

New York Yearly Meeting
Fall Sessions – Minutes
November 10-11, 2018

Holiday Inn, Rochester, NY
Saturday, November 10, 2018; 10 a.m.

Jeffrey Aaron (New Brunswick), Clerk
Elaine Learnard (Conscience Bay), Assistant Clerk
Karen Reixach (Ithaca), Recording Clerk
Robin Mallison Alpern (Amawalk), Reading Clerk

2018-11-01. The meeting centered in worship. The clerk welcomed Friends and reflected on how we embody the “beloved community” and the challenges and opportunities we face both externally and internally. His full remarks are attached below. He introduced the individuals at the clerks table.

2018-11-02. Kathy Slattery (Orchard Park), clerk of Farmington-Scipio Regional Meeting, welcomed Friends to this large and diverse region. She invited Friends to a spacious place. She thanked the host committee and the Rochester Meeting for their loving support in our work of discernment.

2018-11-03. The reading clerk read the roll of regions, monthly meetings and worship groups. Friends stood as their meetings were called. All regions were represented.

2018-11-04. Madeline Schmitt (Rochester) acknowledged that the land where we are meeting is home to the Onondowagagh and Haudenesaunee confederacy. Her remarks are attached.

2018-11-05. The clerk noted that the agenda this morning addresses items from the General Services Coordinating Committee. He announced that the second reading of the by-laws has been laid over to Spring Sessions at the request of Trustees, who are working on clarifying the language.

2018-11-06. The clerk introduced Bridget Bower, clerk of General Services Coordinating Committee, who brought forward the business of the section.

2018-11-07. Laura Cisar (New Brunswick), NYYM treasurer, who reviewed the financial status of the Yearly Meeting as of October 31, 2018 ([click here to view](#)). With 83% of the year completed, 68% of income has been received and 78% of expenses have been incurred. Current budget shortfall is \$73,564. Last year at the end of October NYYM had a surplus of roughly \$2000. The year-end projection suggests that NYYM will need to go into operating reserve (more or less \$37,000). She offered clarifications to questions from the body.

2018-11-08. Douglas Way (New Brunswick) of the Pay as Led Working Group described how the registration system will be implemented for Summer Session 2019. He noted that this new process will handle the financial aspects of registration under the new challenges of the master billing contract with Silver Bay and Pay as Led. Registration will open in January 2019 and the Pay as Led options will end on May 15th, 2019. As always, folks can register until the last day of Summer Sessions, but we cannot guarantee Pay as Led prices after May 15th. For every person who attends Summer Sessions in 2019, NYYM is responsible for paying the set room and board rates by the end of Summer Sessions. With a Pay as Led process, though, some participants will pay less than that set rate and some participants will pay more. We trust that f/Friends will be both generous and honest in their discernment on what they are led to pay. The full report can be found [on our website](#).

2018-11-09. Bridget Bower, clerk of General Service, provided an overview of the process of developing the 2019 budget. This morning the Treasurer informed us about our financial status for this fiscal year.

Financial Services Committee will offer a proposed 2019 budget developed from Budget Saturday.

The Trustees will then offer discernment about the budget request.

Then this body will have an opportunity for discernment.

Based on the Priority Working Group recommendations, the budget process has become more transparent, with the operating budget, investments and other funds clearly laid out in a consolidated statement. In addition, the budget process begins in January with a draft budget developed by Summer Sessions. Nonetheless, time constraints have complicated the process this year.

This proposed operating budget was created in light of the minuted approval by gathered Friends at Summer Sessions 2018 for the hiring of the new Young Adult and Children Secretary and the instructions to Financial Services of the need to create a budget to accommodate this new position at a net cost of \$50,000. We also desire to expand outreach. And everywhere else, NYYM is continuing to do business as usual. To fund these increased expenditures will require significant increases in income. If the budget is not approved at Fall Session, there is a process whereby in effect, the old budget is continued essentially with no changes until a revised budget is presented at Spring Sessions.

She described the investments of New York Yearly Meeting: The total is \$6million, \$4.5 of which is restricted. Unrestricted investments amount to \$1.5 million. The income from these unrestricted investments fund a variety of committees and other organizations.

Our job is to figure out we manage our resources going forward.

2018-11-10. Mary Harpster (Rahway & Plainfield), Clerk of Financial Services Committee, proposed the designation of any remaining overage from the 2018 budget to the 2019 operating account or to the 2019 budget. Friends approved.

2018-11-11 Mary presented the proposed 2019 NYYM operating budget, describing the major items of income and expenses. The budget total is \$1,036,119, an increase of over \$300,000 from the 2018 budget, \$200,000 of which is covered by estimated income from Summer Sessions registration (see minute 2018-11-8.) In order to fully fund the 2019 budget Financial Services estimates that this would require using principal from the Yearly Meeting investments as needed over the course of the year (an estimated over \$135,000), which would likely continue in subsequent budgets. Friends at Budget Saturday recommended exploring the transition of the income of approximately \$20,000 from selected committees and organizations to the NYYM operating budget and the consideration of use of endowment principal to fund the operating budget.

2018-11-12. Dare Thompson (Poughkeepsie) of the NYYM Trustees reported that the Trustees appreciate the work done at Budget Saturday and recognize and understand the desire for the Yearly Meeting to invest in its future through an injection of funds for outreach; a children, youth and young adult field secretary position; and other initiatives in support of the vitality of the Yearly Meeting. As fiduciaries of NYYM's trust funds, Trustees are especially mindful of any request to draw down principal of funds under our care and feel a heightened need for more serious discernment, especially when the term of the request is not well defined. She expressed concerns of the Trustees about the sustainability of this approach.

