near Barnesville, Ohio. During the waiting worship at our first yearly meeting session, we were enjoined to come to the foot of the cross of Christ, and to make sure that both all our words spoken and all our actions taken in yearly meeting worship and business might happen with the awareness of the shadow of His cross. God has been faithful, and as the week has flown by, we have frequently sensed the covering of His Spirit in our worship and business as we have collectively submitted ourselves to Christ's leading. We are thankful for the strength and refreshment of spirit that we have received from spoken messages, and sweet fellowship together at meals and at times of informal sharing. Here are some of the highlights of our time together this week:

- We are thankful to the Lord for an increase of both His Spirit and numbers. This year we are gladdened to welcome a new meeting into the membership of Ohio Yearly Meeting: Marlborough Monthly Meeting in Kennett Square, Pennsylvania.
- We received a renewed reminder that God is calling us to be faithful for times such as these. We must build on the firm foundation of Christ in order to give the next generation a strong, sure base on which they can continue to build. We were challenged to ask ourselves:
  - Are we passing on our Quaker faith and practice to the next generation? 52

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- Are we being good and faithful servants with the physical blessings God has given us?
- Are we being good and faithful servants with the spiritual message God has given us?
- What are we doing to help those who don't yet have a relationship with our Lord and Savior? Have we let them know how deeply they are loved by God?
- What are we both corporately and individually called to do in His service?
- What does it mean to be a people of God - a peculiar people?
- How are we responding to God's call in Isaiah 6:8, "Who shall I send?" Are we willing to respond as Isaiah did: "Here am I. Send me!"
- Mornings, we have meaningfully begun our days with corporate silent Bible reading. Then, as different people felt led to read passages aloud, they did so, without comment. The Lord taught us much through the scriptures.
- After Bible reading, some of us met for prayer to share prayer requests and to offer vocal prayer. Others of us were challenged during a concurrent meeting with Henry Jason, who helped us examine our Christian Quaker Foundations through New Testament words and concepts as they were traditionally understood and explained by early Friends.
- We spent an evening reflecting on the Friends peace testimony, hearing from a panel of individuals as they shared with us how they have interpreted and lived out Christ's call to love our enemies and to pray for those who would persecute us. (Matthew 5:44)
- One evening we learned much from Marian Baker (a recorded minister from New England Yearly Meeting) who shared her Gospel ministry travels in Uganda and Tanzanian Yearly Meetings. The Lord has been moving in a mighty way among African Friends: where was once just one yearly meeting in Africa, there are now twenty yearly meetings with an estimated 200,000 Friends.
- We eagerly look forward to hearing conviction stories (Sixth Day evening) from several of our members as they share their spiritual paths and how they found Christ in their spiritual journeys.
- Our junior yearly meeting has been with us in our meetings for worship, and then moved to their own sessions when the adults turned to the business of the yearly meeting. We are looking forward to their presentation Seventh Day evening. We are also 53 thankful to the Lord for the adults who have given their time and talents to nurture the youth attending.
- Our Outreach Committee is exploring new ways via Internet technology to gather together isolated Ohio Yearly Meeting Friends for an experimental, called, online meeting of Christ-centered, waiting worship. This kind of experimental Internet

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meeting for worship is in its infancy, but might utilize new methods of online, live meeting using Internet software such as Skype, or Google Plus (Hangout), or Facebook Video Chat, or perhaps some other software. We will learn more if way opens to move forward with the experiment.

The fellowship this week with our Savior and with each other has been sweet. While we would love to stay on the mountaintop, we know that God calls us all to be His servants in His world, helping communicate Him to those He brings into our individual lives. We pray that the Truth will prosper among both you and us as we move into the coming year. May we all live, move, and spend our lives in service to Him, the Savior and Lover of our Souls.

On behalf of Ohio Yearly Meeting,  
Seth Hinshaw, Clerk  
8/8/2015

### **6. Reports from the Monthly Meetings**

*Reports from the monthly meetings were read and are included in the minutes.*

#### **Report from Davidson**

Clerk: David Perry  
Recording Clerk: Jan Blodgett  
Treasurer: Barbara Gardiner  
Representatives to Yearly Meeting: Patty Levering, Anne Olsen, Kristin Olson-Kennedy, David Perry  
Representatives named to Interim Body Meeting: Patty Levering, Anne Olsen, Kristin Olson-Kennedy, David Perry  
Changes in membership: No membership changes. 18 total members.  
Ministers and Elders: None  
The advices were not read.  
The queries were answered.

#### **Report from Durham**

Co-Clerks: Cathy & David Bridge (beginning 9-2013).  
Assistant Clerk: Toby Berla (beginning 4-2016).  
Recording Clerks: Jessica Barnhill (beginning 9-2013), Diane Wilkinson (beginning 10-2015).  
Treasurer: Tim Allen (beginning 9-2014).  
Representatives to Yearly Meeting: Marguerite Dingman, Kent Wicker, Karen Stewart, Andrew Wright, John March, and others as are able to attend.



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Changes in membership: 114 Adults are members; 379 Adults are attenders.  
The meeting celebrated the birth of a baby to attenders Bethany Kell and James Chappel, who were married under Durham's care last year.  
Bob Abernathy, husband to long-time Durham member, Roz Abernathy, transitioned from this world. Durham held a memorial in celebration of his life in the Meetinghouse on the 13th day of Second Month, 2016.  
No marriages were held under the care of the Meeting.  
The advices were read.  
The queries were answered.

### **Report from Fayetteville**

Clerk: Susan Lees  
Recording Clerk: Robert Cooper  
Treasurer: Susan Lees  
Representatives to Yearly Meeting 2015: Susan Lees, Robert Cooper, Melidy Poole and Lynn Newsom  
Changes in Membership: Fayetteville Friends Meeting has seven adult members and five attenders, two of whom are Quakers elsewhere. We gained no members this year. We lost no members through death or laying down of membership. There were no births of children to report and no new marriages under the care of the meeting.  
Ministers and Elders: No ministers or elders were recorded this year.  
The Advices were read on Sixth Month 14, 2015.

### **Report from Friendship**

Monthly Meeting Clerk: Susan Carlyle  
Recording Clerk: Lloyd Lee Wilson  
Treasurer: Stephen Holland  
Representatives to Yearly Meeting 2016: Sid Kitchens, Deborah Shaw, Maureen Burns, Judith Harvey, Carole Treadway, Ray Treadway, Darlene Stanley, Susan Carlyle, Carey Reece  
Representatives named to Interim Body Meeting: Darlene Stanley, Carole Treadway, Ray Treadway, Maureen Burns, Claire Koster  
Changes in membership:  
Births: Eliza Joanne Morris on May 7, 2016  
Deaths: David Martin (8/13/15), George White (1/14/16), Betty Austin (5/26/16)  
Marriages: Judy Purvis to John Schoonover March 5, 2016 and Juliet Smith to Isaiah Unger May 28, 2016  
New members: Jane Fernandes, Jim Fernandes, Judy Williams

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Transfer of members: Rachel Knight, Lori Fernald Khamala, Imani Khamala, David Parsons (sojourning)  
Total Membership: 103 (including 8 sojourners)  
Ministers and Elders: No newly recorded since 7/2015  
Worship and Ministry has taken Advices on as their project in the upcoming first days and into the new year. They used to be read all at one time and they feel that it's a bit too much to take in that way.  
The queries were answered.

### **Report from Greenville**

Monthly Meeting Clerk: Bruce Arnold  
Recording Clerk: Richard Miller  
Treasurer: Guy Burgess  
Representatives to Yearly Meeting 2016: Bruce Arnold, Richard Miller, Mary Miller, Elizabeth Rolfe  
Representatives named to Interim Body Meeting: Bruce Arnold, Richard Miller, Mary Miller, Elizabeth Rolfe  
Changes in membership: No births or deaths. Rachel Miller, member, married to Henry Cohn, non-member. New member Elizabeth Rolfe.  
Ministers and Elders: No newly recorded since 7/2015.  
The Advices were not read.  
The queries were answered.

### **Report from Rich Square**

Monthly Meeting Clerk: Barbara C. Gosney  
Recording Clerk: John G. Parker  
Treasurer: Robert E. Gosney  
Representatives to Yearly Meeting 2016: Edward Pearce, Robert E. Gosney, Barbara C. Gosney, Judith V. Reece, W. Carey Reece, Jr.  
Representatives named to Interim Body Meeting: Edward Pearce, Robert E. Gosney, Barbara C. Gosney, Judith V. Reece, W. Carey Reece, Jr.  
Changes in membership: Member Mary Enid Gosney married Amit P. Bhatia on Third Month 7th, 2016 in California. No new members and one new regular attender. Total membership is 43 recorded members.  
Ministers and Elders: None newly recorded since 7/2015.  
The Advices were read.  
The queries were answered.

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### **Report from Virginia Beach**

Monthly Meeting Clerk: Nancy J. Nixon  
Recording Clerk: Patrick Goold  
Treasurer: David French  
Representatives to Yearly Meeting 2016: Nancy Nixon, David French, Tom Bertrand and other members.  
Representatives named to Interim Body Meeting: Nancy Craft, David French, Kieth Williamson, Ruth Ann Childres  
Changes in membership: No births. Two deaths. No marriages. Two new members. Total membership is 117.  
Ministers and Elders: None newly recorded since 7/2015.  
The Advices were read.  
The queries were answered.

### **Report from West Grove**

Clerk: Charles Ansell  
Recording Clerk: Charles Newlin  
Treasurer: Janis Ansell  
Representatives to Yearly Meeting: Dora and Corena Owens  
Changes in Membership: There were no births or deaths and no changes in membership.  
Ministers and Elders: No newly recorded.  
The Queries were answered and the Advices read in the face of meeting.  
Grace surrounds us.

### **Report from Wilmington**

Monthly Meeting Clerk: Goldie Walton  
Recording Clerk: Daylen Bushnel  
Treasurer: David Hensler  
Representatives to Yearly Meeting 2016: Goldie Walton and Cheryl Fetterman  
Representatives named to Interim Body Meeting: Cheryl Fetterman and Goldie Walton  
Changes in membership: No births. No deaths. No marriages. Tom and Pat Dareneua transferred membership to Wilmington. Total membership is 32.  
The Advices were read.  
The queries were answered.

### **7. American Friends Services Committee (AFSC) Report**

*Toni Etheridge presented on the programs operating out of the AFSC Area Office of the Carolinas in Greensboro, N.C.*

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North Carolina Peace & Economic Justice Program Overview:

Our Peace & Economic Justice Program (NCPEJ) engages local youth groups on social justice topics including community organizing and advocacy through regular meetings and through special “Humanize Not Militarize” arts projects. We train youth on lobbying and help them carry their issues to policymakers. This year in particular, we have engaged the community around issues of policing. We support the N.C. NAACP’s “Moral Monday” movement focusing public attention on the need for economic justice across our state. With the Immigrant Rights Program, we sponsor an African American – Latin@ Bridge Building project as well as a Human Rights Through Digital Storytelling program.

NC Immigrant Rights Program Overview:

Our Immigrant Rights Program (NCIRP) seeks to lift up the voices of immigrants in our community and work for immigrant-inclusive policies. Current campaigns include advocating for tuition equality and drivers’ licenses for undocumented residents at the state level, and opposing immigrant detention quotas on a national level. We inform and mobilize the immigrant and non-immigrant communities about these (and other) policies & help folks carry their messages directly to policymakers. We work with Quakers and others through Immigrant Solidarity Committees to educate and support immigrant struggles. We develop short videos to let immigrants tell their own stories in their own words, and we also fight individual deportations in certain cases. We were also honored to have a full time Fellow in our North Carolina Immigrant Rights Program: Adamou Mohamed and then Leticia Benitez. We were funded to host Leticia for one more year!!

### **8. Letter Received from Lauri Langham**

*A note of gratitude was read from Lori Langham for the yearly meeting support received for her participation in the School of the Spirit Spiritual Nurture Program. She is unable to be with us during yearly meetings sessions but looks forward to future involvement, fellowship, and worship.*

### **9. State of the Society Reports**

*State of the Society reports from the monthly meetings were shared. The reports are included in the minutes below.*

### **Davidson Monthly Meeting**

Meeting for worship is the core of our meeting. There is life in the silence, and in the messages. We experience something that joins us. When people speak, the messages

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seem to come out of the silence, and they seem to belong to some one or all of us there. There is the sense that we support each other in what is said in meeting.

We also find life in the meeting when we gather for special activities—First Friday potlucks, Christmas celebrations, our annual talent show, discussions around QuakerSpeak videos. We watch the QuakerSpeak videos after fellowship time on First Day morning once a month. We can keep the activity to a reasonable length of time, and it allows different voices to be heard. We also value hearing from different persons in the meeting about their spiritual journeys in Quakerism, which happens for fifteen minutes at the end of meeting for worship on fifth First Days. These activities invite us to have fun, to get to know each other better, and let us be vulnerable with each other, which is where we find life. They strengthen the community and build spiritual community.

There is equality in the meeting. Each person is valued for what he or she brings to the meeting. We have real strength in recognizing and nurturing one another's gifts, because we know one another. We confess that we do that better with those who have been around longer.

We come from a geographically large and nebulous area. How we reach out to that community is more challenging than caring for each other. We pray for new people to join us. We have no young children now and only a few (but beloved) older children, and this is a sadness to us. We may need to offer programs particularly for newcomers. We wish we were more engaged with other faith communities. We gratefully value the occasional visits of college students, including hearing from them in programs. We are happy to know that we have had some positive impact on the local college students. We enjoy having our own physical space, for ourselves and to share with others. We are grateful that we are managing financially, and that we are able to keep it maintained and cleaned ourselves. We have had the building used by a Montessori school preschool program for almost six months while they awaited the completion of their new space. And we offer spiritual programs that include people inside and outside of meeting.

We have especially enjoyed and been enriched by having visits from other Quaker groups—North Carolina Yearly Meeting (Conservative), a committee of Friends World Committee for Consultation, and Piedmont Friends Yearly Meeting/Piedmont Friends Fellowship.

We have lots to be grateful for and room to grow.

### **Durham Monthly Meeting**

“You create a path of your own by looking within yourself and listening to your soul, cultivating your own ways of experiencing the sacred and then practicing it. Practicing it until you make it a song that sings you.”

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This quote by author Sue Monk Kidd came from *The Dance of the Dissident Daughter: A Woman's Journey from Christian Tradition to the Sacred Feminine*. The book was the center of DFM's Meeting Reads during the fall of 2015 and the topic of discussion in a forum and additional smaller gatherings of our meeting community. The book explores the imbalance of patriarchal power, as expressed through our actions and through our words societally, politically, and religiously. The forum and follow-up discussion groups were significant in drawing attention to patterns and frameworks that exist everywhere. In the awareness of this, the predominant frequency of vocal ministry by males noted within our own meeting ebbed and since that time, a more balanced sense of silent worship and mixed ministry has been noted. There are ongoing efforts to understanding the spirit beyond the old language of male dominated writings in our Christian and Quaker historical writings. We look forward to seeking and questioning what this means to Durham Friends Meeting and to Quakers in general.

In this same vein and during this past year, DFM involved itself deeply in Durham's community with the efforts of Peace & Social Concerns subcommittee on Undoing Racism/Racial Justice. Our activities were grounded in educating ourselves about the concentration of privilege and the use of power to retain and concentrate it. The Racial Justice group began with a yearlong commitment to meet two hours each month, operating in the American Friends Service Committee-developed process that includes both worship and action. DFM is one of 6 monthly meetings in the country working with American Friends Service Committee to pilot this social change model.

Not surprisingly, Durham Friends are involved with many organizations. Over a year ago, Durham Friends Meeting was invited to be affiliated with the newly formed Piedmont Friends Yearly Meeting (PFYM). Having had deep involvement with Piedmont Friends Fellowship (PFF) for many years, this invitation led to a process of deep discernment within DFM, as well as a Quakerly exploration of what affiliation means and the relationship between our monthly meeting and annual meetings. This discernment was undertaken by an ad hoc committee that met monthly for a year. Their report was approved at our 6th month Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business. Some of the ad hoc committee's discernments are listed below:

Durham Friends Meeting is like a river that has been fed by many streams and the two major streams are North Carolina Yearly Meeting – Conservative (NCYM-C) and Piedmont Friends Fellowship. Many individuals in meeting are nourished by one or both of these streams and our corporate body is fed through those relationships. They are important underpinnings of our faith community. Early on, someone came up with the query, "What feeds the living Spirit?" and that query came to shape the focus of our discernment. After a year of accumulating information, a forum, a retreat, and worshipful waiting, we came to unity that there simply was not enough energy in the

## North Carolina Yearly Meeting (Conservative) - 2016

Meeting to support joining Piedmont Friends Yearly Meeting at this time. Despite the decision, we acknowledge our enthusiastic support for the work of PFYM and will actively look for ways of increasing DFM's interaction with PFYM without a formal affiliation and with NCYM-C with our continuing affiliation. Manifestations of these interactions could include the following:

- Working groups made up of members of both Yearly Meetings that combine energy and resources to be more effective on shared concerns,
- Directory of Friends from both Yearly Meetings interested in shared issues,
- Website/blog and list serve that would facilitate the sharing of information across groups, and
- Youth programs involving participants from both Yearly Meetings.

After several years of deep listening, discernment, loving and unfailing devotion, and much hard work from our meeting with the support and guidance of our Facilities Use and Planning Committee, Durham Friends Meeting came to unity to develop the unfinished ground floor of our meetinghouse into space that will be safe and useful to our meeting's youth program, committee work, administrative needs, and outreach. The construction work will be substantial and we are still in the planning stages.

Our meeting has continued to grow. On each first-day, the DFM Meetinghouse is typically filled to capacity (over 100). Silent worship is strong and vocal ministry turns us toward the Light thanks to tender and meaningful advice (in the form of announcements, forums, and direct interactions) by active Ministry and Counsel, Care and Support, and Adult Education committees. The Fellowship Committee fosters a nurturing environment at the rise of worship. We celebrate and benefit from the vibrancy of the Youth Ministry program. Generally, more than 30 people attend DFM's Meetings for Worship with Attention to Business. Since our last State of the Meeting Report to NCYM-C, nine adults and five children became DFM members.

There are many more items that could be included in this report. We decided, however, to close with the news of two of our youth, Thomas Little and Ben Gavin, who brought letters of their Conscientious Objector status to our Sixth Month Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business. In acknowledgement, we minuted our deep appreciation of their willingness to come forward and take this step. These letters (attached to this report) are living examples to DFM's peace testimony and its response to NCYM-C's query to the peace testament. [See below for the two letters which were read along with the State of Society Report and approved for inclusion in the yearly meeting minutes.]

We trust that our continued Spirit-led seeking for guidance and continual revelations of a moving truth will lead us towards deep listening and cultivating ways of

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“experiencing the sacred and practicing it...” as we open our hearts, minds, and actions in the ever-expanding present moment.

June 9, 2016

Dear Durham Friends Meeting,

I'm writing this letter in order to outline and further explore my faith. I was brought up as a Quaker and as such I was brought up with non-violence as a cornerstone of my community's beliefs. When I was younger, these beliefs meant trying to work out a conflict instead of hurting someone, but as I aged my understanding of the world grew and so did my understanding of the concept of nonviolence. I realized that war of any kind required an irrational disregard for the value of a human life, a mindset of which I am incapable. I believe that no matter what a person does or says, there is always a chance for redemption. Waging war is always the easy way out and is a sign of someone who cannot reason. If our country spent as much time and money on diplomacy as we do on "defense" the world would be changed for the better. I could never take a life because of my country's inability to cooperate with others. These beliefs are very important to me and I would be a very different person without them.

Sincerely,

Benjamin Paul Gavin

June 10, 2016

Dear Durham Friends Meeting,

I am writing this conscientious objection letter in order to further explore my faith, to declare that I believe that war of any kind is wrong and I could not participate in it. To understand why I believe this I must first tell you about my upbringing. I was born and baptized Presbyterian but my mom a strict pacifist never let me think for one minute that the use of weapons was ok in any way. She also taught me that all wars were wrong. While I believed her I did not fully develop these beliefs for my own until my high school years. By the time I was in high school, I had been attending Durham Friends Meeting for 5 years and had read The Bible, but I felt that I needed to explore my faith more. I began reading the Quran and asking lots of questions to people who I saw as spiritual leaders in my community and in other communities. The Quran confirmed what I had read in the Bible that peace was important and non violence was something I should work towards. After many discussions and and a lot of inward thinking I feel as though I have a spiritual foundation that I try to base my life around. The key belief that makes up this foundation is that there is the light of God in every one. I believe that no matter how terrible a person is perceived to be they are still one of God's children and that means that the light of God is within them. Because of this belief I also believe in equality, and I am



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a pacifist. My foundation helps me believe in equality because if everyone has the light of God in them then I do not believe any earthly position, characteristic, or anything else could be nearly as important as having God inside you. If none of those things matter in comparison, then why should a straight white billionaire be given any more rights than a transgender Southeast Asian sweatshop worker. My spiritual foundation makes me a pacifist because to kill another person is equal with killing part of God in my eyes. War involves killing of humans and the belief that one group of humans is superior in some sort of way, so I believe that war of any kind is morally wrong.

