

2015 – 2016

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

Published October 2015

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NEW YORK YEARLY MEETING
FALL SESSIONS
November 15–16, 2014

Fifteenth Street Meetinghouse, New York, NY
Saturday, November 15, 2014, 9:30 a.m.

Jeffrey L. Hitchcock (Rahway & Plainfield), clerk
Lucinda Antrim (Scarsdale), Assistant clerk
Roger Dreisbach-Williams (Rahway & Plainfield), Recording clerk
Karen Snare (Bulls Head-Oswego), Reading clerk

2014-11-01. The clerk spoke of the deep worship we shared this morning. The Yearly Meeting has faced difficult times with a troubled economy and declining numbers. He has heard a sense of despair and cynicism as he travels around the Yearly Meeting. The ministry we heard this morning may be a step in a new direction, a sense of guarded optimism. He invited Friends to enter the work before us with joy. The clerk introduced those at the clerks' table and reviewed the agenda.

2014-11-02. Friends were asked to stand as their region was called. All nine regions, quarters and half-yearly meetings are present. The clerk asked Friends to identify their home meeting and role when speaking to the body.

2014-11-03. Carol Summar (15th Street) and Emily Provance (15th Street) spoke for the host committee welcoming us and going over access issues since the elevator is not working. Special thanks were extended to Friends Seminary, Yearly and Quarterly Meeting staff for their efforts in preparing for these sessions.

2014-11-04. The clerk reported interim items approved by the clerk and general secretary and not reported previously.

November, 2012 – signed on to a statement from Britain Yearly Meeting and AFSC calling for the end of the use of force in Gaza.

December, 2012 – signed on at the request of the NYYM Committee on Conscientious Objection to Paying for War as official co-sponsors of the next International Conference of War Tax Resisters and Peace Tax Campaigns.

December, 2012 – signed on to a letter from FCNL for The Climate Summit 2013 coalition, of which FCNL is a charter member, supporting President Obama in following through on his commitment to host a national summit on climate change. The President was particularly looking for religious groups to show support for this initiative.

January, 2013 – signed on to a letter to Governor Cuomo from many organizations applauding his commitment to address climate change after hurricane Sandy, and challenging his ongoing support for hydrofracking as being inconsistent with that stance, due to its large impact on greenhouse gas emissions.

September 2014 – signed a shared statement by Quaker groups titled “Facing the Challenge of Climate Change.”

A list of all interim items approved by the clerk and general secretary since 2010 was made available to Friends.

2014-11-05. Friends heard the 2014 epistle from Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting.

2014-11-06. Friends heard a report from the general secretary which he entitled “Community, Communion and Living in Truth.” There was ministry of appreciation and expansion of the general secretary’s report. Notes for the oral report are attached (page 11). A separate written report on the work of the general secretary is also attached (page 14). Friends received the general secretary’s oral report.

2014-11-07. Minutes 2014-11-01 to -06 were approved.

2014-11-08. John Cooley (Finger Lakes), serving as clerk of General Services, spoke on Friends’ commitment to follow the law when possible and to break it when necessary and to act with integrity and transparency.

2014-11-09. Susan Bingham (Montclair), serving as Treasurer, presented her report. Last year the closing balance was \$18,000 less than the opening balance, this year it is \$26,000 less. In the context of the total budget, this is not a serious concern. Friends received the report (page 18).

2014-11-10. Matt Scanlon (Scarsdale and Sing-Sing Worship Group) presented the first part of the budget for 2015. The

budget now considers volunteer efforts and trust fund expenditures, which effectively doubles the size of the budget.

Meeting income is about the same (this number had been decreasing). Most meetings are able to increase what they contribute, several have indicated that they must reduce their contributions, and it balances.

Christopher Sammond spoke on the work of the Development Committee (see page 18); about asking for our passion, and the funds that go with it. He expressed gratitude for automatic donations, multi-year donations, and the member of a prison worship group who gave \$5 on an income of a few cents an hour. Concerns that Development efforts will take funds from Covenant Donations are not supported by the experience of New England Yearly Meeting that has been doing this for several years.