Trustees recommended:

2018-11-13. First, that in 2019, 2020 and in 2021 all income from the mortgage held by NYYM for the sale of the Stamford-Greenwich Meetinghouse be payable directly to the Yearly Meeting for unrestricted use in annual operations. This amount is \$13,320 per year. (This minute overrides NYYM Minute 2013-07-51.) Friends approved.

2018-11-14. Second, that, starting in 2019, the dividend from the Fund for Sufferings accumulation of \$33,000 be directed to the Yearly Meeting for unrestricted use in annual operations. The amount is estimated at \$1300 annually. Friends approved.

2018-11-15. Third, that the Yearly Meeting reprioritize the use of our current income prior to tapping trust fund principal, making hard choices as necessary. In particular the Trustees recommend the Yearly Meeting explore redirecting the approximately \$20,000 per year in unrestricted trust fund income that currently goes to select committees and organizations and instead have that income go to general

operations. These groups have been notified of this possibility. No decision was taken on this recommendation at this session (See Minute 2018-11-?? of Sunday session).

2018-11-16. That no final decision about tapping trust fund principal be made at Fall Sessions. The Yearly Meeting needs time to come up with a plan once the exact 2019 budget gap is known, which will likely be in early 2019 when the 2018 Final Treasurer's Report is available. Furthermore, Trustees recommend that prior to liquidating the principal of any unrestricted trust funds, the Yearly Meeting have in hand a time line and long-term financial plan that ensures the use of principal is sustainable and appropriately limited.

2015-11-17. Friends asked a number of questions to clarify the proposals, including the question that given the fiduciary responsibility of the Trustees, does the body have the authority to direct the Trustees to take particular action on the Stamford-Greenwich income and Fund for Sufferings? The clerk indicated the Trustee brought these recommendations to the body for action.

2018-11-18. The Clerk outlined the options for further discernment on the 2019 budget. Friends will have the opportunity to explore further at Sunday's session.

2018-11-19. Reading and approval of minutes occurred as the meeting progressed. The reading clerk read announcements. The meeting closed with waiting worship.

Holiday Inn, Rochester, New York
Saturday 1:40 p.m., November 10, 2018

Jeffrey Aaron (New Brunswick), Clerk
Elaine Learnard (Conscience Bay), Reading Clerk
Karen Way (New Brunswick), Recording Clerk
Robin Mallison Alpern (Amawalk), Reading Clerk

2018-11-20. The meeting opened with quiet worship.

2018-11-21. Clerk Jeffrey Aaron welcomed Friends and introduced the clerks' table. Jeffrey read from the JYM Seniors' epistle to gathered Friends at Summer Session 2005. The young Friends urged acceptance of our wonderful diversity and differences as an act undertaken in the Light.

2018-11-22. Jeffrey explained that Emily Provance (Fifteenth Street), clerk of Ministry Coordinating Committee is traveling in the ministry. Thus Jeffrey did introductions for the following presenters.

2018-11-23. Trish Eckert, Pastor of Farmington Friends Meeting and Jillian Smith (Saratoga) presented the report from the Outreach Working Group ([available online](#)). The report is the product of two years of work including the formation of the Outreach Practitioners Circle, research by a consultant, focused efforts of 18 meetings, and a recent weekend of discernment. Friends are united in the understanding that outreach is important. The Outreach Working Group has developed a 3-year action plan built around four strategic priorities: to foster a spirit-infused culture in the yearly meeting, to build our capacity to communicate, to create better awareness of Quakers in the NYYM geographic area, and to improve outreach capacity in the monthly meetings. A structure of implementation priorities envisions an Outreach Steering Circle at the center, supporting interconnected projects: to develop a cohort of coaches, to create an online repository of outreach tools, to establish a story-telling network that amplifies stories of bold faithfulness among Friends, and to mobilize resources to communicate our messages to the world. This proposal will be taken to the Coordinating Weekend in January, with the possibility that a final Action Plan will be presented at Spring Sessions. Next year's proposed budget (subject to approval) has a funding line for continued work by the Outreach Working Group.

Friends spoke in response, emphasizing the value of inreach in building community. Others noted that witness can serve as outreach, and that newcomers attracted to meetings must be warmly welcomed when they arrive. Outreach can be supported by an easy introduction to Quaker terms and processes. More difficult and more important is how to share and communicate the experience of worship in the Light. Further resources are available from Friends General Conference's Welcoming Friends Project. Friends with additional suggestions and comments can contact Robin Whitely and Arlene Johnson in the OWG before Coordinating Weekend.

2018-11-24. Carolyn Emerson (Conscience Bay) and David Herendeen (Farmington) presented the first reading of a revised section on clearness committees for Faith & Practice ([click here to view](#)). Friends offered suggestions for clarification and inclusion. Further comments should go to the Committee to Revise F&P.

2018-11-25. Carolyn Emerson and David Herendeen, speaking for the Committee on Sufferings, went on to present a revision of the Handbook that describes a new way of managing the Fund for Sufferings ([click here to view](#)). In the current version of the Handbook, the fund is managed by a committee that evaluates requests for support from Friends who are suffering financially because of fidelity to Friends testimonies. In the proposed version ([click here to view](#)), the committee would be laid down and replaced by a single point person with much the same job. All requests would be forwarded to the clerk of Ministry Coordinating Committee with the point person's recommendation.