Sincerely,  
Thomas Little

### **Fayetteville Monthly Meeting**

One of the blessings of this report is that it helps remind Fayetteville Friends Monthly Meeting of where we've been and determine where we want to go. We are a smaller meeting, usually with four to six people in attendance. We have several inquirers into Meeting, and some who visited once or twice; introductory conversations via email are frequent; and, we know this is a transient community. In late 2015 we welcomed a new Member to our midst. Life-changes among members and attenders provide us with opportunities to support each other in meaningful and practical ways, strengthening connections already existing given the size of our Meeting.

Ministry: we completed our Quakerism 101 class and grew our understanding of Friends and each other. We began reading and discussing the book *Living Buddha-Living Christ* by Thich Nhat Hanh for our Adult Discussion hour. Outside of worship, we've supported Quaker House and other like-minded organizations by sponsoring and by attending events close to our missions of peace and social justice: Movement to End Racism and Islamophobia, Mike Boehm speaking about a reconciliation ministry in Vietnam, a Peace Corps Opportunities forum, and a series of discussions on race relations. We completed a Prison Ministry journey with one person as he "graduated" out of prison and has a job and home. We attended a unity rally to stand in solidarity with our Muslim friends and neighbors. Members and attenders continue to be active in other faith communities, community service groups, and political action initiatives. We purchased school supplies and a backpack for a child in the county's Foster Children Back to School Program.

Fellowship: one out-of-town member brought her children to Meeting; we appreciated and enjoyed the youth and the awareness that Quaker beliefs are being passed on to the next generation. We connected with fellow Friends via Yearly Meeting and Interim Body Meeting, Piedmont Friends Fellowship, Friends General Conference's annual Gathering, and Coastal Friends Gathering, and we recently hosted a Coastal

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Friends Gathering. We continue to express our gratitude for the work that the Discipline Revision Committee is doing. We appreciate the work that Quaker House Board has begun to find a new Director after the Newsoms retire; this impacts our community perhaps more than other Meetings.

Growth: Meeting has been working to become more welcoming: we updated our physical Meeting presence within the parameters of Quaker House's living room; we discussed, updated, and re-affirmed our Minute on Same-Sex Marriage; and we have plans to update our website and to create a scrapbook of Meeting's history. Perhaps we'll have the scrapbook completed by our official 35th anniversary in 2018 ... in Quaker time.

### **Friendship Monthly Meeting**

How has the Spirit worked in the life of Friendship Friends Meeting since we last wrote?

We are grateful to report to you our meetings for worship are carried out faithfully and are well attended. The quality of the gathered silence is generally profound when none are called to speak and when ministry is given it most often seems to come from that place as described by the Psalmist in Psalms 42:7: "Deep calls to deep in the roar of your waterfalls; all your waves and breakers have swept over me."

Our meetings for business in the spirit of worship are full and centered in the seeking of God's guidance for us at all times. Occasionally, the clerk offers five minutes for Quaker Continuing Education at the beginning of our business session for us to share our insights on such topics as Friends process, preparation for meeting and the difference between unity and consensus. We begin our centering with a quote from various Quaker sources. Our co-clerk has taken a much more active role than past co-clerks, presiding at business meetings and sharing much of the clerk's work load. This year we established a clerk's support committee to listen to our clerk's concerns and offer seasoned counsel. Meeting members gathered to answer the Yearly Meeting queries. Members of Friendship have met regularly in the last three years to participate in the process approved by the yearly meeting to revise the Faith and Practice (Book of Discipline).

In our meetings for business in the spirit of worship we have wrestled with the issues around the recording of ministers. We are discerning the right path in accepting the long term commitment to sponsor a refugee family and we held two Threshing Sessions to enable us to share thoughts and to ask questions. We have considered how the recent state government's ruling affects transgender individuals and have scheduled a forum to learn more about how to be welcoming to all. We have labeled our restrooms to reflect how they are actually used.

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We continue with activities that enrich the life of our meeting such as mid-week worship at Friends Homes, quiet Tuesdays in our meetinghouse, men's group, Bible study, and monthly sessions for deepening the spiritual life of the meeting.

A substantial gift to the meeting of residential and personal property provided funds that enabled us to purchase land adjacent to our existing property. We can now move forward with our plans to increase the size of our meeting space. The gift was not without challenges. It necessitated much effort in working together. We readied one property for sale by sorting, cleaning, and selling its contents. This proved to be an opportunity for hard work, negotiation, committee work and community building.

We continue to grow in numbers and to rise to the challenges that growth presents. We do not yet know our final plans for expansion, but the Meetinghouse Planning Committee continues its work on this large undertaking working with the House and Grounds Committee to maintain our property and rise to the challenge of the added responsibilities of the new land. We have held two threshing sessions to discern the will of the meeting in this project.

Our Religious Education Committee has worked to nurture our young Friends and guide them in their growing social justice awareness. This is done with able assistance from members of our meeting as well as Guilford College Quaker Leadership Scholars Program students who help with child care and First Day School activities. Our Young Friends made a substantial donation to Doctors Without Borders following their own fundraising efforts. Members of our meeting have worked to make available an additional space in the basement in which the older Young Friends can hold their business meetings. We listened to the young friends desires and specifications and members labored to follow thru with a clean carpet, furniture, and white boards.

The Peace and Social Concerns Committee has offered several forums to help us learn more and to offer our witness to the wider community. Some have involved a cultural exchange with local Muslim communities. Our Fundraising Committee is continuing the process of asking each Friend to commit funds toward reaching our financial goals. As always, our Hospitality Committee expends considerable effort to welcome everyone by providing social opportunities before and after our meetings. We prepared and served several meals at the local Pathways Center, a transitional housing location for families in crisis. We are also considering options for audio visual equipment and the feasibility of installing internet service in the meetinghouse for forums and educational opportunities.

We gave financial support to fifteen outside organizations and to Friends seeking assistance to attend NCYM-C Annual Sessions, for Friends General Conference Gathering, for attending a clerking workshop, and to enroll in the Spiritual Nurture class of the School of the Spirit.

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We welcomed Jim and Jane Fernandes as new members, Rachel Knight, Lori and Imani Khamala as transferring members and David Parsons as a sojourning member. We had two weddings under the care of the meeting.

We celebrated the birth of members Anne and Hannah Morris' baby Eliza Joanne and mourned the deaths of members George White and Betty Austin and of Alex Burns, husband of member Maureen Burns.

### **Greenville Monthly Meeting**

This has been a joyous year for us.

- We did not lose one of our oldest and best-loved members, Bill Baker, who has been periodically very ill and has spent too much time in the hospital. We are always grateful to our attender and friend, Carroll Webber, for his warm and gentle care of Bill, helping him get to Meeting and to the Unitarian Church.
- We welcomed Elizabeth Rolfe into membership, and nominated her as one of NCYM-C's delegates to the FWCC Triennial in Peru. Besides being a welcome addition to our Meeting, she has become active with Young Friends internationally, with trips planned later this year to Kenya and New Zealand. She will also be a leader in the High School program at FGC this summer.
- By the time Yearly Meeting is in session, we will have had a marriage under the care of our Meeting. Rachel Miller, well-known and beloved by so many in our Yearly Meeting, is marrying Henry Cohn on June 11, 2016. Kristin Olson-Kennedy has kindly agreed to represent Greenville Friends, signing the necessary documents on our behalf.
- On a sad note, our Meeting dog Summer breathed her last a few months ago. We miss her welcoming presence at worship, but feel favored that she was with us so long.

We continue to meet in gospel order every Sunday. The blessed peace of our communion together is occasionally highlighted by vocal testimony and song.

Richard Miller and Elizabeth Rolfe have a shared concern for outreach to young adults in Greenville. There are groups for college-age youth in the evangelical mode. Richard and Elizabeth want to provide an alternative for them. Not expressly Quaker, and not for the purpose of proselytization, but to help seekers and progressive Christians have a place they can meet for fellowship. Richard Miller is also attending meetings of the Interfaith Fellowship to represent Friends within the religious community of Greenville.

Bruce Arnold is visiting all the Meetings of NCYM-C under a travelling minute concerning the role and nature of ministry in our body. As of this writing he has visited three.

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The Core Sound Worship Group in Beaufort is under the care of Greenville Friends. We have been exercising that care more regularly as Core Sound Friends wrestles with dwindling attendance. Plans are under consideration for some changes in time and place that may bear fruit. We hope to see renewed vigor in the worship group before long.

### **Rich Square Monthly Meeting**

We find our meetings for worship grounded and covered by what we believe is the same Christ Spirit which prompted Rich Square Meeting Friends who lived in the area of Woodland, NC to begin the new Cedar Grove indulged meeting in 1868. That new meeting was at the site of a small school house near a spring and not far from the home of Elijah Outland. During the past 148 years, many events have contributed to the declining numbers of Friends living in Northampton County.

Today the meeting has only 3 active Northampton County Friends. We can truly say that Rich Square Monthly Meeting still exists by the grace of God working through members and attenders who live at a distance. Most First Days approximately 8 people are present for worship at Cedar Grove Meetinghouse. On monthly meeting days we usually have twice that number. Most of our regular members and attenders travel 70-275 miles roundtrip when they come to meetings in Woodland. With so few people living in the local community, Rich Square Monthly Meeting seems to be struggling with the same internal queries that many people face at different stages in their lives. Rich Square Monthly Meeting is showing evidence of the questions “Who am I and why am I here?”

Rich Square Monthly Meeting is responsible for worship, care and counsel of members and attenders, community outreach, social concerns, communication with Salem Black River Allowed Meeting, hosting the annual Homecoming at Cedar Grove and participation in the Yearly Meeting and other Friends organizations. At this time, less than a dozen members and attenders show interest in our Yearly Meeting. Since 2013, Cedar Grove Friends Meeting, Inc. has been responsible for managing trust funds as well as buildings, grounds and cemetery care. Except for one local member, the corporate board is composed of distant members and people who grew up in the meeting.

During the past year the Monthly Meeting made a commitment to support Northampton County members’ participation in the local community. Woodland is located in what has become one of the most socio-economically distressed regions of the state. The meeting approved releasing members who live in Woodland to determine the needs and make purchases to begin the fourth year of the Woodland Children’s Community Garden which meets on Third Day evenings at the edge of the meetinghouse grounds, near the old spring house. This project has made the meeting more visible to townspeople and led to more personal interaction with local people. Beginning last winter, the meetinghouse has been open for worship on Third Day evenings. These

## North Carolina Yearly Meeting (Conservative) - 2016

interactions have led to more ecumenical involvement with the entire community. One member is working with a town committee to apply for a community non-profit corporation, Woodland Community Outreach. Another member has begun a diverse ecumenical gathering of local women in The Grapevine Restaurant at noon each Second Day for a "Sacred Space at Noon". That weekday lunch hour time is to promote friendship and dialogue about celebrations and concerns in our economically and culturally struggling town. Almost every month the meeting has made some kind of financial contribution outside the meeting to specific personal and/or organizational needs in the local community. Friends in Woodland and others who live at a distance volunteer in their communities to deliver Meals on Wheels or do similar work each week. An active distant member has begun participating in Friends Committee on Scouting and attended meetings in Philadelphia and Indiana during the past year. As one member said, "We bring about change through personal, face to face interaction rather than by simply handing money to people."

Salem Black River Allowed Meeting in South Carolina, under the care of Rich Square Monthly Meeting, continued to meet on most first days throughout 2015-2016. Its four members are members of Rich Square Monthly Meeting. All members attended the last homecoming of the Rich Square Monthly Meeting. There are three other attenders. One faithfully drives from Florence about 30 miles on most first days. One of the members is on the Board of the Corporation supporting Cedar Grove in Woodland, NC.

The Allowed Meeting of Rich Square Monthly Meeting members and attenders in South Carolina gather at the Meeting House of the Salem Black River Presbyterian Church or at the homes of attenders depending on circumstances. A phone call to 803-495-8225 is recommended for those who don't regularly attend. All are welcome.

While most worship in Salem Black River Allowed Meeting is silent, there is much support provided by the members and attenders. The allowed meeting shares its love for those who attend, caring not only for the individual but also for their families.

Attenders are active in their communities. One regular attender provides concerts to a retirement community and has recently provided a program to a local historic African-American cultural center. Other members and attenders support the cultural center. South Carolina members also contribute to the Rich Square Monthly Meeting.

"For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them" seems to best describe the condition of Salem Black River Allowed Meeting.

Friends in Rich Square Monthly Meeting are scattered over great distances. We are thankful for the opportunities of 21st century technology which help us remain more closely connected electronically with frequent email reports and email conversations where all are able to participate.

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### **Virginia Beach Monthly Meeting**

The Virginia Beach Friends Meeting (VBFM) continues to welcome new members and attenders with a deepening of commitment that will enable our community to grow. This year there has been a concerted effort to expand the feeling of community within our members, Virginia Beach Friends School, and our neighbors. Transparency and communication between committees and members has help us all to express a unity that has produced fellowship and joy. VBFM has added two members to our membership roster. Elizabeth Jordan Storm, her daughter Ana Ferreira.

The offering of Hospitality continues after each first day meeting and has been moved to our upstairs library. Since a good deal of our membership is elderly or handicapped, it is easier to provide refreshments and socialization on the upper level. Plans are underway to install a sound system that will provide assisted hearing for our hard of hearing colleagues.

Both our Adult First Day School and our Young Friends First Day School are active. Our Adult First Day meets every third first day and at present is studying the Pendle Hill pamphlet, *Metaphors of Meaning* by Linda Wilson. The Young Friends group meets every first day and are using "Growing in the Light," a lesson plan from Philadelphia Yearly Meeting.

Improvements to our meetinghouse continue; the roof cap has been replaced, painting and cleaning persists, and new windows have contributed to sound proofing. These improvements are evidence of members caring for our beautiful old building.

The Creeds Preparatory Meeting in Munden Point continues to move forward. Every fifth first day faithful members of the VBFM visit for a shared meeting. The two meetings often part take in a potluck and sing-along after the services.

Several workshops have been initiated by Ministers, Elders, and Overseers. One on Contemplative Thought, led by Susan Wilson, was held in late fall. This workshop was well attended by our members. The Spring Workshop, *Humble Leadings*, led by Richard Miller, was very helpful in discerning personal leadings. Comments from the attenders indicated everyone enjoyed both workshops. MEO strives to consider the need of members that require support, attention, and aid.

Peace and Social Justice Committee continues to support Steady Footsteps, a clinic in Viet Nam started by one of our members. The clinic treats patients that have sustained head and orthopedic injuries. P&SJ continues to participate in the One Love Festival, and continues to work on Virginia state poverty and social justice issues. With the help of the Communication Committee, the Peace and Social Justice Committee conducted the Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) survey.

## North Carolina Yearly Meeting (Conservative) - 2016

The Communication Committee has improved the meeting's transparency by instituting consisted email communication to its members. The committee's work on our website has been an improvement, assisting to improve our public visibility and presence in our community.

Our two prayer groups meet regularly on Wednesday morning at 08:30 am and evening at 07:00pm. They both continue to provide strength and blessing for and to all of us.

Sadly, the VBFM lost two of its members this year, Carol Baraff and Lou Stadlin. In view of the long standing road project by the Virginia Department of Transportation and how this will affect our physical estate, VBFM has begun work on a strategic plan for growth. The planning stages have just begun but Meeting feels, in order to remain a viable, thriving Community, we must move forward, and plan for the future.

### **West Grove Monthly Meeting**

Christ is present in our meeting. God's love shared one with one another brings a quiet joy. We are at peace.

West Grove is richly blessed by the presence of Bob and Ruth Anne Childres, who moved from Chesapeake, VA to Alamance County this year. As time permits, full-time sustainable farmers and educators, Larry and Lee Newlin join worship. While his commitment as Clerk of Friends Committee on National Legislation is a full time endeavor pursued with love and obedience, we often have opportunity to worship with Eric Ginsburg and hear firsthand how FCNL is seeking to make this the world we seek. Corena Owens graduated this year and is on her way to Warren Wilson College at Black Mountain, near Asheville, to begin study in Global Relations (major) and Peace and Justice (minor). She is a recent recipient of the Girl Scout Gold Award. Mindful that pride can be our downfall, we still smile whenever we gather with or think about Corena.

West Grove Friends Meeting is pleased to acknowledge that on 5th Month 20, 2016, Monique Lajuan Dailey and Margaret Delores Jeffers were married in a Meeting for Worship with Attention to Marriage held at Sandy Springs, Maryland. Monique has attended West Grove Monthly Meeting at times in the past and Eric Ginsburg served as an overseer of the ceremony. A signed copy of the certificate of marriage was transmitted to the Montgomery County, Maryland Clerk of the Court.

Bible study before meeting continues to enrich meeting for worship and our individual lives. Scripture is often lifted up to hold us in our daily lives. Mathew 11:28 is laid upon my heart as we share with you. "Come to Me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give thee rest. Take my yoke upon thee, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and thee will find rest for thy soul." Join us in the solitude of West Grove as the Spirit leads.



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We Hold Thee in God's Love – Right here Right now.

### **Wilmington Monthly Meeting**

During the past year Wilmington Friends Meeting has maintained a faithful and steady presence in our community. We meet every first day at 10:00 am at 205 N. Fifth Ave in Wilmington NC. Between ten and fifteen regular members and attenders meet each week to uphold our Friend's testimonies of simplicity, peace, integrity, community and equality.

Despite losing some long time faithful attenders, our community was grown closer in terms of strengthening our bonds with each other. Bob and Sandra Hopper relocated to Colorado for health reasons, Mark Riley moved to Viet Nam to work in a monastery teaching English with his wife Nancy, and Marty and Nancy Pike returned to Vermont due to political and cultural differences experienced here in NC. We will miss these strong and centered members who contributed positively to the life of our meeting, but wish them all well in their new homes. Happily, Tom and Pat Deneau transferred their membership from Reading Pennsylvania to WFM; in addition we have been heartened to welcome younger attenders as well as others seeking a close community that speaks to the leadings of their individual consciences.

In third month we welcomed visits from Bruce Arnold, a visiting minister from Greenville Friends Meeting who uplifted us with his inspirational message about vocal ministry, and in fourth month Lynn and Steve Newsom from Quaker House who talked about the incredibly valuable and welcome services and testimonies they provide for military personnel and families, not just in Fayetteville, but throughout the state. Both these visits helped reaffirm the power of Quaker presence in our communities and the realization that doing what you can when you can, brings us closer to a world informed by the strength of adding individual voices to the collective discussion.

Individual Friends serve on the boards of Quaker House, the Friends School of Wilmington, on the planning, youth, hospitality and nominating committees of NCYMC; we volunteer at Good Shepherd Ministries, the Creekwood Homeowners Association, Communities in Schools, the Karen Beasley Turtle Hospital and assist with youth retreats sponsored by Durham Friends Meeting. We are happy to offer space for the Buddhists and Grandmothers for Peace who meet weekly in our meeting house, as well as continue to look for ways to share our available space with other agencies/nonprofits who share compatible goals.

Last year we started the process of becoming certified in completing Alternative to Violence Program but only three friends were able to complete all three training sessions with five more finishing one or two workshops. It was our goal to complete training for all participants this year, but due to scheduling difficulties, we were unable to make this

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happen. Next year we hope to re commit to realizing this end. It is our goal, as well, to meet with Coastal Friends Gathering in eleventh month and to host NCYMC in seventh month 2017.

We end the year looking forward to contributing a voice to the radical ideas of love and inclusiveness.

