

**2018**  
**ADVANCE REPORTS**

**New York Yearly Meeting  
of the  
Religious Society of Friends**



**Prepared for Summer Sessions  
July 22–28, 2018, Silver Bay, NY**

**Please use the documents of this book throughout the week in preparation for business sessions, committee meetings, and the special meetings being held this year.**

**THIS COPY BELONGS TO .....**

## NEW YORK YEARLY MEETING ADVANCE REPORTS

The documents of this publication were printed in advance of the 2018–2019 *Yearbook* for consideration at sessions of New York Yearly Meeting in July of 2018.

Please note that the budgets and expenditures of many committees may be found in the Treasurer’s Report, page 41. Committees that have their own financial clerks submitted financial reports as part of their committee’s advance report. All financial reports are for the 2017 calendar year unless otherwise stated.

### Minutes of Yearly Meeting Sessions

Fall 2017 .....	1
Spring 2018 .....	23

### Finances

Treasurer’s Report .....	41
Funds Report .....	45
2018 Operating Budget .....	48

### Reports of Yearly Meeting Committees, Resource People, and Representatives to Affiliated Groups

#### Meetings for Discernment

Meetings for Discernment Steering Committee .....	52
---	----

#### Ministry Section

State of the Society Report .....	53
Ministry Coordinating Committee .....	60
Committee on Conflict Transformation .....	61
Ministry and Pastoral Care Committee .....	63
Committee to Revise <i>Faith and Practice</i> .....	63
Spiritual Nurture Working Group .....	65
Committee on Sufferings .....	65
Committee on Worship at Yearly Meeting Sessions .....	66

#### General Services Section

General Services Coordinating Committee .....	67
Audit Committee .....	68
Communications Committee .....	69

Development Committee .....	70
Financial Services Committee .....	71
Committee on the Expenditure of the H.H. Mosher Fund ...	71
Lindley Murray Fund, Trustees .....	72
Nominating Committee .....	72
Personnel Committee .....	73
Yearly Meeting Staff Reports .....	74
Digital Communications Director .....	74
ARCH Staff .....	77
General Secretary .....	81
Administrative Associate .....	84
Associate Secretary .....	85
Communications Director .....	87
Records Committee .....	89
Sessions Committee .....	90
Supervisory Committee for the General Secretary .....	92
Trustees, New York Yearly Meeting .....	92

### Nurture Section

Nurture Coordinating Committee .....	94
Committee on Aging Concerns .....	94
Epistle Committee .....	95
Friends General Conference representatives .....	95
Friends United Meeting representatives .....	96
Friends World Committee for Consultation Committee ....	97
Junior Yearly Meeting Committee .....	99
Oakwood Friends School .....	99
Powell House Co-Executive Directors .....	101
Elsie K. Powell House, Inc. ....	103
Youth Committee .....	105

### Witness Section

Witness Coordinating Committee .....	105
Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP), Inc. ....	107
American Friends Service Committee–	
Northeast Region .....	107
Barrington Dunbar Fund for Black Development .....	107
Black Concerns Committee .....	109
Bolivian Quaker Education Fund .....	111

## Witness Section (cont'd)

Committee on Conscientious Objection	
to Paying for War .....	112
Earthcare Working Group .....	112
European American Quakers Working	
to End Racism Working Group .....	113
Friends Committee on National Legislation	
representatives .....	116
Friends Peace Teams representatives .....	117
Indian Affairs Committee .....	120
National Campaign for a Peace Tax Fund	
& Peace Tax .....	123
National Religious Campaign against Torture .....	124
New Jersey Council of Churches .....	124
New York State Council of Churches .....	124
Prisons Committee .....	124
Right Sharing of World Resources .....	126
William Penn House .....	128
World Ministries Committee .....	128
<b>Liaison Committee</b> .....	130
Priorities Support Working Group .....	132

## NEW YORK YEARLY MEETING

### FALL SESSIONS

**November 10–12, 2017**

Caldwell University, Caldwell, New Jersey  
Saturday morning, November 11, 2017

*Lucinda Antrim (Scarsdale), Clerk*  
*Jeffrey Aaron (New Brunswick), Assistant Clerk*  
*Karen Way (New Brunswick), Recording Clerk*  
*Elaine Learnard (Conscience Bay), Reading Clerk*

2017-11-01. The meeting opened with quiet worship.

2017-11-02. Clerk Lucinda Antrim (Scarsdale) welcomed Friends, introduced the clerks' table, and acknowledged those holding the meeting in the Light. She spoke with gratitude of sources of warmth on this cold day, including the fire of Pentecost.

2017-11-03. The Reading Clerk read the roll of monthly meetings and worship groups. Friends stood in response. All regions were represented.

2017-11-04. Liseli Haines (Mohawk Valley) acknowledged with humility that we hold this meeting on Lenapehoking, on the lands of the Lenape. Though many Lenape were forcibly relocated to Oklahoma, many stayed in plain sight, living among us today. We thank them for the care they have taken of these, their homelands.

2017-11-05. Claire Simon (Montclair) and Alice Coulombe (Rockland) welcomed us for the Host Committee from All Friends Region. They thanked Sessions Committee and all those who helped make this gathering possible.

2017-11-06. Mary Hannon Williams (Bulls Head-Oswego), treasurer of the yearly meeting, presented the treasurer's report for the first three quarters of 2017 (attached, see page 41). Mary explained the new format, which includes a high-level one-page summary. As of October 31, our income is at about \$526,000 or 69 percent of the year's budget, and disbursements at \$525,000,

or 70 percent. The summary also shows fund balances and invested trust funds. Details are presented on following pages. Friends received the report.

2017-11-07. Matt Scanlon (Scarsdale), clerk of Financial Services, presented the proposed budget for 2018 (attached, see page 48). Matt acknowledged the extensive, valuable work contributed by all the yearly meeting volunteers—a wealth that no budget can express. He also reviewed comments from monthly meetings that suggest we cannot expect much of an increase in covenant donations, and probably a decrease. To consider this problem, we need the help and participation of as many budget-minded Friends as possible. Friends should notice that ARCH is being fully incorporated into the NYYM budget, which affects totals. Also, as the treasurer indicated, we are changing formats for the sake of transparency, which can make comparisons with past years more complicated.

Matt presented the expense and revenue sections in summary. The projected expenses for 2018 are \$727,000. This is \$26,000 less than the revised 2017 budget, due to decreases in the audit line and in personnel expenses. As with last year, revenue is expected include reserve from 2017, grant income, redistribution of trust fund earnings, covenant donations, and individual donations. Meetings varied in their response to the 2018 request for covenant donations: of 58 meetings responding, 9 increased their donation over 2017, 39 kept their same donation, and 10 decreased their donation. Matt then reviewed the sections, asking for questions.

Friends approved the budget for 2018.

2017-11-08. Friends also approved transferring the excess revenue over expenses in 2017 into the revenue for 2018.

2017-11-09. Chris de Roller (Old Chatham), Powell House Youth Director, spoke of the value of the youth program at Powell House, reading wonderful lists of adjectives, activities, and praise from young participants. Mike Clark (Old Chatham), Powell House Youth Director, described the Powell House youth program as a spiritual development program for growing humans. The program seeks more children, as well as help from older Friends in transportation and recruitment.

Regina Baird Haag (Old Chatham), Co-Executive Director of Powell House, gave the numbers of participant-visits for each age group at Powell House programs, totaling 1,700. Regina described her son's happy first visit to Powell House and asked for stories from everyone to create an experiential history of Powell House.

Dennis Haag (Old Chatham), the other Co-Executive Director of Powell House, described the strategic plan that has been under development since May. They hope to have a 5-year plan in place by January. Dennis reported that on November 28 Powell House will be listed on the website for New York Gives, allowing Friends to donate online to Powell House for 24 hours. Dennis suggested that Friends might follow up this action by writing a check for NYYM.

Friends received these reports (attached, see page 9).

2017-11-10. Steve Mohlke (Ithaca), General Secretary for NYYM, shared what he has learned on his first few months on the job (attached, see page 11). In talking with monthly meetings, committees, and staff, Steve has heard both worry and hope, both concern about our decline and excitement about new projects.

Both are true: we are in distress and we are experiencing energy and enthusiasm. We need to let go of what isn't working, keep what works, and learn new ways to reach out.

We have losses: both Emily Provance (Interim Young Adult Field Secretary) and Melinda Wenner Bradley (Children and Youth Field Secretary) are leaving their positions. Steve thanked them for the wonderful work they have set in motion, and urged us to understand their departure as part of the cycle of life. We are both dying and being born anew, all the time.

Friends received the report.

2017-11-11. Jens Braun (Old Chatham), convener of the Committee on Conscientious Objection to Paying for War, played a recording of a song by Paulette Meier (Cincinnati Meeting) based on the writing of John Woolman:

May we look upon our treasure, our furniture, our garments, and try to discover whether the seeds of war are nourished by these our possessions.

(A recording can be found on Youtube at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=cMvoYdhJ9k4](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cMvoYdhJ9k4) or by searching YouTube for *Paulette Meier Woolman*.)

2017-11-12. Emily Provance (15th Street) reported on the “holy experiment” she undertook this year to see if Facebook could be used in a focused way for outreach. With the support of Ministry Coordinating Committee, Emily ran Facebook ads for 50 days in a 20-minute radius of six meetings, and then repeated the experiment for another 50 days with 12 meetings, along with some social media training for the meetings. Over 300,000 people were reached, with an estimated 30,000 expected to remember. Nearly 1,500 clicked on meeting websites. Emily is now communicating with a wide range of Friends in many Quaker organizations around the world, consulting with them to begin their own holy experiment. Friends who want to follow the growth of Emily’s work can check her blog on [quakeremily.wordpress.com](http://quakeremily.wordpress.com).

Friends received the report.

2017-11-13. Doug Way (New Brunswick) reported for the Pay-As-Led Task Group. The task group has discerned that they cannot implement Pay-As-Led for the 2018 Summer Sessions. Two problems were discovered. First, the process will require that we take on functions previously managed by Silver Bay Association: receiving, processing and ultimately paying for all reservations at once. Second, to create or buy registration software will require upgrading the entire NYYM electronic system, which is a longer process than we have time for this year. The task group is disappointed but not discouraged. A survey of Friends has suggested that there is more than sufficient support for Pay-As-Led, measured against New England Yearly Meeting’s successful implementation. In the meantime, Friends are encouraged to donate to the Equalization Fund. Sessions Committee plans to make the Fund more “user friendly” in 2018.

Friends received the report (attached, see page 14).

2017-11-14. Minutes were read, corrected, and approved in stages during the session.

2017-11-15. After announcements, meeting closed.

Caldwell University, Caldwell, New Jersey  
Sunday morning, November 12, 2017

*Lucinda Antrim (Scarsdale), Clerk*  
*Jeffrey Aaron (New Brunswick), Assistant Clerk*  
*Bridget Bower (Perry City), Recording Clerk*  
*Rima Segal (Rochester), Reading Clerk*

2017-11-16. The meeting opened with a period of worship.

2017-11-17. The clerk introduced the clerks’ table.

2017-11-18. As is our practice, no questions having been raised about the consent agenda, it was approved, with a correction in the spelling of David Fletch to David Fletcher.

### **CONSENT AGENDA**

Nominating Committee Slate for Fall Sessions 2017

#### **General Services Coordinating Committee**

<i>Audit</i>		Class of 2020
Martha Hyde	Brooklyn	
<i>Communications</i>		Class of 2020
Adam Segal-Isaacson	Brooklyn	
<i>Supervisory Committee for the General Secretary</i>		Class of 2018
Ileana Clarke (co-opted)	Cornwall (attender)	
Barbara Menzel	New Brunswick	

#### **Witness Coordinating Committee**

<i>Alternatives to Violence Project, Inc. Board</i>		Class of 2020
David Fletcher	Brooklyn	
Crystal Heshmat	Albany	
Jill McLellan	Buffalo	
<i>Indian Affairs</i>		Class of 2020
Christine Japely	Fifteenth Street	
<i>Prisons Committee</i>		Class of 2020
Suzanne Blackburn	Genesee Valley	
Ernestine Buscemi	Morningside	
<i>Quaker Earthcare Witness</i>		Class of 2018
Pamela Boyce Simms	Hudson	



## CORRECTIONS

### *Committee on Aging Concerns*

Jill McLellan and Jan Philips are in the Class of 2020

### *FWCC/SOA*

Emily Provance serves in the Class of 2018 and should not have been appointed to the Class of 2020.

Also, see release requests below.

### REQUESTS FOR RELEASE FROM SERVICE

F. Peter Philips	From MCC
Mason Barnett	From Conflict Transformation
Charley Flint	From Personnel
Jennifer Lindop	From Sessions
Jeannine Laverty	From Supervisory Committee for the General Secretary
Emily Provance	From FWCC
Charles Brainard	From Indian Affairs
Norma Ellis	From Prisons
Loomis Mayer	From Committee on World Ministries

2017-11-19. Peter Phillips (Cornwall), for the NYYM Trustees, brought the second reading of the proposed revision to the by-laws of New York Yearly Meeting. Friends approved the change of the by-laws. It is attached; see page 17.

2017-11-20. Peter Phillips (Cornwall), clerk of the Committee to Revise Faith and Practice, brought a second reading of the committee's handbook page. Friends expressed concern about limiting membership on the committee to members of New York Yearly Meeting. Friends approved the handbook page without the statement about membership limitation. Friends asked the clerk to reopen the conversation about membership and this committee. It is attached as amended (see page 19).

2017-11-21. Jeffrey Aaron (New Brunswick) reported for Nurture Coordinating Committee. Liaison Committee had requested that Jeffrey serve as acting clerk of Nurture due to the absence of a Nurture CC clerk.

Jeffrey brought a recommendation that Young Adult Concerns

Committee be laid down. We acknowledge with sadness that this committee is no longer useful and we look forward with joy to including all Friends in all phases of our work.

2017-11-22. Jeffrey Aaron (New Brunswick) reviewed the history of the Nurture Coordinating Committee, noting that it has had operational challenges for the last 20 years.

Friends considered suspending Nurture Coordinating Committee until Spring Sessions. Friends are not yet ready to suspend NCC. Until then the assistant clerk will continue to sign vouchers and budget approvals for the committees and groups currently under the Nurture Coordinating Committee.

2017-11-23. Minute of exercise.

Additional discernment and worship needs to be done about the structure of the yearly meeting, perhaps at Coordinating Committee weekend in January, also at other places and times. Friends were concerned about the concentration of power in our current structure. Friends want to be involved and we explored possible ways this might happen: for example a working group or a round of visitations with monthly meetings. We need to look deep and pay attention to the life of the yearly meeting where it is rising.

Friends raised a concern about an apparent micro-aggression made by a Friend during the presentation of an earlier item. The concern was heard but it was not immediately clear how to respond and we continued with the agenda. During our discernment about Nurture Coordinating Committee, Friends repeatedly returned to addressing the earlier incident. It became clear that we could not move forward without additional labor together. The work of restructuring yearly meeting committees is inseparable from the work of addressing the implicit bias in our current structures. We hope to pay attention to the ways in which our structure tends to reinforce existing power dynamics. We are beginning to learn how to talk about it.

2017-11-24 The Ministry Coordinating Committee report is postponed until Spring Sessions.

2017-11-25. Friends approved the clerk's endorsement of Robert Kazmayer's (Sunfire) travel minute (attached, see page 22).

2017-11-26. Minutes were read, corrected, and approved in stages during the session.

2017-11-27. The meeting closed with a brief period of worship. There were no announcements.

*Addendum to the minutes:*

Total registrations for this weekend are at 142 and of that number six were youth.

We will meet again at Spring Sessions, April 6-8, 2018, hosted by New York Quarter. Details will be available in February and March.

We thank All Friends Regional Meeting for hosting our sessions.

## ATTACHMENTS

### **Report from Powell House Co-Executive Directors**

*See minute 2017-11-09, page 2*

The soundtracks playing repeatedly in our minds for the past months have been the songs of GODSPELL, the musical in which we saw our son perform during the last weekend in July. As with all great musical theatre, the songs continue resonate in our brains and spirits well after the show is over. A specific earworm has developed for “On the Willows”, which is sung as Jesus says goodbye to his disciples when they share the last supper before he is crucified. It’s a poignant scene full of fear, grief, regret and sorrow. In particular, the words “How can we sing the Lord’s song in a foreign land?” has echoed through these days, as it has become a backdrop for Charlottesville, North Korea, Las Vegas, the political posturing and bluster. In true academic fashion, Regina had done some research on this line. As you can see below, the lyrics for the song come almost directly from Psalm 137. Psalm 137 was written to convey the anguish, anger, and accountability of the Hebrew people following their exile at the hands of the Babylonians. Their emotions expressed out of abandonment, failure, and pain permeate their questions; “How can this have happened to God’s people? What are we to do? Where is our future?”

These questions also resonate in our current social, political, and spiritual situations... humanity is certainly off-track and “exiled in a foreign land” far away from our creator’s intentions. We find ourselves responding to this scenario from the position of being at Powell House, where grace, redemption, reconciliation are offered and experienced on a regular basis. We encourage Powell House programs, facility, staff, clientele to feel empowered to “sing the Lord’s song” with words, actions, presence that reflect the presence of God’s reign from HERE! This is precisely the work, evolving from this ideally situated setting, that we should continue to be engaged in; creating and offering to ALL the reality of peace and love existing among us. Yes, with the strategic plan we will have a well-designed process for launching us into the future! Additionally, grounding our efforts in the awareness that we are engaged in bringing forth

the reign of God here in our world is essential. Let us continue to bring to NYYM and the greater community all the good gifts that Powell House provides toward healing this world. In Psalm 137 and GODSPELL’S words; “Let us sing the Lord’s song in a foreign land”!

### *On the Willows*

On the willows, there  
We hung up our lyres  
For our captors there  
Required  
Of us songs  
And our tormentors mirth  
On the willows, there  
We hung up our lyres  
For our captors there  
Required  
Of us songs  
And our tormentors mirth  
Saying  
Sing us one  
Of the songs of Zion  
Sing us one  
Of the songs of Zion  
But how can we sing?  
  
Sing the Lord’s songs?  
In a foreign land

—*from GODSPELL © 2012*

—*Regina Baird Haag and Dennis Haag*

### **Psalm 137**

By the rivers of Babylon—  
there we sat down and there  
we wept  
when we remembered Zion.  
  
2 On the willows there  
we hung up our harps.  
  
3 For there our captors  
asked us for songs,  
and our tormentors asked  
for mirth, saying,  
“Sing us one of the songs  
of Zion!”  
  
4 How could we sing the  
Lord’s song  
in a foreign land?  
—*NRSV version, © 1976*

## **General Secretary’s Report to Fall Sessions**

*See minute 2017-11-10, page 3*

I’d like to share some of what I’ve learned in my first few months on the job.

Three of the big parts of my work with the yearly meeting are

- Staff
- The yearly meeting committees
- Monthly meetings

I am aware of some local meetings, by report or by visit, who are small in number or looking around at the ages of the people in the room or both and wonder if the meeting will still exist in 5, 10, 15 years.

We have some committees within the yearly meeting structure that struggle to meet or are having a hard time naming clerks to help facilitate the work of the committee

Our staff position for young adult field secretary was open when I started and remains open.

These are situations in distress.

At the same time, we have some phenomenal enthusiasm and opportunity.

- Robin and Arlene are leading the Outreach Working Group in regular conference calls for people working on outreach in their local meetings
- In our grant-funded Monthly Meeting Partner Project, Montclair Meeting and Wilton Meeting are completing their first year with Melinda as the staff person serving as their outside support. For the second year, Ithaca completed a strong application and was selected. (No others applied.) (To avoid conflict of interest as much as possible, I stayed out of the application process.)
- As you just heard, Emily’s Facebook advertising experiment has demonstrated a straightforward method to get the word out that Quakers exist and individuals in a dozen meetings have learned how to continue it on their own.
- The Spiritual Nurture Working Group continues to offer retreats that monthly meetings find meaningful.



- The Friends Center for Racial Justice, now one year old, has partnered with both the Spiritual Nurture Working Group and the Conflict Transformation committee to offer workshops.
- The ARCH (Aging Resources Consultation and Help) Program is transitioning from being a separate entity to becoming integrated within the yearly meeting staff, budget, program and fundraising structure. It's Callie's persistent message "we're all in this together."
- Trustee, the Treasurer and Finance and Personnel and Development and office staff are all taking on significant tasks to support the organization as a whole
- Pamela Boyce Simms is gathering people around in a movement to effect a transformation focused on the environment.

I'm leaving some things out, quite a bit really, but you get the idea.

Both are true. We are in distress and we have phenomenal energy and enthusiasm. Both are part of the cycle of life. But spirit wants to grow, to find expression. How do we find opportunity in the distress? How do we let go of that which isn't working anymore? What is it that we shouldn't let go?

If someone says "Let's advertise!" do we say "Quakers don't proselytize," or "Social media is evil?" Do we hang on to that idea until we are the only one left? Do we dig a little deeper and ask each other "what do you mean by proselytize?" Why is not doing it considered Quaker? Is inviting someone to worship the same as insisting they believe a certain thing? So often our Quaker cultural assumptions are the source of our distress. If you are interested in more examples and what you can do, I suggest reading Emily's blog, [quakeremily.wordpress.com](http://quakeremily.wordpress.com)

Emily has served us well as interim young adult field secretary. As of this week, she is no longer serving in that role. She has done lots of wonderful things but acknowledges that the work of young adult field secretary is not the work to which she is called. Thank you Emily for your clear thinking, your challenges, your holy experiments, your advocacy and your thorough reports.

Now I'd like to share about Melinda. Melinda has been serving

since April 2016 as our first children and youth field secretary. When she started, she and her family lived on Long Island where her husband had a job as head of school. The unanticipated loss of that position meant their family's on-campus housing also ended. Since they still owned a house in Pennsylvania it only made sense to move there this past July. Fortunately, Melinda has continued her part-time work with NYYM and absorbed the additional travel cost. She brings tremendous gifts and energy to children's religious education and to the Monthly Meeting Partner Project. Unfortunately, her family's circumstances remain uncertain. This week, Melinda accepted a full time job with Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. To be clear, she wasn't looking for a job. She didn't know PYM was offering this position until friends pointed it out to her and how perfectly it seemed to fit her gifts. Our position is part time and does not include health benefits. Accepting the position with PYM is the responsible thing for her to do for her family and three children.

We're all on friendly terms here and PYM is very open to helping this transition happen in a reasonable manner. We are still working out details. Melinda will wind down some of her work here over the coming months. She carries a big part of the Monthly Meeting Partner Project and she is willing and eager to continue that work in a consulting role even as she fully engages with her new position. This is still too fresh for me to think about adequate thank yous.

From distress arises opportunity. This is the cycle of life. We now have two positions open. If you have ideas or want to be engaged in the process please contact me or the Personnel Committee.

—Steve Mohlke, General Secretary

## Pay as Led Process Report to 2017 NYYM Fall Sessions

*See minute 2017-11-13, page 4*

Dear friends:

At our 2017 NYYM Summer Sessions, the yearly meeting approved the following minute:

2017-07-49. Friends approved working toward becoming one body, in part through the spiritual exercise of Pay as Led.

We will leave to the subcommittee the details of implementation (technical, procedural, additional volunteer or paid assistance, eligibility).

We understand that if we cannot have a detailed plan by Fall Sessions, we are unlikely to be able to implement by 2018 and encourage the subcommittee to continue its work.

We now stand before you to say that we cannot in good conscience push forward a Pay as Led process for our 2018 Summer Sessions. There are two “stops” that require more research and discernment than we have time for between now and what would need to be the start of the 2018 Summer Sessions registration.

First, we discussed the Pay as Led concept with Silver Bay Association, because we have a contract with them for 2018, and they were very clear that this change would require that we become a “master bill” entity. Currently, to state the process simply, we register with NYYM to attend Summer Sessions, and NYYM then transfers our registrations to SBA, which collects our room deposit and subsequent payment for our stay. Individuals are therefore responsible for their own bill. As we know, many receive assistance from JYM, the Equalization Fund, Sessions Committee (plenary speaker, etc.) or another committee, and or their monthly meeting. However, with a Pay as Led process, the yearly meeting is taking the responsibility of ensuring that bills are paid. Individuals may still receive assistance from the options listed above, may pay 100% of their stay and may pay more than 100% of their stay, but the bottom line is—New York Yearly Meeting will make sure Silver Bay Association is paid in full, not individuals. This basic shift in responsibility changes our status with SBA from individual registrations that they

collect to a “master bill”—meaning WE are required to receive, process, and ultimately pay for all the registrations, once the dust settles on the various options of payment levels included in a Pay as Led process.

Given this first complication, we started looking into registration software and found that implementing the software for such a complex upgrade to our registration flow also necessitates a complex upgrade to our entire NYYM electronic system. Sessions Committee did not realize that the two would have to be integrated smoothly—Pay as Led cannot simply be an add-on or side process to our main database functions. Having discovered this interconnectedness, the YM staff and the NYYM Communications Committee are now understandably very interested in our intentions. It is therefore prudent to step back a little, widen the Pay as Led Ad Hoc Subcommittee membership and resource persons, and take the proper amount of time needed to ensure we do this right and don’t break anything on the way!

While implementing Pay as Led is more complex than we expected, we anticipate solutions and resolutions will be found in time to put Pay as Led in place for our 2019 Summer Sessions.

We regret this delay very much, but for 2018, we encourage friends to keep the Equalization Fund firmly in mind, since it is already in place helping members of our community attend our sessions. Friends can make donations to the EQ at any time—there is no need to wait until you register to attend a YM session! Just go online and click on “Donate” and note that your donation is for the Equalization Fund. Also, for 2018, Sessions Committee is revising the policies for the Equalization Fund making it more “user friendly”—look for an announcement on those changes in our January *Spark*.

Finally, we thank the folks who offered to be part of the Pay as Led Focus Group—and as soon as we figure out something to focus on, we will contact you!

—Doug Way, clerk, Pay as Led Ad Hoc Subcommittee  
Melanie-Claire Mallison, clerk, Sessions Committee  
Steve Mohlke, NYYM General Secretary

## **Travel Minute for Susan (Sue) Regen**

*See minute 2017-11-18; part of consent agenda*

Rochester Friends Meeting  
Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)  
84 Scio Street, Rochester, New York 14604

November 9, 2017

Dear Friends,

Susan (Sue) Regen has a well-established concern for encouraging the practice of forgiveness as a spiritual discipline. The authenticity of this work derives from its origins in Sue's personal journey of forgiveness, and is the source of its profound impact. Since 2002 Sue has been led to support others in this work by providing a total of 67 different events as well as individual accompaniment.

During the period since the approval of her last travel minute in 2014, she has offered workshops around the country, most recently at Lake Erie Yearly Meeting's Spiritual Formation retreat (the first of two retreats for this group) and at Friends General Conference Gathering at Niagara University in July 2017. Many individuals continue to ask for Sue's support and counsel as they engage with forgiveness issues in their lives.

Rochester Friends Meeting recognizes that the practice of forgiveness as a spiritual discipline is foundational to the Quaker testimonies of Peace and Integrity, and that it provides a deepening connection to the Divine for those who engage in the work. The meeting has appointed an ongoing support committee and has established a fund to support this ministry. Sue travels with an elder.

We took this ministry under our care in 2006, renewed the travel minute in 2008, 2010, and 2014. Although Sue and her husband Rich moved to the D.C. area in December 2015, they remain members of Rochester meeting, and Sue's forgiveness work remains under the care of Rochester Friends Meeting until she is settled in a meeting that can provide spiritual direction for this work. We have renewed her minute of travel.

In peace,  
*Dawn Pozzi, Clerk*

## **Revision to NYYM By-Laws**

*See minute 2017-11-19, page 6*

For many years, NYYM has had both a Treasurer for the Yearly Meeting and a Treasurer of the Trustees, with different responsibilities. Many of the functions of the NYYM Treasurer and the Trustees Treasurer are being combined, and duties formerly handled by the Trustees Treasurer now are or shortly will be handled by the NYYM Treasurer. As a result, Trustees propose eliminating the position of Treasurer of the Trustees and replacing it with a Trustees Financial Clerk, who will have different responsibilities from the duties previously undertaken by the Trustees Treasurer. These changes should be reflected in the By-Laws.