Friends asked for added clarification in the text about whether the clerk of MCC would further convey the application to the coordinating committee before making a

decision. Friends also wanted better clarification on the role of the point person in deciding which applications would be forwarded to MCC.

The Committee on Sufferings will revise the text to be more explicit on these matters and will bring the result to a future yearly meeting session.

2018-11-26. At this point, clerking for the session was changed from Jeffrey Aaron to Assistant Clerk Elaine Learnard because Jeffrey had been an active member of the group next to report.

2018-11-27. Jillian Smith (Saratoga), Marissa Badgley (Poughkeepsie), and Jennifer Swann (South Berkshire, NEYM) presented the work of the Alternative Membership Pathways Working Group (AMPWG). Jillian reviewed the history of the working group, which was created under the care of Ministry Coordinating Committee in 2016 and which has drawn on the work of many other groups with similar concerns (history [available online](#)). The group has presented a proposal for alternative pathways to membership to MCC in Fall 2017 and Summer 2018 for refinement and discernment. The group then undertook to write a section describing a new pathway to membership that might serve as a first draft for a new F&P section.

Today's proposal ([click here to view](#)) is offered as the beginning of a process of wider discernment among Friends and their meetings. Many potential Friends are unable to attend a monthly meeting for a wide range of reasons, such as incarceration, schedules, distance, caretaking, and differences of culture. The proposal lists criteria an applicant would need to meet to become a member under the direct care of New York Yearly Meeting. The proposal also describes in detail how the process would work for the applicant and for the Ministry and Pastoral Care Committee within MCC.

Friends are urged to read the current section on applying for membership in F&P, and consider what barriers might have existed at different times in their own lives.

Friends spoke in response. A concern was expressed that the monthly meeting is the foundation of Quaker experience and life. Others spoke to the reality of being actually unable to attend a monthly meeting. The question was asked: what do we call a person who is strongly devoted to Quaker values and to vibrant non-meeting communities within the yearly meeting, if not a Quaker? The working group estimates that there are hundreds of adult Friends in the New York area who cannot make it to weekly meeting for worship but who yearn to belong to a larger Quaker family.

Ministry Coordinating Committee has already sent the proposal to all monthly meetings with a request for consideration. Responses can be sent to alternate-pathways@nyym.org.

2018-11-28. Minutes were read, corrected, and approved in stages during the session.

2018-11-29. After announcements, meeting closed in quiet worship.

Holiday Inn, Rochester, NY
Sunday, November 10, 2018; 9:45 a.m.

Jeffrey Aaron (New Brunswick), Clerk
Elaine Learnard (Conscience Bay), Assistant Clerk
Mary Eagleson (Scarsdale), Recording Clerk
Justin Murphy (Rochester), Reading Clerk

2018-11-30. Friends gathered in waiting worship. Clerk Jeffrey Aaron shared an excerpt from “Standing Rock: A Change of Heart” by Charles Eisenstein:

Each time you refuse the invitation onto the warpath, you become more powerful. Those who can stay peaceful in the face of any terror or threat become virtual miracle-workers. ... In a way, we are all in the same boat; we are all facing situations that invite us to choose love over fear, to listen to the heart when it feels unsafe to do so. We need to help each other obey that call. In that, we are allies. We can be allies in calling each other to our highest potential.

2018-11-31. On behalf of the Working Group on Conscientious Objection to Paying for War, Lyle Jenks read the following quote from Wally Nelson on the 224th anniversary of the signing of the Canandaigua Treaty and the 100th anniversary of the armistice ending World War I:

What would you do if someone came to your door with a cup in their hand asking for a contribution to buy guns to kill someone they didn't like?

2018-11-32. Jeffrey introduced the clerks' table: Elaine Learnard as assistant clerk, Justin Murphy of Rochester Monthly Meeting as reading clerk, Mary Eagleson as recording clerk. He reviewed the agenda.

2018-11-33. Lu Harper (Rochester Monthly Meeting) introduced Sue Regen of Rochester Meeting. Sue carries a witness of forgiveness as a spiritual practice. She has been offering workshops on forgiveness since 2004, her work has been under the care of Rochester Meeting since 2006. Sue then spoke about her work.

Forgiveness is a daily opportunity to choose love over fear. It is the effort to see that of God in every person. Forgiveness is the letting go of all hope for a better past. It is releasing our pain and suffering. She spoke of the blessing of helping people step on the path of healing through the daily practice of forgiveness. Two opportunities for Friends

to attend her workshops will be in June at Powell House, and in July at the FGC Gathering.

2018-11-34. Rebekah Rice, co-clerk of Witness Coordinating Committee (WCC), introduced the business of WCC. Rebekah read a statement from WCC, joined by some members of Ministry Coordinating Committee who were present at the WCC meeting last evening:

In order to help defray the additional budget expenses in the 2019 proposed budget, it was proposed by Trustees that \$20,000 in income generated from some of the trust funds was never or was no longer restricted in its use and could be used by the Yearly Meeting in any way it discerned. In the past few years, it has been used to support the budgets of several WCC committees, including Black Concerns Committee, Prisons Committee, Barrington Dunbar Fund for Black Development, and Indian Affairs Committee. To help reduce the substantial deficit in the 2019 budget, it has been suggested that these funds might be transferred from the Witness committees to the operating budget. We don't believe that anyone intended taking these funds away from outreach to people of color in order to do inreach on behalf of largely White, middle-class Quaker meetings, but that would be the impact of this action.