### **10. Responses to Lloyd Lee Wilson's Travel Minute**

*Corena Owens read the endorsements received in response to Lloyd Lee Wilson's travel in the ministry to New England. A new minute of support from Friendship Monthly Meeting of Lloyd Lee's travel in the ministry with Deborah Fisch was read and approved for endorsement by the yearly meeting clerk.*

### **11. Minute of Appreciation**

*Friends approved a minute of appreciation for Corena Owens serving as Reading Clerk for the morning. The yearly meeting was grateful for the participation of our young Friends during morning sessions. Anne Olsen served as Reading Clerk for the afternoon session and others will be filling in until a new Reading Clerk is identified by Nominating Committee.*

### **12. Sponsorship of Bolivian Student**

*The Bolivian student the yearly meeting has sponsored for the past four years through the Bolivian Quaker Education Fund has graduated. Therefore, the yearly meeting's initial commitment is fulfilled. Friends approved committing \$750 per year from the Special Project Funds for the next four years to support a Bolivian student. It is recognized that there may be other needs from this and other initiatives but that our commitment at this time is the sponsorship program. Any other requests for Special Project Funds could come forward at a later date for fuller discernment.*

### **13. Committees to Draft Epistles and Letters to Absent Friends**

*Kristin Olsen Kennedy and Elizabeth Rolfe agreed to draft the epistles to Friends Everyone and to Iowa (Conserative) and Ohio Yearly Meetings. Robert Cooper volunteered to write the letters to absent Friends. Friends were reminded that the letter to absent Friends is a form of personal communication with those we miss and does not need to be lengthy as the Summary of Exercises will be attached.*

### **14. Report from Guilford College**

*Guilford College President Jane Fernandes framed her report as a message of hope. She shared that Guilford remains rooted in Quaker testimonies and more committed than*

## North Carolina Yearly Meeting (Conservative) - 2016

*ever with an awareness of the need for Quaker values in our world today. She invited Friends to share more about our experiences and “that of God in everyone” with the wider world. She described how this influences Guilford’s mission serving students from a diversity of backgrounds and understandings. She views Guilford as providing students an opportunity to learn and know themselves so that they may be strong in their purpose, passionate about their lives and have an understanding of how they might transform the world. She also spoke about the importance of seeking unity and listening to all voices. Drawing on Guilford’s past leaders, she quoted on Mary Mendenhall Hobbs’ description of her father, New Garden Boarding School principle teacher Nereus Mendenhall, “The unity that was so evident in his daily life was due to same underlying principles that went through every transaction...” In the context of the political and economic situation today, Quaker witness and testimony give Jane Fernandes hope. She strives to lead the college to be an institution of integrity, including fiscal integrity by achieving balanced budgets. She also spoke of Guilford as a place of refuge, both historically and through the current Every Campus a Refuge program, as the institution’s testimony to the world. She shared the good news that the entering class of new students is very robust. When Guilford’s mind and heart is clear, then the institution is able to share a message that resonates with the students who need to be at Guilford. Appreciation was expressed for Jane’s leadership and spirit-led work.*

### **15. Friends Center Report**

*C. Wess Daniels and Deborah Shaw reflected on the many travels, activities, and opportunities that presented themselves over the past year. Deborah expressed deep appreciation for the servant leadership of Jane Fernandes and also the gifts that Wess Daniels has brought as the incoming Friends Center Director. The Quaker Leadership Scholars Program (QLSP), which began in 1992, continues as a successful program nurturing young people with a grounding in Quakerism. There is hope that way may open financially for a Cuban Friend to be a part of the incoming class. There are also Guilford students without prior Quaker experience who transfer into QLSP as they feel called to be a part of this community.*

*Friends Center and QLSP students have been engaging in anti-racism work and participated in the White Privilege Conference. The center is broadening their long-term plans to take a more global view of Quakerism and inclusive of additional international Friends. Work is being done to shift the Quaker culture on campus to be more open, accessible, and inclusive of all on campus and to not be perceived as limited to those who come from a Quaker background.*

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### **16. Friends Historical Collection Report**

*Gwen Gosney Erickson, Librarian and College Archivist, presented a report from the Friends Historical Collection at Guilford College.*

The Friends Historical Collection at Guilford College serves as the official archives for North Carolina Yearly Meeting (Conservative) and other yearly meetings, meetings, and Quaker organizations in the southeastern United States. All meetings are encouraged to routinely deposit their minutes and permanent records in the archives. Contacts from each monthly meeting are being given monthly meeting reports with information about what the Friends Historical Collection has on record for their meeting.

Historically, generous funding was provided by North Carolina Yearly Meeting (FUM), as their records comprised the bulk of the meeting archives and to assist Guilford in providing Quaker research services. In recent years NCYM (FUM) has hired a part time archives assistant to assist with care of records. Due to changes within that yearly meeting, their budget is no longer sufficient to provide past levels of funding. Therefore, it is especially important at this time for meetings to be aware of the services the Friends Historical Collection provides to all Quakers in our region and to researchers beyond the Guilford campus and to support Guilford in maintaining the archives.

Notable highlights of Friends Historical Collection activities and initiatives in the past year include:

- Establishing a more intentional “dotted-line” relationship with Friends Center, formally acknowledging our shared mission in upholding the Quaker heritage of Guilford College and working with the wider world of Friends.
- Celebrating the many years of service of our volunteer docents as we transition to a newly focused volunteer program more inclusive of student interns.
- Partnering with local museums in collaboration with the Guilford County Register of Deeds and UNCG to develop Quaker focused panels for the “Bill of Sale” slave deeds exhibitions.
- Presenting in June 2016 with other Quaker archives at the Conference of Quaker Historians and Archivists to highlight our particular resources and the history of Friends in North Carolina.

### **17. Southern State Worship Group**

*Kristen Olsen Kennedy highlighted that the Southern State Worship Group is now entering its fortieth year. This is a worship group held at a New Jersey prison. She was able to go worship with the group this year. Bill Geary came to yearly meeting for many years but has not been able to in recent years. Kristen described the group as isolated Friends that is not able to engage directly with the wider Quaker community due to their circumstances rather than a specialty population. Simply acknowledging them and letting*

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*them know that someone is thinking of them – either a card or a visit -- is hugely important.*

### **18. Report on Trust Fund for Travel in the Ministry**

*Carey Reece noted that the move made in recent years to Friends Fiduciary has generated a greater return on the funds and also knowledgethat the funds are being invested in ways that better match our values. Andrew Wright received funds to support his ministry leading a workshop on the Gospel of Mark at the 2016 Friends General Conference Annual Gathering. Andrew briefly shared about his leading to and plans to give a fuller report at a later date.*

#### Yearly Meeting Trust Fund Report – Travel in the Ministry

Fund Value July 1, 2016	\$5,222.80
Reimbursements for the Year	\$600.00
Additional Receipts for the Year	None
Interest for the Year	\$111.27
Fund Value July 1, 2016	\$4,734.07

The Yearly Meeting needs to continue to search for other avenues of income to support this important commitment. Friends are encouraged to apply for assistance for the Travel in the Ministry Fund. A brief history and an application are posted on the Yearly Meeting web site. Friends are encouraged to make special contributions in support of Travel in the Ministry.

Submitted by W. Carey Reece, Jr. and David Perry, Trustees

### **19. School Reports**

*Carole Treadway read reports from Virginia Beach Friends School and Carolina Friends School.*

Dear Friends,

First I would like to convey our best wishes to you all from the Friends School of Virginia Beach's Community.

Another year has ended and students have left for the summer. As I walk through the empty buildings, the halls and walls seem to echo the joy, excitement and fun students and faculty have shared. Here is a brief outline of the good work that is being done here!

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Our enrollment continued to be stable this year and we had fourteen international students join our school from Serbia, Germany, China and Taiwan. These young people brought an enriching perspective to us all.

New classes introduced in 2015-16 included Introduction to Psychology, Healthy Living, Theater Workshop and an Intermediate level Mindfulness class for Middle and Upper School students. Faculty members have also had training in Mindfulness and they have been incorporating mindfulness into their classroom routines.

All four divisions have undergone a lengthy curriculum review and upgrade with the assistance of a curriculum consultant. We are moving to an inquiry approach, redesigning the curriculum and using essential questions as the catalysts for engaging learning in each grade level. This curriculum is in its final stages of development and implementation will start in the fall. We are very excited about this.

STEM and Environmental sustainability continued to play a key role at Friends School this year. Our wind turbine is up and running and our greenhouse will be powered by electricity created by the turbine. Middle school students stayed at an environmental center on Fox Island. They have studied rainwater management, putting up rain barrels and creating a new rain garden through a Chesapeake Bay Trust grant. Next fall we will be broadening our oyster gardening and including marshland restoration through a generous grant from the Chesapeake Bay Foundation. Our Middle and Upper School students will have the opportunity to work in their own outdoor classroom on the Lynnhaven Inlet!

We are committed to preparing our students for the highly complex and rapidly changing world they will live in by developing their skills in utilizing technology and information management. The introduction of Chrome Books to our ninth grade was well received and we are going to furnish the remainder of our high school students with these devices. Technology in Middle and Lower School will also be receiving a boost as we are going to introduce a two to one ratio of devices in both divisions in the fall. Our giving parents and friends of the school helped to fund this upgrade. We could not offer such an enriching experience for our students without the generosity of our Community.

Public speaking and theater are woven through our program with Middle and Lower School students doing well at the independent schools' Forensic Tournament. Two large theatrical performances took center stage in the late spring. Both were musicals –our Lower School presented Mary Poppins while the Middle School Theater class did a rendition of Grease. Both were well done and thoroughly entertaining. We have such talented students and teachers at Friends!

Our goal of offering a Quaker education to those who cannot afford it continues. I humbly ask that your meeting continues to be as generous as possible in supporting the school in this endeavor.

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Thank you for your interest in our school as we continue to offer students an enriching and high quality education, steeped in the tenets and values of Quaker tradition.

In Peace,

Linda Serrette, Head of School  
Virginia Beach Friends School

Dear Friends,

The end of the 2015-2016 school year is an opportunity for us to share with local Friends' communities just a few ways in which Carolina Friends School – founded by Quakers in 1964 – continues to be a beacon of Quaker education.

We have said farewell to 39 departing seniors at a meeting for worship filled with joy and gratitude for the nurture the school has given these students. We are also saying farewell to Mike Hanas, who has served as Principal of CFS for the last 13 years. He will step into his next adventure as head of San Francisco Friends School in July. Renee Prillaman has graciously agreed to serve as Interim Head of School for the 2016-17 school year while we search for our next head. A search committee that includes Board members, staff, parents, alumni and a student has begun reviewing candidates and expects to invite finalists to campus in the fall of 2016. We are excited about the breadth of experience and diversity of the candidates and ask you to hold us in the light as we continue our discernment.

Other highlights of the 2015-16 school year at CFS include:

- Continued emphasis on “education for action,” learning from migrant farmworkers in eastern North Carolina, lobbying with the Friends Committee on National Legislation against mass-incarceration policies on Capitol Hill, doing conservation research in the Peruvian Amazon, and partnering with Habitat for Humanity for a school-wide “interfaith build.”

- Nearing the close of Building Friends, our largest ever fund raising campaign. Community members have given about \$9 million for projects centered on improving the teaching and learning facilities at the school, including the already completed expansion of the Middle and Lower Schools.

- An historic decision by the Board, after months of discernment, to borrow money to allow the school to break ground and build a Performing Arts Center, a part of the vision of Building Friends.

- Sustained attention and work by the 21-member Board, with the help of consultants, to consider ways to keep CFS affordable and to increase the economic, ethnic, and cultural diversity of our school community to better reflect the world we live in. Recommendations about new tuition and financial aid models are currently under consideration.

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- An increased emphasis by the staff, led by the Diversity and Inclusivity Committee, on education and actions the community can take to remove the blinders of bias and privilege. This work included two staff workshops with Dismantling Racism Works (DRWorks), a change in how and where we recruit for new staff, and continued community-wide “Beloved Community” events following the visit in April 2015 of Andre Robert Lee, creator of the documentary “I’m Not Racist...Am I?”

- A vigorous intellectual program based on student-centered pedagogy that includes unique aspects such as conscious use of outdoor learning spaces, one of the country’s only high-school neuroethics course and a Quaker Advocacy class.

- Continued emphasis of silence and other Quaker practices in the fabric of life at school, including daily “settling in” for early, lower and middle school students, weekly meetings for worship for upper school students, quarterly all-school meetings for worship, and education about and incorporation of Quaker decision making process at the Board, staff, and student level.

- Enthusiasm among staff for spreading the good news of the value and power of Quaker pedagogy through more than 30 staff presentations at local, regional and national education forums, as well as service on community non-profit boards including Student U, Peaceful Schools NC, and the NC Association of Independent Schools.

- Service to the Friends Council on Education by Mike Hanas and Trustee Mark Kuhn. This year, CFS also hosted the first “Educators New to Quakerism in the South,” a 2.5 day event led by Drew Smith and Deborah Pancoe of Friends Council on Education and attended by staff from CFS, New Garden Friends School, High Point Friends School, Tandem Friends School, and a faculty member from the UNC-CH School of Education.

- Participation of students in national groups on concerns ranging from the environment to ethics, including the hosting of the Annual Gathering of the Friends Environmental Network, attended by staff and students from CFS and other Friends School staff from across the country.

Through all of this, the school and the board have worked hard to articulate what it is that makes CFS such a vibrant, spirit-filled institution, recognizing that our Quaker values, Quaker history, and Quaker identity are what sustain the school and differentiate it from other independent schools in the area. As it is sometimes hard to see clearly the water in which we swim, it has been gratifying to have consultants, visitors, and others confirm our sense that the CFS community is succeeding in living its mission and is, as our departing principal is fond of saying “making love visible.”

Sincerely,

Marsha A. Green Outgoing Clerk of the Board of Trustees (June 30, 2016)

Mark Kuhn Incoming Clerk of the Board of Trustees (July 1, 2016)



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### **20. *Quaker House Report***

*Lynn and Steve Newsom presented a report of their work at Quaker House.*

On December 4th, 2015, we participated in the annual wreath laying for Beryl Mitchell who had been killed by her military spouse. It is just one of the many ways Quaker House not only witnesses to the absurdity and cruelty of war but provides support, counseling, and care for those affected.

The Quaker House GI Rights Hotline answers thousands of calls from military, active duty, and veteran and military families. The number of calls to the hotline continues to increase. This year our Hotline counselors answered an average of 280 calls per month for a total of 3,370, up from 2,659 last year. The counselors most rewarding yet most time consuming work is helping service members with their conscientious objector status, guiding and providing moral support as they move through regulations, delays and at times deliberate roadblocks of the command structure. In November, we hired Elaine Martin for a few hours each week to support the GI Rights Hotline by returning messages, screening calls and prioritizing them for urgency.

Quaker House also continues the important work of providing counseling and support for the victims of military domestic violence, sexual assault, and moral injury. Started three years ago with a donation from an anonymous donor, the Quaker House counselor sees up to 10 clients one day a week. The reputation of the program has grown both in the community and on base at Fort Bragg. The service is free and often the last resort for those in need of help. Funding for the program is tenuous and any and all contributions are appreciated.

We continue to travel to reach out to new audiences providing education and information on moral injury. To name a few, we gave our presentation for the Medical Grand Rounds at H.H. McGuire VA hospital in Richmond, VA; for the Licensed Professional Counselors Association of North Carolina's annual conference; and for a military chaplain's retreat for the officers in the 82nd Combat Aviation Brigade. Quoting Rita Nakashima-Brock, "Moral injury results when soldiers violate their core moral beliefs, and in evaluating their behavior negatively, they feel they no longer live in a reliable, meaningful world and can no longer be regarded as decent human beings." Today, on average, 22 veterans a day commit suicide. Numerous people come up to us after the presentation to express their gratitude.

Quaker House facilitates Alternatives to Violence Project training and provides Truth in Recruiting literature and information. In addition, Quaker House provides a warm and welcoming place for people in the community to meet. Mindfulness classes and an AA group meet there regularly and musicians perform house concerts frequently.

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Quaker House organized a forum on “Challenging Islamophobia and Racism” co-sponsored by approximately 19 other community organizations. We help conduct, in partnership with NOW, the Human Relations Commission, the public library, and the Cumberland County Association of Educators, regular public discussions on race relations called “Cracking the Codes: The System of Racial Inequity.” We advocate for Conflict Resolution in the public schools. We continue to witness against torture and drone warfare. Educational forums on many subjects that relate to peace and justice issues are conducted regularly.

We have forged a relationship with Fort Bragg. Through work with the military chaplains and mental health care professionals, a closer association has developed which allows Quaker House to provide information and services on base and personnel at Fort Bragg make referrals to our programs. In addition, we continue to attend and present at the Bragg Region Behavioral Healthcare Collaborative, Community Blueprint (we are now on their Advisory Committee), the Behavioral Health Professionals Association, Greater Fayetteville United, and serve on the board of CARE Domestic Violence Center. More recently, Quaker House has taken up the issue of the poor mental health care provided for the more than 250,000 incarcerated service members and veterans. This issue was brought to our attention by the tragic case of a service member in Fayetteville who was sentenced to 10-18 years in prison for an offense that was brought on by his severe PTSD and Traumatic Brain Injury. We are working with his family and lawyer to help him, and we organized a petition and a vigil calling for “Adequate and Compassionate Mental Health Care for Service Members and Veterans” nationally. The Military Chaplains Association of North America published the petition on their electronic newsletter. Our Op Ed was published in the Raleigh News and Observer and the Fayetteville Observer. In April, the vigil, in front of the Airborne and Special Operations Museum, brought veterans, VA and DoD employees, members of the Cumberland County Human Relations Commission, and Quakers together. We are continuing to work with VA and veterans’ groups to advocate for “Veterans’ Dorms” in prison, a program which is being utilized in other States.

The new website for Quaker House went live last year and continues to add resources and news of the work of Quaker House. Our Facebook page averages 1,500 “hits” a week.

Moving forward, Quaker House foresees the challenge of the future; to take the Quaker House message to a wider audience, tackling the increasing administrative complexities, expanding the fund base, and succession planning as we will retire in 2017.

### *21. Friends General Conference Visitor*

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*Rex Sprouse is attending sessions as a visitor on behalf of Friends General Conference. He reminded Friends that Friends General Conference is more than just an annual gathering. A growing number of useful resources are available at [www.fgcquaker.org](http://www.fgcquaker.org).*

### **22. Discipline Revision Committee Report (Part 1)**

*The committee presented two sections of the revised discipline for second approval. Parts I, II, III of the Organization and Procedures section were brought for approval last year but met with some additional requests for changes. Andrew Wright presented the recommended changes that were shared with meetings prior to these sessions and, with one word change, the first section was approved. It was clarified that Interim Body's "reporting of actions to the yearly meeting in session" is a reporting of actions, which may or may not include full reading of prior Interim Body minutes. The section on membership was also approved as presented, noting that one sentence has been adapted since last yearly meeting session to make the document internally consistent. With these approvals, the two sections are now included the Interim Discipline.*

### **23. NCYM (C) Visitors to Iowa (Conservative) and Ohio Yearly Meetings**

*Lloyd Lee Wilson intends to attend the sessions of Iowa Yearly Meeting (Conservative) and Nancy Craft intends to attend the sessions of Ohio Yearly Meeting. Clerk Nancy Craft will write a letter of introduction for Lloyd Lee's visit to Iowa.*

### **24. Friends Committee on National Legislation Report**

*Jim Cason from Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) was welcomed as a visitor. The clerk was approved to endorse his letter of introduction. Jim expressed gratitude to the yearly meeting. He noted the role of a member of our yearly meeting, Eric Ginsberg, as clerk of the FCNL General Board. He encouraged Friends to support a space in Washington, D.C., for active listening to happen and to create spaces for dialogue with our political leaders in our state and nation. He also expressed gratitude for Guilford College as a large number of Guilford students have participated in FCNL's work with young adults and QLSP graduates have served as office interns.*

### **25. Treasurer's Report**

*Lloyd Lee Wilson presented the Treasurer's Report.*

#### Budget Report

Budgeted income was 99.9% of the expected amount in the year just ended. (Through an oversight, Greenville contributed \$16.33 less than its budget amount.) \$600.00 was

## North Carolina Yearly Meeting (Conservative) - 2016

transferred from the Special Projects Fund to cover the donation to the Bolivian Quaker Education Fund, as planned.

Yearly meeting expenses for the year that ended 6/30/2016, other than yearly meeting sessions themselves, were almost 25% higher than anticipated. These expenses were covered in part by unbudgeted contributions to the yearly meeting, in part by using restricted or reserve funds held by the yearly meeting for those specific purposes, and in part by drawing on the general reserves of the yearly meeting.

FWCC Travel: The Travel Support Committee recommended that \$4,400 be spent in support of our two representatives to Peru when only \$2,000 had been budgeted. Through the yearly meeting clerk Interim Body approved the extra expenditure. The extra cost was paid by using all the FWCC Travel fund held in reserve (\$1,200), and drawing on the unrestricted reserves of the yearly meeting for an additional \$1,200.

Travel in the Ministry: The yearly meeting trustees approved an unbudgeted disbursement of \$600 for travel in the ministry, which was paid for out of the trust fund established for that purpose.

Yearly Meeting Journal: The Journal Editorial Committee published Issue Number 7 of the Journal of North Carolina Yearly Meeting (Conservative), at a cost of \$394.30. This was paid for out of the restricted fund established for this purpose. Individual donations for copies of the Journal were received for \$289 and were added to the Journal restricted fund.

Bookstore: Unbudgeted expenses of \$520 were offset by unbudgeted bookstore revenue of \$591.

### General

Fiscal Year: The start and end dates for the yearly meeting's fiscal year (7/1 through 6/30) continue to generate some difficulties for the yearly meeting. For those member monthly meetings whose fiscal year is the calendar year, it is difficult to track down what portion of each contribution check is applicable to which fiscal year. Reporting on the financial condition of the yearly meeting itself is complicated by the fact that the fiscal year closes so close to the time of annual sessions that not all bank correspondence needed to generate a final year-end report is available. Also, each year the ending balance sheet shows large sums of money on hand which will not be available for use until next year.