Article II, Section 3 of the current NYYM By-Laws specifies that the officers of the Board of Trustees shall include a "Treasurer". Article II, Section 3 also states the responsibilities of the Treasurer of the Trustees, as follows: "The Treasurer of the Trustees shall receive and disperse funds held by the Corporation in trust, and shall keep account books and report regularly to the Trustees with respect to such funds."

Article III, Section 5 of the current By-Laws describes the responsibilities of the Treasurer of the Yearly Meeting, as follows:

"The responsibilities of the Treasurer are to receive and disburse funds with respect to the Operating Budget of the Corporation. The Treasurer keeps the account books of the Operating Budget of the Corporation and reports regularly to the members of the Corporation."

Under Article VIII, the By-Laws may be amended by (i) presenting a proposed amendment at a Yearly Meeting session for a first reading, and (ii) approving the proposal at a second, separate Yearly Meeting session.

This is the first reading of the following proposed amendments to the By-Laws:

1. The first sentence of Article II, Section 3 of the By-Laws of the New York Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (the "By-Laws") is amended by deleting therefrom the word "Treasurer" and substituting in its place the phrase "financial officer".

2. The third sentence of Article II, Section 3 of the By-Laws is amended by deleting the sentence in its entirety and substituting in its place the following sentence: “The financial officer shall oversee the receipt, disbursement, investment, reporting, record-keeping and accounting for funds held by the Corporation in trust or otherwise entrusted to the management or supervision of the Board of Trustees, and shall report regularly to the Trustees with respect to such funds.”

As a result of these changes, the amended Article II, Section 3 of the By-Laws will read as follows:

“3. Officers of the Trustees: The Trustees shall appoint from their own number a Clerk, a Secretary and a financial officer. The Clerk of the Trustees shall act as President of the Corporation when the acts of such an officer are required. The financial officer shall oversee the receipt, disbursement, investment, reporting, record-keeping and accounting for funds held by the Corporation in trust or otherwise entrusted to the management or supervision of the Board of Trustees, and shall report regularly to the Trustees with respect to such funds. No employee of the Corporation shall serve as Clerk of the Trustees.”

3. The first sentence of Article III, Section 5 of the By-Laws is amended by adding at the end thereof the following: “,and to receive and disburse funds held by the Corporation in trust or otherwise entrusted to the management or supervision of the Board of Trustees, in consultation with the financial officer of the Trustees and subject to the approval of the Trustees.”.
4. The second sentence of Article III, Section 5 of the By-Laws is amended (a) by deleting therefrom the phrase “of the Operating Budget”, and (b) by adding between the words “of the Corporation” and the word “and” the following: “in consultation with the financial officer of the Trustees and subject to the approval of the Trustees with respect to funds held by the Corporation in trust or otherwise entrusted to the management or supervision of the Board of Trustees.”.

As a result of these changes, the amended Article III, Section 5 of the By-Laws will read as follows:

“5. The responsibilities of the Treasurer are to receive and disburse funds with respect to the Operating Budget of the Corporation,

and to receive and disburse funds held by the Corporation in trust or otherwise entrusted to the management or supervision of the Board of Trustees, in consultation with the financial officer of the Trustees and subject to the approval of the Trustees. The Treasurer keeps the account books of the Corporation in consultation with the financial officer of the Trustees and subject to the approval of the Trustees with respect to funds held by the Corporation in trust or otherwise entrusted to the management or supervision of the Board of Trustees, and reports regularly to the members of the Corporation. If Assistant Treasurer(s) are appointed, they shall also be Officers of the Corporation.”

## **COMMITTEE TO REVISE FAITH AND PRACTICE, The Book of Discipline of the Yearly Meeting (2017)**

*See minute 2017-11-20, page 6*

### **History**

The Committee to Revise *Faith and Practice* (“the Committee”) was created in the fall of 1977 by the clerk of the Yearly Meeting and subsequently by the Representative Meeting. Initially its charge was to address the membership of children.

From 1977 until 1988, the Yearly Meeting appointed members to one-year terms. Since the Committee was considered *ad hoc*, there were no restrictions on successive appointments during the early years.

With the passage of time, the Committee identified additional sections of *Faith and Practice* in which material needed to be changed or added: sexist language, prison reform, troubled marriages, separation and divorce, death and dying, and human sexuality. The Committee also considered matters of Quaker spirituality, such as ensuring that references to Christ remained in our Book of Discipline while recognizing that the spirituality of our faith ranged from Christian to universalist, including atheists, non-theists and agnostics as Members. Friends individually, and through suggestions from monthly meetings, called on the Committee to consider most sections of the book. The second part of the book, “Practice and Procedure,” received final approval in July 1987; the first part, “Faith,” in July 1995. The most recent printed edition was approved in April 2014.



Changes approved subsequently are posted on the Yearly Meeting website.

### **Committee Responsibilities and Process for Proposed Changes**

The Committee is charged with the consideration of proposed changes to our Book of Discipline and the preparation and presentation of such proposals to the Body at Sessions.

The process associated with its charge was approved at Summer Sessions 2016 as follows:

“Proposed revisions to *Faith and Practice* may originate in a monthly or regional or a Yearly Meeting body. When the proposed revision has been seasoned by the Committee to Revise Faith and Practice and approved by Ministry Coordinating Committee, the Committee to Revise Faith and Practice may bring the proposed revision to any Yearly Meeting session for a first reading. After being brought forward the first time, the proposed revision is brought for a second reading and final approval to a subsequent Yearly Meeting session.”

### **Functions and Activities**

5. The Committee functions under the care of the Ministry Coordinating Committee, to which the Committee reports. The Ministry Coordinating Committee may offer guidance and counsel to the Committee’s work and help facilitating Friends’ understanding of Committee proposals for revision.
6. The Committee meets at all Sessions and at other times as needed to fulfill its responsibilities. Between Committee meetings originating bodies (*i.e.*, a monthly, regional or Yearly Meeting body) may write suggestions for new sections or for changes in sections already published as set forth above in the section entitled “...Process for Proposed Changes.”
7. The Committee is on call to explain suggested revisions and to listen to Friends’ thoughts and concerns.

### **Organization and Method of Appointment**

Committee members are appointed for three-year staggered terms, with about one-third of the members having their terms

end each year. The Yearly Meeting’s limit of two successive terms applies to appointees. The Yearly Meeting’s Nominating Committee recommends appointments, for subsequent approval by the Yearly Meeting.

The Committee selects its own clerk and recording clerk for one-year terms and names a representative to the Ministry Coordinating Committee for a one-year term as well.

### **Meeting Times & Places**

The Committee meets at all Sessions, at a date, time and place selected by the Committee’s clerk, typically on site at the scheduled Session, and announced in advance, typically in *Spark* and on site at the scheduled Session. All Committee meetings at Sessions are open meetings. The Committee’s clerk may schedule additional meetings.

Communication on all matters in connection with the Committee’s work abide by the guidelines set forth in the minute approved at Fall Sessions 2016 entitled “Use of Technology In The Conduct Of Business.”

### **Finances**

The expenses of the committee are met by an appropriation in the Operating Budget. Sales of *Faith and Practice* are intended to cover the costs of its printing.



## Travel minute for Robert Kazmayer (Sunfire)

*See minute 2017-11-25, page 7*

To the Leadership of the Parliament of the World's Religions,

We commend to you Friend Robert ("Sunfire") Kazmayer, who is a member of the Easton Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (a meeting within New York Yearly Meeting) and a member of New York Yearly Meeting's Witness Coordinating Committee.

Sunfire has shared with New York Yearly Meeting his leading to attend the 2018 Parliament of the World's Religions, November 1-7, 2018, in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. This leading has grown out of his conviction, expressed to us, that all of the world's spiritual leaders have a vital role in combating the hatred that is tearing the world apart. He has noted the call of the Parliament's leadership to "all faith communities to move against violence and hate," and that this call is in harmony with Quaker testimony since the start of our movement in the seventeenth century.

Sunfire also has a leading to apply to present a program at the 2018 Parliament called "Discerning a Path to Peace." This program will be based on the Quaker practice of Worship Sharing. Participants will be given questions for reflection that focus on a topic or problem—in this case, our efforts to bring about peace on earth. After silent reflection, participants are invited to make statements that speak to the questions. Sunfire has led Worship Sharing groups at both Quaker and interfaith gatherings. We trust that you will give careful attention to his application.

We look forward to hearing a report from him about the 2018 Parliament and trust that what he brings to us will help us work with other faith communities to achieve the world we seek.

*Endorsed by Easton Monthly Meeting, October 1, 2017;  
William Reagan, Clerk*

*Endorsed by the Witness Coordinating Committee of NYYM,  
November 11, 2017; Mary Eagleson, Clerk*

*Endorsed by Northeastern Regional Meeting, October 29,  
2017; Nathaniel Corwin, Clerk*

*Approved by NYYM, November 12, 2017; Lucinda Antrim,  
Clerk*

## NEW YORK YEARLY MEETING

### SPRING SESSIONS

**April 6–8, 2018**

Brooklyn Friends School

Saturday, April 7, 2018; 10:00 a.m.

*Lucinda Antrim (Scarsdale), Clerk*

*Jeffrey Aaron (New Brunswick), Assistant Clerk*

*Karen Reixach (Ithaca), Recording Clerk*

*Mahayana (Yana) Landowne (Brooklyn), Reading Clerk*

2018-04-01. The clerk invited Friends to move closer to the front. She reviewed the agenda. The meeting then settled into expectant worship out of which Liseli Haines (Mohawk Valley) offered an acknowledgment of the Canarsie:

Let us begin by acknowledging with humility that the land where we sit and stand today is the territory of the Canarsie, a Lenape nation, which translates as "at the fenced-in place." Their vast cornfields covered much of what we now know as Brooklyn. Their trading network stretched for hundreds of miles by land, sea and waterway. These multilingual people traded extensively with the Dutch, who brought new diseases to the Nation. It is estimated that 90% of the Canarsie died of smallpox, diphtheria and fever in the first half of the contact. Of those left, some joined nations to the east and west, as settler pressure increased.

2018-04-02. The reading clerk read the roll of monthly meetings by quarter/region and invited Friends from each meeting to stand as their region was called. All regions were represented.

2018-04-03. The clerk introduced those at the clerks' table. The folks at the clerks' table demonstrated the temptations of cell phones, and the clerk reminded Friends of the opportunity for depth and the difficulty posed by texting, Instagram and email in worship.

She acknowledged the elders and whisper buddies.

2018-04-04. On behalf of the host committee Nancy Britton (clerk of New York Quarter) introduced the host committee and welcomed Friends to Brooklyn Friends School.

2018-04-05. Treasurer's Report: Mary Williams (Bulls Head), NYYM treasurer for 2017, described the 2017 Consolidated Financial Statement and its components, which is also on the NYYM website. (See page 41.) She also reviewed the figures in each of the components. Laura Cisar (New Brunswick), the treasurer for 2018, introduced herself. Mary and Laura invited questions from the body.

Mary responded to a question about the surplus of roughly \$57,000 and the vacancy in the Young Adult Field Secretary position by saying that this was a partial reason; other reasons included the income from meetings (99% of expected donations were received), and that the financial accounts were revised in 2017. She estimated that half of the surplus was one-time occurrences. Another question was what accounts were closed that could have been used by monthly meetings and are we making available to monthly meetings all the resources that they could use? Mary indicated that funds from the closed accounts were not available for monthly meetings and added that NYYM could do better in providing information about resources available to monthly meetings. An important goal of Financial Services is financial simplicity and transparency.

Friends received the report.

2018-04-06. Elaine Learnard (Conscience Bay) reported for the Liaison Committee on the Temporary Proposal on New York Yearly Meeting Structure, which is available on the NYYM website and is attached; see page 29.

The proposal is intended to care for and support the entities under Nurture Coordinating Committee without overburdening the remaining coordinating committees. Elaine summarized the changes and provided the rationale for each change: She emphasized that this proposal suspends but does not lay down Nurture Coordinating Committee.

- Aging Concerns to General Services Coordinating Committee
- JYM to become a subcommittee of Sessions (which is under General Services Coordinating Committee)
- Epistle Committee, Powell House and Youth Committee to Ministry Coordinating Committee

- Reps of FGC, FUM and FWCC to an "affiliate group" linked with Liaison Committee
- Oakwood Board to Liaison Committee

This temporary plan would begin at the close of these Spring Sessions and go through Summer Sessions 2019, by which time we hope a new structure for the yearly meeting will be ready to be tried or another proposal will emerge from our discernment.

A concern about the reports to the body from the various affiliate groups was raised; Elaine indicated that the affiliates will receive care.

Why is this a temporary proposal? This plan would begin now and will continue through Summer Sessions 2019. This gives time for Liaison and the body to hear concerns and suggestions.

Will this necessitate a revised budget to be approved at Summer Sessions? No.

One concern is that more time for Coordinating Committees means less time for other activities. Elaine indicated that greater efficiency and meeting times outside of Sessions may be necessary.

Where is JYM Committee and will Nominating Committee continue to bring nominations? Elaine indicated that JYM Committee will continue and Nominating Committee remains responsible for naming individuals to this committee.

Deeper problems, both spiritual and practical, need attention. We need a plan that starts soon for the transition we are in; this proposal does not answer this spiritual call. Is this plan honest and real? The threshing session (tomorrow) will offer an opportunity for this deeper reflection.

The clerk invited Friends to reflect in silence. She asked whether we are ready to move forward with this plan.

In the present structure, the care for NCC committees is not provided; this plan is an experiment. We are invited to talk about the future of how the yearly meeting can grow and deepen during this temporary plan.

How we move forward matters. Knowing we are not going to stay, we are being pulled forward by forces that if resisted will get us in deep trouble. If we listen and support each other as a community, we will have depth, strength and power because

being in a spirit-led community can allow us to do the next right thing.

A missing piece is the question of why the energy has flagged. The solution is not structural.

Friends approved the temporary plan with the understanding that we hope to experiment with what we let go of and what we will embrace, not only in structure but also in use of time.

One Friend stood aside from a place of love.

The meeting clerk then invited Friends to offer ministry on the future of the yearly meeting and the work God is calling us to.

2018-04-07. Minutes were read, corrected and approved in stages during this session. Following announcements, the meeting closed with brief open worship.

Brooklyn Friends School  
Sunday, April 8, 2018

*Lucinda Antrim (Scarsdale), Clerk*  
*Jeffrey Aaron (New Brunswick), Assistant Clerk*  
*Karen Way (New Brunswick), Recording Clerk*  
*Rima Segal (Rochester), Reading Clerk*

2018-04-08. Friends gathered in worship.

2018-04-09. Clerk Lucinda Antrim welcomed Friends, introduced the clerks' table, and reviewed this morning's agenda.

2018-04-10. In accordance with our consent agenda practice, the clerk reported that the previously posted contents had required no amendments. Friends therefore approved the items in minutes 2018-04-11 and 2018-04-12 (as follows).

2018-04-11. The report on interim actions by the clerk and general secretary was received. (Report attached; see page 33.)

2018-04-12. Nominations for appointment to service and releases from service are approved; see below.

### CONSENT AGENDA

Nominating Report for Spring Sessions 2018

### REQUESTS FOR RELEASE FROM SERVICE

Thomas Rothschild	From Indian Affairs Committee
F. Peter Philips	From Committee to Revise <i>Faith and Practice</i> , representative to Ministry Coordinating Committee, NYYM Board of Trustees
David Herendeen	From Worship at Yearly Meeting Sessions

### APPOINTMENTS

<i>NYYM Board of Trustees</i>	Class of 2023
Dare Thompson	Poughkeepsie

2018-04-13. John Cooley (Central Finger Lakes), clerk of General Services Coordinating Committee, introduced Pamela Wood (Morningside) from Personnel Committee. Pamela reviewed the history of trying to fill the yearly meeting's needs for staff support for children, youth, and young adults. She proposed a model for meeting all these needs with one position: a full-time Children, Youth and Young Adult Secretary position that would combine the currently open part-time positions of Children and Youth Field Secretary and Young Adult Field Secretary. In a program modeled on ARCH (Aging Resources, Consultation, and Help), the new secretary would anchor and oversee the work of local coordinators. Working for a monthly stipend, the local coordinators would be geographically close to monthly meetings and could provide skills specifically focused on children, youth, or young adults.

This idea will be further delineated in *Spark*. Friends were asked to consider this idea and other possibilities, and to direct their questions and comments to the Personnel Committee. A proposed job description is expected to be presented for consideration at Summer Sessions.

2018-04-14. Heidi Kelly (Old Chatham), clerk of the Powell House Committee and her daughter Maddy Kelly reported on activities and plans for Powell House.

There is a plan to try a sliding scale for Powell House fees, allowing program participants to pay less or more than the

usual fee.

There will also be a yearly subscription plan for individuals (\$740) and for meetings, so more people can attend more conferences.

In addition, a summer internship will be offered.

2018-04-15. Maddy Kelly (Old Chatham) reported on a Powell House trip to Washington, DC to experience lobbying with help from Friends Committee on National Legislation. The focus this year was on immigration. The experience was rich and very educational. An article should be appearing in *Spark*.

2018-04-16. At this point, we began a Threshing Session to consider how to organize our conversation about the future. How should we structure the conversation? Who should be in the conversation? How do we include voices that are not always heard?

The resulting discussion was not minuted, but notes were taken and will be distributed (now posted at [nyym.org/sites/default/files/2018-SpringSessions-Threshing.pdf](http://nyym.org/sites/default/files/2018-SpringSessions-Threshing.pdf)). Sarah Way, communications director, will work with the clerk and assistant clerk to be sure the entire yearly meeting will have a chance to read and respond.

2018-04-17. Melanie-Claire Mallison (Ithaca), clerk of Sessions Committee, reported on the experience of being clerk of the host task group for these sessions. She first saw the school on Friday and realized there were two steps that could be a barrier to accessibility. Melanie-Claire apologized and hoped to do better in the future. Over the three days, these sessions were attended by 135 adults and 4 teens.

Summer sessions will be July 22-28, 2018 in Silver Bay.

2018-04-18. Minutes were read, corrected, and approved in stages during this session.

2018-04-19. After quiet worship, we closed with announcements.

## ATTACHMENTS

### **A Temporary Proposal on New York Yearly Meeting Structure, For Discernment at Spring Sessions**

*See minute 2018-04-06, page 24*

March 23, 2018

Dear Friends,

This letter is about yearly meeting committee structure. New York Yearly Meeting's structure operates in the background of the awareness of many Friends in NYYM, and the letter may not engage your interest. However, many of us who gathered to discuss the structure learned a lot about the work of some of the committees, and even if you are not interested in the overall structure questions you may find, as many of us did, that the work and the dedicated Friends doing it are an inspiration.

One of the YM's four coordinating committees has no clerk, and although we were not clear at Fall Sessions to lay it down, Nurture Coordinating Committee is no longer functioning. To help the committees and entities that are under Nurture Coordinating Committee continue to function, Liaison Committee has created a possible temporary plan. The plan is based on feedback from Fall Sessions, from a survey that went out to the yearly meeting as a whole, and from a series of sharing sessions at Coordinating Committee weekend. If you are interested in more detail, please see the report on survey results prepared for Coordinating Committee weekend (online at [nyym.org/sites/default/files/NYYM-StructureSurveyReport.pdf](http://nyym.org/sites/default/files/NYYM-StructureSurveyReport.pdf)) and the notes from our open discussions (online at [nyym.org/sites/default/files/NYYM-RestructuringPlenaryMeetings.pdf](http://nyym.org/sites/default/files/NYYM-RestructuringPlenaryMeetings.pdf)), which are full of ideas, reflections, hopes and concerns.

Temporary plans can become, by default, more permanent plans. A deadline for a more permanent plan might be overridden if a new plan has not been approved by that deadline. Nevertheless, we propose that we act under this temporary plan, if the body discerns that is where we are being led, to begin at the close of Spring Sessions 2018 and to go through Summer Sessions 2019, by which time, if needed, we hope a new, more welcoming and agile structure for the YM will be ready to be



tried. Liaison Committee proposes the following ideas for the discernment of the body:

A change in the structure of the yearly meeting may be needed. We will need time to discern what longer-term structure may be emerging for us, so the following is brought forward as a temporary plan. We heard clearly that a crucial part of our work is to constructively address concerns about implicit bias in our structure, including institutional racism and bias about gender, age, and class. We are working, in parallel to this temporary effort, to open a broader conversation about the overall structure of the yearly meeting.

We have heard that as we work to care for and support the entities under Nurture Coordinating Committee, we want to avoid overburdening the remaining coordinating committees. We are proposing, as a part of this plan, to try to build in more time for coordinating committees to meet.

We learned a lot at Coordinating Committee weekend. Some of what we learned you will read below. Many of us heard for the first time what some of the committees do and how they connect with the wider Quaker and non-Quaker worlds. We were grateful for the opportunities to learn.

The following entities are under Nurture Coordinating Committee:

Aging Concerns

Epistle

Representatives to:

Friends General Conference (FGC)

Friends United Meeting (FUM)

Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC)

Oakwood School Board

Junior Yearly Meeting

Powell House

Youth Committee

(the Young Adult Concerns Committee has been laid down)

As we listened to the ideas that rose during Coordinating Committee weekend, the following ideas seemed sound, although not everyone agreed with each of them. Please take some time to read through and reflect on them.

### **Aging Concerns can move to General Services Coordinating Committee.**

Aging Concerns is a committee in transition. As ARCH (Aging Resources, Consultation, and Help) has been integrated into the structure of the YM, the financial part of the committee's work has moved to General Services CC and the supervisory part of their work has moved to the Yearly Meeting General Secretary. Moving Aging Concerns to General Services made sense to Friends. We also considered Ministry CC as a possible fit, but MCC may receive other committees needing care and we are trying not to overburden any one CC.

### **Epistle Committee can move to Ministry Coordinating Committee.**

We also considered a move to Sessions Committee (and thus to General Services, since Sessions is under GSCC), but we acknowledged that this committee functions well on its own, needing little oversight, and is in many ways ministry. Along with writing our Epistle from Summer Sessions, the committee reads and forwards epistles from many other Quaker entities.

### **Representatives to FGC, FUM, and FWCC can move to an "affiliates group" who would be linked to Liaison Committee through a representative or through one or two people on Liaison who would be charged with maintaining contact with the representatives.**

We hope with this move to allow these representatives to wider Quaker organizations a more direct connection with the yearly meeting, with a rotating schedule of reports to the body at YM Sessions.

### **Oakwood Board can move to Liaison.**

The YM's responsibility to Oakwood is to name half plus one of the members of its Board. The school is separately incorporated from the YM; the body receives a report at least once a year from the head of school. Nominating Committee can use support in their work of finding Friends to serve on the Oakwood Board. Little else is required of the YM. Keeping the sense of connection with Oakwood alive can happen at the level of the Liaison Committee, at least for now.



**Junior Yearly Meeting can become a subcommittee of Sessions, thus moving to General Services Coordinating Committee.**

JYM co-clerks agree. They say: “It makes sense to us that JYM be under the care of GSCC.” It was felt that fostering a close connection between JYM and YM Sessions could help knit the community at our sessions together, and so we suggest that JYM be moved to Sessions.

**Powell House can move to Ministry CC.**

The Powell House co-directors see a strong link between Powell House and ministry. This is reflected in their new mission, vision, and values statements. At CC Weekend, Friends affirmed that Powell House is a ministry.

**Youth Committee can move to Ministry CC.**

The Youth Committee is experiencing renewed energy. As it continues its explorations, it was felt that Ministry CC would be for now a good place for it to receive care and support. We noted that it is important that the committees concerned with youth and young adults stay connected with one another, and if Powell House moves to Ministry, Youth Committee may belong there as well.

So, Friends, you now know what we have heard. Please come to Spring Sessions with questions and ideas, and please feel free to reach out to any member of Liaison Committee (listed below) at any time with thoughts and questions. If you have significant concerns about this proposal, it would be very helpful for the yearly meeting clerk, Lucinda Antrim, to know about them in advance of Spring Sessions.

One of the comments on the survey we referred to above captured the sentiment of several: we are “toooo...busy.” It is interesting: this concern did not rise during our time together at CC weekend. Perhaps when we are together, doing the work, grounded in the Spirit and in each other, the pressure of busy-ness falls away, leaving only Light.

In peace,  
Liaison Committee\*

Lucinda Antrim (lucindaantrim@gmail.com)

Jeffrey Aaron (jephreyaaron@aol.com)  
Fred Dettmer (fdettmer@aol.com)  
Mary Eagleson (mleagleson@aol.com)  
John Cooley (jhcooley@aol.com)  
Steve Mohlke (smohlke@nyym.org)  
Caroline Lane (lcaroline4@gmail.com)  
Deb Wood (dnbwood@aol.com)  
Elaine Learnard (ellearnard@gmail.com)  
Lu Harper (luharper@gmail.com)

\*At the YM clerk’s request and with the approval of the Liaison Committee, the clerk of Trustees, a co-clerk of the Meetings for Discernment Steering Committee, the clerk of the Priorities Support Working Group, and a co-clerk of Nominating Committee have been participating in Liaison Committee sessions and so are included here.

**Interim Actions Report, Spring Sessions 2018**

*See minute 2018-04-11, page 26*

In a minute approved at Fall Sessions 2014, the yearly meeting directed the NYYM clerk and general secretary to represent the yearly meeting between sessions, when the occasion for giving the yearly meeting a public voice seems urgent and appropriate.

Since Fall Sessions 2017 the New York Yearly Meeting clerk and general secretary have three items on which to report:

1. We signed a NYS Council of Churches amicus brief for Ravi Ragbir, both individually as clerk and general secretary, and as a one of four institutional signers on behalf of New York Yearly Meeting.

It is a very large document; you can read it at [nyym.org/sites/default/files/Ragbir-Amicus-Brief-Final-March-6-2018.pdf](http://nyym.org/sites/default/files/Ragbir-Amicus-Brief-Final-March-6-2018.pdf)

The text of the Statement of Support is copied here:

STATEMENT OF SUPPORT FROM AMICI NEW YORK STATE  
COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

The Governing Board (Executive Committee) of the New York State Council of Churches has given its unanimous approval

to serve as an Amici. The Council, which has been in existence since the late 19th Century, is comprised of eight denominations (American Baptist, Episcopal Church, Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, New York Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quaker), Lutheran Church of America, Presbyterian, U.S.A., United Church of Christ, United Methodist Church) and approximately 7,000 congregations from those denominations in every part of New York State.

The New York State Council of Churches states in its constitution that “It’s fitting that Christians should manifest their unity by joining together to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ and to show God’s good and just purposes throughout New York State. Therefore, we covenant to care for one another, safeguard the presence of vital Christian communities, provide hospitality to all, proclaim the gospel boldly in each place, and declare God’s just will among the powers and principalities.”

Given our mission, we have a compelling interest to serve as Amici to protect the free speech of our congregations and its lay and clergy leaders that they may freely exercise their first amendment rights to welcome the stranger, advocate for marginalized and vulnerable people and seek their welfare. Such advocacy is central to our goal to offer the good news of the Gospel in word and deed in a broken world and to offering effective pastoral care to our congregants and those in the society as a whole. All of our denominations have well developed theological positions to advocate for immigrants who have, over the years, been subjected to discrimination and marginalization. We have advocated for government policies and laws which prevent this discrimination and allow for human flourishing. We are deeply grieved by the poor treatment of Ravi Ragbir and many immigrants like him, by Immigration Customs and Enforcement (ICE). The prospect of the Government intimidating and discriminating against our congregants and their lay and clergy leaders infringes on our ability to offer the good news of the Gospel through advocating for the poor, the vulnerable and the stranger in our midst.