2018-11-35. Pamela Wood read an update on the lawsuit pursued by Green Haven Preparative Meeting and others, including NYYM [minute 2018-07-46 (July 27, 2018)], against the Department of Corrections and Community Supervision (DOCCS), protesting the refusal of the Green Haven Prison administration to allow the preparative meeting to hold quarterly meetings in the facility. The report is [available on the NYYM website](#). The lawsuit was filed in the United States District Court for the Southern District of New York (White Plains branch) on September 18, 2018. It asks the court to direct the defendants to accommodate the religious practices of the Quakers and to remove the inclusion of the Religious Society of Friends from the list of Protestants who celebrate Pentecost.

A Friend asked if any measures have been or could be taken to protect the members of the preparative meeting from retaliation against them by DOCCS. Pamela responded that there is little or nothing Friends could do, and that the men are aware of the risks they are running by proceeding with the lawsuit.

2018-11-36. Rebekah read the following statement from Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, with which WCC unites:

Quakers are holding in prayer and the light the families and loved ones of those who we lost at the Tree of Life Synagogue on October 27, 2018, at the Kroger grocery store in Kentucky on October 24, 2018, and in other acts of hate that will go untold.

We are called to name these as acts of antisemitism, racism, and bigotry. As a Faith centered in the belief that each person has God's light within them, we are trying to address the culture of violence, isolation, and hate in our society. We are concerned that certain uses of internet and other media outlets foster a climate that embraces such acts of hate.

To heal from these, we are called to respond nonviolently, with love as our primary impulse.

Personally, between one shock to the system and the next, we may find this call to be tremendously difficult to follow. These days, we have little time even to mourn let alone consider how to move forward. We wonder what to tell our children.

The Civil Rights leader and author, Bayard Rustin—who was deeply influenced by Quaker and Gandhian nonviolence—wrote something that some may find helpful, in a letter to the children of Cleveland on December 3, 1969:

“...we cannot hope to achieve democracy and equality in such a way that would destroy the very kind of society which we hope to build. If we desire a society of peace, then we cannot achieve such a society through violence. If we desire a society without discrimination, then we must not discriminate against anyone in the process of building this society...If we can build such a society, then we would have achieved the ultimate goal of human freedom.”

In the work that we do, we sometimes feel like we are digging holes in the ocean. But we are reminded that we all share a relationship with God and to each other. As long as there are people like us, centering our actions in love, holding each other up, there will be resilience.

In the words of A.J. Muste, another organizer influenced by Quakerism, “There is no way to peace; peace is the way.” We add: There is no way to love, love is the way. There is no way to beloved community, beloved community is the way.

2018-11-37. Jeffrey reported on an interim action taken since last July by the clerk and the general secretary. NYYM has signed onto a further amicus curiae (“Friend of the Court”) brief in support of Ravidath Ragbir’s lawsuit to prevent the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement from silencing critics of the government’s immigration policy by deporting Ravi Ragbir and like-minded activists who have been targeted because of their political advocacy on behalf of immigrant rights. This brief was submitted to the United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit. NYYM had earlier joined the amicus curiae brief to the trial court, the United States District Court

for the Southern District of New York. The new amicus curiae brief makes the same points as the earlier brief. Both briefs are available on the NYYM website.

The defense counsel replied with the following:

While we are still waiting for a decision on the First Amendment claim itself, the Second Circuit issued a stay of removal yesterday afternoon! The stay ensures that Ravi will not be deported while the First Amendment case is pending. And, as a result of the stay, we learned this morning that ICE has cancelled Ravi's report date, most recently scheduled for Nov. 9, 2018, and rescheduled it for January 28, 2019.

We know we must remain vigilant, because ICE continues to seek Ravi's deportation and will do so as quickly as it can if this new stay, and the stay by the federal court in New Jersey, go away. But we are so grateful that the Second Circuit recognized the importance of ensuring Ravi is here and that it gets a chance to consider the important First Amendment issues this case presents, not just for Ravi, but for all of us.

2018-11-38. The nominating committee report, presented as a consent agenda (attached below), was approved.

2018-11-39. Deb Wood from Purchase Meeting reported for the Nominating Committee on other nominations not on the consent agenda.

Albert Hsu, Wilton Meeting, class of 2019 as assistant treasurer.

Sarva Mongeau, Rochester Meeting, class of 2021, FWCC Section of the Americas representative

Emily Provance, 15th Street Meeting, released from FWCC Section of the Americas, class of 2021.

These nominations and release were approved.

By permission of the Yearly Meeting, Hazel Powless, Oneida Nation, Bear Clan, is co-opted for one year to serve on Indian Affairs Committee.

2018-11-40. Marissa Badgley announced a joyous experiment, which came out of a Summer Sessions gathering of young adults: the launching of the Young Adult Spiritual Nurture Series, under the care of Spiritual Nurture Working Group, which started in October and will continue through Summer Sessions, 2019. 18 young adults were present at the initial gathering held at the Quaker Intentional Village. However, only

one monthly meeting nominated a young adult to participate, and Marissa urged us to reach out to any young adults who are connected to our monthly meetings, no matter how long it has been since they were last in the meetinghouse. The next retreat will be held in December in New York City.

2018-11-41. Dennis and Regina Haag, co-directors of Powell House, the NYYM retreat center, reported. The budget situation is worrisome. This causes Dennis to do new and creative things he might not otherwise do to reach out to bring in more people. He reported on recent experiments and commented that the only time you fail is when you don't try.