It may be time for the yearly meeting to consider changing its fiscal year so that the start and end dates are after the yearly meeting sessions rather than before sessions. It may be advisable to shift to a fiscal year coincident with the calendar year, since several monthly meetings operate on that basis.

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New Treasurer: The current treasurer is under the weight of new and substantial leadings into an extended and substantial ministry, and would very much like to be relieved of the responsibility of serving as yearly meeting treasurer.

### Income and Expense Report

#### Yearly Meeting Sessions - 2015

Room & Board Income	8,409.00
<u>Youth Scholarship Contributions</u>	<u>1,344.00</u>
Total Revenues for Room & Board	9,753.00

<u>Room &amp; Board Charges</u>	<u>9,869.00</u>
Net Room & Board Deficit	\$-116.00

Registration Fees	3,640.00
<u>Other Contributions</u>	<u>39.00</u>
Total Other Revenues	3,679.00

Liability Insurance	266.00
Youth Program Expense	241.91
Other Program Expense	1,086.16
<u>Site Use Fee</u>	<u>430.00</u>
Total Program Expenses	2,024.07

Net Registration Revenue	1,654.93
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Registration Revenue less R&B Deficit: \$1,538.93

\$1,538.93 has been added to the Yearly Meeting Sessions Reserve Fund. This reserve covers any deficit the sessions may run in a given year, and also pays for any financial assistance to adults enabling them to attend yearly meeting sessions.

#### Other Income and Expense

The only budgeted income or expense that deviated significantly from the budgeted amount was FWCC Travel, discussed above. The Finance Committee will respond to this matter in its proposed budget for next year.

### Balance Sheet

#### Assets

## North Carolina Yearly Meeting (Conservative) - 2016

Checking The checking account balance plus undeposited funds at year-end amounted to \$57,707.30, an increase of about \$700 from a year ago. This amount includes \$12,969.99 in current liabilities, \$22,338.05 held in various restricted funds for particular uses, and \$20,824.45 in unrestricted funds.

Friends Fiduciary: The yearly meeting trust fund is now entirely invested with Friends Fiduciary Fund; its current balance of \$4,683.60 is shown under “Other Current Assets” and “Permanently Restricted Funds” on the Balance Sheet. The value shown in both instances is cost basis rather than current market value.

### Current Liabilities

The yearly meeting has collected about \$13,000 from individuals for registration, room and board, and gifts for the 2016 annual sessions. Monthly meetings contributed \$1,200 near the end of the year toward the contributions they will make toward next year's budget. We have not yet received the invoice for expenses of maintaining our web site for the past 12 months, but know that we will owe this amount.

### Changes in Equity

#### Permanently Restricted Funds

- The FWCC Jamaica Fund has had no activity; the balance is unchanged at \$571.20. This money is held in trust for Jamaican Friends.
- The Journal Publication Fund, after paying to print the most recent issue of the yearly meeting Journal and receiving donations for that publication, has a slightly lower balance of \$2,194.90
- The Trust Fund for Travel in Truth's Service is controlled by the yearly meeting trustees and appears as an “Other Current Asset” in the upper portion of the balance sheet. The value shown in both instances is cost basis rather than current market value.

#### Temporarily Restricted Funds

- The Discipline Fund received \$84.00 in donations this year. The balance is now \$2,394.00. The Discipline Fund is earmarked for paying the expense of printing the yearly meeting Discipline.
- The FWCC Travel Fund previous balance of \$1,200 was entirely expended to help cover the over-budget FWCC expenses this year. Because it has a zero balance, it does not appear on the printed balance sheet.
- The General Travel Fund received the unspent portion of this year's budget for general travel, and now has a balance of \$6,115.74. This fund assists Friends who have travel expenses associated with representing NCYM-C on committees and

## North Carolina Yearly Meeting (Conservative) - 2016

- organizations outside the yearly meeting. It also assists the yearly meeting clerks with their expenses for travel within the yearly meeting.
- The Special Projects Fund has been charged \$600.00 for the contribution to the Bolivian Quaker Education Fund (originally approved at the 2013 yearly meeting sessions). It has a year-end balance of \$4,363.74. The Special Projects Fund is disbursed at the discretion of the yearly meeting in session.
  - The Yearly Meeting Sessions Reserve balance has increased by about \$1500 due to the positive cash flow from the 2015 yearly meeting sessions, and now stands at \$2,832.47. This reserve fund is the cumulative net surplus of holding yearly meeting sessions over the years, and is used to cover any deficit incurred by the yearly meeting sessions. It is also the source of funds to provide financial assistance to adults attending yearly meeting sessions.
  - The Yearly Meeting Scholarship Fund balance is unchanged, with a year-end balance of \$3,865. This fund provides financial assistance to pay for children under 18 attending yearly meeting sessions.

Unrestricted Net Assets of the yearly meeting now stand at \$21,363.65

Submitted by Lloyd Lee Wilson, Treasurer

### Balance Sheet As of 6/30/2016

<b>ASSETS</b>	
Current Assets	
Checking/Savings	
Wells Fargo Checking	54,748.30
Total Checking/Savings	54,748.30
Other Current Assets	
Friends Fiduciary Fund	4,683.60
Undeposited Funds	2,959.00
Total Other Current Assets	7,642.60
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<b>62,390.90</b>
<b>LIABILITIES AND EQUITY</b>	
Liabilities	
Current Liabilities	
Other Current Liabilities	
Pre-Paid Session Registrations	2,710.00
Pre-Paid Session Room & Board	6,513.69
Prepaid MMTg Contributions	1,200.00

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YMtg Scholarship Commitments	2,281.31
Total Other Current Liabilities	12,961.99
Total Current Liabilities	12,961.99
Total Liabilities	12,961.99
Equity	
Perm. Restricted Net Assets	
FWCC Jamaica Fund	571.20
Journal Publication Fund	2,194.90
Trust Fund for Travel in Truth	4,683.60
Total Perm. Restricted Net Assets	7,449.70
Temp. Restricted Net Assets	
Discipline Fund	2,395.00
General Travel Fund	6,115.74
Special Projects Fund	4,363.74
YMtg Sessions Reserve	2,832.47
YMtg Sessions Scholarship Fund	3,865.00
Total Temp Restricted Net Assets	19,571.95
Unrestricted Net Assets	21,363.65
Net Income	1,043.61
Total Equity	49,428.91
<b>TOTAL LIABILITY &amp; EQUITY</b>	<b>62,390.90</b>

**Income & Expense Fiscal Year Ended 6/30/2016**

Ordinary Income/Expenses			
Income			
Book Store Revenue			591.60
Interest Earned			60.80
MM Contributions			12,567.00
YMtg Sessions Income			
YMtg Other Contributions		39.00	
YMtg Registration Fees		3,640.00	
YMtg Rm&Board Income		8,409.00	
YMtg Scholarship Contrib.		1,344.00	
Total YMtg Sessions Income			13,432.00
Total Income			26,651.40
Gross Profit			26,651.40



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Expenses			
Book Store Expenses			520.04
Donations and Grants			
Donations to Organizations		6,100.00	
Internships / Scholarships		1,000.00	
Total Donations and Grants			7,100.00
Operations			
Postage, PO Box		170.75	
Website Expenses		256.99	
Total Operations			427.74
Printing and Copying			
Directory Publication		246.77	
Journal Publication		394.30	
Minute Book Publication		726.87	
Total Printing			1,366.94
Travel and Meetings			
FWCC Travel		3,200.00	
Travel – General		500.00	
Travel in Truth's Service		600.00	
			4,300.00
YM Sessions Expense			
YM Program Expense			
Insurance – Liability	266.00		
Youth Program Expense	241.91		
YM Program Exp. – Other	1,086.16		
Total YM Program Expense		1,594.07	
YM Room and Board		9,869.00	
YM Site Use Fee		430.00	
Total YM Session Expense			11,893.07
Total Expense			25,607.79
Net Ordinary Income			1,043.61
Net Income			<b>1,043.61</b>

### **26. Finance Committee Report**

*Treasurer Lloyd Lee Wilson reported on the work of the Finance Committee. Noted changes include increasing the Friends Historical Collection (FHC) donation to \$600 in recognition that FHC provides direct services for the yearly meeting, increasing annual*

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*amount designated for FWCC travel and transferring funds from general travel restricted fund to support the FWCC travel restricted fund, and reducing internships/scholarships line. Friends approved the budget as presented.*

	<b>2017 Budget</b>	<b>2016 Actual</b>
<b>Income</b>	<b>12,300.00</b>	<b>12,583.33</b>
<i>Monthly Meeting</i>		
<i>Contributions</i>	<i>12,300.00</i>	<i>12,583.33</i>
Davidson	750.00	750.00
Durham	3,600.00	3,600.00
Fayetteville	500.00	500.00
Friendship	1,700.00	1,700.00
Greenville	350.00	333.33
Rich Square	1,500.00	1,500.00
Virginia Beach	2,700.00	3,000.00
West Grove	200.00	200.00
Wilmington	1,000.00	1,000.00
<i>Other Income</i>	<i>0.00</i>	<i>0.00</i>
Individual Contributions – unrestricted	0.00	0.00
Individual Contributions – Directory	0.00	0.00
Individual Contributions – Journal	0.00	0.00
Nonmember Contributions	0.00	0.00
Bookstore Revenue	0.00	0.00
Prior Year Contributions	0.00	0.00
Interest Income	0.00	0.00
Transfer from FWCC	0.00	0.00

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Travel Fund		
Transfer from Journal Restricted Fund	0.00	0.00
Transfer from Yearly Meeting Trust Fund	600.00	600.00
<b>Expenses</b>	<b>11,706.99</b>	<b>12,800.38</b>
<i>Administrative Expenses</i>	<i>1,706.99</i>	<i>1,400.38</i>
Operating Expenses	300.00	170.75
Website Costs	256.99	256.99
Bookstore Expenses	0.00	0.00
Publication of YM Directory	250.00	245.77
Publication of Minutes	900.00	726.87
Publication of Memorials	0.00	0.00
Publication of <i>Journal</i>	0.00	0.00
<i>Donations to Organizations</i>	<i>5,800.00</i>	<i>5,500.00</i>
AFSC	300.00	300.00
Indian Affairs	300.00	300.00
FCNL	300.00	300.00
Quaker Earthcare Witness	300.00	300.00
Quaker House of Fayetteville	1,000.00	1,000.00
RSWR	300.00	300.00
Friends Center at Guilford	300.00	300.00
Friends Historical Collection at Guilford	600.00	300.00
FWCC	300.00	300.00
Pendle Hill	300.00	300.00
Guilford College	300.00	300.00
Carolina Friends School	300.00	300.00

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New Garden Friends School	300.00	300.00
Friends School of Wilmington	300.00	300.00
Virginia Beach Friends School	300.00	300.00
School of the Spirit	300.00	300.00
<i>Other Expenses</i>	<i>4,200.00</i>	<i>5,900.00</i>
<hr/>		
Internships/Scholarships	1,200.00	1,000.00
Travel (General)	500.00	500.00
FWCC Travel Fund	2,500.00	4,400.00
Travel in the Ministry	0.00	0.00
<b>Budget Summary</b>		
Total Sources of Funds	12,300.00	12,583.33
Total Uses of Funds	11,706.99	12,800.38
<hr/> <hr/>		
Net Sources and Uses of Funds	\$593.01	-\$217.05
<u>Special Projects (Paid from Special Projects Fund)</u>		
Bolivian Quaker Education Fund	\$750.00	\$600.00
Cuban Student Scholarship @Guilford	\$1,363.74	\$0.00

*The funds available in the Special Projects Fund are sufficient to recommit to the Bolivian Quaker Education Fund by donating \$750 with the intent that this is a four-year commitment. With this commitment, the remaining \$1,363.74 was approved to donate to Friends Center at Guilford College in support of a Cuban Quaker student (or if no Cuban is student entering, to support international Quaker scholarships through Friends Center). With this, next year's Finance Committee will be charged with determining what level of support might be possible in future years to support international Quaker students coming to Guilford. The Finance Committee is also asked to consider if there is a need to establish a Special Projects Fund for the future.*

**27. Discipline Revision Committee Report (Part 2)**

*Andrew Wright presented the proposed section on Special Occasions for first approval. Friends approved the draft as presented. Lloyd Lee Wilson presented the proposed Historical Sketch section for first approval. He noted that the ending piece describing the term "Conservative" as applied to Friends was not included in his presentation with recognition that this sub-section is undergoing further revision and will be re-circulated to monthly meetings for review prior to being brought forward for approval. The historical sketch provides a context for understanding our yearly meeting and as a resource for those coming to us. The historical sketch was approved with the awareness that this is a first approval and the document is open for further seasoning prior to it being brought back for second approval next year. Andrew Wright presented a paragraph for insertion in the already approved Organization and Procedures section to note the existence of a yearly meeting policies and procedures manual. This draft paragraph was approved with some suggested elements for further consideration prior to being brought for second approval next year. These three items will be implemented for the next year and be brought forward again at next yearly meeting for further consideration and approval as part of the interim Discipline.*

**28. Nominating Committee Report**

*Anne Olsen presented the Nominating Committee's report with the understanding that the committee is continuing to work on filling all positions and will have a more complete report for Interim Body in Tenth Month. Vacancies to be filled include a yearly meeting treasurer and additional representatives to the Friends Committee on National Legislation. (See full report via listing of committees and representatives in Appendix.)*

**29. Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC) Report**

*Elizabeth Rolfe shared a report on the FWCC World Plenary Meeting that she and Kristin Olsen Kennedy attended as our NCYM(C) representatives in First Month.*

I extend warm greetings to you from the Friends World Committee for Consultation and from the worldwide body of Friends. For those of you who do not know, FWCC is an international organization that seeks to connect Friends from all different countries, cultures, and Quaker traditions. The organization does this in many ways, including (but not limited to) creating channels of communication between yearly meetings, allowing international engagement of isolated Friends and Worship Groups, keeping up contact with the Quaker United Nations Offices in Geneva and New York, and organizing

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conferences, plenaries, and staff travel to increase global contact and understanding among Friends.

On January 19th through 27th of 2016, FWCC held a World Plenary Meeting in Pisac, Peru. 320 Friends attended for the entire plenary, plus an additional 60 Friends from Peru and Bolivia who joined us over the weekend. Friends came from 37 countries, 77 yearly meetings, 8 independent monthly meetings, and 2 worship groups. 90 of these Friends were Young Adults under the age of 35. Dozens of languages were spoken over the course of the plenary, though the majority of the business was jointly held in Spanish and English. Everyone had to wear translation headsets at some point during each day.

The theme of the plenary was “Living the transformation: creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God (Romans 8:19).” We listened for the inner Light, shared with one another, and discussed this topic and others in small groups, workshops, consultations, and gathering-wide worship. This opened up countless opportunities to pray, sing, ask difficult questions, laugh, cry, and grow together.

It is hard to describe this experience to someone who has never had it before. I come to you with a full heart, a heavy but beautiful burden, and words that feel so lacking. An important theme of the FWCC Plenary this year was the care of the earth and environmental sustainability. In a few minutes I will share with you the minute produced from the business sessions regarding sustainability. However, despite how important that is, I feel a strong call to first emphasize the work of the plenary in regards to peace, bridge-building, and the connection of young adult friends.

In my time at the plenary, I experienced first-hand how simple presence and communication can break down walls, destroy stereotypes, and build understanding and peace. I experienced first-hand what it means to feel where the words come from. In the world at large, there are many barriers that separate people. Language, class, politics, finances, distance, and unfortunately skin color all play a part in building walls between people. From these walls comes misunderstanding, prejudice, inequality, and violence. Sometimes these walls are huge and obvious. Sometimes they stand between us like a pane of thin glass and we don't even realize it. When Friends arrived at the plenary, many of us were confused and disoriented. Languages were different, cultures were different, spiritual practices were different. There were so many walls. But as we broke down those barriers and began to speak to one another, share our experiences, ask questions, and learn from differences, we discovered that, actually, we were not that different after all. Many of us have the same fears and struggles in life, just in different forms. Many of us have the same joys. Many of us laugh and cry at the same things. And all of us held that precious inner light that we could feel so strongly among us. This kind of experience and understanding is what binds us together as the human race and destroys the violence, hatred, and confusion that eats away at this world. Friends, when we learn to see eye to

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eye with others who seem different than us, that is when violence ends and unity begins. That is why FWCC is so important. We will never learn to love and understand others if we don't communicate, and in order to do that you must take steps to build bridges. This may mean travelling yourself or supporting others who will travel. It may mean hosting Friends from other places in your home. It may mean getting involved in an organization such as FWCC and keeping up regular communications with Friends from around the world. Building bridges can take many forms. I would encourage you to sit with that thought and consider how you may be lead to create peace and unity in this world. Are you prepared to build peace and unity by engaging in the worldwide Society of Friends? What would that look like for you?

During the plenary, Young Adult Friends sorely felt the need to build these bridges between one another and between themselves and the wider Quaker world. We, as Young Adult Friends, met and decided to create an international committee for this very purpose. This is a topic very dear to my heart, and as the clerk of the FWCC Young Friends Committee, I would like to read you the minute from our meetings in Peru.

Minute from the Young Friends of the FWCC World Gathering in Pisac, Peru

“We are going, Heaven knows where we are going, but we know within. We will get there, Heaven knows how we will get there, but we know we will.”

The young adult Friends from across the world who gathered in Pisac, Peru, met twice to consider the needs and leadings of those gathered. Our sessions were covered and fruitful, though we at times struggled to see the way that God was leading us. It was only through our faithful availability to the Spirit moving amongst us that we became united in the sense that we need each other if we are to faithfully answer the callings we feel growing among us. We do not know what those callings are, let alone where they will lead us. What we do know is that we are not yet ready; that our work now is to prepare the ground. We need stronger connections with other young Friends within our regions so we can find our voices. We need stronger connections with other young Friends across the world, so we can lift each other's voices up. We need space and time to love these connections into being. We are called to provide this space and time for ourselves, and asked the following Friends to start this work: Laura Herman, convener - Alaska Friends Conference; Lavender Mukanzi - Central Yearly Meeting, Kenya; Khosi Daniel Sekoere - Central and Southern Africa YM; Jean Hubert Hirwa - Rwanda YM; Alex Pacco Catachura- INELA Peru YM; Daniel Burton - Aotearoa/New Zealand YM; Rosie Remmerswaal - Aotearoa/New Zealand YM; Ludwig Quirog - Bohol Worship Group, Philipines; Connor Chaffey - Australia YM; Renke Meuwese - Netherlands YM; Milena Villca Mamani - Union Boliviana Amigos YM; Micaela Flores - La Estrella de Belen YM; Elizabeth Rolfe - North Carolina YM (Conservative); Sergio Espino -

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Santidad Guatemala YM; Michael Doo - Baltimore YM; Christina Isabel Tellez - Canadian Young Friends YM

And have named these Elders to assist in their work: Kelsey McNicholas, SAYMA, USA; Elias Sanchez-Eppler, New England Yearly Meeting; Noemi Genesis Gutierrez Plata - Santidad Amigos Bolivia; Thomas Owen, New Zealand YM; Jonny Poole, Ireland YM

The gathered group laid our hands on these Friends and prayed over the. We charged this working group to begin its process with these six specific tasks:

- 1) Fill out the working group so it reflects the diversity of young Friends globally and not only those who could come to Pisac;
- 2) Support young Friends in building connections, taking on Quaker leadership roles, and voicing the needs of young Friends within their regions;
- 3) Serve as a hub for young Friends' communication across sections;
- 4) Keep listening for a call to gather global young Friends together;
- 5) Discern what else God is calling the working group to do; and
- 6) Share with young Friends globally within a year, how the group has been led.

The young Friends gathered in Pisac offered their hands, heads, and hearts to this work. In the ending of our time together we formed a prayer group around those who have agreed to serve and shared powerful ministry whilst laying on hands.

Clerk (pro tempore): Leo Wieldraaijer-Vincent

Recorders: Jenny McCarthy, Kelsey McNicholas, Elias Sanchez-Eppler

As one of the Young Adult Friends participating in this Yearly Meeting, I would like to ask you: What are you doing to welcome Young Adults into the Society of Friends and let them grow with you and even change you? How can you support the needs of Young Adult Friends in this Yearly Meeting and in the general Society of Friends?

Now, as I said before, I would like to tell you about the work of the FWCC Plenary regarding environmental sustainability. I believe the best and most thorough way to share this with you is to read an excerpt of the minute from the FWCC Consultation on Sustainability.