The Reverend Peter Cook, Executive Director  
The Reverend Dustin Wright, President

2. We sent the following letter asking Comptroller DiNapoli (New York) to divest NY State’s pension fund from fossil fuels:

Thomas P. DiNapoli, Comptroller  
State of New York  
Albany, New York

Dear Comptroller DiNapoli:

We are writing in support of the NY State Fossil Fuel Divestment Campaign to urge you to divest New York’s Common Retirement Fund of the top 200 oil, gas, and coal companies. You have the authority to do this unilaterally, and we encourage you to do so. In addition, we support the NY Fossil Fuel Divestment Act (S.4596 (Krueger)/A.3712 (Ortiz)), which seeks to require divestment as a matter of law. Our support arises from these beliefs:

**It is immoral to profit from activities that are destroying the planet.** It is settled science that burning fossil fuels pumps greenhouse gases into the atmosphere which retain heat and accelerate global warming. Global warming, in turn, is making severe weather events more common and more powerful. Warmer oceans add energy to storms and result in higher winds; warmer air holds more moisture and results in greater precipitation (51 inches from Hurricane Harvey!), and higher sea levels result in greater storm surges and flooding. The US has just experienced a flurry of such storms in Houston, South Florida, and Puerto Rico. In Asia, it has been much worse, with 1,200 deaths attributed to climate change enhanced weather in India, Bangladesh, and Nepal. We should not be making money from an industry that is causing planetary destruction and profound human suffering. So far, portfolios valued at \$5.6 trillion in the aggregate have committed to fossil fuel divestment.

**Divestment is an act of leadership.** When the New York Common Retirement Fund divests of its fossil fuel holdings, it will raise public consciousness about the severity of climate change, and it will inspire other institutions to divest. It will also be a message to the rest of the country and the rest of the world that although our national leadership has pulled out of the Paris Accord and abdicated responsibility for fighting climate change, Americans can still make a difference on the State and local level, and New York stands ready to work with the rest of the world community to do so.

**The fossil fuel industry is poised to suffer huge financial losses.** Virtually every country in the world has committed to replacing fossil fuels with renewable energy sources. This is going to result

in a massive increase in laws and policies designed to reduce the use of fossil fuels. It is inevitable in this environment that the value of fossil fuel investments will decline. Indeed, a study released in February, 2016 showed that the NY pension fund would have been \$5 billion dollars better off if it had divested when first asked to do so three years earlier. This was before Exxon wrote off 19% of its reserves in the spring of 2016, which is only the tip of the iceberg. As demand for fossil fuels falls, the vast reserves of oil, gas, and coal comprising large portions of the industry's balance sheets will have to be written off as unusable "stranded assets." In addition, increasing numbers of lawsuits seek to hold fossil fuel companies accountable for the damage they have caused and the lies they have told to investors and the public. NY's own Attorney General is considering legal action against Exxon. And our Governor has set goals for reducing the use of fossil fuels in NY. It makes no sense for us to be pursuing a public policy designed to challenge and shrink the fossil fuel industry while at the same time investing in that industry. Investors in the coal industry have already lost a fortune. Prudent investors would be wise to get out of oil and gas before the same thing happens, and we owe it to our retirees to be prudent.

Thank you for your serious and faithful deliberations on this crucial matter. Yours faithfully,

Lucinda Antrim  
Clerk

Steve Mohlke  
General Secretary

3. We sent a letter to the CEO and COO of FedEx, asking them to discontinue their practice of offering discounts to National Rifle Association members, below:

March 2018

Individual copies of this letter were sent to:  
Frederick W. Smith, Chairman and Chief Executive Office, and  
David J. Bronczek, President and Chief Operating Officer

FedEx Corp., 942 South Shady Grove Road, Memphis, TN 38120

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

Because our office has a FedEx account, we were dismayed to learn that FedEx offers discounts to members of the National Rifle Association (NRA). A central tenet of our faith is that every

human life is infinitely precious in God's sight. Through our patronage of FedEx, we have been indirectly supporting the NRA, which has always supported indiscriminate arming of people and is thus complicit in the increasing horrors of gun violence across our country.

As you are surely aware, the NRA has, through its financial support of many members of Congress, prevented the passage of legislation intended to prevent indiscriminate slaughter, such as we have seen repeatedly in the last few years. By its political activities, the NRA has made itself complicit in the deaths of men, women and children; by offering discounts to members of the NRA, FedEx is also, indirectly, complicit in those deaths. And by patronizing FedEx, so is the Religious Society of Friends.

We understand that FedEx is prevented by law from refusing to do business with the NRA. However, FedEx is under no legal compulsion to offer the NRA discounts, and we urge you to end that practice at once.

Lucinda Antrim  
Clerk

Steve Mohlke  
General Secretary

4. Lucinda signed on to a NYS Council of Churches letter to the NYS governor in support of bail reform, copied below:

Too often in our society, one's race, gender, religion and socio-economic background determine the trajectory of their adolescent and adult life, and some of the greatest imbalances and inequities in our society persist within our current criminal justice system.

In this year's State of the State, Governor Cuomo laid out a bold and comprehensive criminal justice reform agenda to eliminate many outdated policies that have enabled these injustices to persist.

In New York City jails, 75 percent of incarcerated individuals have not been convicted of a crime and are awaiting trial. Throughout the rest of the state, 60 percent of incarcerated individuals have yet to stand trial. The reason a vast majority of these individuals are detained pretrial is simple—they can't afford to pay bail.

Within his agenda, Governor Cuomo has vowed to eliminate cash bail for anyone facing misdemeanor or nonviolent felony

charges, effectively reducing pretrial detainment statewide.

Historically, our criminal justice system has disproportionately preyed on low-income young men and women of color, unjustly locking them up because they or their families are too poor to bail them out. Countless lives have been unfairly squandered as these individuals await trial for indefinite periods of time. These indefinite periods of incarceration can significantly alter an individual's future, posing potential negative impacts on their mental health, educational advancement, and professional development. In some cases, incarcerated individuals may even be encouraged to accept premature plea deals in a desperate attempt to be released from jail regardless of their innocence.

This version of the criminal justice system ignores and attacks some of our nation's most vulnerable populations—going against its very purpose and creating an unequal and unbalanced system. Governor Cuomo's reform package returns dignity to the criminal justice system.

This progressive and comprehensive criminal justice reform package also includes discovery reform, which will provide attorneys the tools to properly represent their clients, as well as change in court procedures and scheduling to reduce backlog and case delays. This builds on Governor Cuomo's improvements to New York's re-entry process, removing statutory bans on occupational licensing for professions outside of law enforcement. For many incarcerated individuals, re-entering their community is an incredibly hard transition. Governor Cuomo's proposed reforms allow for a more stable, smooth and fair transition back into society.

Incremental change is not enough. While these reforms show progress and are truly a step in the right direction, we must continue to fight to ensure an equal justice system for all New Yorkers. We unequivocally endorse Governor Cuomo's bold, progressive, and necessary criminal justice reform package, and urge its swift passage.

Lucinda Antrim, Presiding Clerk, *New York Yearly Meeting, Society of Friends*; The Reverend Adrienne Brewington, *Poughkeepsie United Methodist Church*; The Rev. William F. Brisotti, Pastor, *Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal Roman Catholic Church, Wyandanch*; The Reverend Kimberly Chastain, Pastor, *United Presbyterian Church, Binghamton*; The Reverend Peter Cook, Executive Direc-

tor, *New York State Council of Churches*; The Reverend Alan Dailey, Interim Pastor, *First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, Spencerport*; The Reverend Dr. Harold Delhagen, Synod Leader, *Synod of the Northeast, Presbyterian Church, U.S.A.*; The Right Reverend Andrew Dietsche, Bishop, *Episcopal Diocese of New York*; The Right Reverend DeDe Duncan Probe, Bishop, *Episcopal Diocese of Central New York*; The Reverend David Gaewksi, Conference Minister, *New York Conference United Church of Christ*; The Reverend Robert Foltz Morrison, Presbyterian, *Presbytery of New York*; The Right Reverend Mary Glasspool, Assistant Bishop, *Episcopal Diocese of New York*; The Very Reverend Howard Hubbard, Bishop (Retired) *Roman Catholic Diocese of Albany*; The Reverend Jim Ketcham (American Baptist) *New York State Council of Churches*; The Reverend Kirk Laubenstein, Executive Director, *Coalition for Economic Justice*; The Reverend William Mebane, Interim Dean, *St. Paul's Cathedral, Episcopal, Buffalo*; The Reverend Gavin Meeks, Interim Presbyterian, *Hudson River Presbytery*; The Reverend Cris Mogenson, President, *New York State Protest Chaplains Association*; The Reverend Alan Newton, Executive Minister, *American Baptist Churches of Rochester/Genesee*; The Reverend Amy Nyland, Executive Minister, *Regional Synod of New York (Reformed)*; The Reverend Deborah Packard, Pastor, *First Presbyterian Church of Potsdam*; The Right Reverend Lawrence Provenzano, Bishop, *Episcopal Diocese of Long Island*; The Reverend Tamara Razzano, Pastor, *First Presbyterian Church of Little Falls*; The Right Reverend Prince Singh, Bishop, *Episcopal Diocese of Rochester*; The Reverend Douglas Stewart, Senior Pastor, *Lutheran Church of the Incarnate Word, Rochester*; The Reverend Lynette K. Sparks, Associate Pastor for Outreach & Evangelism, *Third Presbyterian Church*; The Reverend Marti Swords Horrell, Pastor, *Emmaus United Methodist Church, Albany*; The Reverend Lamont Anthony Wells, Assistant to the Bishop for Evangelical Mission, *Metro. NY Synod ELCA*; The Reverend Dr. William Wilkinson, Interim Pastor, *Medina Presbyterian Church*; The Reverend Dustin Wright, Pastor, *Messiah Lutheran Church, Rotterdam*

**Report from Elsie K. Powell House, Inc., Co-Directors**  
*Report received at Spring Sessions but not minuted.*

The three nor'easters dumped closed to three feet of snow on us during March, and we lost our power for approximately 12 hours (postponing two retreats), but nonetheless we have persisted! Currently, we are hoping for spring's arrival to warm things up



and dry us out.

We had a great Spring Work/Messiah Sing/Scavenger Hunt retreat last week, and accomplished quite a bit, including: felling a dying tree, renovating picnic tables, preparing two basement offices for new floor tiling, drainage ditch digging, graveling the lane, sewing projects, and a mailing.

Our Strategic Plan launched April 1, 2018, and we look forward to sharing it with the yearly meeting in detail at annual sessions this summer. It is available to be reviewed on our website.

There have been a number of exciting (and new) events or groups who have arranged to use Powell House in the next year or so:

### Quaker Organizations:

Friends United Meeting General Board Meetings, Quaker Religious Education Collaborative (QREC), and Superintendents and Secretaries Annual Gathering.

### New School Groups:

The Greenwood School and Manhattan Country School

### Advocacy and Justice groups:

Alliance of Families for Justice, Refugee and Immigrant Support Service of Emmaus (RISSE)

Also; don't forget to take advantage of our Subscription Series available for individuals and monthly meetings that allow attendance at Powell House Adult Programs all year for one price.

Please be attentive to the fliers at our display table that detail our new sliding scale fees, the subscription series, as well as upcoming programs.

—Dennis Haag and Regina Baird Haag,  
co-executive directors

## Treasurer's Report

### Page 1

### Summary

December 31, 2017

NYYM Financial Summary

#### Five Year Vision of the Priorities Working Group

- ❖ Meetings and Friends understand and support the work and finance of the entire Yearly Meeting.
- ❖ Comprehensible consolidated financial statements are published annually.

Operations	Budget	Goal	100%	Overall
Income		Receipts	% Budget	% Budget
Meetings (Covenant Donations)	\$ 439,351	\$ 434,751.31	99%	58%
Grants	116,385	116,785.00	100%	15%
Contributions (Annual Appeal)	47,500	53,675.75	113%	6%
Invested Trust Funds	55,000	55,444.49	101%	7%
Sessions	25,000	32,280.96	129%	3%
Aging Concerns	18,450	19,817.65	107%	2%
All Other	59,987	23,876.06	40%	8%
Total Income	\$ 761,673	\$ 736,631.22	97%	
Disbursements	Budget	Payments	% Budget	
Personnel	\$ 447,947	419,269.96	94%	59%
Office Admin & Support	111,986	95,610.16	85%	15%
Sessions *	32,800	35,171.36	107%	4%
Committees & Working Groups	36,275	17,083.63	47%	5%
Programs & Publications	28,550	21,598.46	76%	4%
Support of FUM/FWCC/FGC	10,050	5,992.84	60%	1%
Donations to Others	85,250	84,950.00	100%	11%
Total Disbursements	\$ 752,858	\$ 679,676.41	90%	
Surplus/Deficit**	\$ 8,815	\$ 56,954.81		

\* does not include staff expenses and expenses for others paid by committees or funds

\*\* 2017 surplus not sustainable; due to lower personnel costs, no audit, and closed funds moved to operations

Fund Balances	Operating Fund	Sharing Fund	Other Funds
Opening Balance	\$ 243,695.48	\$ 58,493.35	\$ 191,232.34
Plus Income ***	736,631.22	89,299.51	146,577.92
Minus Disbursements	679,676.41	71,165.65	147,684.52
To Date Balance	\$ 300,650.29	\$ 76,627.21	\$ 190,125.74

\*\*\* Includes \$25,288 Vital Meetings grant for 2018

Invested Trust Funds	June	December	Total
Dividend Disbursements			
NYYM Operations	\$ 23,006.81	\$ 23,133.68	\$ 46,140.49
Witness Funds	23,930.01	23,930.01	47,860.01
Other NYYM Funds	25,209.95	25,668.30	50,878.25
Other Organizations	34,315.89	34,315.89	68,631.78
Total Dividends	\$ 106,462.65	\$ 107,047.88	\$ 213,510.53
Invested Trust Fund Value	\$ 5,739,062.04	\$ 6,120,959.91	



# Treasurer's Report

## Page 2

## Operations

### December 31, 2017 NYYM Operations Financial Report 100%

	2017 Budget	YE 2017 Expenses	% Bud	Notes
<b>DISBURSEMENTS</b>				
<b>General Services Coordinating Committee</b>				
General Committee Expense	300	150.00	50%	
NYYM Officers' Expense	2,000	879.33	44%	
Development Committee	4,750	2,658.65	56%	
<b>Total Committee Expense</b>	<b>7,050</b>	<b>3,687.98</b>	<b>52%</b>	
Spark		8,327.00		
Yearbook/Adv Reports		3,930.44		
Other/Handbook/Faith&Practice		584.78		
<b>Total Publications Expense</b>	<b>18,100</b>	<b>12,842.22</b>	<b>71%</b>	
Fall/Spring Sessions Program		10,160.87		1
Summer Sessions Program		8,262.60		1
Sessions Committee Expense		1,519.87		
<b>Total Sessions Expense</b>	<b>15,000</b>	<b>19,943.34</b>	<b>133%</b>	
Administrative Expenses	17,206	16,891.24	98%	2
Insurance	11,330	10,897.11	96%	
Rent and Utilities - 15th St Office	23,800	23,481.41	99%	
Volunteer Support	500	109.25	22%	
Office Equipment & Support	2,950	2,399.32	81%	
<b>Total Office Expense</b>	<b>55,786</b>	<b>53,778.33</b>	<b>96%</b>	
Staff Salaries	349,886	320,151.66	92%	2
Medical and Pension Benefits	40,000	37,033.07	93%	
Other Wage Related Expenses	38,061	38,942.27	102%	2
Staff Development	1,000	990.00	99%	
Staff Travel	19,000	22,152.96	117%	2
<b>Total Personnel Expense</b>	<b>447,947</b>	<b>419,269.96</b>	<b>94%</b>	
Bookkeeping	36,200	31,200.00	86%	
Temp Staff/Consultants		10,631.83		
Audit/Review	20,000	-	0%	3
<b>Total Services Expense</b>	<b>56,200</b>	<b>41,831.83</b>	<b>74%</b>	
<b>Total General Services</b>	<b>\$ 600,083</b>	<b>\$ 551,353.66</b>	<b>92%</b>	

Note 1: Sessions expense offset by fees; 2016 expense did not include all Fall/Spring Sessions expense

Note 2: 2017 includes ARCH and Youth Secretary expenses paid from funds in 2016 plus online contribution fees

Note 3: There is no plan to do a professional audit or review in 2017

<b>Ministry Coordinating Committee</b>				
General Committee Expense	700	895.00	128%	1
Spiritual Nurture Working Group	3,250	1,541.11	47%	
Task Group on Racism	1,000	-	0%	
Outreach Working Group		305.00		2
Conflict Transformation	1,000	492.75	49%	
Ministry & Pastoral Care Committee	600	-	0%	
<b>Total Committees/Working Groups</b>	<b>6,550</b>	<b>3,233.86</b>	<b>49%</b>	
Bible Study & Worship Summer Sessions	1,100	670.32	61%	
<b>Total Summer Sessions</b>	<b>1,100</b>	<b>670.32</b>	<b>61%</b>	
Pastors' Conference	1,250	644.98	52%	
Other Programs		149.25		
From a Place of Abundance	3,200		0%	
Parent Meet-Up	500		0%	
<b>Total Program Expense</b>	<b>4,950</b>	<b>794.23</b>	<b>16%</b>	3
<b>Total Ministry</b>	<b>\$ 12,600</b>	<b>\$ 4,698.41</b>	<b>37%</b>	

Note 1: Additional \$200 budget from laying down of Advancement funds

Note 2: Additional \$500 budget from laying down of Advancement funds

Note 3: Facebook program charged to Vital Meetings Fund

# Treasurer's Report

## Page 3

## Operations

### December 31, 2017 NYYM Operations Financial Report 100%

	2017 Budget	YE 2017 Expenses	% Bud	Notes
<b>DISBURSEMENTS</b>				
<b>Nurture Coordinating Committee</b>				
General Committee Expense	1,200	50.25	4%	1
Aging Concerns	13,725	7,886.09	57%	
Young Adult Concerns	2,500	425.00	17%	
Youth Committee	750	1,029.93	137%	
<b>Total Committee Expense</b>	<b>18,175</b>	<b>9,391.27</b>	<b>4%</b>	
Nurture Programs	-	-	0%	
ARCH Programs	-	3,237.34	0%	
<b>Total Program Expense</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>3,237.34</b>	<b>0%</b>	
Junior YM Planning	2,200	740.00	34%	
Junior YM Summer Sessions	14,500	13,817.70	95%	2
<b>Total Summer Sessions</b>	<b>16,700</b>	<b>14,557.70</b>	<b>87%</b>	
FGC Central Committee	1,400	1,563.15	112%	
FUM Board Representatives	4,200	1,062.69	25%	
FWCC Section Meetings	3,000	1,917.00	64%	
<b>Total NYYM Appointee Expense</b>	<b>8,600</b>	<b>4,542.84</b>	<b>53%</b>	
Provision FUM Triennial Sessions	550	550.00	100%	
Provision FWCC World Gathering	900	900.00	100%	
<b>Total for Gatherings not held annually</b>	<b>1,450</b>	<b>1,450.00</b>	<b>100%</b>	
Friends Council on Education	150	150.00	100%	
Friends General Conference	2,500	2,500.00	100%	
Friends United Meeting	2,500	2,500.00	100%	
FUM - 3rd World Attend to Triennial	150	150.00	100%	
FUM 3rd World Board Reps	150	150.00	100%	
Friends World Committee	1,000	1,000.00	100%	
FWCC Section of the Americas	150	150.00	100%	
Friends LGBTQ Concerns	150	150.00	100%	
Oakwood School	5,300	5,300.00	100%	3
Powell House	73,200	73,200.00	100%	3
<b>Total Contributions to Quaker Orgs</b>	<b>85,250</b>	<b>85,250.00</b>	<b>100%</b>	
<b>Total Nurture</b>	<b>\$ 130,175</b>	<b>\$ 118,429.15</b>	<b>91%</b>	

Note 1: Budget includes \$9091 for FFA grant for ARCH strategy

Note 2: Silver Bay expenses for JYM staff

Note 3: Receive additional contributions from sharing funds and other funds

<b>Witness Coordinating Committee</b>				
<b>Total General Committee Expense</b>	<b>3,000</b>	<b>550.00</b>	<b>18%</b>	1
<b>Contributions to Outside Orgs</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(300.00)</b>		2
<b>Total Witness</b>	<b>\$ 3,000</b>	<b>\$ 250.00</b>	<b>8%</b>	

Note 1: Sharing Fund campaign expenses paid from the Sharing Fund receipts

This account is for expenses incurred by committees.

Note 2: Returned check from 2016 contribution

<b>Other Groups</b>				
Meeting for Discernment	1,000	220.52	22%	
Priorities Working Group	500	-	0%	
Miscellaneous	5,500	4,724.67	86%	1
<b>Total Other Groups</b>	<b>\$ 7,000</b>	<b>\$ 4,945.19</b>	<b>71%</b>	

Note 1: Quaker Outside the Lines project included in this line; returned part of \$5000 grant not spent on projects

<b>TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS</b>	<b>\$ 752,858</b>	<b>\$ 679,676.41</b>	<b>90%</b>	
----------------------------	-------------------	----------------------	------------	--

# Treasurer's Report

## Page 4

## Operations

December 31, 2017	NYYM Operations Financial Report			100%
INCOME	2017 Budget	YE 2017 Income	% Bud	Notes
<i>Meetings</i>				
All Friends Regional	43,620	33,920.00	78%	
Butternuts Quarterly	5,211	4,261.00	82%	
Farmington Regional	72,443	82,823.96	114%	
Long Island Quarterly	48,315	45,515.00	94%	
New York Quarterly	80,851	79,487.35	98%	
Nine Partners Quarterly	38,538	41,757.00	108%	1
Northeastern Regional	31,148	31,992.00	103%	
Purchase Quarterly	65,565	65,085.00	99%	
Shrewsbury & Plainfield HY	53,660	49,910.00	93%	
<b>Total Meeting Income</b>	<b>439,351</b>	<b>434,751.31</b>	<b>99%</b>	
<i>Other Sources</i>				
Summer Sessions Registration	25,000	20,887.00	84%	
Spring/Fall Sessions Reg & Meals		11,393.96		
Invested Trust Funds	55,000	55,444.49	101%	2
Grants	116,385	116,785.00	100%	5
Annual Appeal	47,500	53,675.75	113%	3
ARCH Contribution	18,450	19,817.65	107%	4
NYYM Funds	38,667	10,337.73	27%	6
Products/Services Contributions		3,554.83		
Other Income	7,370	9,983.50	135%	7
Operating Reserve	13,950		0%	8
<b>Total Other Sources</b>	<b>322,322</b>	<b>301,879.91</b>	<b>94%</b>	
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$ 761,673</b>	<b>\$ 736,631.22</b>	<b>97%</b>	

Note 1: Includes \$3000 received in 2017 for 2016

Note 2: Trust Fund income includes dividends from NYYM invested trust funds and from NYQ Lafayette fund and from a share of the administrative costs of NYYM invested trust funds.

Note 3: 2017 includes \$9,115 received in Nov and Dec 2016 and all of 2017

Note 4: Contribution from Aging Concerns fund for ARCH expenses not covered by grants and income for products and services

Note 5: See list below

Note 6: Transfer from NYYM funds to operations; see list on Other Funds report

Note 7: Includes \$5000 credit for outstanding Audit invoice

Note 8: To cover possible deficit ; not needed

Operations Summary	Dec-17	Dec-16
Income	\$ 736,631.22	\$ 577,600.56
Disbursements	\$ 679,676.41	\$ 541,541.98
Surplus/Deficit	\$ 56,954.81	\$ 36,058.58

### Grants received for 2017 Operations

Aging Resources, Consultation, and Help (ARCH) operations	\$ 74,000.00
ARCH Strategic Plan	\$ 10,000.00
Duke Leadership Grant (Quaker Outside the Lines)	\$ 5,000.00
Shoemaker Vital Meetings - Monthly Meeting Partnership Project - Children, Youth, Young Adults	\$ 27,785.00
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$ 116,785.00</b>

# Treasurer's Report

## Page 5

## Sharing Fund Report

### Sharing Fund Financial Report

### December 31, 2017

	Balance Jan 1, 2017	Adj***	Income	Sharing Fd Allocation	Designated Income	Total Disbursed	Balance 12/31/17
<b>Contributions to Other Organizations</b>							
AVP (Alternatives to Violence) Donation	\$ -			\$ 3,343.13	\$ 50.00	\$ 3,393.13	\$ -
Right Sharing	\$ -			\$ 2,466.26	\$ -	\$ 2,466.26	\$ -
<b>Designated Use Funds</b>							
Barrington Dunbar Fund for Black Development	\$ 4,997.20		24.3%	\$ 13,317.64	\$ 1,916.00	\$ 11,300.00	\$ 8,930.84
Black Concerns	\$ 4,767.97		6.8%	\$ 3,726.76	\$ 1,631.16	\$ 5,449.47	\$ 4,676.42
Conscientious Objection to Paying for War	\$ 3,817.84	(2,200.00)		\$ -	\$ -	\$ 610.50	\$ 1,007.34
Earthcare	\$ 317.58	2,500.00	7.2%	\$ 3,946.00	\$ -	\$ 699.10	\$ 6,064.48
Euro American Quakers Working to End Racism	\$ (284.99)	1,000.00	1.3%	\$ 712.48	\$ -	\$ 1,124.00	\$ 303.49
Indian Affairs	\$ 5,802.78		21.6%	\$ 11,837.99	\$ 4,804.90	\$ 10,233.00	\$ 12,212.67
NYYM Named Representatives	\$ 1,865.85			\$ -	\$ -	\$ 961.50	\$ 904.35
Peace Concerns	\$ 5,731.70	(4,731.70)		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,000.00
Prisons	\$ 1,953.99		10.2%	\$ 5,590.15	\$ 4,355.00	\$ 5,956.38	\$ 5,942.76
Torture Awareness	\$ 524.40			\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 524.40
Witness Activities	\$ 10,663.86		7.4%	\$ 4,055.59	\$ -	\$ 6,346.37	\$ 8,373.08
Witness to the World	\$ 3,611.49	6,984.16	6.1%	\$ 3,343.13	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 13,938.78
World Ministries	\$ 8,621.71		4.5%	\$ 2,466.26	\$ 15,329.20	\$ 17,800.00	\$ 8,617.17
FUM (Friends United Meeting) Missions	2,549.51			\$ -	\$ 3,481.92	\$ 1,900.00	\$ 4,131.43
<b>Campaign Expenses</b>				\$ 2,925.94	\$ -	\$ 2,925.94	\$ -
<b>Inactive Funds</b>							
Meeting the Minimum Needs of All (MMNA)	3,552.46	(3,552.46)		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
<b>Total Sharing Fund</b>	<b>\$ 58,493.35</b>	<b>\$ -</b>		<b>\$ 57,731.33</b>	<b>\$ 31,568.18</b>	<b>\$ 71,165.65</b>	<b>\$ 76,627.21</b>
***Adjustment per minute from Summer Sessions							
General Contributions (Meetings and Individuals)	36,737.19						
Donor Designated Contributions	3,079.36						
NYYM Trust Fund Income	20,994.14						
Sharing Fund Endowment	28,488.82						
NYYM Designated Trust Funds	\$ 55,000.00						
<b>2017 Sharing Fund Goal</b>	<b>Percentage of Goal</b>						
	72.39%						

Note 1: Includes \$800 contribution from NY Quarter

Note 2: 11.3% of the Indian Affairs allocation is designated for Standing Rock; 10.3% is for all Indian Affairs work; three vouchers in process for \$300 each

Note 3: Included a one-time contribution from trustees of \$1622.94 from 2015 retained income

Note 4: Designated income includes a return of a grant of \$1500

Note 5: Adjusted at end of year from endowment income

## Treasurer's Report

## Page 6

## Other (not Witness) Funds Report

	Balance Jan 1, 2017	Income	Disbursed	Balance 12/31/17	Steward	Notes
<b>Funds to Provide Grants</b>						
Equalization Fund	\$ 1,057.41	\$ 15,604.64	\$ 12,856.39	3,805.66	Sessions C	3
Lindley Murray	\$ 29,495.00	\$ 29,713.54	\$ 29,495.00	29,713.54	Lindley Murray	5
Mahlon York (Butternuts)	\$ 4,690.34	\$ 8,393.94	\$ 1,510.00	11,574.28	NYYM Trustees	5
Meeting Houses & Properties	\$ 624.85	\$ 1,139.11	-	1,763.96	NYYM Trustees	5
Stevens	\$ 1,948.26	\$ 5,920.14	\$ 8,250.00	(381.60)	Pastoral Care C	5
Young Friends Activity	\$ 4,411.57	-	\$ 600.00	3,811.57	Nurture CC	
<b>Contributions Funds</b>						
Aging Concerns (ARCH)	\$ 31,076.20	\$ 5,586.00	\$ 19,817.65	16,844.55	Nurture CC	2
<b>Provision Funds</b>						
FWCC World Gathering	\$ 2,870.33	\$ 900.00	\$ (7.70)	3,778.03	Nurture CC	
FUM Triennial	\$ 4,767.62	\$ 550.00	\$ 4,487.50	830.12	Nurture CC	
FWCC Regional Hosting	\$ 1,248.44	-	-	1,248.44	Nurture CC	
<b>Other Designated Use Funds</b>						
Meeting Visitation	\$ 5,826.76	-	\$ 3,250.00	2,576.76	M&C CC	6
Mosher	\$ 8,923.19	\$ 4,985.50	\$ 4,188.10	9,720.59	Mosher C	5
Vital Meetings Grant	\$ 7,507.40	\$ 30,782.93	\$ 5,402.99	32,887.34		1,4
Trustee Reserve	\$ 48,155.99	\$ 42,084.98	\$ 35,035.89	55,205.08	NYYM Trustees	
<b>Inactive</b>						
Conflict Transform Film Proj	\$ 511.24	-	-	\$ 511.24		
Sufferings	\$ 15,319.04	\$ 917.14	-	\$ 16,236.18	Sufferings C	5
<b>Total Other Funds</b>	<b>\$ 168,433.64</b>	<b>\$ 146,577.92</b>	<b>\$ 124,885.82</b>	<b>\$ 190,125.74</b>		
<b>Closed</b>						
Aging Resources Website	\$ 319.48	\$ 319.48			Operations	
Advancement	\$ 14,423.58	\$ 700.00	\$ 4,861.39	\$ 8,862.19	Eq Fund, Vital Meetings, Center for Racial Justice	
Contingency Fund	\$ 5,887.36	\$ 5,887.36			Operations	
Faith & Practice Fund	\$ 953.42	\$ 953.42			Operations	
Young Adult Field Secretary	\$ (22.53)	\$ (22.53)				
Records Preservation	\$ 1,237.39		\$ 1,237.39		Swarthmore Historical Library	
<b>Total Closed Funds</b>	<b>\$ 22,798.70</b>	<b>\$ 7,837.73</b>	<b>\$ 4,861.39</b>	<b>\$ 10,099.58</b>		

Note 1: Income includes \$3500 from closed Advancement funds to cover Facebook project expenses

Note 2: Amount disbursed is operating cost of ARCH program not covered by grants and income from products and services

Note 3: Income from individual/meeting contributions; \$9600 from 10 complimentary stays at Silver Bay; \$1360 from closed Advancement funds

Note 4: Includes \$25,288 Shoemaker grant for 2018; 2017 grant shown in Grant Income

Note 5: Receives income from NYYM Trust funds

Note 6: \$2500 moved to operating fund per approved 2017 budget

## Treasurer's Report

## Page 7

## Trust Funds &amp; Property

December 31, 2017

NYYM Invested Trust Funds and Property

Trust funds consist of bequests or gifts to NYYM and the assets of Meetings that have been laid down. Trustees determine an annual dividend. The dividend is disbursed semi-annually in June and December. The assets are currently invested under the care of Friends Fiduciary Corporation.