Regina reported that Powell House is a place of heartfelt welcome for all. She read some statistics about recent visits in the last six months. There were 207 in adult and intergenerational programs, 93 in monthly meeting retreats, 659 in community groups, 329 in youth programs, and 70 in yearly meeting programs. Chris DeRoller and Mike Clark have 37 young adults registered for next week. Powell House is starting up a fundraising campaign for this fall; it is getting ready to launch a capital campaign later.

2018-11-42. Melanie-Claire Mallison, clerk of Sessions Committee, reported as follows:

She thanked the host task group for their work in arranging this weekend. There have been 110 participants, including 2 youth, and an additional 10 guests to the Friday evening sessions. Spring Sessions will be held April 5-7 at Oakwood School. The November issue of Spark will have information about Pay As Led for Summer Sessions, and she urged us to read it and begin to prepare now for a joyous gathering at Silver Bay in July.

A Friend appreciated the hotel space where we are now meeting; she has concerns regarding both the accessibility of our venues in general, and funding for the sessions. She noted that there are financial barriers to the use of such space for those who must stay overnight, and asks us to consider how those affect our efforts to be a welcoming and inclusive community.

Another Friend asked if there would be an evaluation survey for Friends to use to communicate about this session: Melanie-Claire will send one out by email. A Friend asked that there be a question on this survey asking how much people have had to spend on transportation to attend. Melanie-Claire reminded us that Farmington-Scipio Region is the largest in the yearly meeting, so Friends from that region are very aware of the costs of transportation. She asked Friends to speak to Sessions about their concerns and possible solutions, and above all to attend sessions!

Jeffrey observed that we are facing a desire to do more than we have the financial resources to do, and that the costs of sessions will be part of the conversation about

what we can do. Another Friend expressed gratitude for the presence of many Friends from the Farmington-Scipio Region at these sessions.

2018-11-43. After the initial budget discussion yesterday, Financial Services Committee met and decided to withdraw the budget they had proposed for 2019. They felt unable to propose an alternative budget, so there is at this time no budget. There is an interim budget process, which will be used; there will be nothing on the interim budget which has not been previously approved. It will thus be approximately similar to the current, 2018 budget.

Mary Harpster, clerk of Financial Services, said that the committee seeks guidance from the Yearly Meeting as it prepares a budget to propose at spring sessions. Friends are invited to send comments by email to financial-services-clerk@nyym.org. She asked that we all consider not only the budgets for the work of the committees with which we are connected, but for the entire yearly meeting.

Rebecca Rice re-read the statement from the WCC she had read earlier in this meeting.

Jeffrey clarified that the budget is created by Financial Services Committee. Trustees, and anyone else, are welcome to offer input. Last summer, the yearly meeting approved asking Financial Services to find resources to support a new hire, among other things. Financial Services asked Trustees to help find those resources, and Trustees listed several options, including the one referenced above. Trustees have also recommended that we not approve the proposed 2019 budget as it stood. Friends were asked for suggestions as to our priorities, so that we may discern what we can afford to do.

Jeffrey explained that approximately \$20,000 in income each year from unrestricted investments is divided among several Witness committees as well as other entities such as Oakwood School and Powell House.

A period of sharing followed. The main thrust of these was that Friends do not want to make any cuts, except perhaps in transportation costs. Nor do they approve invading the principal in our investments. Instead, we encouraged ourselves to contribute to the cost of the expanded budget.

2018-11-44. Friends asked that the comments captured during this session be sent to Financial Services and Trustees almost verbatim, and that they be summarized by the clerks for inclusion in these minutes. Friends approved.

Attachments:

1. Fall Sessions 2018 Clerk's Opening Message

Beloved Community.

Words that I hold in my heart, reinforced by the harshness of so much of the outside world – beloved community. When I see the remarkable work that our small numbers of dedicated Friends do, such as last night's presentation reminded us, and have done for centuries to promote peace and make a better world for everyone, I am overwhelmed with the importance of our work and I know that ours is a special place, even if we can do better. Ours is a community where we commit to a relationship based on the divinity of loving kindness and tender listening. Being imperfect beings, we blow it, frequently, as we were reminded last night. I know that I do. We need the humility that Jesus taught to learn from the Divine within each other how to advance what we profess. Unlike most of the world, our witness is to labor lovingly together to achieve equal opportunity without hierarchy, instead of competing for power and wealth. There are few such communities worldwide. This makes our community blessed, I believe, even with its defects, and of enormous importance to each of us. I believe it is why we are here. Thank you for your commitment, whatever your reason to be here.

Even when I sense distress among us when someone's words or the way they are delivered inadvertently hurt someone's feelings or when someone feels that another speaks too long or too frequently or with too much certainty that they know the answer when their answer may not be the answer for others, I truly believe that everything we say to each other in our work together comes from the passion of imperfect seekers who want to make our community more of a blessed community in the midst of a dangerous and harsh world. When I look at the pain and anguish throughout the wider world, at home and abroad, I re-dedicate myself to our community of seekers of Truth.

Tomorrow, November 11, is the 100th anniversary of Armistice Day 1918, celebrating the end of the first World War, the so-called "war to end all wars." Thirty-seven million were killed, and countless others suffered their loss and the destruction of their lives and their families. Yet the proposed new military budget is well past half a trillion dollars, up more than 15% from last year. We have many hundreds of military bases in scores of countries, far more than any other nation. There are more than a dozen military conflicts that we are currently involved in, and there is a plan to withdraw from the INF, the Intermediate Nuclear Forces weapons treaty of 1987 to start a new nuclear arms race. Our message is critical.