IRM 16-20. Sustainability. The Consultation on Sustainability, facilitated by Jonathan Woolley (Mexico City MM/Pacific YM; Staff, QUNO-Geneva), Rachel Madenyika (Staff, QUNO-NY), and Charlotte Gordon (Aotearoa/New Zealand YM) have presented a minute for our consideration:

Living Sustainably and Sustaining Life on Earth

The Light of Christ has inspired Quakers throughout the generations. As we gather together in Pisac, Peru in 2016, we feel this light stronger than ever in our calling to care for the Earth on which we live. It is calling us from all traditions: programmed, unprogrammed, liberal, and evangelical. It calls us to preserve this Earth for our children,



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our grandchildren and all future generations to come, working as though life were to continue for 10,000 years to come. Be ready for action with your robes hitched up and your lamps alight. (Luke 12:35, Revised English Bible)

Our faith as Quakers is inseparable from our care for the health of our planet Earth. We see that our misuse of the Earth's resources creates inequality, destroys community, affects health and well-being, leads to war and erodes our integrity. We are all responsible for stewardship of our natural world. We love this world as God's gift to us all. Our hearts are crying for our beloved mother Earth, who is sick and in need of our care....

On recommendation of this Consultation, and after some discussion, we adopt the following minute:

In this effort for sustainability, and mindful of the urgency of this work, this Plenary asks the FWCC World Office and Central Executive Committee to:

Invest FWCC World funds ethically.

Share Quaker experiences with other faith groups to inspire them to action, especially through the World Council of Churches.

Seek ways of connecting Friends worldwide that are sustainable.

Facilitate dissemination of training materials on sustainability issues for Quaker leaders, pastors and teachers.

This FWCC Plenary Meeting also asks all Yearly Meetings to:

Initiate at least two concrete actions on sustainability within the next 12 months.

These may build on existing projects of individuals or monthly meetings or they may be new initiatives. We ask that they encourage Young Friends to play key roles. We ask that meetings minute the progress and results, so as to share them with FWCC and Quaker meetings.

Support individuals and groups in their meetings who feel called to take action on sustainability.

Support the work done by Quaker organisations such as the Quaker United Nations Office and the Quaker Council for European Affairs to ensure that international agreements and their implementation support sustainability.

This FWCC Plenary Meeting asks individual Friends and groups (such as Monthly Meetings, Worship Groups and ad hoc groups within Meetings) to share inspiring experiences of living sustainably on the new "sustainability webpage" of the Quakers in the World Website (<http://www.quakersintheworld.org/>). This webpage can be used as a source of ideas, inspiration and action.

We recognize that different actions are relevant to different Quaker meetings in different parts of the world. So, what can you do to contribute to the care of our earth?

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Which of these actions could you take, or are there other actions you can think of to implement in your life and your meeting?

Finally, I would like to share with you the financial needs of FWCC. For this, I will read you an excerpt from the FWCC website regarding the finances of the plenary in January.

The work of FWCC depends on us all. In order to continue it, we encourage Friends, meetings/churches and Yearly Meetings to contribute financially to and participate in building connections between Friends. Our experience with the World Plenary Meeting exceeded all expectations. This gathering was extraordinary in that Friends were remarkably open to each other and expressed a longing to discover ways to work together in the world across traditions. The participation of over 90 Young Adult Friends brought a fresh energy, encouraging us as Friends to allow God to transform us. Coming from 37 countries, we were greatly enriched by our cultural diversity.

Although we had been working for many months with the Peruvian embassy, the significant delays in processing visas and the resulting additional travel costs means that our expenses have been significantly higher than budgeted by about £20,000 or \$29,000.

We are seeking help from as many Friends as possible to meet this unexpected expense of the FWCC World Office. Here are ways you can give through your Section or directly to the World Office:

Section of the Americas – Friends can make a tax deductible contribution on the FWCC SoA website, [www.FWCCAmericas.org](http://www.FWCCAmericas.org) with a note designating the contribution to the World Office travel fund. There will be a small administrative charge by the Section of the Americas for processing the donation.

In light of the heightened finances involved in calling together an FWCC World Plenary and the desire to reduce Friends' carbon footprint on our earth, we held a worshipful and emotional business meeting regarding the length of time that the FWCC constitution requires between world plenaries. Before the 2016 Plenary, the FWCC constitution required that world plenaries were not to be separated by more than 4 years. After much thought, prayer, and discussion, the body of representatives gathered in Peru decided to lengthen this time to 10 years. This does not necessarily mean that there will be ten years between now and the next FWCC world plenary. However, it does mean that that there will be more than three or four years between each plenary in order to allocate FWCC funds and staff energy elsewhere and to reduce the amount of pollution and waste involved in so many people gathering so often. It is the hope of the representatives that FWCC will now be able to spend more time and energy connecting Friends in a variety ways that are less costly.

Friends, we have so much work to do. In closing, I would like to repeat the queries that I asked after each section of this report, and add one more as well.

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First: Are you prepared to build peace and unity by engaging in the worldwide Society of Friends? What would that look like for you?

Second: What are you doing to welcome Young Adults into the Society of Friends and let them grow with you and even change you? How can you support the needs of Young Adult Friends in this Yearly Meeting and in the general Society of Friends?

Third: What can you do to contribute to the care of our earth? Which of the listed actions could you take, or are there other actions you can think of to implement in your life and your meeting?

And finally: Are you lead and able to support FWCC with your time and/or your finances?

*Kristin Olsen Kennedy provided an update on the FWCC Traveling Ministries program, which she currently clerks. The program is seeking its first cohort of ministers and planning training for their two-year commitment to the program. The program is also seeking meetings wishing to welcome traveling ministers to their meetings and Kristen encouraged NCYM(C) meetings to participate.*

### **30. Durham Monthly Meeting Report on Affiliations**

*Toby Berla reported on the process Durham Monthly Meeting went through regarding possible affiliation with Piedmont Friends Yearly Meeting. The process evolved to consider what affiliations mean in the life of their meeting. The yearly meeting expressed appreciation to Durham Monthly Meeting for the process that they undertook. Friends are directed to a fuller report of the process, which is available through Durham Friends.*

After a period of deep discernment, we recognize that there is insufficient energy within Durham Friends Monthly Meeting to join a second yearly meeting. As such, we decline the invitation to join Piedmont Friends Yearly Meeting at this time. We appreciate the understanding and support received from both Piedmont Friends Yearly Meeting and North Carolina Yearly Meeting (Conservative) throughout this process.

Recommendations section of the final report of the committee that was submitted to Durham's Business Meeting in Sixth Month:

#### Recommendations for Meeting for Business

After a year of discernment, accumulating information, a forum and a retreat, we agreed that there simply was not enough energy in the Meeting to support joining Piedmont Friends Yearly Meeting. Several of the members of the committee expressed regret that we would not be moving forward, believing that we are missing a rare opportunity to participate in the building of a new yearly meeting which is

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affiliated with Friends General Conference. Most of the members of the committee have had rich experiences in either PFF or NCYM(C) and are somewhat sad that participation of our monthly meeting in those organizations has ebbed. We posited that members are busier than they used to be, that the longing for a bigger community has shifted as our meeting has grown so large. We recognize that participation waxes and wanes and recommend that the Meeting be open to reconsidering this decision should a group of Friends come forward with the energy and enthusiasm to join Piedmont Friends Yearly Meeting. Piedmont Friends Yearly Meeting recognizes that monthly meetings may have dual yearly meeting affiliations and their discipline will firmly establish the authority of monthly meetings to discern way forward should differences in disciplines be present. We also expressed a desire to see intervisitation between all three groups: Piedmont Friends Fellowship, Piedmont Friends Yearly Meeting, and North Carolina Yearly Meeting (Conservative), and perhaps even Friends United Meeting and Evangelical Friends International.

### Recommendations for Piedmont Friends Yearly Meeting and Piedmont Friends Fellowship

We recommend that we decline the invitation to join Piedmont Friends Yearly Meeting at this point in time. We did not sense sufficient energy or enthusiasm for accepting the increased responsibilities that joining Piedmont Friends Yearly Meeting would entail. This decision could be revisited at a later date if a group of Durham Friends came forward with the desire, energy, and enthusiasm to shift our affiliation from PFF to PFYM. We recommend that we offer our enthusiastic support for the work of Piedmont Friends Yearly Meeting. The support could take the tangible form of the provision of meeting space and an observer to the yearly meeting. We could express hope for more interaction between PFYM and NCYM(C) including: (1) working groups made up of members of both Yearly Meetings that combine energy and resources to be more effective on shared concerns, (2) directory of Friends from both Yearly Meetings interested in shared issues, (3) website/blog and/or list serve that would facilitate the sharing information across boundaries, and (4) youth programs involving participants from both yearly meetings. We appreciate the sustenance that PFF has provided our meeting over the years. It has offered an opportunity for Friends of all ages from programmed and unprogrammed traditions to come together for fellowship, Spiritual renewal, education, and Spiritual activism. Through PFF we have been connected with Friends General Conference, the Gathering and the many services that FGC offers. We are grateful and affirm our desire for our relationship to continue, to grow and to deepen.

### Recommendations for North Carolina Yearly Meeting (Conservative)

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We recommend that the meeting clerks send a letter to the clerk of North Carolina Yearly Meeting (Conservative) expressing appreciation for their understanding and support as we considered the question of joining Piedmont Friends Yearly Meeting. We appreciated the Friends that stepped forward to offer support: Barbara Gosney (Rich Square Meeting), David Perry (Davidson Meeting) and Bruce Arnold (Greenville Meeting). We especially appreciated the presence of Barbara and Bruce at our retreat.

We are grateful for the sustenance, accountability and support that we have received from NCYM(C) since our formation under their care. We have appreciated their tolerance and support as we have struggled with issues that were at odds with the majority of the yearly meeting members. This is remarkable in a time when Friends in other traditions are experiencing bitter disagreements and are splitting and dividing rather than working together. We have managed to allow differences and maintain a relationship based on love and understanding: “Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of Peace,” Ephesians 4:3. We would share the same desires for more interaction between PFF/YM and NCYM(C) as stated above. We would affirm our covenant and express our desire for our relationship to continue, to grow and to deepen.

### Actions within Our Meeting

We observed a significant lack of interest in participation in NCYM(C), PFF or PFYM on the part of most Friends in Durham Meeting. Interest in participating has waxed and waned over the years. There is no pressure for Friends to be involved, but we want to make sure that Friends are informed about opportunities. We offer Quakerism 101; the Adult Education Committee offers forums from time to time on our relationship to other Quaker organizations; and Friends regularly announce opportunities following Meeting for Worship on the Meeting list serve or in the newsletter. One Friend reminded us that reaching out personally is the best way to let Friends know why they might enjoy a particular experience. We recommend continuing all of these avenues of education. Friends interested in becoming more involved in either organization are encouraged to contact the representatives to those organizations to discern way forward.

### **31. Journal Committee Report**

*Kent Wicker reminded Friends of the recently printed seventh issue of the Journal. 250 copies were printed and most have been distributed. Over half of the printing costs have already been recovered through donations received. The journal is a way of making our yearly meeting's values known to the world. Back issue are available online and the latest issue will also be posted through the yearly meeting web site. The Journal Committee has met and is exploring topics for future issues.*

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### **32. Letter to Absent Friends**

*Bob Cooper read the Letter to Absent Friends. Friends approved the letter to be sent out to absent Friends along with the Summary of Exercises and epistle.*

We send you our loving greetings, and want you to know that you were missed at the 319<sup>th</sup> sessions of North Carolina Yearly Meeting (Conservative).

As we considered the theme, "I love to feel where words come from," we recognized through your absence how deeply we have cherished gifts the Spirit has sent through you and that you have faithfully experienced our gatherings in the past.

Enclosed you should find our Summary of Exercises and the Young Friends epistle to give you a fuller sense of our time together.

### **33. Web Committee Report**

*Melidy Poole shared that the Web Committee met face to face during sessions and have established a committee online group to continue their work virtually.*

*The Web Committee is asked to consider how we may (or may not) use photographs of yearly meeting on our yearly meeting web site and social media presence. Several years ago it was requested that our yearly meeting photographs that are published with the minutes not be included online. It is time for us to revisit our approach to yearly meeting images online.*

### **34. Hospitality Committee Report**

*Ray Treadway, registrar, presented the Hospitality Committee Report.*

The yearly meeting held its annual sessions on the campus of Guilford College from Seventh Month 13 through 17, 2016. For these five days and four nights, ninety-seven participants were registered, including seventy-seven adults (including sixty-two members, five frequent attenders, and ten visitors) and twenty children. The rooms in Mary Hobbs Hall were filled by the weekend and seven rooms in Bryan Hall were required to accommodate those staying on campus. There were twenty-two commuters who attended for one or more days. The evening sessions were well attended, with perhaps as many as 125 persons, including visitors from the community.

Our income included payments of nearly \$12,000 for staying in the dormitory, meals, and day fees and nearly \$3700 in registration fees. Almost \$2800 was contributed to assist attenders. We covered the costs of all children attending, for a total of approximately \$2300, and also provided nearly \$550 to supplement the costs of others who could not pay the full amount.

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We are grateful for the assistance of John Garrison, Guilford College Coordinator of Conferences & Events. Deborah Shaw and Judy Reece worked with Guilford College before and during the sessions to ensure smooth operations. Claire Koster and Susan Carlyle provided essential help at the registration desk.

### **35. Documents Committee Report**

*Susan Lees and Barbara Gosney shared a summary of themes and highlights from epistles received over the past year. They read the Documents Committee charge as described in the 1999 and 1989 minutes. The nature and distribution of epistles and how we share them has changed since these descriptions were approved. How much does our yearly meeting want circulated to our meetings and how are they circulated? Who is on the Documents Committee and should we be intentionally including a young Friend as noted in earlier minutes? Guidance is needed with a request to take back to meetings for discussion and further follow up at Interim Body.*

### **36. Answers to the Queries**

*The answers to the Queries from the monthly meetings were read. (As is our custom, although answers are read during several different sessions, for continuity, all answers will be grouped together when included in the minutes.)*

*Query #1: Do we faithfully uphold our testimony for worship, which is based on silent waiting, and for a free and unprogrammed ministry that may be shared by all? Is there a living silence in which we feel drawn together by the Light of Christ, the power of God in our midst; and is this inspiration carried over into our daily lives? Do we come to meeting with hearts and minds open and ready to worship in silence or in vocal ministry or prayer as the Holy Spirit leads us? Does our Meeting encourage those who may have a gift in the spoken ministry?*

**Davidson:** We are in agreement that we do uphold our testimony for worship. There is a feeling of living silence in our worship. People who have spoken in meeting have been encouraged in their ministry after they have shared in meeting. There is an appreciation for the query to acknowledge the different activities that can happen in meeting: worship in silence, vocal ministry, and prayer. It was expressed that in our meeting for worship more vocal prayer would be appreciated. Understanding the historical context of this query in our yearly meeting helps us deepen our appreciation of this query.

**Durham:** The nature of our worship is that it welcomes all, invites new voices, sustains itself over time, bears sweet fruit, and opens hardened hearts. Our worship is a tea that is

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sweetest when given time to steep and time to sip slowly. It arises without paid ministers or programmed worship and it reaches across years and throughout each moment. When we attend to it, we see that our worship provides a bountiful harvest year after year.

**Fayetteville:** We do uphold our testimony for worship based on silent waiting and an unprogrammed ministry. We do feel a silence where we are drawn together by the power of God in our midst. We feel happy to come together to worship in silence or vocal ministry. We are sometimes uncertain if we are led to speak, but usually take time after the meeting for worship for the expression of any afterthoughts. We do try to encourage the spoken ministry.

**Friendship:** Friendship Meeting is faithful in its practice of waiting worship, seeking to feel for and be directed by the perceptible presence of the Spirit of God in our midst. Vocal ministry is widely shared by those present, and we understand that it is open to anyone who is so led by the Holy Spirit. Our meetings for worship are frequently blessed with a sense of the presence and power of God in our midst, in which our experience of being a single community is strengthened and made more precious. The daily lives of those in our community bear witness to the ways in which this living presence stays with us. The quality of our meetings for worship indicates that most arrive with hearts and minds open and prepared. There is little indication that any come with a set intention to speak or to be silent. We are actively seeking a fuller understanding of what it means to have a spiritual gift, particularly a gift in vocal ministry, and what would be appropriate encouragement from the meeting as a body to those who give evidence of having such a gift.

**Greenville:** We prepare to come to worship in various ways and come as we are, well prepared or not. We bring our ordinary worries and concerns and endeavor to set them aside in the silence. We also come with deeper hurts to bring to the silence in search of healing. We do nurture vocal ministry and have welcomed more this past year. We also acknowledge musical gifts as a valuable form of ministry.

**Rich Square:** We believe as a meeting we are clear in our worship based on silent waiting that is shared by all in attendance. We quickly settle into silent worship. At times our waiting worship is enriched by vocal ministry. As our numbers have grown over the past year the strength of our unprogrammed ministry has grown and been shared by all who attend. Out of the silence we are drawn closer to the divine and find.



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**Virginia Beach:** The gathered silence is deep and fulfilling. The spoken ministry at times reinforces the gifts of the silence. We encourage each other to be alert to genuine leadings to speak and to be open to the different places openness takes different friends. Hearing these differences, while remaining attentive to one another and honoring what is important to each of us, is one way we carry our faith into our daily lives.

**West Grove:** We endeavor to move under the spirit of what this query calls us to do.

**Wilmington:** Yes, we feel we uphold the testimony for worship in the manner of conservative Friends. We benefit individually from the silence, but also feel we are too quiet and would benefit from more vocal ministry. We recognize that vocal messages help us feel connected to one another and they make our love for one another obvious. We also recognize that the ambiguity of messages is part of the beauty of vocal ministry. Our concern over the depth of ministry in our spoken words stops us from speaking. We agreed that unpolished words are welcome and this query discussion provides needed encouragement.

*Query #2: Are we faithful in our attendance at meetings for worship and are we careful not to disturb the spirit of the meeting by our late arrival? Is our behavior therein that of open submission to God in silent communion?*

**Davidson:** Acknowledging that our condition is one where we have people who come regularly and others who come from time to time and that this may not fit the sense of the query, we are still called to celebrate that our meeting is a place where God can be met. Our space and our community practices create a spirit of worship and openness to divine in gathered way makes God present and available for when people come. We are grateful for this query as a reminder that the base of our worship is that of open submission as this is a practice we cannot always meet.

**Durham:** We find that our worship reflects a deep settling of the entire Meeting. We note that it is amazing how often there arises from the silence a message that speaks to our individual condition. Even with our greater numbers, we seem to maintain a beautiful deep worship.

We note that to some degree the query asks if we take our Meetings for Worship seriously. If we do, we make it a priority to get there on time. And yet the query reflects two different questions. One asks about an ideal world in which all are prepared for meeting and the other the actual world in which open submission may refer to how we

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behave when the ideal does not happen. Are we able to allow the Divine to use the disruptions as a way to speak to us?

One might think of punctuality as an issue of virtue, but in the Apologia there is a description of entering meeting for worship and being "caught by the Spirit" existing in the room. The person who wrote this must have arrived late. One may arrive late and become hyper aware of the Spirit present, like walking into a house and smelling something wonderful cooking. Settling into the silence may be compared to a rock settling into a bog, a metaphor which includes the acceptance of late arrivals and the sounds of children as part of the process.

We recognize that there will always be those who arrive late and sounds from the children present, and our meeting has learned to adapt. We are grateful to our greeters who organize the entrance of late comers and the exit of the children to minimize disturbances.

We are mindful that there are other ways we may take care not to disturb Meeting for Worship. We may consider that a message might be disruptive: do we need to settle in more deeply to wait upon God in silence before we speak. Might we also come late to meeting if we have not prepared ourselves for worship. There is a seamlessness to the notion that the week prepares us for meeting for worship and meeting for worship prepares us for the week. When we come to Meeting, we should ask ourselves if our spirits are in time with Meeting.

We live in human time and attempt in Meeting for Worship to engage with the timelessness of God time. In human time we try to arrive to meeting in time to prepare a space, but in our worship we try to move beyond the actual, let our bodies go and let the silence and the timeless world come in.

It is sometimes difficult for us to juggle human time and timeliness versus the timelessness of God and to know that way will open when the time is right.

**Fayetteville:** We are faithful in our attendance at meetings for worship and try not to disturb the meeting by our late arrival. We felt we came to meeting remembering that if we seek we will find. It was mentioned we are vessels waiting in expectancy to be filled with the Spirit.

**Friendship:** While we find that attendance fluctuates it has increased significantly overall. The meeting room is often nearly full and frequent use is made of the anteroom. Those few who arrive late do not disturb the spirit of the meeting. Despite the larger numbers of attenders, the silence that settles is deep. We believe that vocal ministry is increased and it seems to come from that spirit of open submission to God.

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**Greenville:** We are faithful in waiting in humble submission to Divine Guidance. The quality of our attitude during worship is more important than when we arrive. Coming a few minutes late and slipping quietly into an already settled meeting can be helpful for some.

**Rich Square:** We are faithful in our attendance at meetings for worship. Due to the travel distance for some of our members, we occasionally have late arrivals, but are glad that they are in attendance and there is no feeling of disruption. When meeting begins, we are quick to settle, and the spirit of the meeting is focused in silent waiting.