	June 2017 Dividend	Dec 2017 Dividend	YE 2017 Value
<b>Invested Trust Funds</b>			
<b>Operations</b>			
Operations - Unrestricted	\$19,354.43	\$19,481.31	\$1,113,934
Operations - Ministers	\$1,292.04	\$1,292.04	\$73,878
Operations - Aging Concerns	\$2,360.34	\$2,360.34	\$134,963
<b>Total Operations</b>	<b>\$23,006.81</b>	<b>\$23,133.68</b>	<b>\$1,322,776</b>
<b>Funds under the care of Witness Coordinating Committee and Sharing Fund</b>			
Barrington Dunbar	\$558.00	\$558.00	\$31,906
Black Concerns	\$585.90	\$585.90	\$33,502
FUM Missions	\$1,740.96	\$1,740.96	\$99,547
Indian Affairs	\$2,352.45	\$2,352.45	\$134,512
Prisons	\$2,092.50	\$2,092.50	\$119,648
Sharing Fund	\$10,497.07	\$10,497.07	\$600,219
World Ministries	\$6,103.13	\$6,103.13	\$348,975
<b>Total Witness Funds</b>	<b>\$23,930.01</b>	<b>\$23,930.01</b>	<b>\$1,368,309</b>
<b>Other Designated Use Funds</b>			
Lindley Murray	\$14,856.77	\$14,856.77	\$849,505
Mahlon York	\$4,696.97	\$4,696.97	\$268,571
Meeting Houses and Properties	\$340.38	\$798.73	\$45,671
Mosher	\$1,897.20	\$1,897.20	\$108,481
Stevens	\$2,960.07	\$2,960.07	\$169,256
Sufferings	\$458.57	\$458.57	\$26,221
<b>Total Other Designated Use Funds</b>	<b>\$25,209.95</b>	<b>\$25,668.30</b>	<b>\$1,467,704</b>
<b>Designated to Quaker Organizations</b>			
Friends Historical Library	\$3,187.86	\$3,187.86	\$182,281
Oakwood	\$29,325.69	\$29,325.69	\$1,676,833
Powell House	\$1,802.34	\$1,802.34	\$103,057
<b>Total Quaker Organizations</b>	<b>\$34,315.89</b>	<b>\$34,315.89</b>	<b>\$1,962,170</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$106,462.65</b>	<b>\$107,047.88</b>	<b>\$6,120,960</b>

## Property under the care of Trustees

## Value/Disposition

Stamford - Greenwich Mortgage	Monthly payments; income reinvested
Plattekill Meeting House	March sale net \$24,708; invested in Meeting Houses & Properties Fund
Monkton Meeting House and Cemetery	Deed to Methodist Church in process
Yorktown Meeting House and Parsonage	In negotiations with Calvary Bible Church
Morris Cemetery	Cemetery trust fund established; used to pay for cemetery maintenance

# 2018 Operating Budget

page 1

		2017 Budget	2018 Budget
Revenue		Revised	
	Meeting Income	439,351	421,703
	Registration Fees	25,000	22,000
	Trust Funds	55,000	56,500
	Other	203,655	190,448
	NYYM Other Funds	38,667	37,000
	<b>Total</b>	<b>761,673</b>	<b>727,651</b>
Revenue - Other Sources	Grant Funds: Shoemaker	31,805	25,385
	Grant Funds: FFA + Others	74,000	75,000
	Grant Administration	10,580	
	Interest/Friends Contribut/Publicat	7,370	9,000
	From Provision for Next Budget	13,950	-
	Annual Appeal	65,950	81,063
	<b>Total</b>	<b>203,655</b>	<b>190,448</b>
NYYM Other Funds	Contingency	5,254	-
	2016/2017 Excess Rev/Exp		37,000
	Aging Concerns	27,413	-
	Advancement Lafayette	3,500	-
	Meeting Visitation	2,500	-
	YFIR	-	-
	<b>Total</b>	<b>38,667</b>	<b>37,000</b>

# 2018 Operating Budget

page 2

		2017 Budget	2018 Budget
General Serv. Expenses			
Section Expense	General Expense and Travel	200	300
	NYYM Officers' Expense	2,000	1,000
	Audit/Financial Review	20,000	-
<b>Total Section</b>		<b>22,200</b>	<b>1,300</b>
Committees			
	Communications	18,100	20,000
	Nominating	100	-
	Sessions Committee	15,000	18,000
	Development Committee	4,750	5,000
<b>Total Committee</b>		<b>37,950</b>	<b>43,000</b>
Office Expense			
	Office Operations		
	Administrative Expenses	17,206	16,300
	Insurance: D&O, liab, prop, umbrella	11,330	11,100
	Rent @ 15th St.	22,000	23,000
	Utilities @ 15th St	1,800	2,040
	Staff Travel	19,000	17,500
	Computer Consultation	750	-
	Electronic Services		5,000
	Office Equipment	2,200	2,500
<b>Total Office Operations</b>		<b>74,286</b>	<b>77,440</b>
Personnel			
	Staff Salaries	282,536	343,677
	Staff Hourly Wages	67,350	-
	Salary and Wage Related Expenses	78,061	73,534
	Staff Development	1,000	1,000
	Volunteer Support	500	300
<b>Total Personnel</b>		<b>429,447</b>	<b>418,511</b>
Acctg/Bookkpg Svcs		<b>36,200</b>	<b>36,200</b>
<b>TOTAL GENERAL SERVICES</b>		<b>600,083</b>	<b>576,451</b>

Ministry Expenses			
Section Expense	Section Expense	700	1,800
Programs			
	From a Place of Abundance	3,200	-
	Bible Study Leader	1,000	1,000
	Conflict Transformation	1,000	3,000
	Ministry & Pastoral Care	600	3,600
	Pastors' Conference	1,250	1,250
	Alternate Member Path WG	-	1,000
	Spiritual Nurture Working Group	3,250	4,800
	Worship At YM Sessions	100	-
	Parent Meet-Up	500	300
	Outreach Working Group	-	5,000
	Task Group on Racism	1,000	1,000
<b>Total Programs</b>		<b>11,900</b>	<b>20,950</b>
<b>TOTAL MINISTRY</b>		<b>12,600</b>	<b>22,750</b>



	2017 Budget	2018 Budget
<b>Nurture Expenses</b>		
<b>Section Expense</b>		
Section Expense	1,200	-
<b>Total Section</b>	<b>1,200</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Committees</b>		
Aging Concerns	13,725	4,775
Junior Yearly Meeting Planning	2,200	3,955
Junior Yearly Meeting Silver Bay	14,500	14,245
Young Adult Concerns	2,500	-
Powell House Committee		1,000
Youth Committee	750	1,000
<b>Total Committees</b>	<b>33,675</b>	<b>24,975</b>
<b>Appointees</b>		
FGC Central Committee	1,400	800
FUM Board Representatives	4,200	4,000
Provision for FUM Triennial Sessions	550	1,000
FWCC Section Meetings	3,000	1,800
Provision for FWCC World Gathering	900	1,200
Provision for FWCC Regional Hosting	-	900
<b>Total Appointees</b>	<b>10,050</b>	<b>9,700</b>
<b>Allocations &amp; Donations</b>		
Friends Council on Education	150	150
Friends General Conference	2,500	2,500
Friends United Meeting	2,500	2,500
FUM-3rd World Attend to Triennial	150	150
FUM-3rd World Board Reps	150	150
Friends World Committee	1,000	1,000
FWCC Section of the Americas	150	300
Friends LGBTQ Concerns	150	150
Oakwood School	5,300	5,300
Powell House	73,200	73,200
<b>Total Allocations/Donations</b>	<b>85,250</b>	<b>85,400</b>
<b>TOTAL NURTURE</b>	<b>130,175</b>	<b>120,075</b>

	2017 Budget	2018 Budget
<b>Witness Expenses</b>		
<b>Section</b>		
Section	3,000	1,000
Coordinating Committee	-	-
<b>Total Section</b>	<b>3,000</b>	<b>1,000</b>
<b>Donations</b>		
NJ Council of Churches	-	300
FCNL	-	300
NYS Council of Churches	-	300
Earth Care Witness	-	300
William Penn House	-	300
Peace Tax Fund	-	300
Water Protectors	-	300
Campaign Against Torture	-	300
Bolivian Quaker Education		300
Friends Peace Teams		300
<b>Total donations</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>3,000</b>
<b>Appointee Expenses</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>3,000</b>
Appointee Expenses		3,000
<b>Committees</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
See Treasurer's Report		-
<b>Sharing Fund Campaign</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
Sharing Fund		-
<b>TOTAL WITNESS</b>	<b>3,000</b>	<b>7,000</b>
<b>Meeting for Discernment</b>	<b>1,000</b>	<b>800</b>
<b>Leadings &amp; Priorities</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Contingency/Future Budget</b>	<b>2,000</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Provision for Vital Mtgs</b>	<b>3,000</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Provision for Next Budget</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total Disbursements</b>	<b>752,858</b>	<b>727,076</b>
<b>Revenue/Expenses</b>	<b>8,815</b>	<b>575</b>

## Meeting for Discernment Steering Committee

Meetings for Discernment are held each year during Summer Sessions and in the winter at a host meeting's meetinghouse. The gatherings have become a valued time for sharing with other Friends from throughout New York Yearly Meeting in extended worship. In these sessions, we may learn what is rising up in local meetings, hear inspired ministry from new and experienced Friends and gain renewed appreciation for the variety of gifts among us.

This past February 17, sixty-eight Friends gathered in the 15th Street meeting house in New York City for the winter meeting for discernment. Most Friends who participated found the experience to be deep and meaningful. With a participation of only sixty-eight in a central location, the Steering Committee is concerned that too many Friends are not truly aware of the value of the experience of meetings for discernment, a rare experience of extended worship without any press of business or decision making. This was a normal practice among Friends in past centuries, and for good reason. We hope to try to do a better job of making better understood the spiritual value of such deep sharing so that more Friends will attend and discover why so many look forward to the gatherings and attend whenever they are able.

This year, the steering committee will be reviewing the process of creating queries. We may want to consider less directive queries so that Friends do not feel restricted by the queries in their messages. Should the queries lean toward being personally reflective? Toward concerns of the local meetings and how they are faring? Toward what is rising in the local meetings and throughout the yearly meeting? Toward specific rising concerns such as pay-as-led and/or racism? Toward the "hard" issues of the world and how we may be led to respond? Do we need queries at all? For both the morning and the afternoon session? We may experiment at Summer Sessions 2018, and we would value your input afterward.

The gatherings are all organized by the steering committee with the help of the local host committee. Rather than being a burden, hosting is usually experienced as a true opportunity for the local meeting to connect deeply with Friends from through-

out the yearly meeting, both as a body and as individuals. The experience of hosting is much less demanding than hosting a spring or fall session. It brings meeting members together in what is usually found to be a rewarding group experience for the meeting. The committee also finds that Friends who are asked to serve as elders and clerks during the process express a willingness to serve because the process has spiritual depth and value both to them as participants and to the host meetings. All Friends are invited to attend all of our gatherings. The cost is small and travel expenses are available on request. There is of course no additional cost at Summer Sessions.

The steering committee meets monthly by conference call and expects to continue its work to provide this twice yearly environment for deep extended worship. We encourage participation by all Friends. You are invited to experience the foundational experience of Friends across the centuries and across the world as we sit and listen deeply.

*Jeffrey Aaron, Caroline Lane, co-clerks*

## MINISTRY SECTION

### State of Society Report

*Between January and April 2018, 56/73 (77%) of New York Yearly Meeting monthly meetings submitted State of Meeting reports. 8/10 (80%) of prison worship groups submitted reports. 49/63 (78%) of monthly meetings (excluding prison worship groups) completed a ten-question survey distributed by the State of Society Committee. All quotations and data represented in the narrative below come from submitted reports and the results of that survey. Since not all Meetings responded to the survey, any percentages included in the report are approximations rather than exact figures.*

\*\*\*\*\*

Present with one another in worship, discernment, witness, and fellowship, Friends across New York Yearly Meeting described the 2017-2018 year as one in which the Spirit flowed. Rich connections continue to enliven and enrich us, to show us the

way while we wrestle with internal struggles, concerns about the state of our nation, violence around the world, and climate change. Many of our meetings are small or shrinking. 61% of meetings have fewer than 40 members, 47% have fewer than ten people attending meeting for worship, and 32% have lost members over the last year. Yet, “we find strength in each other even as we are challenged by our diminishment and face the fears of our unknown future as a meeting.” Other meetings are large or growing. 39% of meetings have greater than 40 members, 16% have greater than 25 people attending meeting for worship, and 23% have increased their membership over the last year. One meeting shared, “We have been blessed this year to hear a letter requesting membership (either first or second reading) at eight of eleven meetings for worship with a concern for business.” Indeed, whatever the meeting size and circumstances, the commitment we make to one another to gather in worship to find a way forward is the core of our Quaker faith and practice.

Meetings posed rich questions for themselves, and perhaps in turn for Quakers everywhere:

- Can we reclaim the discipline of speaking truth with love to each other—and to the world?
- Are we making Friends’ testimonies a way of life?
- What would it look like to be a radical spiritual community?
- Is it possible for us...to push back against overstimulation—to keep the Sabbath, to make room every day for the Holy? Can we find a way to do this as individuals and as a community?
- How has the meeting changed me? Are there ways we would like the meeting to change us?
- What is the shadow side of our Light?
- What is experiencing the Spirit?
- How do we keep the channels of Love and Truth alive?
- Has the State of Society report become a “redundant process” ...“new ways to say the same thing”?

Briefly or in more detail, each state of the meeting report shares wisdom from a collective journey across the year, revealing strong and consistent themes throughout our yearly meeting. Truth is illuminated and elevated by elders, members and attenders, newcomers and children, and we see that “Truth is spoken by both experienced and inexperienced Friends. We need only to listen.”

Many Meetings experience **worship** as strong, vital, and powerful, the primary well from which we, as individuals and as a community, draw our vision and sustain our integrity. While 38% of our meetings report that ministry is rare with fewer than two messages per week, there is a “sense of increased nurture and sustenance, depth in a time of emotional stress in the country, and interest to offer spiritual sanctuary to all who attend.” “Our world cries out for all the loving creative energy we can muster. Our coming together regularly in worship helps us not be paralyzed but meet each day with gratitude and openness to possibilities.” “Everything is suspended as we sit quietly and wait—except for the fire in the woodstove and the Light.” “Meetings for worship are an opportunity for us to feel human in a de-humanizing world.”

“We listen for the wisdom of the Inner Light, experience the Holy Spirit, pay attention to the spoken ministry of others and deliver our own vocal ministry.” Sometimes “the unwillingness to break the silence” suggests that the spoken ministry arises from an inward prompting of “the genuine spirit of prophecy.” “We do not pull and tug at each other’s beliefs—or lack of them. We trust the power of silent worship to unite us.” “The worship silence can challenge us to be the person we want to be and to come to actions led from the voice of love.” “I sit in silence here, so I can go out and be a loud voice for justice.”

**Witness and service**, activism, and interfaith partnerships are important to us, both communally and as individual Friends. One meeting noted that the state of the world in the present times “prompted many of us to become more visible as Quakers;” and another embraced the call to “witness to others in love and to not surrender to our fears.” “We like how our meeting takes collective action to heal the world but also helps us in our own individual efforts.” Friends provide unwavering

leadership to unpack and dismantle racism in our history and practice. “We call on Friends to look at how white privilege and European-American culture have been baked into the history and structure of Quakerism.” Friends across the yearly meeting also stay busy with personal and shared reading, training, speaking out, engagement with community partners, and activism in the wider community. We continue with regular peace vigils, preparing and serving meals for the hungry, support for refugees, homeless shelters, film/discussion programs open to the community, prison visitation, AVP, and active participation in a wide variety of local and statewide issues including prison reform. “We were deeply encouraged by so many people coming on board for the solitary housing unit display” hosted at the local county fair, and “how many members of the public we engaged in dialogue there.” Our witness in the world is a vehicle for spreading God’s love and sharing the Truth we have discovered.

Yet there is tension for some of us as well. We wonder how to faithfully balance the communal leadings of our meetings and the strong leadings of individuals. We wonder how to sustain myriad projects and events beyond the meetinghouse walls while sustaining ourselves as a community. We wonder if our attention to social justice distracts us from attending to our members and attenders. “Meaningful witness became hesitant at a time when spiritual sustenance was most needed and when attendance was declining.” “We hope to obsess less over news headlines and to focus instead on critical issues.” “We strive to anchor the ‘doing’ of service’ in the deep ‘being’ that changes even our neurons in the direction of compassion, trust, and service.” We trust we are moving in the right direction and recognize that the path is not always easy.

**Outreach** is a focus for many meetings, informed by a desire for growth and a more vibrant, inclusive, diverse community in worship and business. We know and are continuing to discover the value of diverse opinions and we seek to enrich the presence of Friends in a changing world. While in past years we have discussed hypothetical ambitions for outreach and griped about the challenges to accomplish it, we have shifted our tone this year, instead focusing on the concrete and specific actions we

are taking to make our presence known and invite people in. Outreach is more comfortable for some than for others, and what outreach looks like varies based on meeting size and location, including geographic “apartness” for those who travel some distance to their meeting. However, we seem more confident and optimistic in our efforts, potentially as a result of the newly launched Outreach Working Group which serves to “make outreach a thoughtful, joyful, ongoing practice in every Quaker meeting, ultimately raising the visibility and awareness of Quakers and the message we bring to the world.” We sense that they are succeeding.

“Who are we as a faith community, family and how can the meeting house serve our needs? Who are we to our neighbors? Who are we to seekers who cross our threshold?” How do we visibly create “a place of more walking together than holding to a dogma?” “We endeavor to teach Friends’ practice and to be as transparent as possible in our work as we try to learn from those who join us in worship and community.” “We are optimistic that we are both ‘doing the right things’ and ‘doing things right,’ but we know that we now need results in the coming year to show that the meeting is growing, that the quality of our worship is growing, and that the service we offer to the world is making a difference.”

We also seem to be shifting and growing in our capacity to recognize and address **conflict**. While in past years we have noted aversion to or outright ignoring of the conflicts simmering in our midst, many of us have learned how to move from positions of powerlessness and fear to strategies focused on peaceful resolution, transforming power, and community. We know that when left unresolved, conflict takes away from our ability to grow and connect with Spirit, and while we still have work to do, we are more open about naming the reality of conflicts and misunderstandings that have separated members from a meeting and from one another. Certainly, the work of the Committee on Conflict Transformation is aiding us in our journey by providing tools, resources, and support. “We hope and feel obligated for the healing outcome of open discussions and new revelations.”

Meetings large and small acknowledge that being prepared



for **First Day School, children, and families** is sometimes a burden. However, we note that our increased labors and attention in this area often brings people together and creates a bright spot in the life of our communities. 34% of our meetings offer First Day School every week for elementary-aged children and 14% are prepared to offer First Day School if children attend. We are growing in our ability to welcome and value children's voices in meeting activities, including the writing of the state of meeting reports. We are also growing in our sensitivity to the challenges facing our families and parents. There is much gratitude expressed throughout NYYM for the guidance and resources offered by Melinda Wenner-Bradley to enrich First Day School and involve children in worship and meeting life. At the same time, 34% of our meetings do not have any children or families in attendance, and only 13% offer programs, First Day School, or engagement opportunities for high schoolers or young adults. While there is much to celebrate in terms of increased inclusion, as a yearly meeting we have work to do in this area.

We are **experimenting with and examining our structures** for committees, business meetings, and even our meetings for worship, recognizing that our processes must sometimes evolve to make room for or better illuminate God and Truth. One meeting wonders how to "support our differences without feeling we homogenize into an even keel, middle of the road, steadily plodding-in-the ordinary meeting?" We offer new ways to engage and encourage participation and understanding by members and attenders including creating a flow from worship into meeting for business, holding a meeting for committee clerks one week prior to meeting for business, distributing agendas and other documents in advance of meetings to allow for fuller discernment, allowing both members and attenders to break meeting, and introducing queries or readings into meeting for worship. One meeting shared: "as a small meeting, we cannot maintain a committee structure. Having come to accept this as a strength, rather than a limitation, we are now able to conduct Spirit-led, worshipful business together." Another meeting described a well-functioning "Upreach Committee" that combines "advancement, peace and social concerns, and

intergenerational fellowship." Yet another wrote that "rotating leadership for adult Religious Education broadened participation." We are actively discussing and navigating challenges around how to embrace technology, effectively use websites, and employ social media. While there is still tension and some resistance to change, we are finding that our experimentation and deep listening help reduce committees' and individuals' sense of being over-stretched, and further contribute to improved inclusivity and productivity in our meetings and yearly meeting. "In trusting in Spirit, we are letting go of fear, realizing that it also a means letting go of certainty."

While many of our meetings and worship groups experience fragility and fear of the future, together this year's state of meeting reports tell more of a story of continuing revelation, openness to change, optimism, and hope. "A year that began with a sense of crisis and [seemingly] dwindling resources [of time and energy] has ended with a deeper, richer sense of community and mutual trust." We are preparing people to participate and engage at deeper levels. We are singing, making music, and creating art. We are becoming more aware of and attempting to limit our implicit expectations of people. We are sharing responsibility for the joy and tension of supporting individuals in their leadings. "The darkness comes in the human form of misunderstandings in which we listen more closely to our own voices than to the voice of the Holy Spirit working among us." We are working on it by reaching out and reaching in, growing up and centering down, honoring the past and looking toward the future. "Just as the Apostle Paul wrote to the church at Philippi nearly two thousand years ago, we have not yet reached perfection in the Lord, but we move ever forward to reach that mark and attain that goal." From our small corner of Quakerdom, New York Yearly Meeting shares praise, blessings, wisdom, and gratitude with each other and the wider world.

—*Marissa Badgley*

## Ministry Coordinating Committee

Ministry Coordinating Committee (MCC) is trying to learn to be more inclusive. We're also supporting other parts of the yearly meeting in doing that. We have taken the Alternative Membership Pathways Working Group under our care. We supported Whisper Buddies. That's a program that helps explain how things work to Friends who are new to yearly meeting sessions. We are trying to simplify the language of our reports and documents. This is hard! The Outreach Working Group started regular peer group calls to support monthly meetings' outreach efforts. We supported a groundbreaking experiment helping monthly meetings use social media. We also helped address racism and white privilege. We funded some Friends' attendance at the white privilege conference in Philadelphia. We also supported the Friends Center for Racial Justice in Ithaca.

MCC actively supports Friends' ministry and the spiritual life of monthly meetings. We hold an ongoing concern for the support of retired ministers. MCC distributes the Stevens Fund. Trustees have requested that we open applications for this to the whole yearly meeting. We have, but the funds available are limited. There is a gap between the financial need of retired ministers and what we have to give. We also work with New England Yearly Meeting. Together, we support current ministers and elders through joint retreats. We share the cost of facilitators and scholarships.

Several meetings have asked for a member to be recorded in the ministry. We have set up discernment committees to get to know the Friends and their ministries. Darlene Farley of Farmington was recorded in the ministry in 2017. We have also begun to explore ways to release Friends carrying a ministry. That means helping them with financial and other support. The Spiritual Nurture Working Group provides retreats tailored to local meetings. It also sponsors retreats at Powell House. The Conflict Transformation committee is working with Friends everywhere. They've done workshops at national gatherings and online videos.

The State of Society committee has enlivened its reports. The reports help us understand each other better. They talk about monthly meetings and committees. They show the life and the

challenges. We continue to experience continuing revelation. Sometimes that means changing our book of discipline. The Committee to Revise *Faith and Practice* works on that.

Ministry Coordinating Committee (MCC) met four times. These meetings happened at Coordinating Committee Weekend, Spring Sessions, Summer Sessions, and Fall Sessions. The committee held one conference call in early fall to work on our budget. It was a year of transition when our long-term clerk moved away from NYYM. Interim clerks were appointed while we discern a new clerk. Some committees had unexpected transitions in membership. Some committee members asked to be released. The interim clerk has been helping the Worship at Sessions Committee. That committee only has a few members.

Our meetings are based in worship and grounded in love and mutual respect.

*Lu Harper, clerk*

## Committee on Conflict Transformation

In 2017 the Committee on Conflict Transformation was invited to be of service to monthly meetings, the Friends Center for Racial Justice, and the yearly meeting organization.

The committee has an active core of four members from Farmington-Scipio and Northeastern regional and quarterly meetings. In 2017 the co-opted member from Philadelphia Yearly Meeting asked to be released from service. We sent a list of potential members to the Nominating Committee but have not received a response to date. With our clerk's term expiring in July 2018, we feel an urgency to recruit new members of the committee.

The committee met by phone with some regularity and gathered on retreat August 25-27, 2017.

Members of the committee invested significant effort by phone and in face-to-face meetings in planning for a 5-day workshop at the July 2017 FGC Gathering in Niagara Falls. We structured the workshop around gospel order, and provided a mix of lecture and experiential elements; in addition we offered opportunities for one-on-one sessions to four individuals. Seventeen individuals attended, and feedback from the evalu-

ations was quite positive. We do not plan to offer a workshop at FGC in July 2018, but may consider doing so again in 2019.

The committee has shifted its emphasis in the last part of 2017 to bringing peace circles as a means of conflict transformation.