My name is Jeffrey Aaron. My home meeting is New Brunswick. I am your new interim Clerk. Okay, that was a strange thing to say, but I said it for two reasons: first, there were clerks before me and there will be clerks after me, and we face a strong calling to look beyond the present to our future. I think of myself as interim because we

need to make many changes. Part of the work we are called to do is to find creative ways to make the rising generations, new Friends, and Friends of color all feel fully welcome as beloved equal participants. For the effort we do make to be inclusive, I feel great joy, but it has not been nearly enough. If we hold tight to old ways, the world may leave us behind and we may diminish in numbers even further than we already have. Maybe I should have said I am a transitional Clerk. I am old and called “white”, as have been most to serve at this table – not all, but most. It is hard to avoid because of life’s pressures on today’s young adults and the small number of Friends of color among us, but it is critical to try to find ways to embrace coming generations and all our Friends who possess the passion and creativity to do new things new ways.

We agreed at Spring Sessions to suspend Nurture Coordinating Committee and relocate all its committees and boards, then report back next summer on possible structure revisions, yet we chose not to create an ad hoc structure committee. Everyone is welcome to make suggestions at any time to any member of Liaison, which consists of the Clerk and Assistant Clerk, the General Secretary and the coordinating committee clerks. If you have any ideas, big or small, please contact any of these Friends at any time. Consider taking part in Coordinating Weekend at Powell House at the end of January, where change will be the focus. It may take some uncomfortable changes to accomplish what we need, because change is usually uncomfortable, but it is the task we face to remain viable and pertinent. We must welcome positive change with joy and faith. So I see myself as your interim Clerk. I promise to serve you with humility, joy and love. Even when I blow it.

2. Acknowledgment of the land

I have been asked to open Fall Sessions NYYM MFB with an acknowledgement that the land we hold these Sessions on was Onondowagah [Seneca] ancestral land held in common with the Hodinohso:ni [Iroquois] Confederacy for hundreds of years before European settlers came to this region. The Onondowagah [Seneca People] were and remain the “Keepers of the Western Door” in the Confederacy. Today we pay respects to Hodinohso:ni [Iroquois] elders past and present , women and men, who would remind us of our responsibility for stewardship of the land.

We also want to acknowledge that the Onondowagah [Seneca People] have survived efforts to remove them from New York State and are still here in Western New York, although their continuing presence may be less visible to most today. Finally, we acknowledge that the Hodinohso:ni Confederacy’s form of government provided inspiration for our Federal Constitution.

We have the opportunity to learn more about the Onondowagah’s ancestral presence and contemporary culture through the local Native American Cultural Center, who recently collaborated with the City of Rochester to establish the first Indigenous People’s Day, by visits to Ganondagan State Historic Site and Seneca Art & Culture

Center, in nearby Victor, NY, by attending Canandaigua Treaty Day tomorrow afternoon-or any Nov 11th; and, by watching the PBS special series Native America that, in the 2nd episode, gives great visibility to the history of the Hodinohso:ni Confederacy through the eyes of contemporary Confederacy, including Onondowagah, elders.

3. Report on lawsuit against the New York State Department of Corrections and Community Supervision regarding quarterly meetings in Green Haven Correctional Facility

Background Green Haven Prison Preparative Meeting is under the care of Poughkeepsie Monthly Meeting and is part of Nine Partners Quarterly Meeting. Beginning in 1980, full-day “quarterly meetings” were held at Green Haven Correctional Facility (“Green Haven CF”). These quarterly meetings generally lasted from the time of morning worship through mid-afternoon, and included fellowship over a meal (lunch) paid for by Friends. Similar gatherings inside other facilities under the charge of the New York State Department of Corrections and Community Supervision (“DOCCS”) occur or have occurred at Auburn, Otisville and Sing Sing Correctional Facilities. In 2015, Green Haven CF authorities ended these gatherings on the basis that DOCCS’ annual Religious Events Calendar identifies Friends as “Protestants” who can participate in a “Family Event” on Pentecost, together with the 18 other faiths designated as Protestant.

Friends made substantial, but unsuccessful, efforts to get the quarterly meetings in Green Haven CF restored. In addition, during the course of trying to resolve this concern through consultation and negotiation with DOCCS, Green Haven CF terminated the Green Haven Preparative Meeting’s weekly meetings for worship with a concern for business, perhaps in retaliation. Because DOCCS has failed to address this problem, but rather has expanded the deprivation of Friends’ opportunities for worship and fellowship in Green Haven CF, the members of Green Haven Prison Preparative Meeting determined to seek recognition of their rights through a lawsuit brought primarily under the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act, 42 USCS § 2000cc-1 (“RLUIPA”). This statute (similar to the Religious Freedom Restoration Act) requires governments, including DOCCS, to accommodate inmates’ religious practices unless the government can prove that permitting the religious activity would jeopardize a compelling governmental interest and that there are no other ways to achieve this compelling governmental interest, which would be less harmful to the inmates’ religious freedom.

At Summer Sessions, New York Yearly Meeting approved a minute to participate in the proposed lawsuit, and named Robert Martin (Bulls Head-Oswego Meeting) and Pamela Wood (Morningside Meeting) to serve as liaison for the Yearly Meeting (Minute 2018-07-46, July 27, 2018). Frederick Dettmer (Purchase Meeting) is acting as counsel pro bono. New York Yearly Meeting’s Prisons Committee has agreed to cover expenses of the litigation out of its allocations from the Sharing Fund.

Developments Since Summer Sessions

Over the summer, Nine Partners Quarterly Meeting, Bulls Head-Oswego Monthly Meeting and Poughkeepsie Monthly Meeting approved minutes to participate in the lawsuit, and a number of Friends (see list below) also discerned their clearness to participate in the lawsuit as a representative of their Meeting or in their individual capacity or both.