**Virginia Beach:** The silent meeting for worship is the heart of our practice. It seems that many things happen in the silence besides the open submission mentioned in the query, among them prayer and listening to the messages of others. These, too, however, are done in the spirit of submission. We note that the opening question does not say “Don’t be late!” but rather, enjoins us not to disturb the spirit of the meeting by one’s late arrival. That some will come late seems unavoidable. Those who can come early set an example by settling in. Those who are late settle in as quietly as possible and those already settled in maintain the spirit.

**West Grove:** We feel we are clear under the heads of this Query.

**Wilmington:** We seek to live our lives guided by simplicity. Members expressed how it can be difficult to avoid all activities that are harmful to others and ourselves when found in the workplace. The difficulty arises when you choose to remain in a tense or toxic situation in order to strengthen the physical, mental, and spiritual lives of those who may have less power. Reflecting on Quaker movements from the past, it cannot always be simple to be an agent of change, but it speaks to the honesty of our manner of living. Also, we discussed comparisons of simplicity across cultures and time periods, while it may be very different, it should reflect the content of our society. We are mindful that we have a choice and that simple isn’t always quick.

*Query #3: Do we follow the teachings of Jesus and seek the inspiration of His Holy Spirit in our daily lives? Are love and unity maintained among us? Do we cultivate a forgiving spirit, and do we avoid and discourage needless and destructive criticism of others? When differences arise, do we endeavor promptly to resolve them in a spirit of love, honesty, and humility?*

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**Davidson:** Personal reflections reveal that as much as we hope to live out Jesus' teachings, some are hard to follow given our human frailties. We do find that vocal ministry often speaks to our need to follow Jesus and be open to the Holy Spirit. It is our sense that our meeting does have a welcoming and forgiving spirit. We appreciate the way the structure of query offers a model of we may seek to be, especially as it calls to mind the difference between unity and suppression of conflict and between constructive and destructive criticism. We find that there is much in this query to speak to our condition as individuals and as a meeting.

**Durham:** Friends affirmed ideas and practices that help to maintain love and unity among us. We can listen with a spirit of tender forgiveness, recognizing that we often "know not what we do" (Luke 23:34 RSV). In business meeting, we can recall that we are waiting upon the Spirit for guidance, leading to a true sense of the meeting, which may not be obvious at first. We are grateful to Friends who orient newcomers to Quaker traditions and practices, in a spirit of honesty, humility, and love, which contributes to a sense of love and unity.

Sometimes we endeavor promptly to resolve differences, sometimes we succeed, sometimes we are not as successful, and sometimes we could try harder. Resolution of differences may come slowly, but there is a sense of love and unity among us that carries the process, reduces hard feelings, and holds us together.

**Fayetteville:** We try to follow the teachings of Jesus. We work to maintain Love and unity in our Meeting. This Query helps in strengthening us in trying to live in the world. We are aware that cultivating a forgiving spirit takes time. A request was made for us to spend time learning more about reconciliation.

**Friendship:** In our individual meditation, in our corporate worship together, and in our meetings for business in the spirit of worship, we seek to understand God's message for us and the right way forward. We have undertaken projects, either as a meeting or as individuals, to help those who struggle to have enough to eat, those who are lonely and in need of companionship, and those who are immigrants and looking for new beginnings. We are aware of the times we fail to follow the spirit of the teachings of Jesus, to go the second mile, and we may become enamored of the distractions of our culture.

We are aware that our community consists of persons from diverse religious backgrounds and differing experiences of Quaker process, and sometimes we make assumptions about what is important that are not shared by all. We have found threshing sessions helpful in listening to each other. We continue to be mindful of trying to know

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each other at a deeper level, remaining open to seeking respect and unity when differences are recognized. We realize that we often fall short.

**Greenville:** Love and unity are maintained among us. A gentle, even playful Spirit watches over Greenville Meeting. Our differences do not create divisions that require any forgiveness as we offer mutual support in the challenges that we face in life. Each of us seeks to follow the inspiration of the Holy Spirit in the very individual ways in which we understand and experience that guidance.

**Rich Square:** As a meeting community, we appear to be living into the inspiration of the Holy Spirit in our encounters with one another. We hope this is true in our daily encounters with everyone. Within the Meeting love and unity are maintained. Our dispositions seem to be toward cultivating a forgiving spirit and avoiding destructive criticism of others. “Differences” as a matter of breaches of relationships are not apparent among us. We do have “differences” among us which testify to the individuality of each one of us. We recognize and prize what each person contributes to the whole. In seeking to live in the Spirit daily, we trust that when hurt and divisiveness may arise we will seek to work through them with a loving and forgiving spirit.

**Virginia Beach:** Not the love but the unity among us was questioned. References to the teaching of Jesus and the phrase ‘the Holy Spirit’ seem too narrow to some. Others find this implied rejection of a tradition perplexing. The final sentence of the query is bright before us now. What will it mean to ‘resolve’ this difference?

**West Grove:** We feel we are in unity with one another, and endeavor to let our lives speak Truth to those with whom we have to do. Friends expressed gratitude that our practice of living the guidance of this query allows us, at this very difficult time in our nation to mediate tensions and be experienced participants in peaceful dialogue.

**Wilmington:** Friends aspire to live in the light of the teachings of Jesus, believing that love, humility, and understanding are the true components of living in the Light. We find it easier to approach and resolve conflicts with those who share the same ideals, but harder to maintain loving kindness with those who are difficult and/or toxic. Friends noted that even Jesus at times reacted in human anger or doubt when faced with seemingly insurmountable obstacles or impossible demands but through his human struggling we are provided an example of perseverance toward the Divine. Forgiveness is another concept that we struggle to attain but recognize it is the only path to peace, not just with others, but with ourselves.

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*Query #4: Do we assume our rightful share in the expenses of our meeting? Do we regard our time, our talents, and our possessions as given us in trust, and do we use them freely for the needs of others.*

**Davidson:** Not answered.

**Durham:** With the windows open on a beautiful spring day, amid the voices of children and birds, Friends reflected on this query. We are not comfortable with the emphasis placed on expenses in this query. Our expenses are a product of the work inspired and enabled by the Meeting. We share this work and in doing so build community. It is amazing how much people give of themselves. How can we tend to these contributions in a way that passes knowledge and experience to future Friends? Sometimes important work gets lost or forgotten only to be rediscovered by a new set of Friends. Some Friends give more money than others, and a Friend wishes we spoke more openly about this. While we strive to give of ourselves freely, we value the thoughtfulness that resists the hyperactivity of our wider culture. How do we discern rightful share? One Friend suggests we ask: “Am I giving freely with love? If so, that is my rightful share.”

**Fayetteville:** We seem to give freely what we can, when we can, be it money or our time and service. As a Meeting we don't try to accumulate, but if we have extra funds we try to use it to help others.

**Friendship:** Since the Meeting has agreed to go ahead with a new meeting room and renovations everyone is being asked to consider increasing their yearly donation to help raise money for new facilities. The meeting children have come up with ways to raise money for the new building. Many members have given time and energy to help clean and get ready to sell a donated house. Through reports at business meetings and information sessions all have felt a part of this effort. We have served the local community throughout the year. We support various Friend's organizations and other local community needs that come to our attention. It has been obvious from our committee work and other commitments that we consider our time, talents and possessions as given to us in trust. We are grateful to be able to say that contributions to the meeting have enabled us to meet all of our obligations.

**Greenville:** Our monthly meeting has few expenses and these the members are careful to meet. Resources of our time and energy as well as our money need to flow outward for

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the good of others and while we need to be good stewards of our possessions, we cannot cling too tightly to them. We feel that we are maintaining proper balance at this time.

**Rich Square:** Meeting operating expenses are being met. Some of our distant members focus their meeting contributions on developing resources for the maintenance of the cemetery, meetinghouse and grounds. We do regard our time, talents and possessions as resources for the needs of others. Community assistance in the form of funds and other items are given to local people outside the meeting. The meeting also makes financial contributions to local organizations and members participate in town events for increasing community spirit.

**Virginia Beach:** We honor the hours given by Friends to the service of others. We accept our talents and possessions as held in trust and as truly belonging to God. The phrase 'rightful share' raises further questions. Introducing 'rights' is perhaps more definite than is warranted by the waiting submission to God which is the heart of our practice. There is great difference among us in material circumstance and gifts must take different forms.

**West Grove:** We feel that our members do assume their share of the meeting's expenses and endeavor to share with others as led.

**Wilmington:** At first reading of this question, many of us were in agreement that we would freely share our time, talents, and possessions as well as take responsibility for our share of our Meeting's expenses. We view this place as a second-home, a place that provides us with a community. We find participation and contributions to this community are meaningful to us. All of the little things that we do for each other and our Meeting add up to be something greater than what we alone could manage. We recognized that our membership is cyclical, and it is more difficult now because we have fewer members and attenders which leads to fewer gifts and talents available to the Meeting. With smaller numbers, the gaps left by missing one person can be felt throughout the Meeting, but we seek to expand ourselves to address the needs as a community.

Most of us noted that the difficulty with addressing this question is upon analysis of the word "freely." Many of us are striving to be better at giving without the expectation of appreciation. We feel it is important to possibly endure a "growth spurt" in which we put effort into not giving in order to receive anything, even credit or recognition. We also recognized that for some giving is easier than asking for help. While asking for help can be humbling, it builds capital between relationships. Others may know the joy of giving when presented with an opportunity to do someone a favor. Additionally, our personal belief systems can sometimes limit what we think we are capable of doing. By doing

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something that we think is beyond our capability, we can expand ourselves and update our truth.

*Query #5: Do we regularly attend meetings for business and are they held in a spirit of love, understanding and forbearance? Do we seek the right course in humble submission to the Authority of Truth and in the patient search for a sense of unity under Divine Guidance?*

**Davidson:** Not answered.

**Durham:** Worship can feel more powerful in a space where business is taking place. Patience is the crux of our practice. We live in a time when we expect things to happen quickly, yet we try to humbly submit and seek a sense of unity through patient search rather than take a quick vote. When our patience is tried, it is helpful to remember that this is a meeting for worship first. When we feel judgmental of another's opinion or view, it is good to remember that our meetings for business are a precious opportunity to sit in a spirit of love.

Coming together to do business this way is a spiritual practice and as with all spiritual practice, sometimes it is easier and more natural than others. Something can interfere with the deep source of the practice within us. Then we must be gentle with ourselves—as individuals or as a corporate body—until we can return to a deeper sense.

**Fayetteville:** Fayetteville Friends Meeting is one of the few Monthly Meetings that is well-attended by members and attenders. Our meetings are held in a Spirit of love, understanding, and forbearance (patience, restraint, tolerance, moderation, self-control, mercy). We sometimes forget it's a Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business, and forget to patiently wait for each person's Truth to be voiced. We don't get too upset when we hear differing viewpoints. Our Meeting's size and location has its advantages, with no building expenses and fewer committee reports and activities. We continue to be mindful of the time, and attempt to end within the hour timeframe.

**Friendship:** We have experienced increased attendance at business in the last couple of years which coincides with an increasing membership. There are a goodly number of regular attenders. Increasing membership has meant more projects and points of view as to what to do in the meeting and how to do it. The incoming clerk has initiated our having a Quaker educational moment or inspirational reading related to Quaker business meeting process at the beginnings of our business meeting time together. We follow this with a period of silent gathering before beginning to conduct our business.



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We try to have a moment of silence in between business points which has helped us to recenter and remain grounded. We have been reviving the practice of “threshing sessions” to provide information and to have a clear idea of what are the issues. We are not afraid to lay things over for more seasoning of time, thought and prayer which we feel is in line with the phrase from the query “the patient search for a sense of unity under Divine guidance”.

**Greenville:** We have met for business regularly this year with good attendance. Forbearance hasn’t been needed as no difficult issues have arisen. We have dealt with necessary practical matters in a spirit of simplicity and unity in the Spirit. The main item for business each month has usually been the queries. Members take satisfaction in the process of producing these corporate responses.

**Rich Square:** Since only three members live in the Woodland area, we are appreciative that nearly all who live within a two hour one way commute regularly attend meetings for business. Several others who live farther away attend as often as they are able. Usually more members and attenders are present for meetings on days we have monthly meeting for business. We maintain regular communication each month with nearly all members via email. We believe our meetings are held in a spirit of love, understanding, and forbearance. We trust we are humble and patient as we seek the best courses of action within and beyond our meeting community. As far as we know, there has been no disunity within the meeting.

**Virginia Beach:** Our meetings for worship with attention to business are attended by a loyal core of regulars. They are held in a spirit of love and in a patient search for unity. How we conceive of that unity seems to differ as we puzzle about the meaning of the phrases “authority of Truth” and “under divine guidance.” We listen behind and through the words to the life that calls us together.

**West Grove:** Our regular attenders attend our meetings for business faithfully and we feel that we conduct the business in the authority of Truth.

**Wilmington:** If we compare the average for weekly attenders and members, those who stay for Meeting for Business is high. Those who come for worship are concerned and interested enough to stay for the second hour. Sometimes we feel it is difficult to know that we are submitting to the Authority of Truth for all topics considering that some items discussed during Meeting for Business can feel mundane, but we see that there is divine guidance in searching for unity among members and attenders. Our meeting feels that

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overall, we are willing to see that of God in all opinions brought to the meeting, and we have not faced major controversy in the past year. We keep in mind that conflict may actually be a gift because you can examine your perspective, offer your truth, and search for a solution in silence. Each member or attender only has a piece of the Truth, drawing on the sense of the meeting is way to go forward with faith in divine guidance. This is an important query because it brings the focus away from one's own perspective. In Meeting for Business, we have the chance to practice stewardship for Quakers and others in our community.

*Query #6: Do we endeavor by example and precept to cultivate in our children a sense of openness and expectancy about life, and to aid them in their growth in spiritual understanding and moral discernment? Do we share with them the faith that guides the practice of Friends, while encouraging them to develop their religious insights as the Spirit of God may lead them?*

**Davidson:** It's important to us that children be grounded in a faith, and we try hard to ground them in a spiritual life. Our First Day School curriculum for several years has mindfully included content that gives our children some background knowledge and questions to grow into. This query describes our intention, and our sense is that we do the best that we can. The children in our Meeting are a blessing, and it would be nice if we had more of them, and more who could come regularly.

**Durham:** Yes! When we gather in worshipful silence, we demonstrate by example a comfort and ease with stillness. When we accept and rejoice in the sounds and movements of young children in worship, we provide a safe and loving space for them to grow in faith.

Children and young friends in meeting also want to hear from us about what we believe and how we practice our faith in the world. Sometimes we have trouble finding the words to clearly express our beliefs. Nonetheless, witnessing the children grow into thoughtful and dynamic young adults affirms our response to this query.

**Fayetteville:** We have no children in our Meeting, but do endeavor to cultivate with children a sense of openness to help them in their growth in spiritual understanding and discernment.

**Friendship:** We encourage the spiritual growth of our children of all ages. They join us in the worshipful silence at the beginning and the end of our meetings. We have members who spend time with our children each First Day to guide them in their growth in their

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spiritual and moral discernment. We are fortunate to employ several Quaker students from nearby Guilford College to help with the childcare. The children hold their own monthly meeting for business and make reports to the meeting's regular business meeting from time to time. Under the guidance of our Religious Education committee the young people have taken on fund raising efforts to help immigrants and refugees after having heard personal stories of members and visitors who are or were immigrants and refugees themselves. Under guidance of meeting members, the older children in First Day School lead the meeting for worship's closing and introductions/ announcements on the fifth First Day of a month. The meeting has united to help them prepare a new classroom with furnishings for their use.

**Greenville:** We faithfully endeavor to encourage children and those younger than ourselves to expect new experiences of the Spirit in their travels through life. We do this partly through words, but mostly by keeping this sense of expectancy alive in ourselves.

**Rich Square:** We feel that sharing our faith with children creates a foundation which opens the heart and mind to religious experience in all forms as they grow. Those of us with children at home try to find moments of learning each day through reflection on our interactions with others and our choices in relation to how we feel God leads us to action. With our support of the Community Children's Garden, we endeavor to offer similar opportunities for children in the local area.

**Virginia Beach:** Parenting is humbling experience. We suspect at times that the openness and expectancy we see in our children arises in spite of us. We are grateful for the work of Friends School and of our first-day school in aiding parents in this delicate task. We see evidence of their success. In the face of daunting cultural obstacles, we trust the children while moving gently to make our limited leadings available to them.

**West Grove:** We feel we do endeavor to fulfill the tenets of this query.

**Wilmington:** As we opened the query, a member remarked that the beauty of the query is not the answers, but that the right questions are asked. We believe that it is a good practice to encourage children to find their own religious stirrings rather than expect them to believe what you believe. It is the responsibility of adults to demonstrate our own faith and have the wisdom to allow children to explore their religious insights. Members who have had children in Quaker schools were appreciative that their children developed their faith as the Spirit of God lead them because the children were also able to respond with love to those who judge the spiritual leadings of others. In some ways, we are all still

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children seeking revelation, discovering our faith, and questioning our practice. As parents and adults in the community we believe that raising children who are willing to think will also be willing to search and seek the Truth.

*Query #7: Do we endeavor to live in the life and power that takes away the occasion of all war, seeking to do our part in the work of reconciliation between individuals, groups, and nations? Do we faithfully maintain our testimony against nuclear and all other military preparations, the bearing of arms, and all participation in war?*

**Davidson:** As a meeting we have shared our concern for peace through writing letters to our government representatives, most recently on the Iran nuclear treaty. We also recognize that individuals are called to follow their conscience and that some of our members have served in the military. We see a value in knowing what other Meetings in our state and area are doing to promote peace and take away way causes for war that we might extend our work as a meeting and individuals.

**Durham:** We are delighted to find that we answer this query on the day we record letters from two young Friends declaring their intentions to be conscientious objectors. This is one of the tangible signs of our support for the peace testimony.

In addition, our meeting supports the work of various groups that seek to bring Quaker values into the mainstream world. On the national level, we are thankful to be a part of the work of such groups as FCNL, AFSC and FWCC. On the local level we provide support for conscientious objectors through our support of Quaker House and for victims of violence through our connection with the Religious Coalition for a Nonviolent Durham. Our local work also includes our involvement with the racial justice group which has resulted in deepening relationships among those involved.

We are reminded, however, that the query also mentions the individual and that we are called to reconcile individuals in Meeting. We are aware that sometimes feelings are hurt and we lose people. Working for peace begins at home.

Living in the world, we are targets for messages about power and patriotism that seem to imply that we must always be in agreement with a single side and that those with the most power and those most likely to use violence will “win”. We are called to resist these messages, to live in the power, the creative rather than destructive power, that takes away the occasion for war, and to see what love can do. This is a lifelong task which may not always be easy, but one which may yield unexpected benefits.

**Fayetteville:** As a Meeting and as individuals, we strive to actively maintain peace, internally, financially, and in our actions. We support peace-orientated agencies such as

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American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) and Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL). We recognize that when we encounter conflict, we can find a peaceful path. As peacemaker A. J. Muste said: there is no way to peace; peace is the way.

**Friendship:** Many members consider the ways in which the seeds of war manifest in their daily lives. In general we consider our habits of consumption, our modes of travel, and how to support the wider community's efforts to seek a peaceful world. Frequently members of our meeting will publish editorials or articles in the local newspaper speaking out against war and other injustices. We have been asked, as a meeting, to give input to Friends Committee on National Legislation as they prepare to set their legislative priorities for the next congress. Several members are working to gather this information so that we can participate in the wider Quaker effort to influence our government and send the message that war is not the answer.

**Greenville:** As a group we are all committed to the peace testimony, but there is variation in how our personal experiences with war and peace have shaped our understanding. We share a sense that the root causes of war lie within people and ultimately we rely on the spirit of God to show us what to do in our own personal lives.

**Rich Square:** The meeting has not answered this query during the past year.

**Virginia Beach:** There are things we are not doing that we might do. We have, for example, abandoned the vigils on Laskin Road. There is always more we could do. The work of South Africans for truth and reconciliation is held up as an example. We recognize in our own country a past saturated with violence and a present devoted to preparations for war and to the glorification of war. We are all looking for ways to begin healing conversations with other citizens. We take comfort from the work of the school in helping to build a more peaceful community.

**West Grove:** We feel we are committed to seeing that of God in all individuals and to living in the life and power that takes away the occasion of all wars.

**Wilmington:** To understand this query, we looked at the past, the present, and possible future and the impact of the peace testimony. This query can go beyond our comfort zone because in our hearts, we wholly agree to the peace testimony, but it may not be enough. We strive to live a life committed to our individual part of taking away the occasion of all war, and understand that it is not only our responsibility. We rely on the leaders in our

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country to navigate diplomatic solutions that work to reconcile. As a nation, we currently have a president who is not insistent on putting troops on the ground, but with current events in mind, we realize that it will be our duty to more actively pursue a course to let our leaders know our position before war is an option. We asked what we are doing now to live the testimony. We acknowledge that the testimony is an ideal that seems larger than ourselves, but it can be lived on a very personal level to settle disputes in our lives. Striving to promote reconciliation in all areas of our private life is a way in which we can think globally, but act locally. We faithfully maintain our testimony against nuclear and all other military preparations, such as the bearing of arms. We notice that in our community the bearing of arms is depicted as necessary for safety. We look to identify the statements that can engage those who may be escalating toward violence to be motivated toward reconciliation. We hope that in holding the intention for the good that we can be the ripple in the water and effect change.