- CCT was invited to assist in working through a situation arising out of 2017 Summer Sessions. We began with confidential phone conversations with individuals, then pairs of CCT members conducted phone interviews. In the course of this work we were clear that our role is restoration of relationship rather than discipline. We continue to work toward bringing together those involved in the situation in a peace circle.
- In late 2016 the committee was called upon by a monthly meeting experiencing tensions; assistance began with confidential phone conversations with a number of individuals in preparation for finding how best to respond. By September we facilitated a peace circle for members of that meeting and continue in dialogue with them.
- We offered a weekend workshop on Conflict as Communication in Community at the Friends Center for Racial Justice on October 6-8, 2017, using peace circles as a key piece of the training. Ten people participated.
- CCT sent each meeting a copy of *The Little Book of Circle Processes* in Fall 2017.
- CCT is sponsoring Kay Pranis, the author of *The Little Book of Circle Processes*, to facilitate two 2-1/2 day workshops on circle processes in April, one in Rochester and the other in New York City. We have obtained a grant from Farmington-Scipio Region to assist in expenses with the Rochester workshop and are using committee funds and registration fees to cover the remaining costs.

The committee submitted its responses to the accountability queries to Ministry Coordinating Committee in a timely way.

*Heather Cook, clerk*

## **Ministry and Pastoral Care**

Ministry and Pastoral Care committee has focused on supporting ministry and ministers in varied ways over the last year. We have continued our support of the annual retreat for Pastors of New York Yearly Meeting at the annual NYYM/New England Yearly Meeting retreat. This year, instead of a retreat for pastors and elders, a retreat was held for people who 'tend the flock' as identified by their monthly meeting. In addition, the committee cares for the distribution of monies from the Steven's Fund. This year, in conjunction with the trustees, we brought transparency to the process, clarifying eligibility requirements and reimbursement processes. We added an additional ongoing beneficiary. This committee provides support to the Whisper Buddies coordinator. We have been asked to undertake the task of how the yearly or monthly meeting might financially support an individual with a ministry. The large scope of the project has asked us to consider what first steps might be. This year we look forward to identifying specific projects that individuals serving on the committee are interested in. The work of this committee is varied and deeply spiritually supported. We look forward to having others join us in this work.

*Anne Pomeroy, clerk*

## **Committee to Revise Faith and Practice**

The main accomplishment of the Committee to Revise *Faith and Practice* during the calendar year 2017 was the preparation of the 2018 edition of our Book of Discipline, which was released in March 2018. This edition represents the first plenary updating of the book since 1998, and incorporates changes approved by the body during the past two decades.

These revisions include the laying down of the yearly meeting on ministry and counsel; the restatement of the discipline on covenant relationships; revision of the spiritual duties of monthly meeting ministry and counsel; procedures for the recognition of worship groups; guidelines for the use of technology in the work of the yearly meeting; and revisions to the procedure by which the Book of Discipline may be revised.

The committee's *Handbook* page was revised for the first

time in 17 years, and the body approved the new charge at Fall Sessions 2017. The committee (and the Ministry Coordinating Committee) recommended that appointees to service be members of monthly meetings; however the body was not clear to approve that restriction, and so service on the committee remains open to attenders.

The committee met several times by telephone and at each Sessions during 2017. It also conducted a day-long retreat on September 30, 2017. At that time, the committee members experienced divine guidance in a rich and inspiring way, and candidly identified ways that procedures of service may be improved, and that particular sections of *Faith and Practice* could be subject to prayerful reconsideration. One portion of the minutes of that retreat may be of interest to the body at large:

The committee does not meet to propose what ought to be our faith and our practice, but rather to describe our current practices and what principles of the Spirit we, as a yearly meeting, share in common. We seek to come to unity in our proposals after deep discernment involving others, rather than through advocacy, discussion and conviction. Ideally, our Book of Discipline should articulate our current practices and how we are living out our faith as a coherent body. For that reason, it is prone to revision as the body is prone to continuing revelation. We hold a mirror to the body to say what it is actually doing.

At Spring Sessions, the committee met and discussed details concerning the new edition of *Faith and Practice*, including making it available in several accessible formats—large print, e-book, e-audiobook, and possibly, braille. We continue to work on this.

We also continue our editing on an expanded section on *Clearness Committees* and are beginning work on a new section on *Eldership*.

The yearly meeting's web page was revised and re-structured in 2017 and among other features, the web page has links to the Book of Discipline and the text of revisions to the book that have been recently approved by the body.

The committee is blessed with gifted membership and is hopeful that others may be led to service.

*Carolyn Emerson, clerk*

## **Spiritual Nurture Working Group**

During Summer Sessions, SNWG offers coffee, conversation & communion on the Inn Porch from 6-7:30 am. We also offer drop-in worship sharing on the porch for those who haven't signed up for a worship sharing group or are only at Silver Bay for a portion of the week.

Since Summer Sessions 2017 we've facilitated retreats for three monthly meetings. We had trouble responding promptly to a retreat request from a prison worship group, although we forwarded the request to facilitators who are prison visitors. Although we have many possible retreat offerings and usually tailor our retreats to meetings' needs, there is an ongoing need to get the word out about our availability to provide retreats at no cost to monthly meetings or quarters. We hope to increase our use of social media in the coming year to get the word out.

The most active participants of the working group met in person and/or conference call less frequently this year, in large part due to other Friendly work pulling us away. One Friend was involved in NEYM's Nurturing Faith & Faithfulness course, serving as an elder, and is bringing us insights around creating in-person/online retreats for our future work. Another Friend spent much of the spring traveling in the ministry internationally. Yet another Friend was involved in planning a potential course under the auspices of School of the Spirit. Another was called to become interim clerk of a YM coordinating committee.

We hope to regroup with new energy and participants, and invite anyone with a concern for the spiritual life of our meetings to join us.

*Lu Harper, clerk*

## **Committee on Sufferings**

*No report submitted.*



## **Committee on Worship at Yearly Meeting Sessions**

The committee had some difficulties getting underway initially. One member withdrew for personal reasons before we began our work.

We were fortunate to find a volunteer to do the work of organizing and seeking volunteers for the worship sharing groups, and he did an admirable job. He has agreed to serve again next year.

Melinda Wenner-Bradley, NYYM Children and Youth Secretary, graciously and skillfully organized daily community worship. We will need to find someone to take over Melinda's work on community worship, as she is leaving the yearly meeting's service. Melinda suggested perhaps a task group might be formed to take over this work.

Volunteers easily came forth for the Silver Bay chapel services, and their messages were well received. Many Friends continue to enjoy these worship opportunities, and are grateful to the enrichment brought by Silver Bay's fine musicians.

Most Friends, it seemed, appreciated the singing and children's message given during opening worship at Silver Bay. However, concerns were raised by a few Friends who expressed deep dissatisfaction, expressing a strong desire for more waiting worship time during the opening worship, or perhaps more waiting worship time during our week together. The committee has attempted to have conversation related to these concerns, but more listening is needed. The committee clerk later suggested that perhaps opening worship might be better served under the care of Sessions committee, in consultation with JYM. This committee is no longer responsible for opening worship at Silver Bay.

The person giving the message at closing worship shared her experiences working for racial justice. Many messages arose from Friends out of the open worship, describing how their own work for change flows out of their life in the Spirit.

The committee also oversees the presence of elders at each meeting for worship with a concern for business, both at YM sessions, and Spring and Fall Sessions. The committee could use someone with easy computer access to oversee the elders'

contact list for sessions.

For health reasons, this facilitator had to step down from the committee in January. Beverly Archibald continues on the committee. Barbra Bleecker has since joined the committee.

*David Herendeen, Worship at YM Sessions facilitator*

## **GENERAL SERVICES SECTION**

### **General Services Coordinating Committee**

Since its meetings at Summer Sessions 2017 the Coordinating Committee has met at Fall Sessions, January Coordinating Committee weekend, and Spring Sessions. Minutes of our meetings are posted in the committee section of the NYYM website. From the various committees in General Services Section we sometimes hear good news, sometimes problems. We may have to do new work on old issues or to pursue new opportunities.

See reports from Sessions Committee on regular work for each session, and the continuing special project to make "Pay-as-Led" process work in 2019. See reports on Development Committee, their working retreat and good results. Spark and the NYYM website demonstrate the good work by staff, with advice from Communications Committee. The Finance Committee creates the yearly operating budget and consults on a variety of financial issues, working with the treasurers to make our financial information more transparent and available.

The treasurers, staff, trustees, accountants and volunteers have met together and helped to produce an inclusive financial systems guideline, which should be ready for General Services approval at Summer Sessions. A formal audit has been deferred for another year, until we have had sufficient experience with the simplified statements, unified accounting and reporting of trustee and program activity.

Meanwhile Personnel Committee has been refining the Personnel Handbook, helping to manage staff benefits and to describe a combined youth and young adult position with local or regional coordinators.

At a late April meeting on administrative processes, a



summary of outcomes noted our need to prioritize what we work on, putting approved procedures into use as soon as they are ready, while creating a central place for policies and procedures. One objective is to mitigate risk, another is for staff and volunteers to know what they are required to do and what they can expect others to do. The trustees are active in this process, and may provide funding for a consultant to work on the production and assembly of standard operating procedures.

With the restructuring of Nurture Section committees to function without a Nurture Coordinating Committee, General Services will be the coordinating home for the Aging Concerns Committee. The ARCH program itself is now fully integrated into office administrative systems, though continuing to depend substantially on renewable grants from Friends Foundation for the Aging.

*John Cooley, clerk*

## **Audit Committee**

The purpose of the Audit Committee is to assure that the financial records of the New York Yearly Meeting are clear, complete, and correct. In performing these functions, the Audit Committee interacts with the NYYM office, the Financial Services Committee, the treasurer, and the trustees. During the 2017-2018, the Financial Services Committee, the treasurer, and the trustees all made significant improvements in financial reporting based on recommendations made during our previous audit. These improvements have resulted in a single financial statement that reflects both trust and operating funds and has fewer and simpler accounts that are easier to understand for all members.

In view of the difficulties experienced with the 2015 review audit (cf. 2017-2018 *Yearbook*), and the large number of changes in the structure of the financial statement, it was decided not to attempt another audit until the completion of the 2019 fiscal year. (This is one year later than anticipated in last year's report, since some changes could not be completed until the end of 2018). Most of the eleven areas for changes recommended by the Audit Committee in 2016 have now been addressed. One

that still requires attention of the Audit Committee is the development of a means of performing an initial internal inspection of the year-end financial statement and associated documents before they are turned over to the auditor (i.e., a readiness review); only limited progress has been made on this topic in 2017-2018. Two other areas, required for notes in the financial statements, concern the allocation of office staff hours between fund raising, programs, and overhead activities, and the nature of restriction on various trust funds; data now exists to formulate these notes, but it remains to be formatted.

Nominating Committee has identified suitable staffing for the Audit Committee, and the committee held approximately 3 teleconferences in 2017-2018, and one in-person meeting at Fall Sessions. At the teleconferences, substantial effort was made to brief new Audit Committee members on the present audit status and financial statement format. A new clerk has been identified for the committee. The committee will be concerned in 2019 with engagement of an auditor for the 2019 consolidated financial statement, and performing a readiness review prior to transmitting it to the auditor in 2020.

*Tim Johnson, convenor*

## **Communications Committee**

The Communications Committee gained several new members over the past year, and our meetings continue to draw visitors from outside the committee. The committee met via video conference in the fall and held an "open table" at Fall Sessions lunch. We met as a committee at Spring Sessions, where we had a lively discussion about future themes for *Spark*. The question "what is rising in the yearly meeting?" brought up a lot of ideas around the structure of the yearly meeting and the need for new people in leadership roles. Several themes came out of that discussion: "Spirit-led Structures" and "Cultivating Quakers." In addition, the committee now has a new clerk. We are exploring the possibility of having a "rotating clerk," with each member serving for only a few months at a time; our own experiment with a new organizational structure.

The committee would like to focus on increasing our social

media presence. We can start by better using the material that already exists—for example, articles from *Spark* could be highlighted and shared on Twitter and Facebook. We also discussed the possibility of having online comment boards, where Friends could share their thoughts on *Spark* articles and other topics, but we haven't found a suitable option yet. One problem is that message boards need to be moderated and no one feels able to commit to that never-ending task. It may be possible with the help of Friendly volunteers; we will continue to explore this possibility.

We want to find better ways to communicate with teens and young adults, and we intend to reach out to young people who could join or advise the committee. Technology and modes of communication are changing rapidly. The committee will continue to consider when print should be used and when an online format is a better option. This may involve changing the communications staff's workflow, among other things. We will all try to be open to change.

In the *Handbook*, the functions and activities of this committee include gathering news and articles, proofreading, and serving as an editorial board for the communications staff. I am hopeful that in the future the committee will have time to do that more mundane work in addition to our big-picture thinking.

—Sarah Way, reporting on behalf of the committee

## Development Committee

The Development Committee was created only six years ago to help NYYM Quakers share their financial treasure in the service of widely agreed-upon NYYM priorities in as simple and satisfying a way as possible.

Since its creation, and particularly in the last two years, the committee has come to realize that while special events and Friend/Quaker hats certainly supplement the all-important covenant donations of our monthly meetings, build our sense of community, and proclaim our identity, we also need more direct and less labor intensive ways to support all that we collectively agreed we want from our NYYM.

The 2017 goal for our committee was \$47,500 for NYYM

plus \$18,450 for the ARCH program (total \$65,950). We raised \$73,675, thanks in part to a large gift. For 2018 our goal for NYYM (with ARCH now fully integrated into the NYYM) is \$81,000. We accept the challenge this represents to broaden the giving among those who appreciate the work of the NYYM, and we expect to present a path to success at Summer Sessions that will energize all of us.

On a more mundane level we are tackling several housekeeping items such as assessing our current donor base and current processes for accepting, recording, and acknowledging gifts, and making it easier for Friends and non Friends to donate online and in every other way. We are also discussing confidentiality issues so that we do not share information about donors and donations inappropriately.

Meanwhile we will continue to use the Friend/Quaker hats as a thank you item for gifts of \$20 or more. Wear yours with joy.

*Written by members of Development Committee, Jerry Leaphart, clerk*

## Financial Services Committee

Financial Services Committee met to draft the 2018 budget. The budget is on page 48.

## Committee on Expenditure of the H.H. Mosher Fund

In 2017, at NYYM Summer Sessions at Silver Bay, the book table distributed \$3,094 worth of books from the Friends General Conference (FGC) Bookstore and also consignment books. This total includes:

- Gifts of 192 items to 54 monthly meetings, worship groups, and prison worship groups in the amount of \$2,578.
- Gifts to five Friends Schools and Anna Curtis Center of 15 books in the amount of \$216.
- Books given to 13 individuals (staff, recorded ministers, presenters at Summer Sessions, and first-time visitors) in

the amount of \$205.

- Books for graduating high school students in the amount of \$94.

During these sessions, members of the NYYM Trustees informed this committee that there is a fund balance that has accumulated gradually over the years and asked for a plan to spend that balance. The committee was asked to include plans to allow funds from the Mosher bequest to be available for publication, printing, and video production. Anita Paul has since offered to convene a review group to consider funding projects. Proposed criteria are that the projects be in keeping with Friends values and testimonies, reflects a fresh or needed insight into those values or Friends' history, be readable and understandable, will require minimal editing, and that there are sufficient funds available.

Plans are underway to stock the book table again in 2018. Friends who attend Summer Sessions are invited to visit the table in the lobby of the Inn at Silver Bay during the week to select books for their meeting libraries before the end of Thursday. Up to \$50 worth of books and materials will be available to each meeting or worship group. Volunteers make the book table possible and Friends are invited to sign up for an hour or two to help arrange and distribute books.

*Beatrice Beguin, clerk*

## **Lindley Murray Fund, Trustees**

*No report submitted.*

## **Nominating Committee**

The Nominating Committee is responsible for finding the right people for the many different kinds of work done for and by the yearly meeting committees and for keeping track of the nominating actions taken by the body at every session. We meet by telephone conference throughout the year, usually meet at Spring and Fall Sessions, and meet every morning over breakfast at Summer Sessions.

The Nominating Committee has been working with a reduced number of members for several years now. Because the work is central to good functioning of the yearly meeting, this has become a continuing concern. Nonetheless, as our recent Advance Reports have highlighted, this hard and sometimes complicated work is frequently marked with joy.

And there is much more to it than work. We get to talk to people about their gifts and their passions and also about what they feel it would be just awful to have to spend time on. We usually get to know some new f/Friends over the year and to know some new things about old f/Friends.

We try hard to engage with the whole of the yearly meeting and to do all we can to recognize what is needed and who may be ready to step in. Or jump in. Or sometimes belly flop in. We do this for love of the yearly meeting and in the belief that Spirit will speak through our efforts.

We are fewer than we should be because, although the committee is to be made up of representatives from each region, most regions have not given us their full complement, and a few regions have sent no one. As we've noted before, a smaller-than-ideal committee means that we do not know enough people across all our meetings.

We are trying some new ways to get folks involved in the nominating process even if they cannot commit to full service on the committee. We hope to become better at finding and using new approaches. We hope you will suggest what might be done differently by Nominating and what you might like to do for the yearly meeting. And we encourage everyone to have a "nominating awareness." As you appreciate the gifts you see in the Friends you worship, work, and play with, *share that with Nominating*. And help nominating work to be done, at least in part, by all of us.

*Elaine Learnard, clerk*

## **Personnel Committee**

Over the past year the Personnel Committee has been working on revising the NYYM Employee Handbook. This remains a work in progress but sufficient progress has been made to bring

it to conclusion in the near future. The committee is pleased to note that we have received significant input from NYYM staff with certain aspects of the handbook. The committee is also thankful for the tireless work by our general secretary to move this project along. It is with Steve Mohlke's help that the committee has been able to move ahead with combining the two field secretary positions for youth and young adults into one full time position. Approval is still required for this new position, but by making it into a full time position we are hopeful that the recruiting process will prove to be more successful. The committee has been meeting on a monthly basis and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future. There are some minor issues with membership that hopefully can be cleared up over Summer Sessions.

*Hans-Jurgen Lehmann, clerk*

## YEARLY MEETING STAFF REPORTS

### ***Chad Gilmartin, Digital Communications Director***

I have been serving as the digital communications director for New York Yearly Meeting (NYYM) for just over one year, and I am very much enjoying the work. I am finding that my skills are well suited to the needs of NYYM and the staff that supports its work. I have found opportunities to introduce new technologies to the yearly meeting, explore and implement new tools, and consult with monthly meetings to guide their web-related decision making to better accommodate their needs.

My primary role as digital communications director is to maintain our digital platform that shares our ministry with the world: our website. With the launch of our new website at Summer Sessions 2017, NYYM has greatly increased its capacity to share information, resources, and events through better usability and ease of access. Our new site has led to more engagement; Friends from around the world have visited our website and contacted us via phone, email, and web-contact link. Our website provides a platform for staff and committees to actively

update and share program information and resources for work in ministry. In updating our website, we have expanded our reach and increased the impact of our work.

I have also worked with monthly meetings on how their websites are serving their needs, and how they can better utilize the tools of the digital age. At Summer Sessions 2017, I conducted private consultations to look at monthly meetings' websites. Members from monthly meetings signed up, as well as a representative from FUM. Together, we worked to create plans for how to better utilize the web for outreach and inreach, focusing on usability, accessibility, and content organization to promote information sharing. This initiative was a great success, and I will continue these consultations at Summer Sessions and throughout the upcoming year. Email me at [web@nyym.org](mailto:web@nyym.org) to schedule a consultation.

At the NYYM office, I have worked with staff to implement several updates to technologies, as well as introduce some new digital tools. I executed the consolidation of our telecom system into one provider with faster speeds and a lower overall cost. We are now using Google Suite for Nonprofits, giving us (free) cutting-edge tools for our email accounts, digital security, document and information sharing, website management tools, and more. We have moved our global email list system from an unwieldy 1000+ BCC list to MailChimp, a platform for email lists that is specifically designed to improve our open rate, spam ranking, and unify the aesthetic in our messaging to our constituency. I have updated our vouchers system with fillable PDFs so that Friends can fill and submit them electronically instead of by hand. With these new tools, the office is improving efficiency, security, and adaptability in the digital age.

Along with these new technologies, I have provided technical support to staff to help train them and troubleshoot whenever technological issues arise. I have helped install and configure our web-enabled printer for wireless and remote printing at the yearly meeting office, as well as in the conference office at Summer Sessions. In updating our global emails system, I migrated our global lists, created a global email template using our new logo and letterhead, and trained staff on using the new system; I am working with the communications director,



Sarah Way, to update and unify our fonts, logos, letterhead (both digital and print), and color schemes for a style guide; I updated our Acceptiva pages to utilize the updated branding on our new website; I have been coordinating the use of our Zoom accounts for video conferencing among committees and staff; I have provided IT support for various computer issues around the office, including helping migrate important files to new computers for office staff members. I have created short workshops to train staff in Google Suite tools, digital security, and updating our new website, and will continue these short training sessions regularly.

My role as digital communications director is still relatively new and expanding as I find new ways to utilize my skillsets to support the needs of the yearly meeting. One such role is that of IT support. I have been able to provide IT solutions in the office as issues arise, rather than having to call in a third-party IT consultant, thus saving the yearly meeting time and money. This has also given me the opportunity to work with other members of staff more closely and promote the collaborative nature of our dedicated staff.

My work with NYYM has also provided me with opportunities for learning new skills and expanding my knowledge base. In order to build and utilize our new website, I have learned a great deal about Drupal, and worked with the lead developer of our website, Vonn New, to grow my capabilities as a web developer. Together, Vonn and I have fixed bugs, created new features, and updated the information architecture of our website. In doing so, I have learned how to create new resource portals, customize user-permissions, add and edit modules to our site, and build templates for displaying content in our Drupal system. With this growth, I am better able to serve the yearly meeting as we expand our use of new tools for the digital age.

I am most excited about my opportunity to develop a new role in the yearly meeting: the communications intern. This process has been a rich growing experience for me as I have waded into the waters of selecting and directly supervising. I am thrilled to see the talent and interest that this position has highlighted in our NYYM community, especially in the younger generation. I am confident that the work we do together this summer will

greatly benefit myself, our intern, and the yearly meeting.

My goals for the next year are focused around optimization of our current systems and incorporating more Best Practices into our digital activities. In order to extend my own capabilities with our website I would like to learn more about Drupal and the architecture of our website, allowing me to do more work on the website independently, rather than having to bring in the developer; I would like to complete and implement the Style Guide for NYYM staff and committees that Sarah and I have been working on. I will work to “prune” our website, going over each page with a fine-toothed comb to eliminate incorrect or outdated information, and in some cases eliminating unused pages altogether. I will continue preparing workshops for staff on digital tools, best practices, security, and more; I aim to complete an audit of every monthly meeting website, and help them create a plan to improve or update their sites (if needed). I hope to update our Summer Sessions registration process to reduce the workload for staff and volunteers. I hope to put my “systems brain” to good use by working to increase NYYM staff’s capacity to serve our constituency by increasing the efficiency and efficacy of our work through technological solutions.

### ***Callie Janoff and Aging Resources Consultation and Help (ARCH) Staff***

Recently Barbara Spring, who co-founded the ARCH Program eleven years ago, told me that she was enjoying reviewing her materials and resources in preparation for a workshop she facilitated on end of life concerns. She said, “I love this material, and I’m going through it with different eyes. I have new perspectives being that much older and facing my own aging process in a different way.”

Growing older doesn’t always happen all at once, and our capacity to learn and grow doesn’t lessen with age. If anything, it usually increases. Even those of us who think we have it “all figured out” are still learning, growing, changing, transforming.

Now in our eleventh year, your ARCH program is no exception. This year our program was integrated into the NYYM



operations, which is helping us connect more deeply with each other, and to collaborate on our shared work of nurturing our people and communities at every age.

Practically for me, this means I have a new supervisor in Steve Mohlke, General Secretary. Working with Steve as he inaugurates his work in this role has been a gift. We meet often to collaborate on budget and finance, personnel matters, operational processes, crafting messages and reports, and attending to the day-to-day aspects of working together. Meanwhile I continue to meet weekly with different members of the Committee on Aging Concerns to discuss the how and what of the ARCH program. We may review aging trends in our meetings, consider upcoming topics and offerings, and do the work of brainstorming, reflecting, dreaming together.

These two sources of support fortify me for the many aspects of my work. I continue to meet with individuals and families to attend to their experiences of growing older, and all of the attendant challenges and blessings. I connect with and support our ever-growing network of volunteer ARCH Visitors in the many and sometimes heroic or prosaic ways that they serve older Friends. I am often a referral point for those with urgent needs to connect with appropriate care. I take responsibility for crafting our annual budget and Friends Foundation for the Aging grant proposal, and writing and reporting on our work. I develop and facilitate learning and spiritual growth opportunities in retreats, trainings, interest groups, workshops, publications, and other less formal formats. I travel to visit with meetings and groups throughout our yearly meeting to listen and to offer support where I can. I help those who are called to ease the strain of growing old while incarcerated and to welcome returning citizens home from prison.

But perhaps no aspect of my work is more important than supporting the work of our ARCH Local Coordinators (LCs). LCs extend our capacity and our reach exponentially with only an average of ten hours of work a month. We currently have five LCs geographically distributed throughout our yearly meeting. Each coordinator brings her particular gifts and addresses the unique needs of her area.

### **Abigail (Abby) Burford—New Jersey (All Friends, Shrewsbury-Plainfield)**

Abby likes to say that she has an obsession with Continuing Care Retirement Communities (CCRCs, or as they are increasingly referring to themselves “Lifecare Communities”). As she visits with Friends in her area, she plays this for laughs (she is just 60 and is often mistaken for younger). But she finds that even an initial response—positive or negative—will often mature into a growing thoughtfulness about our plans and hopes for our own future. She says “Something about the opportunity to talk and think about it has been an effective way to get people into a conversation about their own aging.” Abby travels throughout her region, visiting meetings and ARCH Visitors to listen and offer support. She offers an exceptional workshop titled “Decluttering as a Spiritual Opportunity” that gets rave reviews every time. She is available to travel with this workshop—please invite her!

### **Martha Gurvich—Purchase**

Martha recently attended a quarterly meeting in her region where someone asked her if there was a way to be involved with ARCH without going to a full weekend training, and taking on what sounded like a burdensome responsibility. She replied “Absolutely, you can just jump in and if you need help, just call me. I’m happy to help with whatever needs doing.” This perfectly characterizes Martha’s work in her ARCH role. Martha often works one-on-one with families and individuals on end of life planning, connections with crisis and respite care, and the deeper issues of meaning, identity, and purpose that can come up as we grow old and care for one another. Martha brings her prodigious experience with the wider NYYM community to her work, and often knows just the person to call or connect with across regions.

### **Mahayana (Yana) Landowne—New York**

Yana’s work in New York City is characterized by the over 40 ARCH Visitors who call New York Quarter their home. Keeping up with the ministry of so many Friends in so little time is a mean feat that she accomplishes through regular individual and conference calls and in-person opportunities for sharing and

connections. She makes a special effort to make each ARCH Visitor feel cared for and supported. Yana is also an artist and an activist so issues of ageism and working across generations to open up dialogue and shared experiences particularly call her to serve. Her theatre training and growing up Quaker give her a special capacity to facilitate meaningful experiences for groups.

### **Kathy Slattery—Farmington-Scipio**

Kathy is a woman of many ministry hats. She serves as clerk of her monthly and quarterly meeting. She is a healer. She works with children and young adults in her community. She is a grief counselor. AND she is an ARCH LC! Kathy travels a good deal throughout her large region and reflecting on the last year, she felt that her most meaningful ARCH visit was to a meeting that perceives itself as dying. She went for the purpose of listening, to offer the experience of feeling truly heard. Previous consultations between the region and this meeting “had felt to them like re-arranging the deck chairs on the Titanic, not truly grasping their condition nor speaking to it.” She says the best part was “giving oneself over and being in the presence of the body, being welcomed into the heart of the meeting.” It is often when we are able to trust and become vulnerable that our most precious gifts can emerge. Even as we die, we have valuable gifts to share. Even when we are a meeting body.