The lawsuit was filed in the United States District Court for the Southern District of New York (White Plains branch) on September 18, 2018. Thereafter, the Summons and Complaint were served on the defendants, which process was completed on October 15, 2018. The Complaint is available on the NYYM website at <https://nyym.org/sites/default/files/FallSessions2018/ComplaintAgainstNewYorkStateDepartmentOfCorrections.pdf>. Defendants have been granted an extension of time to December 21, 2018 to respond to the Complaint by submitting Answers or making a motion to dismiss the Complaint or both.

The Complaint alleges that DOCCS's termination of Quarterly Meetings at Green Haven CF and the recent termination of Green Haven Prison Preparative Meeting's meetings for worship with a concern for business violate the rights of Green Haven Prison Preparative Meeting and its members and attenders, including in particular plaintiffs Yohannes ("Knowledge") Johnson and Gregory Thompson, under (1) the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act; (2) the freedom of religion clauses of the First Amendment to the United States Constitution ("Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof. . . ."); (3) the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment ("No State shall . . . deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws."); (4) Article 1, Section 3 of the New York State Constitution ("The free exercise and enjoyment of religious profession and worship, without discrimination or preference, shall forever be allowed in this state to all humankind. . . ."); and (5) Section 610 of the New York Correction Law ("All persons who may have been or may hereafter be committed to or taken charge of by any of the institutions mentioned in this section, are hereby declared to be and entitled to the free exercise and enjoyment of religious profession and worship, without discrimination or preference."). The Complaint also alleges that DOCCS's actions violate the rights of the other plaintiffs, including NYYM, under the First and Fourteenth Amendments and the New York State Constitution. The Complaint asks the Court to direct the defendants to accommodate plaintiffs' religious practices by (i) reinstating the holding of quarterly meetings at Green Haven Correctional Facility, (ii) removing the Religious Society of Friends from the category of Protestants and celebrants of Pentecost (because that classification is used to deny the requests for quarterly meetings), (iii) reinstating meetings for worship with a concern for business at Green Haven Correctional Facility, and (iv) eliminating a DOCCS rule that limits the ability of Green Haven Prison Preparative Meeting to attract new

worshippers. The Complaint also requests that the Court award plaintiffs damages, costs and attorneys fees.

The complete list of the plaintiffs is:

- Green Haven Prison Preparative Meeting - Yohannes (“Knowledge”) Johnson, individually and as Clerk of Green Haven Meeting
- Gregory Thompson, individually and as a member of Green Haven Meeting
- Nine Partners Quarterly Meeting
- Donald Badgley, individually and as Co-Clerk of Nine Partners Quarterly Meeting
- Emily Boardman, individually and as Co-Clerk of Nine Partners Quarterly Meeting
- Bulls Head-Oswego Monthly Meeting
- Carole Yvonne New, individually and as Clerk of Bulls Head-Oswego Meeting
- David Leif Anderson, individually and as Treasurer of Bulls Head-Oswego Meeting
- Poughkeepsie Monthly Meeting
- Frederick Doneit, Sr., as Treasurer of Poughkeepsie Monthly Meeting
- Julia Giordano
- Margaret L. Seely - Solange Muller
- New York Yearly Meeting

The complete list of the defendants is:

- New York State Department of Corrections and Community Supervision
- Anthony Annucci, DOCCS Acting Commissioner
- Jeff McKoy, DOCCS Deputy Commissioner for Program Services
- Alicia Smith-Roberts, DOCCS Director of Ministerial, Family and Volunteer Services
- Jamie LaManna, Superintendent of Green Haven CF
- Jaifa Collado, former Deputy Superintendent of Programs at Green Haven CF
- Marlyn Kopp, Deputy Superintendent of Program Services at Green Haven CF.

October 22, 2018

Submitted by: Frederick R. Dettmer (Purchase Meeting) Robert Martin (Bulls Head-Oswego Meeting) Pamela Wood (Morningside Meeting)

4. Consent agenda

Nominating Committee Report for Fall Sessions 2018

Officers of New York Yearly Meeting

Class of 2019

Recording Clerk:

Karen Way

New Brunswick

Assistant Treasurer:

Albert Hsu

Wilton

Oakwood Friends School Board

Class of 2021

William Reagan

Easton

Deborah Wood

Purchase

Ministry Coordinating Committee

Committee on Aging Concerns

Class of 2019

Elizabeth Gilmore

Brooklyn

Youth Committee

Class of 2019

Donald O'Keefe

Housatonic

Class of 2021

Kayleigh O'Keefe

Housatonic

General Services Coordinating Committee

Sessions Committee

Members at Large

Susan Stillman

Class of 2021

Montclair

Witness Coordinating Committee

WCC Members at large

Class of 2021

Leo Quirk

Ithaca

Indian Affairs Committee

Class of 2020

Maureen Healy

15th Street

NYS Council of Churches

Class of 2020

Regina Haag

Old Chatham

Requests for Release:

Arlene Reduto

from Powell House Committee

Karen Tibbals

from Powell House Committee

Judith Abraham

from Indian Affairs

Christine Japeley

from Indian Affairs

Travel minutes

Renewal of a travel minute for Emily Provance, dated 10/14/2018

Dear Friends,

We, the Fifteenth Street Monthly Meeting, continue to unite with Emily Provance's discernment that she continues to be called by God to travel in the ministry.