*Query #8: Do we observe simplicity and honesty in our manner of living? Are we careful to live within the bounds of our circumstances, punctual in keeping promises, prompt in the payment of debts, and just in all our dealings? Do we choose those activities which will strengthen our physical, mental and spiritual life; and do we avoid those harmful to ourselves and others?*

**Davidson:** This query is easier to answer for oneself, but harder for us as a meeting. We are aware that for some of us memory challenges can make it difficult to keep promises and be punctual as abilities diminish, despite our best intentions. Our architect was touched by the honesty and integrity of our meeting as he was working with us. The query makes some uncomfortable in how it asks us to be challenged. Yet the people in the meeting inspire us to live within these ideals. Our treasurer does keep our finances on target with these queries, and we share the building within this simplicity and honesty and reliability. The activities we do as a meeting fit within the bounds of this query. We can express joy and fun as well as be proper.

**Durham:** Query not answered.

**Fayetteville:** We are reminded that simplicity is more than just being simple in our manner of living, but is not letting clutter materially and mentally keep us from strengthening our spiritual life. We are aware how difficult it is sometimes to choose to live simply.

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**Friendship:** As a meeting, we strive to live up to this testimony. Our meetinghouse is a simple, welcoming structure. Most of our furnishings can serve many purposes. We have activities in the meetinghouse that are strengthen us spiritually, mentally and physically. We hold weekly quiet Tuesday afternoons in the meetinghouse for the purpose of individual quiet contemplative activities, monthly gatherings for deepening the spiritual life of the meeting, twice monthly bible study groups, and twice monthly meetings of a men's group. We also have occasional intergenerational game nights for fun and fellowship as well as work days to challenge many of us physically, regardless of age. Our meeting examines yearly our contributions to outside organizations as we prepare for the financial impact of a new planned meeting space. Our treasurer is prompt in making these donations and in the payment of our bills.

The foods at our monthly potluck meals are prepared mindfully, often with a listing of the ingredients. More vegetables and fruits have been presented over the last year requiring fewer of our planet's irreplaceable resources. Meeting participants strive to lead lives whose daily activities nourish them and do not distract them from the guidance of the Spirit.

**Greenville:** Those of us who still work for large organizations find that the expectations put on us sometimes force us to seriously consider the extent to which we can be cooperative employees without compromising our integrity. Meeting informally for breakfast and conversation allows us to help each other come to clearness about how to deal with issues that arise in our personal lives outside of Meeting.

**Rich Square:** We believe we are generally clear under all the headings of this query. We realize that there may be situations, circumstances, needs or obligations of which we are unaware, but should be mindful.

**Virginia Beach:** We are reminded of the root meaning of simplicity as simpleness of nature, integrity and the candid expression of that integrity. We see this candor in our meeting. Do we carry it out into our daily lives? The politics of the day, perhaps of our professional lives, often invite cynicism. The shared life of this community keeps us centered.

**West Grove:** We feel our members try to live in a manner consistent with this query's expectations.

**Wilmington:** We seek to live our lives guide by simplicity. Members expressed how it can be difficult to avoid all activities that are harmful to others and ourselves when found

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in the workplace. The difficulty arises when you choose to remain in a tense or toxic situation in order to strengthen the physical, mental, and spiritual lives of those who may have less power. Reflecting on Quaker movements from the past, it cannot always be simple to be an agent of change, but it speaks to the honesty of our manner of living. Also, we discussed comparisons of simplicity across cultures and time periods, while it may be very different, it should reflect the content of our society. We are mindful that we have a choice and that simple isn't always quick.

*Query #9: Are we mindful of Friends testimonies against alcoholic beverages, tobacco, and other harmful drugs; and do we refrain from using them or dealing in them, realizing that abstinence is the clearest witness against overindulgence? Do we seek to avoid all kinds of gambling and places of diversion that tend to be demoralizing? Do we keep in mind how diverse and widespread are the temptations to grow richer at the expense of others? Are we faithful to our testimony against taking oaths?*

**Davidson:** In listening to the query, two basic themes arise: overindulgence and witness. Ultimately the question is "Are our lives a witness of living in love? Can people look at our lives and see how we are being called by God?" At the same time, we are concerned that our witness come out of humility and that we avoid the judging of others. The reference to oaths reminds us of the history of Quakers as living visibly distinct from the wider culture and asks us to look at all parts of the query in a different light. A further question arose: are we living lives of distinction community or lives of integrity, or might they be same.

**Durham:** Query not answered.

**Fayetteville:** As individuals and as a Meeting we are mindful of Friends testimonies against alcoholic beverages, tobacco, and other harmful drugs and do refrain from using them. We do seek to avoid gambling. We are aware of how widespread the temptation is to grow richer at the expense of others. We have found that recently Society has changed so we usually do not have to decide whether or not to take an oath.

**Friendship:** This query is helpful for our members as it reminds each member to practice a responsible attitude toward alcohol, and other potentially harmful practices. We hope our members refrain from using harmful drugs. We believe our members uphold the Quaker Testimony of Integrity by undergoing spiritual discernment about their use of alcohol or other substances in their personal lives. Our policy is that the meeting house itself is to remain substance free. To the best of our knowledge our members avoid



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gambling, particularly in light of its adverse social and personal consequences. We try to keep in mind that we need to be constantly vigilant about the way we live our lives so that each of us can discern whether or not our standard of living is being achieved at the expense of others. To the best of our knowledge Friends in our meeting refrain from taking oaths.

**Greenville:** We continue to hold that moderation is a good practice for most people but that abstinence is a necessity for some. Avoiding growing rich at the expense of others is still meaningful in these times and it requires that we are mindful of how we spend and invest. While we recognize the need to pay attention to our personal financial choices we also are aware of our responsibility to stay involved with the large powers in the world and see what we can do to influence them in the right direction.

**Rich Square:** Not answered by the meeting during the past year.

**Virginia Beach:** We remind ourselves that the advice to refrain from taking oaths ought to be taken in a broader sense than referring only to the formal swearing of oaths. We are to speak directly and with the intent always of speaking truly. The alcohol clause strikes some as too absolute and that 'abstinence' could be softened. To others the trap that alcohol is for many makes this word seem appropriate. The investment culture raises worries about profiting from the loss of others. In its more speculative forms it may involve us in a form of gambling. We take the query to call us to thoughtfulness about all our speaking's and doings. How this thoughtfulness plays out in individual lives will vary. The challenge remains valid.

**West Grove:** We feel we are generally clear under the various heads of this query. We feel that we have many opportunities to witness to the issues raised by this query.

**Wilmington:** This is a difficult query to start because it provides the most specific guidance of all of the queries. Many of the members are in agreement with the testimonies, but feel that the emphasis is on not overindulging. We strive to live mindfully of those who have addiction and have thoughtful interactions to help others. Indulgence is a part of the culture, so practicing moderation is so important. We do not gamble, noting the exploitative nature of the lottery system. The individual contribution to our global system is difficult to manage exactly how wide-spread our impact is on others. We seek not to become rich at the expense of others, but there are times when we are not explicitly aware of the impact of our purchases. We discussed the importance of avoiding oaths because our truth should be expressed as truth in all things. We have taken

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opportunities to affirm rather than swear in to jury duty. Some members are involved in education, and the Pledge of Allegiance was debated.

Our relationship to this query had us discussing our relationship to temptation. It makes sense to avoid the behaviors that are bad for you and have destructive effects on others. We realize that abstinence is easiest method of avoidance, and personally we have recognized when it is needed in our own lives. The result of a lot of these behaviors can result in temporary pleasure, but it is okay to go towards the pain to get through the pain. Members also expressed that this query does need a continuing revelation, in regards to the support of medical marijuana and expanding the query to address the true nature of this query. Does this query ask the right question? By including very specific behaviors, we may be focusing more on the issues than the excess. We need to explore what is the hunger inside that is not being fed; what am I doing to feed that connection? For some, it may not be gambling, but it could be food. Exploration of this query in a broader sense can deepen the connection to the Light rather than “fix” an addiction.

*Query #10: Do we endeavor to live in harmony with nature? Are we careful in our stewardship of the earth's irreplaceable resources?*

**Davidson:** From a political point of view, we have supported Davidson Lands Conservancy and on a national level FCNL. We see sharing our building as a way of keeping it from being a one use site and acknowledge those who walk to meeting. A concern was raised about using the term resources as that term seems to deny the living aspect of the world. Is there a way that we can move to thinking more holistically and see ourselves and our relationship to the environment as part of a living whole?

**Durham:** *Durham Friends Meeting Youth (Revised Query version, 1991) Do we sincerely seek to understand our place in the universe and our purpose here on the earth? Are we willing to make sacrifices and to ask others to join us in changing the things we use and the way we use them in order to preserve life everywhere? Are we willing to persist gently in persuading others, not giving up, but being receptive to others' needs, as we strive to establish lifestyles dedicated to the preservation of all life? Are we open to the strength, the purpose, the joy, the desire within and beyond ourselves as a resource in truly living in and genuinely loving the world?*

One Friend was moved by the word sacrifice, offered by young Friends in 1991, many of whom now live lives that include their own sacrifices.

Another friend reflected that the pace of life prompts driving over biking and purchasing rather than creating. What do we sacrifice by the fast pace? What richness can be found in slowing down?

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These questions have been at the front of another Friend's thoughts as she and her partner face choices around retirement. Having this community helps bring simplicity to these plans. There is much that the Meeting could do to become more aware.

A Friend spoke of the assumption in the query that we are outside of nature. This horizontal time takes us out of harmony with creation. Early Friends lived in vertical time, living within the second coming. We are edgeless fish living within this world together.

Friends noted that the Early School at Carolina Friends School has a zero trash policy with children's lunches. Every bit counts and prompts others to change. Sometimes the old becomes new.

**Fayetteville:** We do try to live in harmony with nature. We are mindful of our need to be good of the world's irreplaceable resources.

**Friendship:** Attempting to understand what it means to live in harmony with nature in our advanced technology society is challenging. Each year we are becoming more aware of our failure to live in harmony with nature.

Stewardship of resources requires commitment and frequent reevaluation of our individual practices. We endeavor to discern our needs of new products and services before making purchases for ourselves and for the meeting. We try to make good choices in the purchase of paper products and cleaning supplies for the meetinghouse. We remind ourselves that "there is no away" when something is placed in the trash.

We continue to learn about the hidden costs to the environment from our devices of convenience as well as our abundant food supply. Distractions from that which is best for our spiritual growth abound.

We are currently discerning the pros and cons of installing an internet connection at the meetinghouse.

We look forward to the possibility of using solar technology for heating and electrifying our proposed new meeting space. We will discern, as time goes on, landscaping techniques which require little watering and mowing.

**Greenville:** Some of us are reading Francis' encyclical on the environment and are finding inspiration in the moral and spiritual dimension to these issues. We strive to be mindful of nature in making personal decisions about transportation and other practical matters. We must think of nature in personal terms. Love is never abstract and it is impossible to love an abstraction. We need to touch the soil and get to know our trees.

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**Rich Square:** We are becoming more conscious of the beginning and future effects of the global warming crisis. Locally, we seek to set examples of environmental stewardship in our day to day lives. We are all addicted to energy uses that are inconsistent with the survival of our planet. Our use of fuel and food choices make many demands on the environment. We are grateful for the vegetarians in our meeting whose example helps us cut back on excesses.

Over the past several years Cedar Grove Friends have invested special care in preserving and nurturing the Meetinghouse grounds and buildings. The replacement of the sign in front of the Meetinghouse, the constant and detailed care of the lawn, the attention to the ongoing challenges of maintaining aging buildings like repairing leaks and replacing thermostats, and the continuation of a community garden attended to by local children are all indicative of Friends' appreciation of the universal need to live in harmony with nature. We have recently been reminded of the importance of this thoughtful preservation by a distant friend who reacted to this query by writing, "I appreciate -- always -- the evident stewardship of that particular property called the Meetinghouse Grounds, so attune to the buildings on them, and a lovely thing to have grown up across the road from and to come home to -- constantly tended and lovingly nurtured year after year . . ."

**Virginia Beach:** We make small steps as a Meeting as we become aware of the ways we can reduce our level of consumption. We need to think more comprehensively in terms of sustainability while remembering the spiritual core of this query. This means seeing creation in a new more spiritual light. We value the work of the school in bringing children into this project. We see the unfair way the degrading consequences of our mode of life are distributed and managed. This awareness calls to us to speak to the world and to help that world envision an entirely new path.

**West Grove:** West Grove Friends feel we can answer this query in the affirmative.

**Wilmington:** The meeting noted that we do make effort to align with this query. If we could each add just one more effort, we would be living more in harmony with nature. We could each try to establish new routines to conserve and recycle, especially placing a greater effort on recycling. Recently there have been environmental "good news" for Wilmington. We are fortunate to live in an extremely beautiful yet environmentally sensitive area. We need to honor the beauty and be aware. Luckily, there are several individuals in community that are leading the way.

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*Query #11: Do we reverence that of God in every human being with concern for the needs of each individual? Are we seeking to rectify existing social injustice and racial discrimination in our local communities and in the world at large?*

**Davidson:** Noting the particular actions of individuals within the meeting, we reflected on the question of whether if one of us is doing something, can that mean that all of us are engaged as we are part of the worship space that grounds such work. Although there may not be a lot of formal programming through meeting, our members and attenders do bear witness in the world and speak of the support that Meeting provides. We know that there is always more that can be done and even that we can see. We need to continue to be open to what comes to us as individuals and as a meeting.

**Durham:** We find it important that reverence for that of God in each human being be paired with concern for the needs of the individual, the limitation of the Golden Rule being that not all people wish to be treated alike: doing as you would have done to you may not be what another person needs. But we are cautioned not to just think of the needs of the individual but also of the gifts they bring. Sometimes we think of marginalized people as being needy when they actually have much to share.

We appreciate the pairing of reverence for that of God in the individual with issues of social injustice and discrimination. George Fox's injunction to walk cheerfully over the earth answering that of God in others is followed in one of his writings with "May the witness in me be a blessing to you and the witness in you be a blessing to me," with the implication that such light blesses the world. This should be the setting for social injustice work—that we join with others that all may see more clearly.

One friend finds God's radioactive massive dose of love fuels his work on social injustice. He finds that he does best when he remembers the work is spirit led, not the result of a business model of strategic planning, that rest and healing do not best come through such busy-ness as football games and You Tube, and that we do not enter with missionary zeal, but "have some skin in the game" so that when someone else suffers that is also my suffering.

We are pleased that a group in our meeting is gathering monthly to address social injustice issues. One friend is part of a Buddhist meditation group which finds social injustice to be one of the greatest problems in the world and wonders if some cross-pollination would be fruitful. We are reminded however that inequality does not just occur in the outside world but that we should be sensitive to inequalities within meeting as well.

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Sometimes we fear that reverence for God in others may lead Quakers to avoid conflict. But if we avoid conflict, do we run the risk of becoming too passive or even missing an opportunity for growth?

**Fayetteville:** Reverencing that of God in every human being is integral to our faith; we show this individually and corporately. One member attended another faith community's spiritual education class on loving our Islam neighbors; their spiritual leader spoke of "everyone having that Light within." Meeting actively supported a Muslim-and-supporters peace rally on their spiritual land; we were joined by former members and attenders. This is not a creed we recite; Quakers live it. We also financially support organizations working toward eliminating injustices and through attendance at Quaker House-sponsored events.

**Friendship:** We feel the meeting is attempting to address the various headings of this query.

Our Peace & Social Concerns committee holds forums on Islam, immigration, and the rights of farm worker in order to educate and inspire us to action. Our liaison to Friends Committee National Legislation held a forum to address FCNL's request for input from meetings to assist them in setting the legislative priorities for the new congressional session. Our young Friends have made a presentation to meeting about Syrian refugees and have collected money that they will give to "Doctors Without Borders".

There are those among us who give their time to careers or volunteer work based on eliminating these injustices. As a meeting, we share our abundance with First Friends Meeting's food pantry and with Pathways Center, a transitional shelter for families who experienced domestic violence or eviction and who need time and safety to move forward into stable housing.

**Greenville:** We find it challenging to deal with those expressing hatred and fear. Recognizing and acknowledging that of God in those who are expressing hatred is hard.

**Rich Square:** In the particular relations of our lives we do respond with reverence for that of God in individuals and in communities. When we read this query as asking us to respond to the needs of each individual in the world regarding existing social and racial relations, the view that we are called to have the answer to every world problem is so overwhelming that we feel that if we focus locally to build trust within our home community then we are better preparing ourselves and the world for positive insight and action that will hopefully spread among others.

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**Virginia Beach:** Seeing that of God in everyone isn't always easy. It will always be something we must work at. The second part of the first sentence intensifies the challenge: to address the individual needs of others. The recent long-range planning effort has made embracing the individual uniqueness of all in our community one of three major goals. The peace and social justice committee has envisioned and enacted reaching out to groups outside of our community. This committee and the number of individuals working singly push forward the unending work of rectifying social injustice.

**West Grove:** The first question in this query is one with which concerned members are in agreement. When we consider the requirements of the 2nd question we struggle to know how to be a witness to neighbors or family in our rural part of North Carolina whose perspectives differ from ours. We realize the challenge of speaking our Truth with love even in the face of angry responses. We trust a peaceful and loving witness will help to encourage listening from all participating in the conversation. Individually, we are seeking to rectify social injustice in our country though not as much in the world at large. As a meeting, we take no specific actions other than making donations to organizations that do work to rectify social injustice and racial discrimination. Through our consideration of this query we realize that we are not comfortable with our condition.

**Wilmington:** The answer to this query is uniquely tied to the ways in which we interact with each other. With the increase in communication via social media sites, we found that social injustice and discrimination can be topics addressed in posts and comments instead of face-to-face conversation. There is a struggle to not just ignore the injustice, but serve to be at least one voice that offers moderation or questions the status quo. Personally, we strive to post messages of positivity, but when confronted with the negativity, we cannot condemn others on a reactionary basis. We need to seek to understand the other person's truth to even have the potential to create the space to discuss and understand these issues.

We find evidence of racial discrimination, among other forms of discrimination, in our communities. Asking meaningful questions and presenting quiet observations have the best shot at being heard. For our society, the status quo is comfortable and the potential changes to our culture and political system may be invoking fear. All people come from the perspective that they are right. It is our job to ask ourselves, "Is what I am doing honoring that of God in the other? Am I advancing the testimonies? Am I taking care of my fellow man for good?" The answers to these questions can serve as a measurement of how we conduct ourselves in our communities.

*Query #12: Do we welcome newcomers and non-members to our meetings? Are they encouraged to share in meeting activities and to consider membership when they are in*

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*agreement with the principles and practices of Friends? Are our younger members appointed to committees and encouraged to share in other responsibilities of the meeting? Do we visit one another frequently, remembering those who may be lonely? Does the visitation and caring extend beyond the members of our own meeting?*

**Davidson:** It is the experience of newcomers that as a meeting we are welcoming and open to new people being on committees and participating in meeting activities. While not everyone is aware of the level of care and concern provided by the meeting, Ministry and Counsel does stay aware of needs and we do visit those in need inside and outside of our meeting. We acknowledged that there may be more ways that we could have informal interactions outside of the meeting. Our young members have been encouraged and supported in participating in meeting responsibility.

**Durham:** Friends expressed appreciation for the many ways in which Meeting does welcome and include newcomers and non-members in the life of the Meeting. There are opportunities to eat together, sing together and ride together to distant events. Young adult Friends are inviting and welcoming each other and Meeting is enriched by and grateful for this. Relationship is the key to welcoming and inclusion, and we can't just rely on electronic means. Caring is a face to face, personal connection. The worship experience itself is one such opportunity and our worship has a welcoming and open feel.

We are glad that our loving community is extending itself to others through the Friendly Friday food initiative. Through delivering meals to those in Durham who have lost loved ones to violence, Friends find opportunities for genuine connection.

One concern requiring further attention from Friends is our relationship to members and long-time attenders who become less active and may cease contact altogether. This is an opportunity to reach out in a caring way.

There is always room for improvement and we are growing in tending to needs for connection for newcomers and for those who are ready to deepen into more longstanding relationships.

**Fayetteville:** Meeting is very welcoming to newcomers; we are small enough that perhaps we might be too welcoming. We are eager for new ideas. One recent newcomer felt welcomed and not overwhelmed. Another newcomer felt welcomed and included even when she doesn't attend as regularly as she would like.