### **Barbara Spring—North Eastern and Prisons**

Barbara rejoined the ARCH program as an LC last Spring to concentrate her gifts on her local meetings and on serving those of us aging while incarcerated. She worked with American Friends Service Committee to develop a toolbox for those living with life sentences to cope with long term incarceration. She facilitated workshops on end of life decisions in her local region. She connects regularly with ARCH Visitors in her area one-on-one to check in on their ministry of care, and keeps an eye out for older people who could use a caring connection. Her depth of experience with the ARCH program is also a resource for the other LCs she works with; whenever one of us has a real stumper we call Barbara!

The most important aspect of the work of the LCs is our sense of collaboration and connection with each other that is facili-

tated by a once a month video conference on the NYYM’s Zoom platform. Each month this group checks in with each other, asks for help, offers suggestions or resources, shares ideas and dreams. Barbara reflects, “the use of Zoom has expanded our possibilities as a team. I appreciate the potential of doing this, it makes it so much more accessible and meaningful.” Our ARCH staff has found this format so useful that we are ready to pilot a new remote ARCH Visitor Training primarily experienced through Zoom video conferences this Fall 2018. If you are interested to help pilot this exciting new opportunity, please contact us at [arch@nyym.org](mailto:arch@nyym.org).

I am grateful to the Committee on Aging Concerns for its continuing clarity of vision and commitment. Their report can be found on page 94. The ARCH program is made possible through the continuing support of the Friends Foundation for the Aging, through your individual financial gifts, and from the overall budget of NYYM, which is primarily composed of monthly meetings’ covenant donations. But none of this good work is possible without your willingness to engage in it—to learn, grow, change, and transform whatever your age.

*Callie Janoff, director, for the ARCH staff*

### **Steve Mohlke, General Secretary**

A year ago, as I looked forward to being general secretary, I worried about the commute to New York City from Ithaca; I imagined visiting lots of meetings, including prison worship groups; and I thought that all I needed to know about reimbursement payment vouchers was how to fill out the form.

It turns out that there are several express busses between Ithaca and NYC with wifi on board. Given the volume of email I receive, being constrained to a seat with a laptop and wifi for several hours every other week is highly productive. It turns out that I was able to visit one to two meetings per month and at that rate it will take me more than four years to get to all the monthly meetings. It turns out that I didn’t visit a prison worship group because getting approval to enter New York State prisons takes a long time and even having a visit scheduled doesn’t mean the

Department of Corrections will allow it to happen. It turns out that I had to learn nearly everything there is to know about the NYYM voucher payment system in order to help our treasurers and staff streamline and improve it. And it became clear that my work falls into three general categories: staff, our yearly meeting committee activities, and connecting with local meetings.

I find our staff remarkable. Broadly, I think a central role we play as staff is to support the work of our yearly meeting which is a largely volunteer organization. Helen is our associate secretary and has been with us for twenty-seven years. Very few people know in any detail all that she does on our behalf. For example, as I overhear her on the phone with people registering for Summer Sessions, I realize that she is catching and solving dozens of problems in advance that would otherwise not be noticed until we arrive at Sessions. In addition to running the office, supervising three other staff members, helping me find my way, and shepherding our Spring, Summer and Fall Sessions, she also picks up critical tasks when volunteers can't do them.

Walter, our administrative associate, is as steady and detail-oriented as human beings come and exactly the person we need to handle all those routine tasks critical to an office such as recordkeeping, payment processing, etc. Sarah, our communications director, ably takes the lead on our publications by tracking down content, editing it, managing deadlines and publishing everything from InfoShare and *Spark* to our yearbook, sessions advance documents, and *Faith & Practice*. Chad's stated job as digital communications director is primarily to manage our website and help monthly meetings with theirs. In addition, he has become our all-around office support for all things technical. Callie not only does all the things needed to direct the ARCH (Aging Resources, Consultation, and Help) program with vision, skill and grace, she draws us all, staff and volunteers, into harmony with her persistent message that we are all together in this work. During Melinda's time on staff as our children and youth field secretary, she brought tremendous gifts in Quaker religious education and helped others discover their gifts. Having left her staff position, Melinda remains as a consultant working with the meetings in the Vital Meetings

Partner Project. As our interim young adult field secretary, Emily brought her wealth of talent, including her "internet-to-meetinghouse pipeline" skills. Since she left, that position has not been filled. The Personnel Committee is bringing a recommendation to Summer Sessions that we combine these two part time positions into one full time position with benefits and further support our yearly meeting priority on children, youth and young adults with some part time local coordinator positions.

Watch for an opportunity to meet and greet our staff during Summer Sessions.

I bring my gifts with technology to this team. I see one of my roles as finding ways to use technology to make their tasks and our collaboration smoother and stronger. We've been making better use of Calendar, Docs and Groups from Google Suite. We've been improving our online security. We just started using Slack for intra-office communication and we've begun a transition to a different database for some office operations. We've been working together with our treasurer to streamline the process for requesting payment with vouchers by enabling electronic submission and approval.

As general secretary, I've been participating in quite a few committees and projects of our yearly meeting. I've been working with the Personnel Committee, the Development Committee, Liaison Committee, the Meeting for Discernment Steering Committee, the Pay As Led Working Group, the Outreach Working Group, the treasurers, and the yearly meeting clerk and assistant clerk. I've participated in workshops on conflict transformation, racism, pastoral care and more. I've been working on two major documents, the Personnel Manual and NYYM's Financial Guidelines, that are written by committee and have an impact on staff. I view these documents as important to the smooth and transparent functioning of our yearly meeting.

My visits to local meetings have been meaningful and engaging. I've been to some of our more distant meetings from Western New York to Long Island. It is rewarding to join different communities for worship and conversation and to learn how Spirit works through each of them. It's important for me to keep these learnings with me as I help connect people from around our yearly meeting who help each other in strengthening our

local meetings.

As I enter year two, I look forward to finding more ways to use technology to improve our processes without crowding out discernment and Spirit. I look forward to examining how we make decisions together with attention to how people are included and excluded. I look forward to working through the details of implementing Pay as Led in a way that strengthens our community so that we are less about charity and more about balance. I look forward to additional visits with local meetings. I look forward to my first visit to one of our eight prison worship groups. I look forward to exploring challenging topics together as Spirit calls us into them.

### **Walter Naegle, Administrative Associate**

The 2017-18 year was one of positive change and challenges for me. We welcomed a new general secretary, but lost our children and youth field secretary. Our new general secretary is very “tech savvy,” helping me develop new skills that will improve our record keeping.

I maintain the card file and the electronic version of the NYYM database. The active card file consists of members of NYYM, and also individuals and organizations associated with our work. The electronic address list includes monthly meetings, other Quaker organizations, and other yearly meetings. Additional tables in the database include incarcerated individuals who attend our prison worship groups, administrative offices of other yearly meetings (both domestic and international), organizations associated with the work of Friends, and lists of elected officials who we may contact about issues of concern to the Quaker community. The mailing lists for *Spark* and The Sharing Fund appeals are also generated from this information, as well as the global e-mail list for those interested in NYYM news and InfoShare.

I work closely with my supervisor, Helen Garay Toppins, on registrations for Summer, Fall, & Spring Sessions, and Meetings for Discernment. In addition, I help to collect and reproduce materials (agendas, financial reports, epistles, etc.) for distribution at these events.

Helen and I work on NYYM finances, processing payment vouchers, reviewing bank statements, preparing bank deposits and sending out acknowledgements for contributions to the Budget Fund, Sharing and Equalization Funds. I work with the general secretary and Development Committee tracking individual contributions generated by fundraising mailings and events. We are exploring new ways to process and preserve financial records more efficiently using digital technology.

I work with other staff on preparing the annual yearbook. This work includes mailing out information sheets to monthly meeting clerks and statistical report forms to recorders, and compiling the information when they are returned.

Routine tasks include answering the telephone, reviewing/responding to e-mail, opening mail, ordering office supplies, mailing *Spark* to monthly meetings, and shipping out copies of *Faith and Practice* and NYYM Yearbooks.

### **Helen Garay Toppins, Associate Secretary**

Gail Sheehy, author of *New Passages: Mapping Your Life across Time*, tells us that “Growth demands a temporary surrender of security,” but that if we don’t change, we won’t grow and if we don’t grow then we aren’t really living. If that is the case, then I am really living an up-tempo life. I personally experienced more employment changes during the past year than in my previous 26 years of working for New York Yearly Meeting. Almost everything changed. My boss changed, the staff changed, half of the coordinating committee clerks changed, the treasurer changed, the assistant treasurer changed, the trust funds were added to the yearly meeting’s operations budget, our chart of accounts changed, our vouchers changed, how we process vouchers changed; how we calculate registrations fees for Fall and Spring Sessions changed; how we process the Equalization Funds changed; our telecommunication system changed; and our email provider changed. In the midst of it all we launched a new website, laid down a coordinating committee section and reassigned the committees and representatives under its care. And last, but certainly not least, I had to replace my cherished computer of many years.



Needless to say all of these changes had ramifications. These situations increased my phone calls and email communication. As we transitioned to new procedures and new processes, Friends contacted me with questions. The launch of our newly redesigned website stimulated an increase in website traffic. I thought that an increase in website traffic would mean that fewer seekers and fewer non-NYYM Friends would contact the yearly meeting office—not so. It seems that the more people find us online, the more they discover that they want additional information, and then they follow up with a phone call or an email.

Of course, all of these changes occurred against the backdrop of my performing my ongoing associate secretary duties. I supervise the administrative associate, the communications director, the digital communications director, and office volunteers. I support the work of the general secretary, the officers of the yearly meeting, the coordinating committee clerks, and the committee clerks. I respond to queries from NYYM monthly meeting clerks, members, and attenders, throughout our yearly meeting; to queries from other Quaker organizations; and from the wider body of Friends. I assist with allocating the Equalization Funds. I assist with *Spark*, InfoShare and the *Yearbook*. I read every monthly meeting newsletter and the business minutes of every monthly meeting and then I route relevant information to the appropriate parties. I serve as Summer Sessions registrar. I also serve as Fall Sessions, Spring Sessions and Meetings for Discernment registrar as needed.

I especially enjoy responding to seekers. Recently, someone found us on our website, noted the information about time and place of meeting for worship and then called the yearly meeting office. She wanted to be sure that as someone who had never been to a Quaker meeting—that she would be welcome. I assured her she would be.

I appreciate that my job is so interesting and varied. One morning a Friend, whose great-grandmother had been a Quaker, found Quaker books from the 1700s in her attic, and wanted the contact information for our archivist. A librarian from a monthly meeting in California found three epistles from New York Yearly Meeting dated: 1820, 1822 and 1828. They had

no idea how or why these epistles were in their meetinghouse in California. They wanted to know if NYYM were in possession of these epistles and whether or not we wanted them. I contacted our archivist at the Friends Historical Library at Swarthmore. Yes, yes they wanted them.

I love my job. I love what I do and I love the people I work with. My one regret is that under the pressure of so much administrative work, I have had to reduce my worship group and monthly meeting visitations. I particularly enjoy visiting prison worship groups and small meetings and engaging in outreach and advancement work.

### ***Sarah Way, Communications Director***

My job is to help Friends communicate with each other. I am humbled to have the opportunity to do this work. Friends in our yearly meeting are wise, inspiring, and have a lot to share with each other, for which I am thankful. If you ever worry about a decline in Quaker energy, read InfoShare and *Spark*. You can see the Spirit moving if you know where to look.

I continue to publish *Spark* about every other month, using themes generated with the Communications Committee and reflecting what we have felt moving in the yearly meeting. The themes of the past year's issues:

- **September 2017: Bridging the Divide**, inspired by the White Privilege conference many yearly meeting Friends attended.
- **December 2017: Friends Reaching Out**, guest-edited by Arlene Johnson and Robin Whitely of the Outreach Working Group, who collected many inspiring stories of meetings experimenting with outreach.
- **January 2018: The Meaning of Membership**, which was full of essays by committed Friends and included a piece by the Alternate Membership Pathways Group exploring new membership possibilities for Friends who don't feel tied to a particular monthly meeting.
- **March 2018: Earthcare Now**, a special extended issue



guest-edited by Pamela Boyce Simms, a visionary leader around Earthcare issues who believes we are at an evolutionary turning point in terms of our earth-awareness and spiritual consciousness.

- **May 2018: Learning from First Day School**, including interviews with young Friends, an essay on intergenerational worship, and new ideas for First Day School—and all the information for Summer Sessions.

All issues of *Spark* from the past several years can be read online at [nyym.org/content/spark](http://nyym.org/content/spark).

In between issues of *Spark*, I produce InfoShare, our emailed newsletter, using the MailChimp platform. I continue to move toward the industry standard for email newsletters: just one or two lines per item, including links to further information online. Our logo is now featured and more images are included.

I continue to post frequently on Facebook, creating easily-shared posts and events, and sharing items from other Quaker and Quaker-aligned groups. News items often arrive between the press deadlines for *Spark* and InfoShare; those items often end up on our Facebook page ([facebook.com/newyorkyearly-meeting](https://facebook.com/newyorkyearly-meeting)). General Secretary Steve Mohlke, Digital Communications Director Chad Gilmartin, and I are exploring the inclusion of a newsfeed on our website; this will make it easier for those without a Facebook account to stay connected, and would facilitate more frequent (and brief) email newsletters.

Many committees, including the Peace Working Group and the Outreach Working Group, regularly use the yearly meeting's audio/video conferencing accounts on the "Zoom" platform to meet remotely. Chad, Steve, and I are planning to streamline the process for setting up Zoom conferences, using an online calendar (and staff oversight) to prevent meeting conflicts and overlaps.

Every year before Summer Sessions I produce the advance reports, a collection of the previous Fall and Spring Sessions minutes and the annual reports from committees. The advance reports are distributed at Summer Sessions to help Friends conduct business. They then become the first section of the *Yearbook*, which also includes the minutes from Summer

Sessions, a list of YM committee appointments, the directory of meetings, and the alphabetical address listing of Friends under appointment. The *Yearbook* is distributed to committee members and meetings at Fall Sessions. Last year I switched to a new printer for the *Yearbook*, saving the yearly meeting \$1000/year in printing costs.

To help Friends become comfortable with social media, I created a primer on NYYM's social media accounts and distributed it at Spring Sessions 2017. You can view it online here: [nyym.org/sites/default/files/nyym-social-media-handout.pdf](http://nyym.org/sites/default/files/nyym-social-media-handout.pdf). I then led a related interest group—Social Media for Absolute Beginners—at Summer Sessions, attended by about a dozen people. This year I'm offering an interest group on creating a Facebook page for your meeting.

I continued the process of unifying the visual identity of the yearly meeting, creating a design and style guide for NYYM materials, including recommended fonts and colors, and a letterhead template. I also created a capitalization and abbreviation guide and distributed it to recording clerks.

Do you have ideas for how NYYM can better communicate with you and your meeting? What would you like to hear from us? Are you a young adult or a teenager who uses social media—or do you prefer to get your information another way? Please email your suggestions to me at [communications@nyym.org](mailto:communications@nyym.org). Thank you, Friends!

## Records Committee

Records Committee is actively reviewing the Records Guidelines. The world of records has changed dramatically over the last 20 years and the guidelines are being updated to reflect the reality that most of our records are born digital. Look for these revised guidelines to come out this summer.

A small group of meetings (around 15) is faithfully submitting records on a regular basis to Friends Historical Library. The rest of us are not. As Friends, our records testify to our journey with Spirit and serve to remind us of our leadings and our stories. We spend time and energy to record our minutes and craft them so that they reflect our discernment; we need to spend a little time

and energy to maintain our minutes.

Friends Historical Library has begun updating the finding aids to our records. They can be found here: [www.swarthmore.edu/friends-historical-library/new-york-genesee-yearly-meetings](http://www.swarthmore.edu/friends-historical-library/new-york-genesee-yearly-meetings). They have begun to accept electronic/digital records from our meetings. They report that the microfilm that was done prior to the transfer of records is beginning to fail and recommend that we consider having our records digitized for ease of access and to preserve the originals; they have two vendors that they are asking us to consider. We will consider those possibilities and bring a recommendation.

*Bridget Bower, clerk*

## **Sessions Committee**

Since we reported last, Sessions Committee has grown with the addition of the JYM Committee, now a subcommittee of Sessions, and we have continued to listen to the needs of the yearly meeting—first, by simplifying the rules and procedures for requesting financial assistance at our sessions; second, making the Spring and Fall Sessions registration fee a suggested fee rather than a set fee; and third, continuing to work hard to create a successful Pay as Led process for our 2019 NYYM Summer Sessions.

Looking back, our 2017 Summer Sessions was held at Silver Bay YMCA and a total of 450 people attended; 338 adults and 112 youth. Our theme “Bringing the Peaceable Kingdom to a Turbulent World” was well supported by our plenary speaker, Nadine Hoover, coordinator for Friends Peace Teams, and by our willingness to discuss struggles as well as successes during Meeting for Discernment, worship sharing, and interest groups.

One would think that after hundreds of Summer Sessions, we would have the schedule down pat, but we continue to tweak the details, most especially trying to find the right balance for interest groups and committee meetings. And once again, evaluations leave the committee a little worse for wear, when some love the tweaks and some say, never do THAT again. Thankfully, we have found the right arrangement for our Spring and Fall Sessions schedule—we would love to settle on ONE schedule for

Summer Sessions and have that be one less thing to constantly consider. We’ll see what our evaluations have to say about this year’s week-at-a-glance!

Our 2017 Fall Sessions was hosted by All Friends Regional Meeting, making use once again of Caldwell University’s campus, with 142 in attendance, including six youth. Our 2018 Spring Sessions was hosted by New York Quarterly Meeting, at Brooklyn Friends School. There were 135 participants; four youth and 131 adults. We could not hold these weekend sessions if it were not for the often above-and-beyond dedication of the regional Host Task Groups. Working with the Sessions Committee’s Spring and Fall Sessions Coordinator & Liaison and the YM Associate Secretary, these groups of volunteers take care of the kids, make sure the route to the venue is marked, provide on-site support, and take on all sorts of duties as assigned. Sessions Committee is in their debt.

To summarize our upcoming dates, the 2018 Fall Sessions will be hosted by Farmington-Scipio Regional Meeting on November 9–11 at the Holiday Inn Rochester, with a special emphasis on taking part in the Commemoration of 224th Anniversary of the Canandaigua Treaty. The 2019 Spring Sessions will be hosted by Nine Partners Regional Meeting at Oakwood Friends School over the weekend of April 5–7. The 2019 NYYM Summer Sessions, which we currently plan to have feature our very first Pay as Led process, will be held over the week of July 21-27, at Silver Bay YMCA. Finally, in response to the YM’s request, our 2019 Fall Sessions will be scheduled for the first weekend of November (1-3) so that we avoid the annual FCNL Meeting with which we often conflict. Northeast Regional Meeting will host, making use of the ever-popular Doane Stuart School in Rensselaer, New York. As mentioned above, we look forward to working hand-in-hand with our regional Host Task Groups.

Please continue to evaluate our efforts and our yearly meeting sessions. We are listening.

*Melanie-Claire Mallison, clerk*

## **Supervisory Committee for the General Secretary**

The committee has been meeting regularly with the general secretary, Steve Mohlke, since he began full-time work with New York Yearly Meeting. We have met with him approximately every six weeks and have been available for phone consultation as needed.

The committee has focused on helping Steve identify his priorities and manage the multiple demands on his time. We have been supportive of his efforts to support and supervise the staff of the yearly meeting and to begin the process of engaging with the various meeting within the yearly meeting. At the same time, we have been supportive of his need to balance work and family and to seek spiritual nurturance for himself.

The committee anticipates that we will continue to work closely with Steve and to meet on a regular basis. We feel that we have established a good working relationship that will support the fine work that Steve is doing.

*Barbara Menzel, clerk*

## **NYYM Trustees**

Our recent agendas have been headed by the biblical quote “No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money.” (Matthew 6:24; Luke 16:13 (NIV)). How we, as Trustees of NYYM, navigate this challenge is a lesson in Quaker practice and process. Our role can be seen as a very tactical one; however, those on this committee are led to this work and strive to manage the NYYM trusts under Divine guidance.

During 2017, we met a number of times, again holding a full day retreat, as well as multiple teleconferences. Our activities included some of the following:

- We are finalizing the disposition of NYYM properties in Monkton, VT and in Yorktown Heights, NY. Both of these transactions are expected to be completed in calendar year 2018.
- Our Trust Funds Description document is reviewed

regularly and a link to the document is available on the NYYM website under Financial Resources for Meetings. We continue to move towards transparency with all of our activities.

- We have developed a protocol to ensure that the funds distributed to YM committees are being utilized in the manner for which they were intended by the use of accountability reports, which are collected annually.
- Issues around insurance and risk are being addressed in a concerted manner and we have invited the NYYM treasurer to committee meetings, and proposed that the treasurer be an ex-officio member of the committee to enhance further transparency and collaboration.
- We have defined the role and responsibilities of the financial clerk of trustees. This position works closely with the YM treasurer and staff. Further, the work undertaken by this position is reviewed by a named trustee on a regular basis.
- We have reorganized trustees files/records at the YM office and are looking to develop and institute an information governance policy so that records are managed/maintained as legally required.
- A change in by-laws was started and will be presented at the 2018 Summer Sessions as we continue to clarify our role and work for the YM.

At December 2017, assets under the care of trustees totaled \$6,120,960, all of which are invested through Friends Fiduciary Corporation. All realized income from our portfolio is distributed, minus a small charge for collective expenses of managing the assets. This information is also available on the website.

During 2018, trustees will onboard new members as former trustees leave the committee. Those former trustees, whose work has helped define our direction, will be missed. New voices and vision are welcomed as we continue our work under Divine guidance and your trust in our abilities.

*Roseann Press, Assistant Clerk, Trustees*

## NURTURE SECTION

### Nurture Coordinating Committee

*No report submitted; committee has been suspended. The reports from committees within the Nurture Section last year appear below.*

### Committee on Aging Concerns

The Committee on Aging Concerns has seen a productive year. A major development has been the integration of the ARCH (Aging Resources, Consultation and Help) program into the administrative structures of New York Yearly Meeting. The supervision of our experienced ARCH director, Callie Janoff is now carried by General Secretary Steve Mohlke. Our annual retreat built on the widely-attended strategic planning session held in the spring of 2017. This retreat was held this fall at Powell House, and involved ARCH visitors as well as committee members and local coordinators. It was a deep and enlightening weekend.

Our facilitated strategic planning retreat helped us sharpen our vision statement, which guides our programming: ***We envision meeting communities whose culture acknowledges and supports both the challenges and blessings of the aging process. We envision a Yearly Meeting in which older and differently abled persons and caregivers can receive appropriate care within their faith communities and in concert with family, friends, and other resources.***

Our committee has eight members, with current roles of co-clerks, a financial clerk, rotating recording clerks and a liaison to Personnel Committee. The co-clerks (Jill McLellan and Lyle Jenks) and liaison to Personnel (Patricia Glynn) serve as support committee for the ARCH director, with one Friend or the whole group meeting weekly with Callie via phone, over lunch or by Zoom. Committee members have attended both Nurture and General Services Coordinating Committees; we are now clustered with General Services while the future of Nurture

CC is discerned. We meet regularly by conference call as well as at YM sessions and our annual retreat. Opening worship both settles us from our busyness and grounds us for the work ahead.

We currently have a full time director and five part-time local coordinators. We work closely with Friends Foundation for Aging, which is the major funding source for the ARCH ministry. Staff transition at FFA begins a new chapter in our cooperative venture to provide services for seniors and differently-abled individuals as well as their friends and families.

Our goal is to have ARCH visitors accessible to each meeting or worship group in New York Yearly Meeting. Our work includes ARCH programming for monthly, regional, and prison meetings, as well as interest groups or workshops at all Yearly Meetings sessions. We held an interest group at the FGC Gathering in Niagara Falls, and workshops for those outside New York Yearly Meeting boundaries. One topic that has risen up is the prejudices of ageism. We continue ARCH visits to incarcerated Friends, have added ARCH programs for Attica Prison, and plan workshops for other prisons. One of the men receiving ARCH visits while in prison is now happily residing in the community. Our pattern of weekend trainings for new ARCH visitors is being re-evaluated, perhaps to include some online interaction.

We look forward to the coming year with enthusiasm and love as we continue to explore aging issues and to provide resources to our yearly meeting. Please see the report from Callie Janoff, ARCH director, for more reflections on our exciting, challenging and rewarding shared ministry.

*Jill McLellan and Lyle Jenks, co-clerks*

### Epistle Committee

*The epistle of the yearly meeting appears in the Yearbook, published in the fall.*

### Friends General Conference Representatives

*No report submitted.*



## Friends United Meeting Representatives

Friends United Meeting is an organization of yearly meetings in North America, Central America, Africa, and the Caribbean.

The ministry of Friends United Meeting continues to flourish in leadership and resource development.

Friends United Meeting provides educational and inspirational resources to assist local and yearly meetings to grow and flourish in the Spirit of Christ and create ways to guide Friends to that living Source from which the Quaker testimonies originated. FUM also provides training that grows effective leadership—not only for pastors and organizational leaders, but for any who are open to God’s service in the world. FUM operates a leading school in Palestine, a theological college in East Africa, advances peace education throughout hundreds of Kenyan schools, hosts a wide variety of practical trainings, and seeks to be a hub for sharing resources across our community. A growing concern for FUM has been advancing girl-child education opportunities in places where the rights of young women are often ignored.

To help with resourcing and expertise, FUM has partnered with Everence. Everence helps individuals, organizations and congregations integrate finances with faith through a national team of advisors and representatives. Everence is a Christian-based, member-owned financial services organization that offers banking, insurance, investments, asset management, financial planning and other financial services with community benefits and stewardship education. Everence is a ministry of Mennonite Church USA and other churches. Because of FUM’s partnership with Everence, all NYYM meetings have access to Everence’s Spirit-based financial planning resources. You can find more details at [everence.com](http://everence.com).

FUM ministries include, but are not limited to:

- Healthcare concerns and programs
- Community and spiritual leadership promotion
- Educational promotion and institutions
- Peace & non-violence teaching
- Witness and empowerment of women

Programs are located in North and Central Americas, the Middle East and Africa. Ministries, pastors and program directors strive for and promote a cross-cultural collaboration in all their work and goals.

Projects continue to flourish in Belize; Ramallah Friends School, Palestine; Friends Theological College, Kaimosi, Kenya; Turkana, Kenya; Samburu, Kenya; and Communications Friends United Press ([shop.fum.org](http://shop.fum.org)).

After many years as general secretary of FUM, Colin Saxton has left as of June 30, 2018. Kelly Kellum has been appointed the new general secretary. Colin and Kelly have been in a transitioning process since March 22, 2018.

FUM held its 31st Triennial Gathering of Friends United Meeting at Friends University, Wichita, Kansas, July 12–16, 2017. The theme was A Living Flame: *[One] kindled soul may be the agent whereby the slumbering embers within are quickened into a living flames*. (Thomas Kelly, *The Eternal Flame*)

The 2020 Triennial will be in Kenya; please consider whether you might be led to attend.

The FUM Board meeting was held at Powell House, in Old Chatham, NY, June 21–23, 2018. It was a retreat session for the Board focusing on “getting to know one another” and beginning the discussion of “having those difficult conversations” concerning FUM and the larger Society as a whole. The Board is committed to carry this concern into future board meetings.

Current NYYM Friends serving on FUM committees are:

Joe Garren, Beverly Archibald and Emily Provance (NYYM’s representatives to the FUM Board)

Gloria Thomson/Africans in North America Committee

Mary Kay Glazer/Stoking the Fire Committee

Ann Davidson/Unleashing the Power Committee

—Emily Provance

## Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC) Committee

FWCC Committee is planning a regional gathering to inspire and encourage our Quaker community to answer the Pisac Minute on Sustainability, approved at FWCC’s 2016 plenary meeting

in Pisac, Peru, calling for individuals and communities to take action to support environmental sustainability. This gathering will be in 2020 since the Section of the Americas gathering will be in the Kansas City area in March of 2019. Please read the Pisac Minute on Sustainability and get your meeting involved in responding to the call: [fwcc.world/fwcc-news/living-sustainably-and-sustaining-life-on-earth-the-minute-from-the-ple-nary](http://fwcc.world/fwcc-news/living-sustainably-and-sustaining-life-on-earth-the-minute-from-the-ple-nary). Living on a planet that can sustain life is a crucial issue for us all.