In traveling, Emily builds connections with and between people. She's concerned with exploring how Quaker practices from the past can help Quakers now. She tries to help people who are called to ministry grow into their roles. Traveling among Friends has started a spiritual Fire in Emily, and she wants to share that Fire with Friends everywhere. We hope that you will welcome Emily in your meeting and support her in her work while she is there.

In the Light,
Glenn Josey, Clerk, Fifteenth Street Monthly Meeting

Renewal of a travel minute for Christopher Sammond

Poplar Ridge Friends Meeting
1868 Poplar Ridge Road,
Poplar Ridge, NY 13139
Travel Minute for Christopher Sammond
September 15, 2018

Christopher Sammond, a member of Poplar Ridge Monthly Meeting, carries a longstanding concern about deepening the faith and practice of Friends, especially with the respect to the gathered worship experience and vocal ministry, and he has acted on this concern in a variety of ways and in many venues. Years ago, in seminary, Christopher applied for a residency in Clinical Pastoral Education, because, to use his own words, "I knew by then that I craved working with those who really wanted to find a deeper path to God."

In his service to New York Yearly Meeting as our General Secretary, Christopher recognized and named the spiritual gifts of those within the Yearly Meeting and beyond, releasing them not only to deepen their own Quaker faith and practice, but often strengthening the monthly meetings and in the wider world."

Christopher rejoices in the gathering of diversified Friends in the unity of worship and in the spiritual nurture of individuals and groups. Again, in his own words, "Inviting Friends into deeper contact with the Inward Teacher...and creating a container

for a group to open powerfully to the presence of the Holy Spirit has been my greatest joy." Christopher has spent this last year in transition from his years of service as NYYM's General Secretary, discerning his way forward. We support him as he travels on this long-standing and deeply held concern. He will continue this work with faith communities within and beyond New York Yearly Meeting, traveling with an elder whenever possible. A care and accountability committee, under Poplar Ridge Monthly Meeting's Ministry and Counsel, is charged with the support of Christopher's ministry. The committee meets at regular intervals with Christopher to listen, test, and discern where his ministry lies and how it is proceeding.

We expect to revisit this travel minute within one year.
Hannah Richter, Clerk

Renewal of a Travel Minute for Susan (Sue) Regen

Rochester Friends Meeting
Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)
84 Scio Street
Rochester, New York 14604
September 9, 2018

Dear Friends,

Susan (Sue) Regen has a well-established concern for encouraging the practice of forgiveness a spiritual discipline. The authenticity of this work derives from its origins in Sue's persona Journey of forgiveness, and is the source of its profound impact. Since 2002 Sue has been led t support others in this work by providing a total of 68 different events as well as individual accompaniment.

During the period since the approval of her last travel minute in November 2017, she has offered workshops around the country, most recently at Friends General Conference Gathering at University of Toledo in July 2018. 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, 2014 and 2017. 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 loving 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,
Jeffrey W. Fitts
Clerk

4. Comments in response to the request by Financial Services for guidance from the gathered Friends:

One Friend expressed her confidence that the money is there. She sees three pockets: the monthly meetings, the annual appeal and the Trustee-managed investments. The children, youth and young adult field secretary is essential to monthly meetings. The individuals who are able to make much larger contributions could be asked to do so. And finally, as a last resort, consider the Trustee-managed funds.

Who would we be, and what would we do with our lives if NYYM had no money?

We were reminded that development committee has received a match of \$50,000 for new recurring contributions. There are people who are waiting to be asked. We know we don't all have the means to give more, but how do we work together to ask those who would like give? Friends are urged to bring this discussion home to our monthly meetings.

A Friend pointed out that a special fundraising effort for this one year would not support an ongoing hire or outreach efforts; the effort must be for multiple years.

One asked if we might calculate the savings in money as well as fossil fuels we could save by substituting electronic communications for meetings to reduce the amounts we spend on transportation.

A Friend reminded us that in the past we have had some large jumps in budget which we approved in faith, and that we can do it again. We have a voice that must be heard. We must hear the voices of the young people. We can't back away from this challenge. This speaks to who we are and what we are, and we must proceed in faith, not backsliding but stepping forward in faith. We need to do it for our own wholeness.

A lot of people struggle with talking about money, not just Quakers. I hear a lot of us talking from that fear response. What if we have to cut? What if we have to lose some of this vital work. I challenge us to stop talking from a place of scarcity, and start talking from a place of abundance. If every member of NYYM could increase their donation by \$5 a month, we would close this gap. Not all of us can afford \$5 a month, but there are others who can afford \$50 or \$100 a month more. We can take on this challenge and go out and do even more.

Another idea is that Powell House is a substantial part of the NYYM budget. There may be ways that Powell House could help out with the children and youth by depending on part of their staff, until a plan could be worked out to raise funds for a full time field staff.

Early Quakers talked about carrying the weight of a ministry. We are being offered the opportunity come under the weight of the ministry we carry, and we might be thinking too small.

Every Sunday Emily sends a query to those in the Holy Experiment. "What do we need to do to heal from exclusion that has happened and continues to happen?" Let us lift up money as a form of exclusion. This work can never pit Witness vs young adults, Witness vs children. Money is a form of exclusion that young adults have felt for the last few years. They have not felt taken care of. We should not dip into our principal balance. That could do more harm than good.

In shifting from a scarcity to an abundance mindshift, we need to name and hear from the entire community. In order for us not to slip into the default way of ordering our budget, we need to name that this budget is for the care and wellbeing of our entire community.

There are small ways in which we can all help the development committee.