We correspond regularly within and outside our membership, from those in prison to members and attenders absent from Worship. Many of us use social media to connect to Meeting and the wider world. Meeting reaches out to the interfaith community, most recently in support of our Muslim friends. Meeting continually supports and interacts



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with the wider Friends through Piedmont Friends Fellowship, Yearly Meeting, and Coastal Friends Gathering. We have been more involved in more areas in the past; there is always room for improvement. For our size, we do right good.

**Friendship:** Our Care and Counsel committee does a good job actively welcoming newcomers and nonmembers to the meeting. Our nominating committee does its best to approach all members and attenders on ways in which they may participate in the life of the meeting. We encourage younger members to serve on committees. There is a good amount of visitation, care and other assistance being carried out by the meeting for members who need visits or rides to meeting activities. Our visitation and caring extends beyond the members of our meeting.

**Greenville:** We are good about encouraging the participation of younger members and in visiting Friends beyond our own meeting. We have been somewhat remiss about visiting members within our meeting and resolve to do more of this soon.

**Rich Square:** Everyone is welcome and encouraged to participate in all meeting activities. We do try to maintain frequent contact with one another, although this rarely is done as home visitation. We are trying to increase our efforts to extend caring beyond this meeting and have set up a Community Assistance Fund.

**Virginia Beach:** In the recent long range planning process a commitment was made to be more intentional and active in drawing in new attenders. Communication Committee's work on the website puts us out in the world. The activities of individual members in visiting are noteworthy. A more systematic monitoring of the needs for visits might be in order. The work of the school and the activities of the Peace and Social Justice Committee and individuals in acting on our principles and thus bringing them into the world is also an important sort of outreach.

**West Grove:** We have little opportunity to welcome visitors to our meeting but do welcome those who come. We encourage non-members to consider membership. We do not visit others often and the visitations we do are often through electronic means. We consider this query to include visitation with other Friends Meetings in our area. The query has prompted us to realize we are not satisfied with our condition and we are considering ways we can change it.

**Wilmington:** We do feel that those who attend our meeting feel welcomed and included. There are areas in which we still feel we could improve. Communication with newcomers could be improved by providing a functional website, literature at the meetinghouse, and

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a bit more organization on our part. After the rise of meeting, providing snacks has been an opportunity to meet with newcomers. Providing a quick tour of the meetinghouse would be a simple extension to further welcome guests. When we shared information about our experience with Quakerism outside of meeting, we find that others have an interest. It can be difficult to facilitate outreach with those who have curiosity, but are not yet feeling lead to explore more deeply into the Quaker faith.

We feel that the youth are encouraged to share in responsibilities of the meeting. We look forward to providing more opportunities for all members and attenders to follow their leadings to see where their gifts can be utilized. We recognize that personally, outside of meeting, we do make frequent visits to others, including those who may be lonely. When it comes to visiting those who attend meeting, we note that we may need to be more proactive and ask to visit with those who we have not seen in a while.

### **37. Racial Justice Concern**

*Bruce Arnold of Greenville Monthly Meeting shared a draft statement on racial justice with the clerks this week but there was not time in the sessions to address as fully as needed. Therefore, interested Friends are encouraged to be in contact with Bruce and for Bruce to share the statement with his meeting for further seasoning prior to Tenth Month. It is suggested that this be an item for discussion at Interim Body.*

### **38. Virginia Beach Request**

*At the Fourth Month Interim Body Meeting, a concern was raised about the relationship between the monthly meetings and the Discipline Revision Committee:*

The committee was intentionally established without requiring representation from all monthly meetings. Liaisons were identified for each monthly meeting. Some meetings have closer relationships with the committee than others. Is there a need in the process to increase face-to-face opportunities with meetings who do not have established relationships with individuals on the committee? Are there other ways to facilitate connection and trust between our meetings and the individuals within them who are not able to be as directly involved on the yearly meeting level?

*Other meetings are asked to consider these questions and share their experiences with Virginia Beach Monthly Meeting as Virginia Beach Friends continue to struggle with the revision process and other meetings may have found useful appropriate methods to facilitate a greater sense of connection and trust with the process.*

### **39. Epistles to Iowa Yearly Meeting (Conservative), Ohio Yearly Meeting, and to Friends Everywhere**

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*Kristin Olsen Kennedy read the Epistle to Friends Everywhere and the additions addressed for our epistles to Iowa Yearly Meeting (Conservative) and Ohio Yearly Meeting. These epistles were approved with gratitude.*

Dear Friends Everywhere –

We gathered at Guilford College in Greensboro, N.C. on Seventh Month 14-17, 2016 for our 319th annual Sessions. As we gather we remember our distant Friends with great fondness and love. This year we are gathered under the theme “I Love to Feel Where Words Come From,” a translated quote from Papunehang, a member of the Delaware tribe in response to John Woolman’s ministry on Sixth Month 18, 1763.

We have been so excited this year as participation in yearly meeting has increased and our Young Friends number over twenty. Our Young Friends have participated in annual sessions as Reading Clerk and by reading State of Society Reports for a monthly meeting. They have also helped illustrate stories during our morning Bible study and showed the Adult Friends how to dance. It has truly been a joy to be with and participate side by side with our Young Friends.

We were also blessed to have a young adult Friend, Elizabeth Rolfe, represent us in Peru at the Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC) World Plenary. Her report to the meeting of the event included queries that made us think about our role as citizens of Earth and how we plan to live out our Quaker testimonies of peace and equality in relation to young adult Friends in our meetings. She is now the clerk of the Young Adult Friends Committee for FWCC and has started traveling internationally to build connections all over the world among young adult Friends.

For the past four years we have been supporting a Bolivian young Friend who has recently graduated with a degree in engineering. We have decided as a yearly meeting to continue our support for Bolivian young Friends and commit ourselves to supporting another student for the next four years. We were also given the opportunity to support a Cuban young adult Friend who hopes to attend Guilford College.

The Journal Committee completed our yearly meeting’s seventh Journal this year entitled, “Keeping the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace.” There were 250 copies printed and they are almost gone! The Journal will be available on our website in the near future. By reading Yearly Meeting’s Journals some Friends were convinced that this was their spiritual home. The Journal Committee is now working on the theme for the next issue.

The Book of Discipline revision is in its third year. The committee has been faithful in its work and the Body is grateful for all it has done. The revision process is giving us opportunity to share and discuss everything from important concepts to historical events to word choices. Even though this work can be slow and tiring, we are learning from each

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other and learning more about ourselves as a body. We are richly blessed to have undertaken this work and to have people who are gifted by God to do this work.

On our final evening together we had a grand time with a sing-a-long led by talented musicians on guitars and piano along with percussion instruments for all who wanted them. Young and old sang their hearts out and laughed out loud.

We hold you in our hearts and pray that you are able to feel the Love that we have for you. May you experience the Love of God with which we have been so richly blessed. Please know that it would warm our hearts if you were able to visit with us next year. We will meet for our 320th session in Wilmington, N.C., Seventh Month 12-16, 2017 if in accordance with Divine Will.

On behalf of North Carolina Yearly Meeting (Conservative),  
Nancy Craft, clerk

*Epistles to Iowa Yearly Meeting (Conservative) and Ohio Yearly Meeting added the following between the first and second paragraphs:*

Dear Friends of Iowa Yearly Meeting (Conservative) –

As we read your epistle to our body, we felt the love of your words to us. We hope that this epistle shares our love with you.

We are grateful for the visit from Iowa Yearly Meeting Conservative Friends Carol Winkleblack, Martha Davis, and Deborah Fisch to our annual sessions. We appreciated their presence in our business meetings and in our other activities. Our member Lloyd Lee Wilson is planning to visit your sessions this year and we look forward to hearing about them when he returns.

Dear Friends at Ohio Yearly Meeting –

As we read your epistle to our body, we felt the love of your words to us. We hope that this epistle shares our love with you.

We are grateful for the visit from Ohio Yearly Meeting Friend David Ealey to our annual sessions. We appreciated his presence in our business meetings and in our other activities. Our member Nancy Craft is planning to visit your sessions this year and we look forward to hearing about them when she returns.

### **40. Youth Report**

*The Youth Epistles will be submitted at a later time. Young people participating in yearly meeting this year introduced themselves with their parents.*

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### **41. Summary of Exercises**

*Toby Berla read the Summary of Exercises, which, with minor additions and amendments, was approved for inclusion in the minutes and distribution to absent Friends. Appreciation was expressed for the work drafting this summary.*

The 319th annual gathering of North Carolina Yearly Meeting (Conservative) met from Seventh Month 13th to 17th, 2016 among the beautiful old trees of the Guilford College campus in the heat of a typical North Carolina summer.

After check-in we assembled in the Community Room where most of the events for the annual sessions were scheduled to take place and settled into a deep time of worship waiting for the Spirit to begin to move among us. On the evening of Fourth Day, the Yearly Meeting for Ministry and Oversight was held. The clerk of Ministry and Oversight described the recent history and current condition of the body. It has evolved from a body solely composed of recorded ministers, elders and overseers to one in which all those with a special concern for the spiritual life of their monthly meetings gather for mutual support and accountability to one another in carrying that work.

The theme for this year's annual sessions is "I Love to Feel Where Words Come From," which is a phrase that comes to us from a story of John Woolman's visit to the Delaware people in Wyalusing. On Fifth Day evening, Jim Fernandes, retold and remixed this story with his own experiences acting as sign language interpreter for his wife, Jane, during Meeting for Worship. Jim's story deepened our sense of the ways in which God calls us to be in the world - listening carefully for the messages that rise up in ourselves and in others and expecting to be changed by those messages. Jane explained that, just as we know the meaning beneath the words in a gathered Meeting, she too can sense those deeper connections, even when the "words" as interpreted by Jim are only a human attempt to point in that direction. Thus her experience in the Light is just the same as that of a hearing person: listening, quieting one's own passions, and being attentive to the movements of the Holy Spirit.

Our plenary speaker on Sixth Day evening also spoke of the vitality which comes from a remix. C. Wess Daniels spoke on Convergent Friends, which is a combination of "conservative" and "emergent." To be conservative is to be faithful to one's tradition and community. To be emergent is to be open to new ideas and influences from outside one's tradition and community. He tied these ideas to Biblical teaching by reminding us that Jesus taught us that the seed must die in order to spring forth with new life. Wess held out the ideal of a living Quaker tradition that is continually growing by launching new experiments with Truth.

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The first event of the day for many Friends was “Communion” at 6:00 AM hosted by Lloyd Lee Wilson in the lobby of Mary Hobbs Hall. Deep but informal spiritual conversation was shared along with the necessary early morning coffee.

Each morning, Patty Levering led Bible study. The theme of Bible study this year was our ability and our sometimes inability to see, hear and feel the message behind the words of Scripture. Patty sought to illustrate this idea in various ways by using Bible passages that are so familiar that they have become hard to hear with fresh ears. On Fifth Day, we shared the parable of the Sower of the Seeds. We pondered what the word is to which we are supposed to be listening and what it means to actually hear it. On Sixth day the children acted out the parable of the rich young ruler Mark 10:17-27 and we got to experience the story through their eyes as the children upon listening to their questions. We re-experienced wonder at the notion of a camel passing through a needle’s eye as we looked at a gigantic needle specially constructed for this lesson. On Seventh day the story of the feeding of the 5,000 was used to remind us how hard it can be to listen faithfully to the promises of God.

While we ate dinner on Seventh Day evening, the skies opened and a tremendous downpour began and Friends wondered if they could make it to Community Center for the final event. After we all made it we were glad we did. Mark Wutka demonstrated how music and worship have parallel aspects. For example, a particular rhythm might fit well within one metrical structure, but poorly within another. In the same way, a message in Meeting for Worship may be the right message, but it also needs to be delivered at the right time. Mark used percussion instruments to involve Friends of all ages in the demonstrations. At the conclusion of the presentation the entire body of Friends present joined in an enthusiastic sing-along.

During regular business sessions, all the normal business was attended to and visitors were welcomed from near and far. Among the routine business, several experiences stood out. Nominating Committee suggested that we experiment with having a variety of Friends serve as Reading Clerk during these sessions. The very first Reading Clerk was Corena Owens, who is about to attend her first year at college. It was good to hear the letters and epistles from other yearly meetings being read in Corena’s clear and youthful voice. This first business session was covered by a tender gratitude for the way God is moving among us.

Other highlights from the business sessions included an address from Jane Fernandes, the President of Guilford College. Normally one expects a college president to give a bland, carefully controlled message, but Jane spoke plainly and from her heart of bedrock principles that speak to her and the decisions she makes in leading the college. She concluded by saying that the world needs the Quaker witness because there are so many desperate voices and no one is listening to them. Another highlight was Kristen Olsen-

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Kennedy's report on the Southern State Worship Group. She spoke movingly of how these men feel forgotten and of their grateful amazement that anyone notices their existence or cares what has become of them.

The work of revising our book of Discipline proceeds at a slow and deliberate pace. Two sections received a second approval and are now considered part of our Interim Discipline. Other sections received first approval. At an interest group session there was a lengthy discussion of what we mean by calling this Yearly Meeting "Conservative." Coming to unity on this issue was felt to be difficult enough to warrant carrying this matter over to future business sessions.

Elizabeth Rolfe reported on her visit to the 2016 Friends World Committee for Consultation World Plenary Meeting in Peru. She challenged us with queries such as: "Are you prepared to build peace and unity in an international Society of Friends?" and "What are you prepared to do in care of the Earth?"

State of the Meeting Reports and query answers gave us insight into the spiritual condition of our monthly meetings. These responses were honest reflections of our successes and our failures, our sorrows as well as our joys, in our attempts to listen to God's voice and follow it on our daily trudging path. One thing that particularly stood out for Friends were the letters of conscientious objection written by two young Friends of Durham Meeting.

Throughout our time together, we shared in the warm glow of fellowship, drinking from the deep stream of love, dancing in the Light and Life that Unites us all. Andrew Wright and Elizabeth Wintermute had adults and children playing new games together that were much enjoyed in a spirit of silliness. We played a game called "Guess the Leader." Friends of ages from three to seventy-five enjoyed the challenge of guessing who was leading the ever-changing cascade of silly movement. Sixth day snacks were combined with a birthday celebration for Liam Wilgen. Adults and children danced together in the lounge of Mary Hobbs Hall. Nan Bowles gave a presentation on ferns and their cool, quiet and underappreciated beauty. Her presentation invited the audience of children and adults to experience the beauty of the ferns in movement and dance as well as in words and lush photographs. Bonnie Arnold shared a well-received experience of Praying in Color. Jim Cason of Friends Committee on National Legislation led an Interest Group session during which participants learned about the work of that organization to share the message of Quakers with government institutions in Washington, DC. Lynn Newsome of Quaker House in Fayetteville, NC inspired us to think about how military service members suffering with moral and other injuries, are often not receiving the care they need.

The youth participated in several of the adult activities. We welcomed their insights in Bible study one morning and their help with clerking on Fifth Day. The youth also had

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many activities of their own. Notable among these were a trip to Jan and Charlie Ansell's farm to dig potatoes and a visit to the International Civil Rights Center and Museum. This is located in downtown Greensboro and is built on the location of the lunch counter sit-in to protest racial segregation in 1960. The youth aged fifteen to twenty-one created their own "remixed" schedule of activities, sometimes attending business sessions and evening presentations with the older Friends, sometimes going along on excursions with the younger Friends, and sometimes crafting their own projects. They are working on a multi-year effort to record video interviews with Quakers about their faith and practices.

We ended the programmed part of each day with a Collection time. Fifth day Collection young Friends lifted up a query that asks how we can each contribute to the deepening of shared understanding and intimacy in our community. From the silence, Friends gave voice to many ways we can do so. Sixth day Collection was a rousing song led by Deborah Shaw leading to a period of deep worship.

Our annual sessions this year were particularly well attended including a large number of children. A spirit of joy and tenderness pervaded our time together this year. Our sessions concluded with a time of deep worship and we look forward to being together again next year in Wilmington, N.C. for the 2017 annual sessions.

### **42. Minutes of Thanks to the Committees and Hosts**

*Appreciation was expressed for the rich program and opportunities provided through the efforts of the Yearly Meeting Planning Committee and to the Youth Program Planning Committee this year. Gratitude was also expressed to Hospitality Committee, especially Ray Treadway's service as registrar, and to John Garrison and other Guilford College staff for their successful efforts providing a welcoming host site for us.*

### **43. Locations for Interim Body Meetings**

*The clerk reminded Friends that confirmation is still needed regarding hosting of Interim Body in Tenth and Fourth Months.*

### **44. Concluding Minute**

*We adjourn our yearly meeting sessions purposing to meet Seventh Month 13<sup>th</sup> through 16<sup>th</sup>, 2017 at the University of North Carolina at Wilmington, North Carolina, if consistent with Divine will. The Interim Body is scheduled to next meet on the 22<sup>th</sup> of Tenth Month and on the 22<sup>th</sup> of Fourth Month.*



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## Appendix

### Meeting of Ministry and Oversight Seventh Month 13th, 2016

The meeting began with a period of waiting worship.

Friends were present from Davidson, Durham, Fayetteville, Friendship, Greenville, Rich Square and Virginia Beach and West Grove meetings: David French, Cindy Feltner, Toby Berla, Mary Miller, Kristin Olson-Kennedy, Bruce Arnold, Gay Bowles, Nancy Craft, Bonnie Arnold, Judith Harvey, Melidy Poole, Claire Koster, Dora Owens, Robert Gosney, Barbara Gosney, Robert Cooper, Ralph Levering, Patty Levering, Carole Treadway, Anne Olsen, Lloyd Lee Wilson, Edward Pearce, Deborah Shaw, Susan Lees, Darlene Stanley, Ray Treadway, David Perry.

There were visitors from meetings in Asheville, NC (Peter Buck); Nashville, TN (Mary Linda McKinney, Mark Wutka); Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting (Rex Sprouse); Ohio Yearly Meeting (David Eley); and Iowa Yearly Meeting Conservative (Carole Winkleblack, Martha Davis and Deborah Fisch.)

The clerk began with an introduction:

This body used to be a gathering of recorded ministers, elders and overseers. Now not all meetings record Friends who take these responsibilities but we recognize that there are people in every meeting who are called to tend the life of their monthly meetings. It is fruitful for these Friends, whatever they may be called, to get together and benefit from each other experiences. It is about networking; people who have a common concern sharing with each other. This is why we gather today.

The Body added to this that our purpose is to discern God's direction in our service to each other.

The clerk, at the request of the Program Committee, asked for volunteers to lead Collection in the evenings before snack. Those who volunteered were:

- Barbara Gosney- 5th day
- Deborah Shaw- 6th day (Friday)
- Bob Cooper-7th day

Lloyd Lee Wilson and Deborah Fisch addressed the body, offering an opportunity for people to have a deeper experience with other Friends in developing personal spiritual disciplines, scriptural literacy, historical gratefulness, contemporary community. This will be done through a series of long weekends. Lloyd Lee and Deborah have been approached by young(-ish) Friends, typically those who have been with Friends for about five years and are seeking more depth. This project is known as the Broken Vessels Ministries. It is for anyone who feels

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young in the Spirit and is seeking growth. If way opens there will be an initial gathering in the spring of 2017 to continue the discernment process.

Friendship Meeting has approved a certificate for this ministry. Yearly Meeting will be asked to consider the same.

Davidson Meeting brought a request for sharing about the issue of religious/spiritual language and how it can be a stumbling block. How do we learn about each other's words? Friends helpfully shared some ways that meetings have addressed this, for instance:

- Use a physical exercise of answering queries by standing along a continuum in the room.
- Discuss pamphlet called Metaphors of Meaning which addresses the fact that people use different words for different reasons
- Listening in tongues – listening to the spirit behind the words
- Do worship sharing around queries related to language
- Be mindful of Quaker words that may not communicate well to newcomers and may feel exclusive if not introduced in a sensitive way

There has been inter-visitation among the meetings. Some meetings have asked for more of this. The clerk offered to pair up Friends who are willing to do some visiting with the needs of meetings who request a visit. Friends approved.

Bruce Arnold reported for Core Sound Worship Group in Beaufort, NC. In recent years members have moved away and the worship group is getting smaller. It is under the care of Greenville Friends who have been meeting with them to support their discernment regarding way forward. A meeting is scheduled in August to discern what action needs to be taken.

Meetings shared reports concerning their spiritual condition. Friends appreciated the new, less formal approach to reporting wherein each meeting determines what is significant for them to share.

The clerk pointed out that we as a Body are in the process of redefining ourselves. The question was raised about how we relate to the Discipline Revision Committee. Since Ministry and Oversight is independent rather than being a committee of the Yearly Meeting, this implies that this Body should self-define. Friends discussed whether the description should go through the Discipline Revision process as it has been laid out for the Yearly Meeting itself. The Discipline Revision Committee would like guidance from this Body as to whether, in revising the section on Ministry and Oversight, they should be talking with the monthly meetings or with the Ministry and Oversight committees and this Body. The Body continues to consider how to proceed.

Friends entered into waiting worship at the close of the meeting.  
Submitted by Marguerite Dingman, Recording Clerk