Emily Provance (15th Street) has been participating with the Friends World Committee for Consultation traveling ministry corps. This small group of Friends (about fifteen in total, half English-speaking, half Spanish-speaking) has a goal of making contact with as many meetings in the Section of the Americas as possible within the next five years. So far, Emily has visited several meetings in North Carolina, along with Guilford College, and she's also sending letters of greeting to Friends' churches and meetings throughout North America.

Monthly meetings and churches in New York Yearly Meeting are encouraged to invite a visitor from the traveling ministry corps to come and worship with them. You can do so online at [www.fwccamericas.org/traveling-ministry](http://www.fwccamericas.org/traveling-ministry).

Emily also traveled with the support of an FWCC grant to Kenya and Britain to meet with friends from Samburu Friends Mission and Britain yearly meeting. During that time she served as a guest teacher at Loltulelei Friends Primary School and the School for Shepherds. Though this travel was not undertaken in the official capacity of a traveling minister, it supported FWCC's mission of bringing together Friends of varying traditions and cultural experiences.

(You can find Emily's brief documentary about Samburu Friends Mission by going to [youtube.com](http://youtube.com) and searching for "Samburu Friends Mission." Her talk in Britain Yearly Meeting can be viewed by visiting the link [tinyurl.com/whatfuturefor-quakers](http://tinyurl.com/whatfuturefor-quakers).)

FWCC is excited to welcome two new young people to the committee this coming year. Lucy Jackson (Rockland) and Margaret Matthews (15th Street) both traveled with the contingent of young NYYM friends (under the care of Powell House) to

El Salvador to learn about Friends' work in the local communities there. (Current FWCC member Isabella Aguirre [Purchase] went on that trip as well.) Lucy also traveled with another group of NYYM youth to attend Ireland Junior Yearly meeting and learn about Quakers peace work in Ireland. Lucy and Margaret are both very interested in the power of connecting with Friends from all over the world. Three of our six representatives will be under 30 years old and we are glad to be mentoring these budding activists and providing them with leadership experience and exposure to the wider world of friends.

*Sylke Jackson, clerk*

## **Junior Yearly Meeting Committee**

*No report submitted.*

## **Oakwood Friends School**

On June 8th students from around the country and around the world gathered under a beautiful copper beech tree on the Oakwood Friends School campus to celebrate the School's 97th graduation ceremony at its Poughkeepsie home. As is tradition, each of the 36 graduates was given the opportunity to share words of gratitude, words of hope, and words of optimism. The students spoke powerfully about what they have gained academically, socially and spiritually. Through their words, spoken at times in multiple different languages, they expressed deep gratitude for the opportunity a Quaker education affords.

The thoughts of William Reagan, long tenured head of school, resonated as clearly on graduation day as they did 75 years earlier. "The most important choices are made in the context of that of God and within an honest climate searching for purpose and meaning. It may mean danger and occasionally disagreement with custom. It certainly means the emergence of a 'real me,' within a fellowship, highly personal, while fitting into an organizational pattern."

It is a testament to the strength of the Oakwood community that his words continue to accurately and meaningfully inform

our school culture and mission. One graduating senior from the Rosebud reservation in South Dakota spoke powerfully as she presented traditional Lakota quilts to members of the community. Another student identified her responsibility to be the voice of change she wishes to see in society. While another student, who lives half-way around the globe, pointed to his exposure to the Quaker faith, weekly meetings, and the ability to reflect inward as ‘immeasurable gifts.’

This year, shaped partially through the lens of our current society and politics, witnessed increased spiritual and civic engagement within the community. Students, faculty, parents and outside speakers engaged in dialog on social justice, equality, identity, faith, acceptance, gender and inclusion. Students travelled multiple times to Washington, Albany, and NYC, joining thousands of others speaking out on gun violence. Meeting with our NY State Representatives, our students voiced concerns on topics ranging from mental health awareness to suicide prevention to environmental sustainability. In December, commemorating the 1948 adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, students organized a public workshop at the Eleanor Roosevelt Estate. As part of Oakwood’s weekly service learning programs, students volunteered time, energy and talent at local food pantries, women’s shelters, retirement communities and nursery schools. A new, faculty-led initiative partnered Oakwood students and juveniles at the Red Hook Residential Center through an arts exchange program.

The Oakwood community remains committed to efforts to increase sustainability and stewardship, evidenced by the solar array, the four-season greenhouse curriculum, and numerous ‘citizen-scientist’ programs that get our students waist deep into the rivers and estuaries of the Hudson Valley. To date, the solar array has generated over 1.5 GWh of electricity, enough to power over 70 homes annually. The greenhouse continues to be a living, evolving classroom space, providing a tangible connection to the resources we consume. Partnering with local organizations such as Poughkeepsie Farm Project, The Cary Institute and the Beacon Institute, our students are volunteering their time while simultaneously gaining a deeper appreciation for the natural world around us.

This year, the Oakwood faculty, students and the board of managers drew immense strength from the spiritual foundations of this intentional community of learners. Every week over 175 individuals gather together for silent worship. Through both weekly reflection and guided discussions, the student body focused on deep listening and respect for voice. At the core of the community is the belief that there is light and voice within each of us. A belief that our differences and our diversity are strengths to be shared discussed and explored. A respect for the individual, even those we sometimes disagree with, and the ability to listen. Oakwood, under the care of NYYM, traces its roots back 220 years to Nine Partners Boarding School and is part of an educational and spiritual tradition that is much greater than the sum of its parts. It is this connection that helps sustain its mission, helps inform its curriculum and helps ensure that Quaker values remain central to the work of students and faculty every day.

*Chad Cianfrani, Head of School*

### **Elsie K. Powell House, Inc. Co-Executive Directors**

One of the most exciting results of the Powell House Strategic Plan that was approved by the committee in January, is the **theory of change** that now guides and focuses all of our decisions or actions in the coming years. Quoting from the plan:

As part of developing this strategic plan, we sought to describe the causal linkages between our activities and achievement of our mission. What assumptions are we making when we implement activities with confidence that they will affect the change articulated in our mission and vision statements? We will use this “theory of change” to help us maintain our focus, to design and test innovative and more effective programs, and to guide how we measure the effectiveness of what we do.

**IF** we invite people in such a way that they want to come to Powell House.

**And if** we make Powell House accessible to them in terms of personal finances, scheduling, transportation, and accessible facilities.

**And if** we create a space where people who come

- Listen to one another
- Experience Quaker practices, values, and testimonies in action
- Learn about the issues that insult our sense of justice in the world (“smudges on the Soul of Humanity”)
- Find a place of refuge, healing, and inspiration
- Experience spiritual growth and renewal
- Engage compassionately with people who hold different beliefs

**And if** we create a space where groups can

- Experience the Spirit
- Gather in a safe and supportive environment
- Experience joyful connection

**And if** we enable people and groups to

- Explore topics and issues of current concern to them, and then
- Develop ways of living into their intentions, and then
- Acquire skills in Quaker practices and other realms, and
- Access tools and other resources in support of these

**THEN** we’ll have more resilient people and stronger groups and communities.

**Then** we’ll have people who have a sense of global unity, who experience interrelatedness of the spiritual, natural, and human dimensions, and who can more skillfully reach across the divide

**Then God** will open minds and expand awareness, so that people (seekers) and groups can transform the issues of our day and time

**And then we’ll contribute to creating agents of change—people and groups who are empowered to live authentically in the world and to recognize truth and call it forth from one another.**

Just re-reading these statements, evokes such excitement and inspiration for our ongoing work! We invite YOU to catch this vision and join us in this important effort; creating and support agents of change who recognize truth in our world, as well as

call it forth in one another. We CAN make a difference through Powell House!

Thank you again for the privilege of living and working at Powell House to support these endeavors.

*Dennis Haag and Regina Baird Haag  
Elsie K. Powell House co-executive directors*

### **Elsie K. Powell House, Inc. Committee**

This year the Powell House Committee approved a strategic plan for the next five years. This includes the revised Mission, Vision, and Values statements which were published in last year’s *Yearbook* as well as programming, operational, and financial goals and strategies. Here is a brief excerpt from the section on our programs, “Over the coming five years, we will continue to address spiritual hunger and nurture gifts. We will more consciously and proactively support people to support themselves sustainably and be joyfully grounded in their lives.” Some of the ways we intend to do this are by creating programs to attract people in the middle stages of life, to offer single day and week-long workshops and retreats in addition to the traditional weekend format, to provide fresh opportunities for spiritual deepening, and to provide support and assistance on living one’s faith in daily life. After consultation with other retreat center directors, Regina Baird Haag has introduced a “subscription series” for Powell House adult programs which allows an individual to attend as many conferences as they would like for a fixed price of \$720. There is also a monthly meeting version which costs \$1440 and enables any one person from a meeting to attend each adult conference. We encourage you to take a look at our strategic plan summary. A copy is available on the Powell House website under the “About Us” menu tab.

Much gratitude to our strategic plan coordinator, the Powell House staff, the committee, and all of the people from the yearly meeting and beyond who filed out surveys, shared their ideas and energy, and held our process in the Light. Your efforts were vital in the planning process and your ongoing support will help Powell House to use the strategic plan to fulfil our mission: To foster spiritual growth after the manner of Friends and to



strengthen the application of Friends testimonies in the world.

During the last year, 577 people participated in the 22 adult or intergenerational conferences or events offered by Powell House. 18 of these folks were new to Powell House and took advantage of the \$25 discount offered to anyone coming for the first time. Additionally, 163 people, including 26 children, came on retreats from four monthly meetings. Powell House also hosted 458 people from community groups such as Friends schools, AVP, and others who are aligned with our mission.

The youth program continues to offer opportunities for young people to explore Quaker practices and principles in a safe and appealing atmosphere. Attendance numbers continue to be lower than they used to be and the staff has been trying a variety of methods to advertise their amazing programs. Despite this, word of mouth continues to be the most common way attendees find out about the youth program, something we can all help with. We are thankful that people generously contribute money to provide scholarships for young people to attend events as requests for financial assistance were higher this year than last.

This year the youth program offered two conferences for young adults between eleventh grade and about thirty years old. These weekends had lots of participants who appreciated coming “home” to Powell House to consider topics that are relevant to their life stage, such as what it means to be alone. With the support of Witness Coordinating Committee, and as part of the effort to prepare young folks for their place in their Quaker and wider communities, Mike Clark and a youth program graduate took three high schoolers down to Washington DC for the FCNL spring lobby weekend. They met up with additional high school students from New England Yearly Meeting and were the youngest group at this large event. The participants learned how to focus their energy for issues of justice to lobby their representatives in support of sensible immigration policies. From our youngest fourth graders, up through the recently developed young adult programs, the directors and their many co-facilitators and adult presences will continue to create a loving, inclusive community where people can be their true selves and ask how Friends’ testimonies are reflected in how they lead their lives.

*Heidi Kelly, clerk*

## **Youth Committee**

*No report submitted.*

## **WITNESS SECTION**

### **Witness Coordinating Committee**

As a committee, the Witness Coordinating Committee serves the yearly meeting in three important ways: to operate the Sharing Fund, to season minutes related to our witness in the outside world, before they come to the body for consideration, and to hear reports from its constituent committees, working groups, and liaisons to other Quaker bodies. It is responsible for oversight of those groups, to ensure that they are functioning as they should.

Sharing Fund: In 2017, total contributions to the Sharing Fund from individuals and monthly meetings were \$39,966.55. In addition, \$20,994.14 in income was taken from the Sharing Fund endowment. Certain committees are charged with the disbursement of income from designated trust funds; the total of this income was \$28,488.82.

Financial Services Committee has been working for the past few years to simplify and make more transparent the finances of the entire yearly meeting. In cooperation with Laura Cisar and Mary Hannon Williams, WCC has been working to reallocate funds from inactive line items to lines we anticipate will be used. Our goal is not to carry over, from one year to the next, more money than will be spent in the next year. Because a very large part of Sharing Fund contributions are made in December, we expect always to carry over significant sums, but we are trying hard to put Friends’ contributions to use within a year of receiving them.

### **Witness Activities Fund**

In response to the yearly meeting’s Leadings and Priorities, WCC established its Witness Activities Fund (WAF). This fund, which is one of the line items in the Sharing Fund, supports peace and social action activities by monthly meetings, and by individual members or attenders of monthly meetings. In 2017,

the WAF supported the following:

- Chatham-Summit—\$2,400 for an AVP day camp; report received.
- Ithaca—\$1,000 for travel to El Salvador for AVP and Friends Peace Teams work; report received.
- Ithaca—\$600 for presentations on Indians including visits from Indian elders; report received.
- Mohawk Valley—\$516 to cover cost of van rental for trip to Standing Rock at the end of November, 2016. Report received.
- Old Chatham—\$100 for their film series; report received.
- Rochester—\$250 for support of the Gandhi Institute; report received.
- Wilton—\$990 for work on ending solitary confinement; report received.

### **Witness to the World**

To supplement the allocated contributions (\$300 each) to a number of Friends' organizations outside the yearly meeting, WCC established the "Witness to the World" line in the Sharing Fund. In 2017, grants were made from this line to the following organizations to which we have representatives. It should be noted that the yearly meeting also supports two organizations directly through the Sharing Fund: Alternatives to Violence Project, and Right Sharing of World Resources.

Bolivian Quaker Education Fund  
Friends Committee on National Legislation  
Friends Peace Teams  
New Jersey Council of Churches  
New York Council of Churches  
Quaker Earthcare Witness  
William Penn House  
National Campaign for a Peace Tax Fund  
National Religious Campaign Against Torture  
Water Protectors Legal Collective

### **Peace and social action activities**

Although no minutes were brought forward for consideration

by the body in 2017, WCC was actively involved in follow-up to the protests at Standing Rock, and had officially appointed a delegation to Standing Rock in the last week of November, 2016. Monies collected for the benefit of the Water Protectors at Standing Rock could not be used to support their encampment, once it had been bulldozed, but have been sent to the Water Protectors Legal Defense Fund for use by those arrested for their protest activities.

Friends who are interested in the activities of individual Witness committees are referred to the advance reports submitted by those committees.

—Mary Eagleson

### **Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP), Inc.**

*No report submitted.*

### **American Friends Service Committee Northeast Region**

*No report submitted.*

### **Barrington Dunbar Fund for Black Development**

The Committee for the Barrington Dunbar Fund for Black Development sent letters of invitation encouraging meetings and worship groups to **apply for funds from this committee.**

The Black Development Fund was established in 1969 as the response of New York Yearly Meeting to the needs of the Black and Puerto Rican communities within the area of New York Yearly Meeting. The name was changed in 1978 to recognize the work of Barrington Dunbar. In addition, the charge now includes all Latinos in the NYYM area, not just those of Puerto Rican descent.

The committee has granted funds for programs in the Black and Latino communities, including development projects that help preschool children, youth, and aged who are victimized by the adverse conditions of poverty and racism; projects that

help with re-entry challenges of formerly incarcerated individuals; scholarships for disadvantaged students at high school and college level; and many other programs of a like nature. This committee is supported by the Sharing Fund.

In response to Friends applications from throughout NYYM we have given to the following:

- **Expand, New York City**—Black Male Teachers Training & Retention Program
- **Farmington Scipio Regional Meeting**—Prison Reentry Program
- **Operation Unite, Hudson NY**—Cultivates well-rounded, progressive youth by providing programs that foster a sense of direction, self-esteem, and social consciousness.
- **Powell House Youth Program**—Scholarships for economically disadvantaged Black & Latino youth.
- **The Redemption Center, New York City**—transitional housing for those returning home from prison.
- **Rochester ACTS**—an alliance of faith-based organizations that has worked towards increasing funding for safe and affordable childcare. They are currently working on raising the wages for home-based health-care workers (mostly women of color).
- **Rochester Baobab Cultural Center**—promotes an understanding of African culture, as rooted in ancient traditions and routed by the migratory experiences of people through the Caribbean, Europe, and Asia to the Americas. Visitors experience this journey through art and educational exhibits, films and documentaries, poetry readings, book discussions, and other cultural activities.
- **Rural & Migrant Ministry**—identifies and nurtures new generations of leaders in upstate rural New York, through their Youth Empowerment Programs: Youth Arts Group, Youth Economic Education Group, Summer Overnight Leadership Camp, Summer Day Programs, and High School/College Internships. Many of these young leaders are first generation immigrants, and face language and cultural barriers.

- **The Youth Services Opportunities Project (YSOP)**—conducts overnight work camps that engage youth and college students in meaningful service experiences.
- Scholarships for students attending **Brooklyn, Oakwood, and Westbury Friends** schools, and scholarships for students from **Buffalo and Peconic Bay Meetings**.

*Helen Garay Toppins, clerk*

## Black Concerns Committee

The White Privilege Conference (WPC) is coming to New York Yearly Meeting and will arrive in western New York in the city of Rochester in 2019. It will take the form of a regional White Privilege Symposium. The WPC examines race and gender-based privilege, and strives to empower and equip individuals to work for equity and justice through self and social transformations. The WPC is now under the management of The Privilege Institute, a non-profit that supports the work of WPC. There has been a growing demand to create regional WPCs and Quakers in the city of Rochester are stepping up to the plate. The symposium will focus on criminal justice, education, housing, and immigration. The NYYM Black Concerns Committee (BCC) is planning on taking an active role in supporting the Rochester WPC Symposium, much as we did in support of the WPC that was held in Philadelphia. This year we also helped finance NYYM Quaker attendance at the 19th Annual White Privilege Conference, held in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Its theme centered on preparing for future social justice work.

The Black Concerns Committee's work is ongoing. Racism is persistent but so are we. The higher you build the wall **the harder we must climb**. The Committee for Black Concerns used to be called the Race Relations Committee and we are still trying to meet the challenges of improving race relations within and without the Religious Society of Friends. Our mandate from New York Yearly meeting is to: broaden and deepen communication among all ethnic groups, and to develop among Friends a keener awareness of the violence of racism. To that end we have been providing *Deep Denial: The Persistence of White Supremacy in U.S. History & Life*, by David Billings, to Quaker

meetings, schools, and colleges. We highly recommend this text as a nurturing way to engage meetings and communities in racial justice discussions and actions. The text, in conjunction with the free online study guide, will help deepen understanding of race and racism, stimulate discussion of white supremacy, and assist with organizing antiracist actions in your meeting and in your community. A number of monthly meetings are using *Deep Denial* for their study groups. You can access the free on line study guide at: [www.cddbbooks.com/public/DeepDenialStudyguide.pdf](http://www.cddbbooks.com/public/DeepDenialStudyguide.pdf). If your meeting would like a copy of *Deep Denial*, please contact a Black Concerns Committee member. We helped sponsor an author event with Billings, who is a historian and antiracist organizer who has worked for half a century in the struggle for racial justice. His text is part popular history, part personal memoir, and documents and explores why we remain “a nation hard-wired by race.” The conversation with him was lively, interactive and informative. We encourage Friends to invite him to their meetings, or to attend any of his author events.

At a follow-up WPC held in Philadelphia (and attended by 100+ Friends), the BCC created a Racial Justice Network. Its informal operations have been successful, with many Friends contacting us and seeking support for their personal anti-racism work. However, its formal organized structure is in need of much improvement. We are hoping that as we gear up for the Rochester WPC Symposium the anti-racism work among NYYM Friends can be more collaborative. We need to coordinate with the NYYM Task Group on Racism, the European American Friends Working to End Racism, and the Prisons Committee, as well as the Ithaca Center for Racial Justice. After much discernment and deliberation, the BCC has decided that our response to the WPC call will be to campaign to reinstate higher education in prisons in NYYM.

We would like to continue to provide scholarships for Friends to participate in anti-racist training workshops. We would like to continue to provide scholarships for Black and Latino children who need support in order to attend Powell House and Junior Yearly Meeting. However, how much support we can provide will depend on the level of giving to the Sharing Fund. We hope that meetings and individual Friends will give generously in

order to make all of our desired work possible.

*Helen Garay Toppins, clerk*

## **Bolivian Quaker Education Fund**

The Bolivia Quaker Education Fund (BQEF), after a “routine” 2017, has seen considerable action during the first half of 2018. The year began with an acknowledgement of our precarious financial situation and serious consideration of operational options. These options ranged from ending our programs responsibly and on a celebratory note due to our many accomplishments, to ramping up both fundraising and institutional positioning to provide a solid foundation for continuation of our mission. We have chosen the latter option.

As part of our ramping up we have identified and moved into making arrangements for bringing up a scholarship student as an apprentice teacher at a U.S. Friends’ School, and as an ambassador to meetings and yearly meetings around the country.

We have organized a study tour of Bolivia and our programs are to take place in late July and August. This tour will be lead by Alicia Lucasi and we are using this year’s experience to set the foundations for making this a regular part of the program. We find that the opportunity for North American and European Friends to visit Bolivia is highly rewarding for participants and an important element in achieving one of our organizational priorities: to strengthen ties between Andean, North American, and European Quakers.

Former scholarship students are increasingly becoming involved either in direct support of the programs from which they benefited or in tangential activities that complement the social impact that assisting Friends in their education can provide.

Meanwhile, the scholarship program continues to provide critical financial support and assistance with navigating the intricacies of attending a university for young Quaker, mostly Aymara, students who are the first generation do so in their families and communities.

The student residence in Sorata supports young high-schoolers and their families in their desire to make even high school



level education accessible.

Within these programs are components emphasizing Quaker values (many of which match Aymara cultural values that have been fading in the course of an often brutal national history of oppression and resource extraction by the dominant sectors of society). The emphasis on these values, such as operating within a sense of community, of working for peace and integrity, of reciprocity and “passing it forward” has had a profound influence on many lives.

We are grateful to our local Bolivian staff for their dedication and passion about their work, for continuing support from New York Yearly Meeting, and for Friends who give generously of their “time, talent, and treasure” to this wonderful project, started in 2002 by Newton Garver.

*Jens Braun*

### **Committee on Conscientious Objection to Paying for War (CPOW)**

*No report submitted.*

### **Earthcare Working Group**

On June 21, 2017, Pamela Boyce Simms, then clerk of the Earthcare Working Group, wrote to the members of the working group, saying, “NYYM QEW representation to QEW anchors me fully in New York City/NYYM working for Friends at the UN.” She suggested that either the working group be laid down or that a clerk or two co-clerks be found to assume the role she had been taking.

Margaret McCasland and Robert (Sunfire) Kazmayer agreed to accept the positions of co-clerks. They met on July 7 and agreed that the Earthcare Working Group would focus on two or three projects based on the interests of its members. On July 28, members of the Earthcare Working Group met and agreed that Margaret and Sunfire would be the co-clerks with Alice McMechen, Janet Soderberg, and Pamela Boyce Simms supporting them as a steering *team*.

Members of the steering team met by teleconference on

September 19. Sheree Cammer was invited to participate because of her interest in ecological food production. The working group agreed to support her in having a teleconference on ecological eating open to all members and attenders of NYYM meetings. October 24 was set for the date of this event and it was promoted in InfoShare and with small handouts sent to all the monthly meetings. There were twelve participants in the call, which included an informative discussion and a Rex-Amblor-style meditation. Possible follow-up was also discussed, including a dinner at Albany meetinghouse for NERM meetings with all locally sourced food.

Several members of the EWG joined the NYYM Peace Concerns Working Group on their conference call November 29 to discuss connections between peace concerns and earthcare concerns.

In the latter weeks of 2017, the Earthcare Working Group developed a budget for 2018 that included developing a lending library of DVDs related to climate change and earth care for the meetings and committees within NYYM, support for a prototype dinner related to ecological eating, and support for the work that Pamela Boyce Simms is doing with QEW. We learned that Pamela would be a guest editor for the March issue of *Spark*, and several members agreed to provide material for that issue.

The clerks believe that we have laid the groundwork for growth in 2018.

*Robert (Sunfire) Kazmayer & Margaret McCasland, co-clerks*

### **European American Quakers Working to End Racism Working Group**

EAQWER is a working group of white-anti-racist Friends under the care of Witness Coordinating Committee. We have liaisons to the Black Concerns Committee, Task Group on Racism, Indian Affairs, Prisons, Friends Center for Racial Justice and WCC. This year we suffered several losses which we feel deeply: the passing of Florence McAllister, relocation out of the area by Norma Ellis and Irma Guthrie, and the in-progress move to North Carolina of Jeff Hitchcock, the impetus behind our group’s founding. The national atmosphere of intensified racism

and violence has also affected the focus of individual members making more demands on their time in other actions in their hometowns and communities.

In spite of these demands we met our usual three times during the year in addition to meeting during Summer Sessions. Our February 2017 meeting was in Ithaca at the Friends Center for Racial Justice along with members of Ithaca Monthly Meeting and the Task Group on Racism, the first groups to be hosted by FCRJ for a weekend.

We have been working on a revision of our mission statement and discussed the need to do more outreach and organizing, consistent with our mission. We noted we have not done as much as possible with our intention of working during our meetings to undo our internalized racial superiority. While that work is a priority, it is often pushed to the back burner while we attend to business instead.

We examined expanding our presence, re-energizing consciousness raising and a sense that the cutting-edge white anti-racist work we did in our early years in the yearly meeting is stalled. Things have changed and we need to examine whether and how our work needs to evolve. Are we a placeholder that may be impeding the work because of how we structure ourselves? How do we engage younger leadership? Should we do more visiting with local meetings as EAQWERs? Can we build a better connection with Powell House, NYC, individual quarters and regions, and FCRJ? We agreed that it remains helpful to have EAQWER as a base of connection and support for the work.

We have great interest in the FGC assessment of institutionalized racism and wondered how it could be initiated in NYYM. Could this be an opportunity to take on leadership, a role we played the previous year in helping create momentum for NYYM participation at the 2016 White Privilege Conference and the follow-up Powell House weekend? We think NYYM could benefit from an assessment of institutionalized racism, and will follow FGC's progress. We decided to invite a member of FGC's assessment committee to attend Summer Sessions as a resource person who could offer interest groups and informal conversations about the assessment.

In NYYM's policy on expenditures and reimbursement we see

a poverty/racial component in the expectation of prepay before NYYM reimbursement for individual's expenses. We have been beginning a conversation within the yearly meeting on how to address this.

We have been discussing how to engage white anti-racist Friends in other yearly meetings to organize a national Quaker white anti-racist presence to speak truth to Quaker institutions on racial justice and equity. We drafted an open letter inviting participation in a video-conference, conference call or other platform for establishing a community of conversation and planning. EAQWER would facilitate the organization of a core planning group. The open letter asks for both interested participants and those interested in helping to plan/convene the group, and we gathered information about points of contact from other yearly meetings re white anti-racist work to whom we can send the letter.

The treasurer's report for 2017 is as follows:

## Expenditures 2017

### Program:

Donation to Friends Center on Racial Justice (FCRJ) for Feb. meeting there	240
Donation to FGC's Assessment on Racism	200
Attendance of member to FGC Gathering to gather info on FGC assessment	200
Donation to Great Small Works for video production of the play Mariposa and the Saint (on solitary confinement)	200
Donation to Angela Hopkins supporting the work of Friends' Center on Racial Justice	<u>200</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1040</b>

### Administrative:

*There was a carryover of \$50 allocated for travel reimbursement from 2017 that was not claimed.*

Travel for representative to WCC Jan. Coordinating Committee at POHO	50
Travel WCC rep to Spring Sessions	<u>50</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

**GRAND TOTAL** **\$1140**

In considering our budget request for 2018, we noted how EAQWER's plans serve the implementation of the Leadings and Priorities:

1. With respect to gathering the yearly meeting into one body, EAQWER is called to support our community to acknowledge racial divisions and to heal them. We work to remove

barriers to the full participation and inclusion of Friends of Color. We labor with ourselves and all European American Friends to overcome white privilege and internalized superiority patterns, so we too may be fully gathered into the yearly meeting.

2. Our working group attempts to inform and inspire our community to witness for racial justice. We study the roots of racism and its current manifestations and dynamics. We then design projects and activities to support NYYM to speak out and act against racial oppression.

*Evelyn Kennenwood, for the Working Group*

### **Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) Representatives**

The FCNL delegates from NYYM attended the November, 2017 annual meeting in Washington D.C. and voiced concerns about the outsized unaccountable military budget in Congressional offices all over Capitol Hill. In our meetings we carried a copy of a letter from four senators, two Democrats, and two Republicans requesting an audit of the military budget. On December 17, 2017, the Pentagon announced its first-ever audit would be completed and reported by November 15, 2018. This is a milestone that will fulfill a Trump campaign promise and respond to federal legislation passed in 2010 that gave the Pentagon 7 years to clean up its books before reporting. We also lobbied for spending no more on the military than the civilian side of the budget. Instead, both parties voted for a \$100 billion increase in the military budget while cutting many domestic programs. We will continue to advocate for reduced military spending particularly on weapons procurement.

We are also called to lobby for prevention of genocide: [www.fcnl.org/updates/support-the-elie-wiesel-genocide-and-atrocities-prevention-act-620](http://www.fcnl.org/updates/support-the-elie-wiesel-genocide-and-atrocities-prevention-act-620)

FCNL also led a vibrant spring lobby weekend for youth attended by many from NYYM with the help of Mike Clark and others. In addition, FCNL continues to recruit young adult organizers to work part time in their communities for our issues: climate change, immigration reform, peace, etc. This is a

brilliant strategy to cultivate and financially support new young leaders.

Friends, please consider forming an advocacy team to engage with our national government in your region through your U.S. House of Representatives and U.S. Senate members. These offices don't hear enough from citizen lobbyists whose interests are not commercial. Advocacy teams have been formed in response to a call by FCNL. Below is commentary from Kathy Stackhouse, a member of FCNL's general committee and of the NYQM advocacy team.

We are a small but active group with each of us adding our particular strengths to move FCNL's goals forward. We have members from all the NYQM meetings. We meet twice a month. On first Wednesdays we hear a call from FCNL and check in with each other. On third Wednesdays we discuss what we have learned and encourage each other to follow our leadings. This arrangement makes doing the work much easier than trying to do it all by ourselves.

In 2018 the goal is to prevent Trump from going to war with North Korea by backing a bill that reasserts Congress's responsibility to declare war. We visited Schumer's office, attended and spoke at two Nadler town halls and at a Maloney candidates' breakfast. We also hosted a well-attended talk by Dan Jasper and Linda Lewis about AFSC's work on the Korean Peninsula. We are getting to know our representatives and have written letters to the editor. We welcome new members.

*Diane Keefe, clerk of NYYM delegates to FCNL*

### **Friends Peace Teams Representatives**

Friends Peace Teams (FPT) is a Spirit-led organization working around the world to develop long-term relationships with communities in conflict to create programs for peacebuilding, healing and reconciliation. FPT's three initiatives build on extensive Quaker experience combining practical and spiritual aspects of conflict transformation.

**Peacebuilding en Las Americas ("PLA"):** has ten active peacebuilding and trauma healing programs in Colombia, Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras. We provide grassroots solidarity, tools and hope to those most discriminated

against and marginalized. We work with youth, teachers, war survivors, former and active gang members, prison personnel, indigenous communities, and grassroots leaders. Some recent highlights include: the first-ever workshop in a Mayan language in Guatemala; trauma healing workshops in El Salvador with war survivors who have “disappeared” loved-ones; workshops that empowered women in Afro-indigenous and indigenous communities defending their land rights against illegal development in Honduras; workshops that provide rehabilitation for former gang members and prisoners in a Honduran prison; and workshops with survivors of violence, as well as demobilized guerrilla and paramilitary fighters in Colombia.

PLA facilitators helped spread AVP to Argentina, Belize, Chile, Panama, and Peru; and strengthened relationships through visitation.

**Asia West Pacific Initiative (“AWP”):** engages with peaceworkers in Central Java, North Sumatra, Aceh and Papua in Indonesia; Manila, Tagbilaran City, Cebu and Davao City in the Philippines; Seoul, Dejeon and Jeju Island in Dorea; Kathmandu, Pokhara, Surket and Timura in Nepal; Ukraine; and Chechnya, and maintains a concern for peaceworkers in Palestine, Israel, Afghanistan, Iraq, Australia, and Aotearoa/New Zealand. We support volunteers called to do work for peace and nonviolence, trauma healing, conflict transformation, and social justice advocacy with communities recovering from war or religious violence.

In 2017, AWP, in relationship with the Community Self-Reliance Center and National Land Rights Forum, working with the landless and land-poor of Nepal, offered flood relief, input into their constitutional demands for their rights, training in transformative mediation, and uncovering hidden land agendas that often lie beneath armed conflict. AWP supported Nepalese AVP facilitator Jamuna Shrestha to visit Bhutanese resettled in the U.S. with a concern for their epidemic suicide rate. We supported AVP Nepal in hosting the AVP International Gathering, bringing 169 facilitators from 39 countries. In Indonesia, Peace Place Pati hosted a compassionate listening workshop, and in January, 2018, the Fifth International Peace Training with 45 participants from 11 countries in five languages simultaneously. Peaceworkers came from Indonesia, Philippines,

Nepal, Korea, Chechnya, Ukraine, United Kingdom, Singapore, Australia, Aotearoa/New Zealand, and the United States. We continue to develop and support two demonstration sites for creative, developmental learning for young children, families, and teachers based on peace and nonviolence. Three Indonesian peaceworkers have completed degrees in early childhood education so that the preschools established based on AVP and developmental play principles will have qualified teachers. AWP representatives visited the Philippines and conducted AVP and trauma resiliency workshops.

**African Great Lakes Initiative (“AGLI”):** strengthens, supports and promotes peace activities at the grassroots level in the Great Lakes region of Africa—Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda. AGLI responds to requests from local religious and non-governmental organizations that focus on conflict management, peacebuilding, trauma healing and reconciliation.

In Burundi, HIV testing and counseling were provided to 2,100 people and 190 received antiretroviral treatment. Healing and Rebuilding our Communities (HROC)-Burundi conducted 170 workshops with participation of 2,308 people. In Kenya, Transforming Communities for Social Change (“TCSC”) conducted numerous trainings, dialogues, and listening sessions. In Rwanda, there were 49 trainings conducted and construction of the HROC Musanze center continues.

**Changes in FPT Structure and Governance:** Over the past year FPT has continued its substantial transition in structure and governance. We thoroughly examined our origins as well as the principles and values approved by the founders, recorded our current practice, proposed changes and seasoned them. We retain and affirm our bottom-up practice that has served us well and has distinguished us as a Quaker organization operating in the manner of Friends.

**Changes in FPT Staffing and Volunteers:** The volunteer leadership (i.e. coordinators) in two of our three initiatives—AGLI and PLA—has now shifted to part-time paid staff with David Bucura (Rwanda YM) serving as coordinator for AGLI and Monica Maher for PLA. Nadine Hoover (NYYM) continues volunteering as AWP Coordinator. Each initiative has a working group that carries the authority and responsibility for



the guidance and supervision of its work. Previously, working groups functioned only as support for the volunteer coordinator. Now working groups must actively supervise and direct that coordinator.

This year we welcomed three new part-time staff: Allie Prescott as Communications Specialist for PLA; Anne Hutchinson (OVYM) as Publicist with AGLI; and Bess Keller (BYM) as Communications Specialist for FPT.

We are grateful to the many volunteers who help us and our partners abroad to continue to do this work.

Please talk with me about this work and visit our website: [www.FriendsPeaceTeams.org](http://www.FriendsPeaceTeams.org).

*Shirley Way, NYYM representative to Friends Peace Teams*

## Indian Affairs Committee

### ***Historical context worth repeating:***

*From the first arrival of Quakers on this continent, there have been Friends who carried a concern for the Indigenous people whose home we had encroached upon. A committee convened in 1798 with that shared concern. The Indian Affairs Committee is the longest standing committee of our yearly meeting. We know we stand on the shoulders of many Friends who have come before us.*

*In 2016, for the first time in the history of the committee, we sought representation from the Haudenosaunee (our Native partners in this geographic region). After consideration, the Haudenosaunee agreed that such a liaison was in right order and agreed to have Kay Olan, a member of the Mohawk Nation, join us. She served with us for two years. We deeply appreciate Kay's many contributions to our work together. Continuing this partnership in 2018, Freida Jacques, a Turtle Clan Mother of the Onondaga, has joined us, and brings us her keen attention to overcoming the effects of the Doctrine of Discovery.*

**Other activities of the committee** included, but were not limited to, participation in:

- Two Row on the Grand River at Six Nations in Ontario where two IAC members paddled and provided support in July.

- The Friends of Ganondagan, with support from IAC, invited Freida Jacques to present at the 1816 Meeting House. We continue support for the organization and specifically budgeted extra funds for Canandaigua Day celebrations.
- FGC Gathering in Niagara Falls, NY: A week-long workshop on Quakers and Indigenous Peoples as Allies lead by three IAC members.
- Presentation of the “Roots of Injustice” workshop/interest group at Summer Sessions.
- Ongoing invitations to committee members to speak, present workshops and share their witness and journeys continue as result of this work in the wider world.

**How many times did you meet?** The committee met at Spring, Summer, and Fall Sessions in 2017. We have reflected extensively on the need to meet a fourth time each year to share more deeply in our work, and have plans for a retreat in the autumn of 2018 to do so. We have found visitors come to our meetings and wish to join or share in the work in other ways.

**Do you have enough members/support?** We are pleased to share that the Indian Affairs Committee has begun to have the energy needed for supporting each other in getting our work done. We are coming together in roles and responsibilities and look forward to our retreat to fully gather. We are additionally grateful for the financial and personal support of the Yearly Meeting for this committee's work.

**Where is the life in your group—how does the Spirit move?** Use of the “Acknowledgement of the Lands” before every yearly meeting gathering is an important tool of education. IAC members have presented a workshop originally developed by Paula Palmer to address the Doctrine of Discovery called “Roots of Injustice, Seeds of Change” at Summer Sessions, in Canada, regionally, and will continue to offer this to monthly and quarterly meetings throughout our yearly meeting and beyond. Two members are working on the original Kairos exercise with the NOON Ally organization in Syracuse. There have been several presentations and a training by Canadian facilitators, insuring both non-Native and Native peoples are trained and informed. Other members are becoming increas-

ingly involved in activities within their home areas, connecting to the rising work and awareness of the collaboration of Native and Allies as a tool for survival. Still others are continuing their ministry of education and presence within interfaith and ally opportunities. The energy of the Two Row and Standing Rock flows among us.

**How is your budget, if you have one? What services have you provided?** Our generous budget has been used to support the following projects over the past year:

- Akwesasne Freedom School—Mohawk Language Immersion
- Akwesasne Task Force on the Environment
- Kanatsiohareke Mohawk Community
- Friends of Ganondagan for Canadaigua Day
- Ndakinna Education Center
- Two Row on the Grand (Canada)—Haudenosaunee and Native collaboration
- Onondaga Lake Fund—Onondaga Lake clean up
- Haudenosaunee Speaker at the 1816 Meeting House
- FCNL Native American Project
- Blossom Garden Friends School—Quaker-run school with Seneca children in the student body
- Seven stipends and one scholarship for Native American students to pursue education.

Additional committee budgeted funds have been allocated to support the workshop work being carried by our IAC members and for stipends to Native presenters.

- Standing Rock Sioux—Water Protectors
- Contributions for Standing Rock, new WCC contributions and new Trustee funds have given us the additional financial support to assist efforts otherwise not supported and allowed for a nearly \$3500 one time contribution to The Water Protectors Legal Defense Fund.

### **Moving forward:**

We are reaching out throughout the NYYM community for

new IAC members as well as encouraging committee meeting visitors to give their names to nominating. We hope to widen our IAC message by continued presence in monthly meetings. The interface with Indigenous concerns, environmental concerns and our youth's growing awareness of the encroaching pipelines in all our communities is imperative and ongoing. We are encouraging a yearly meeting presence at Canandaigua Day in November. There are long range workshops and inter-yearly meeting collaborations going on to bring about a truth and healing process by Quakers with the Native Peoples of their respective areas.

We are humbled to help carry the Spirit of the Two Row flag of alliance with all beings.

*Buffy Curtis and Rebekah Rice, co-clerks*

### **National Campaign for a Peace Tax Fund (NCPT) & Peace Tax Foundation report**

*Information adapted from [peacetaxfund.org](http://peacetaxfund.org)*

The National Campaign for a Peace Tax Fund advocates for legislation, H.R. 1947, which will protect the First Amendment rights of Americans who have deeply held religious, moral, and ethical beliefs about how their federal income taxes are used for military purposes. Many Americans seek to pay their income taxes knowing they are following the leadings of their conscience. However, a minority of Americans find these deeply held beliefs challenged because of their objection to war.

Quakers, Church of the Brethren, Mennonites and others represent this minority whose religious liberty is compromised when they pay their income taxes. Our government already recognizes the liberty of those who have deeply held beliefs against war and they are exempt from military service. The National Campaign for a Peace Tax Fund seeks equal justice under the law for taxpayers who do not wish to support war financially as a matter of conscience. H.R. 1947 will protect the rights of all as envisioned in The Bill of Rights of the United States Constitution.

This bill directs the Department of the Treasury to establish the Religious Freedom Peace Tax Fund for the deposit of

income, gift, and estate taxes paid by or on behalf of taxpayers: (1) who are designated conscientious objectors opposed to participation in war in any form based upon their sincerely held moral, ethical, or religious beliefs or training (within the meaning of the Military Selective Service Act); and (2) who have certified their beliefs in writing.

Amounts deposited in the Fund shall be allocated annually to any appropriation not for a military purpose. Treasury shall report to the House and Senate Appropriations Committees on the total amount transferred into the Fund during the preceding fiscal year and the purposes for which such amount was allocated. The privacy of individuals using the Fund shall be protected.

Find out more about H.R. 1947 at [peacetaxfund.org](http://peacetaxfund.org).

*Jens Braun*

### **National Religious Campaign against Torture**

*No report submitted.*

### **New Jersey Council of Churches**

*No report submitted.*

### **New York State Council of Churches**

*No report submitted.*

### **Prisons Committee**

There are seven Quaker prison worship groups within New York Yearly Meeting located at the following facilities: Attica, Auburn, Cayuga, Green Haven, Orleans, Sing Sing and Woodbourne. The worship group at Otisville is an interfaith group sponsored by Quakers. These groups range in size from two to fifteen members. The NYYM Prisons Committee is comprised in large part of volunteers who attend these worship groups, although this is not a pre-requisite for membership. The committee offers an opportunity for prison volunteers to share experiences and

“best practices.” It’s a place that provides the yeast that sustains us to grow. The committee met a total of four times in 2017 at Spring, Summer and Fall Sessions.

Six of our eight prison worship groups submitted state of the meeting reports for 2016 and the Prisons Committee compiled these into a State of the Prison Worship Groups report which was submitted to Witness Coordinating Committee at Summer Sessions 2017 and copies were mailed to the clerks of all prison worship groups. The incarcerated men expressed deep appreciation for their small, close-knit worship groups with ‘meeting as the next best thing to home.’ Groups were thankful for their extended Quaker family—the “wonderful and compassionate volunteers” who “deal with the rules and frustrations of prison life in order to comfort us and pray.” There was also a yearning for connection to the wider Quaker community. One group went as far as to say: “Inside Friends know there is an active Quaker world outside. But we feel invisible—part of our Friends community but unable to be fully in it—like ghosts. Friends inside feel extremely isolated, but they will not give up. Writing this report is a way of reaching out.” Several outside volunteers encouraged inside Friends to write to meetings in their region to seek connection by asking how spirit is moving in their meeting.

The Prisons Committee supports a ministry of outreach by funding an extensive mailing of holiday and greeting cards and calendars from the NYYM office to men in our worship groups and those who have been moved to facilities without a group. This year we are also supporting the long-standing greeting card ministry of Genesee Valley Friends. The meeting receives wonderful replies and responses to the cards that they send to prisoners and several of these were read at Café Night to illustrate the direct impact of giving to the Sharing Fund.

The Prisons Committee has established a reintegration grant to provide financial assistance for members of prisons worship groups on their return to society. To be eligible they must be registered as a Quaker with the Department of Corrections and Community Supervision (DOCCS), and have been consistently attending a worship group for at least a 12-month period immediately prior to their release or their transfer to another facility. If an eligible incarcerated Friend is transferred to a facility without a worship group, Prisons Committee/outside

volunteers will connect that person with a Spiritual Visitor. The eligibility of the incarcerated Friend will not be impacted if they remain in regular contact with the Religious Society of Friends through their Spiritual Visitor.

The Reintegration Grant is up to a maximum of \$1000 and Prisons Committee recommends that an initial \$500 be made available without restrictions within the first three months with a further \$500 available for specific needs over time. However, the timing and incremental nature of the disbursements will be determined on a case-by-case basis by the local Committee of Care and Accountability responsible for the worship group from which the released person came. A process for disbursement of the grants was approved at Summer Sessions 2017.

The committee also granted funds to support the following

- Hope House, a recently opened transitional housing program for formerly incarcerated women in the Bronx (started by a formerly incarcerated woman)
- Books through Bars
- AVP Bolivia to support facilitators' travel to conduct workshops in prisons (the Bolivian Department of Corrections will measure the effectiveness of AVP in reducing recidivism)

**Prisons Committee is in need of Spiritual Visitors.** If you are interested please be in touch with any member of the committee. We have funds available to help with travel, collect phone calls and postage to support this ministry. Also, please be in touch with the committee if you are interested in attending a worship group.

*Robert Martin, clerk*

### **Right Sharing of World Resources**

In 2017, the Sharing Fund of NYYM contributed \$2,217.86 to RSWR, Inc. Together with contributions from individuals, monthly meetings, and other yearly meetings (totaling \$550,000 in the 2017-18 fiscal year), this sum provided grants and support to 44 women's groups. These groups, in turn, made loans to their members so they could start or enhance small

businesses. At an average of about 25 women per group, we were able in this one year to make a big difference in the lives of about 1,100 very poor women.

The grants themselves are far from the whole story. In India, we work with established (but new and small) NGOs who support the women's groups with advice and training. In Kenya and Sierra Leone, we have contracted with local individuals to visit the groups and give them the training they need to succeed in their businesses. Many of the women are illiterate, so training can include rudimentary financial literacy as well as, in some cases, skills they need to carry out a trade, such as tailoring or buying and selling food or charcoal. Other women already know their trades, or are already farming, but being able to borrow money for inventory or seed at a reasonable rate of interest can make all the difference.

It may be that the most important thing the groups do is not income generation. Imagine what happens when women get together. They talk, of course. They talk about their children, their husbands if they are married, the welfare of other women in the village, and any problems that may be troubling their communities. In a self-help group, they are likely not only to talk, but to think about what they can do to alleviate those problems. In the male-dominated societies where our partners live, this is revolutionary. In short, we are not only helping poor women make a little money, we are empowering them to work together to solve local problems.

RSWR isn't entirely about making grants to NGOs working with very poor women. It is also about encouraging Friends to initiate change within our own lives. Whether or not we are aware of it, the materialism of our society imposes burdens on us. Jackie Stillwell, the general secretary of RSWR, led an interest group on the Power of Enough at Friends General Conference in July, 2017. She will be coming to Silver Bay as our plenary speaker this year, 2018.

*Mary Eagleson, representative*



## William Penn House

The William Penn House celebrated its 50th anniversary this past year as a center of activism and service in the nation's capital. More than just a hostel for the economical tourist, the WPH is a home of important discussions and calls to action. One cannot walk past 515 East Capitol Street without recognizing something special is happening here.

WPH has been an especially open host this past year, as hundreds of people have used their space as a physical and spiritual base while following their leadings to speak up for love in the face of hate. During the Women's March this past fall, over one thousand people used their bathrooms, rested in their public spaces, and refilled water bottles in the WPH. In December, several activists stayed at the WPH before engaging in non-violent direct action at the capital to protest budget cuts to life-saving health programs. Tired activists again found a place to rest before and after The March for Our Lives. Throughout the school year, groups of students have passed through and been supported in service learning and reflection on many topics including peacemaking, public policy, and human rights.

As NYYM Friends consider how they can speak truth to power, they should not forget the space of radical hospitality offered at the WPH. It is a place of connections and a place where one can truly "come experience what it means to be staying with Friends." Indeed, the dorm rooms, circles of chairs, and vision-filled flip charts echo the same combination of playfulness and intent one finds at Powell House and other Quaker spaces. Read more at [williampennhouse.org](http://williampennhouse.org) about the important and engaging programs they offer and how you can join in!

*Caleb Braun*

## World Ministries Committee

The World Ministries Committee (WMC), with funds from bequests and the Sharing Fund, has supported the ministry of NYYM Friends in the "wider world" since 1889. WMC is a grant-making committee that provides a means whereby NYYM members and meetings can follow their witness to promote peace and love worldwide.

The committee meets by teleconference four times during the year, to review grant applications received by the clerk prior to each meeting. Whenever possible during NYYM sessions, WMC will try to meet face to face, and also welcomes Friends who have questions or potential projects.

WMC grant parameters and standard application form are available on [NYYM.org](http://NYYM.org). The application can be submitted at any time, but will only be reviewed during the next WMC meeting, except in case of extreme emergency (such as the need for Ebola funding which occurred several years ago). All WMC grants must have oversight by at least one designated member of NYYM, to insure that the funds are used within the parameters of the grant request. A progress report well into the grant cycle is also required.

In recent years WMC funds have decreased due to redistribution of bequest interest to other NYYM funds and committees, so there are fewer options than in previous years for the committee to allocate funds. Nevertheless, during the past fiscal year beginning in Spring 2017, after serious deliberations, the committee has been able to contribute to the following projects which "spread Quaker love in the wider world":

- Peacebuilding in Las Américas—\$2,000 for trauma-healing workshop
- Schenectady Meeting—\$ 1,500 for Zimbabwe famine relief
- Bolivia Quaker Education Fund—\$2,500 for AVP in Andean region
- Youth Service Opportunities Project—\$3,500 for Washington DC Fellows Program
- Friends World Committee for Consultation—\$2,500 for traveling ministry program;
- Friends United Meeting—\$1,900 for support of traveling minister in Africa
- Newton Garver Scholarship Fund administered by BQEF—\$1500 for two Quaker Aymara students for post-high school studies
- AVP with Co-Madres in El Salvador—\$1,200 for facilitators

- AVP with Police Officers in Honduras—\$1,400 for facilitators
- Davanga Friends School—\$500 for new classrooms

Friends serving on WMC feel our participation on the committee enables those Friends with special leadings to give their time, skills and hearts by spreading the Light worldwide to those who need our help.

It is to that end that NYYM Friends are encouraged to go to the NYYM website and see if their leadings and projects fit within our funding parameters; if so, apply for grant funds to help WMC “spread Quaker love in the wider world.”

*Submitted in Peace and Friendship with thanks to WMC members Martha Gurvich, David Herendeen, Ken Johnson, Roseann Press, Arlene Reduto, Paul Rehm and Susan Weisfeld  
—Edward Doty, clerk*

## LIAISON COMMITTEE

The Liaison Committee consists of the yearly meeting clerk, assistant clerk, the clerks of the three active coordinating committees, the general secretary, and, sitting in at the request of the yearly meeting clerk, the clerks of the Meetings for Discernment Steering Committee, Trustees, and the Priorities Support Working Group. (In 2015, after the yearly meeting’s approval of the six priorities, the Liaison Committee established under its care the Leadings and Priorities Working Group, renamed in 2017 the Priorities Support Working Group.) At times this year we have included the Yearly Meeting Nominating Committee clerk on our calls. The yearly meeting clerk serves as clerk of the Liaison Committee. While this expanded committee offers a broad view of the yearly meeting, enhancing its advisory role to the yearly meeting clerk, the conference calls feel at times too large for all to have time to be heard.

As duties have failed to be picked up elsewhere in the yearly meeting structure, some duties have fallen to Liaison and its members. Several instances of this occurred this year. When a clerk could not be found for Nurture Coordinating Committee, Liaison asked the assistant clerk to temporarily clerk Nurture. Liaison then formulated a temporary plan to support those

committees that were under Nurture and brought it to the yearly meeting body. After further work and refinement, the yearly meeting suspended Nurture Coordinating Committee and placed its committees under other coordinating committees. In addition, the role of the yearly meeting assistant clerk was expanded under this temporary plan to include liaising with our representatives to organizations in the broader Quaker world; the assistant clerk brings their budget requests to the Liaison Committee for discernment.

Liaison is clear that the work of discerning an inclusive, responsive, sustainable yearly meeting structure organized to support the yearly meeting’s priorities lies not with it but with a committee or working group established by the yearly meeting body.

The committee continues its practice of meeting regularly each month by video and phone conference call. The committee considers rising business within the yearly meeting and recommends items for the agenda of yearly meeting business sessions. The committee also discusses matters of concern to the yearly meeting that do not fall clearly within the scope of any coordinating committee, or that encompass the responsibilities of more than one committee. It is not an executive committee and does not make decisions for the yearly meeting between sessions.

The Liaison Committee supports the yearly meeting clerk as s/he plans and facilitates Coordinating Committee Weekend, usually held in late January at Powell House in Old Chatham, New York. This year, as the yearly meeting grappled with issues of the structure of the yearly meeting, Coordinating Committee weekend was opened to all interested in this part of the life of the yearly meeting.

Liaison Committee meets in expanded form during Summer Sessions, Monday through Friday mornings during worship sharing time. We have been happy with our practice of breaking into very small groups of three or four and beginning with 15 minutes of worship sharing before coming together for our committee work. During summer sessions, we include the yearly meeting recording clerks, the yearly meeting reading clerks, and a representative from Junior Yearly Meeting, with visits from representatives from Sessions Committee and, starting this year, from the Circle of Care and Concern.

*Lucinda Antrim, clerk*

### ***Priorities Support Working Group***

The Priorities Support Working Group (PSWG) met twice after Summer Sessions 2017. We had an informal meeting in January during Coordinating Committee Weekend, and met at Spring Sessions 2017. One article on the progress of the yearly meeting on the priorities was published in InfoShare.

One of our concerns is that some of our documents are written at a college reading level. We ask that Friends be sensitive to this so that our children, youth and young adults, and others, including those for whom English is a second language, are not excluded when simpler text will serve. We understand that the Committee to Revise *Faith & Practice* is considering this concern as they work on revisions.

Many of our monthly meetings have only a limited sense of connection to the yearly meeting. Often the communications from the yearly meeting are not clear and compelling, and some of our monthly meetings are not aware of the resources that the yearly meeting has to offer. More work needs to be done to mitigate this ongoing disconnect between monthly meetings and the yearly meeting. We need to do more to increase inter-visitation, particularly with smaller meetings.

The working group has also seen progress! The ARCH program has expanded so that most of our monthly meetings have at least one active ARCH volunteer. The regional coordinators provide extra support for those of us who are aging. Our Children and Youth Field Secretary brought ideas for intergenerational worship to several monthly meetings, as well as bringing life to community worship at Summer Sessions. Our Young Adult Field Secretaries have given younger Friends a voice in our yearly meeting, and provided opportunities to reach out beyond our yearly meeting. We look forward to welcoming one full time field secretary to minister to all ages.

For witness awareness among us, the Indian Affairs Committee has brought both to Spring and Summer Sessions a report about the original inhabitants of the land where we were meeting.

The Outreach Working Group (OWG), two Friends who in 2016 felt called to nourish the growing interest in outreach, reported to our meeting at Spring Sessions about the ministry

they have been doing with 15 monthly meetings. Included in the 2018 budget is a fund for meetings with an outreach project. Three monthly meetings took advantage of this, and all three projects were approved. The OWG was established as a two year program designed to be reevaluated and disbanded in June 2018. The information they have gathered will be on the NYYM website.

Accountability and transparency in our finances has definitely improved, thanks to the efforts of Trustees and Treasurers. Financial reports contain more information and are easier to understand.

Whisper Buddies have come to yearly meeting business sessions. Those not familiar with Friends practice are paired with someone more experienced to help deepen understanding of our process.

Eldering is becoming more accepted as essential for grounding our worship and business. Clearness committees for individuals help to deepen their spiritual life. Those serving on the committees may also find some deepening in their spiritual life. The recent workshops on Circle Process should assist in transforming conflict.

It would be wonderful to report that we are making steady progress toward implementing the priorities. In this report, we have noted the progress that we have seen. We are few in number, and meet infrequently, so you may be aware of areas that we have missed. Please let us know about signs of growth and where the Light is flourishing.

*Deborah B. Wood*