Matt Scanlon resumed his presentation of the budget, which now includes a consolidated audit to include Trust Funds, Development Contributions, Covenant Donations and Program Revenue, highlighting the changes from last year, and notes on how the budget reflects the Statement of Leadings and Priorities. This will come most forcefully from the work of the committees and should be reflected in the 2016 budget. Yearly Meeting Staff, Powell House and Trustees are already reporting on their work in the context of the Leadings and Priorities.

The covenant donations should reflect what meetings can do. Some will be able to do more and some won't.

The institutional structure that we support in this budget enables Friends to respond to callings. The example of a Friend who was able to replace college courses in prisons when the State of New York ended the program was cited.

Timothy Johnson (Schenectady), serving as clerk of the Audit Committee, spoke to the increased cost of the audit, which is being paid for by Trustees. We have not been in compliance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) and part of the cost increase is to bring us into compliance with GAAP.

Friends approved the budget for 2015. (See page 70.)

2014-11-11. Mary Eagleson (Scarsdale), serving as clerk of the Witness Coordinating Committee, presented the concern to ask President Obama to release Leonard Peltier from prison.

Susan Wolf (Ithaca) presented a minute in support of this request. Friends asked that the minute be reworded to reflect the spiritual basis of our concern. Friends also spoke of others who are unjustly imprisoned and need our concern. A Friend asked what should be done after the minute is approved. This should be the beginning, not the end of our concern. The minute will be brought back tomorrow.

2014-11-12. Minutes 2014-11-08 to -11 were approved.

2014-11-13. The meeting closed with worship.

Fifteenth Street Meetinghouse, New York, NY
Sunday, November 16, 2014, 10:30 a.m.

Jeffrey L. Hitchcock (Rahway & Plainfield), Clerk
Lucinda Antrim (Scarsdale), Assistant Clerk
Andrew Mead von Salis (Brooklyn), Recording Clerk
Sylke Jackson (Rockland), Reading Clerk

2014-11-14. Following an hour in Fifteenth Street Meeting's weekly worship, Friends moved at 10:30 a.m. into attending to the business of the Yearly Meeting. From the quiet in the room, the clerk introduced the clerks and announced the business before us.

2014-11-15. Tom Rothschild (Brooklyn), on behalf of the Indian Affairs Committee, read a revision of the Committee's minute, presented yesterday, supporting the release of Leonard Peltier. Copies, with background information, were distributed.

Friends approved the minute as revised and read at this point, and as further revised by our minute 24 (below). It is therefore as follows:

Friends have a long-standing concern for prisons and those who have been unjustly imprisoned. We are called by God to act with integrity, and out of this grows a concern for justice. We have historic ties with Native American Nations and hold a concern that Native American individuals and Nations receive justice within our governmental systems. We feel led by the Spirit to call for the release of Leonard Peltier because we are led to speak truth to power. If we

remain silent, we fail to take action when we feel called to do so. Our conscience requires it of us and our Spirit moves us to act. We join the international community in calling for his release.

In Leonard Peltier's own words:

The Message

Silence, they say, is the voice of complicity.

But silence is impossible.

Silence screams.

Silence is a message,
just as doing nothing is an act.

Let who you are ring out & resonate
in every word & deed.

Yes, become who you are.

There's no sidestepping your own being
or your own responsibility.

What you do is who you are.

You are your own comeuppance.

You become your own message.

You are the message.

In the Spirit of Crazy Horse,
Leonard Peltier

New York Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends calls for the release from prison of Leonard Peltier in accordance with the plan drawn up by the National Congress of American Indians. Leonard Peltier is elderly and in ill health. We ask that he be allowed to rejoin his family and live his last days in peace.

The clerk of NYYM is requested to forward this minute to Barack Obama while he is in office, and to our Senators and Congressional Representatives.

Additionally, the clerk is requested to write to Leonard Peltier personally to inform him of our action and support, as well as the National Council of American Indians, which formulated the plan for his release; the International Leonard Peltier Defense Committee, Indian Country Today; and all North American Yearly Meetings. Individual members of New York Yearly Meeting are also encouraged to express individual support for release of Leonard Peltier as led.

2014-11-16. The assistant clerk, Lucinda Antrim, presided as the Yearly Meeting heard a report on our Visitation Initiative. Jeff Hitchcock (Rahway & Plainfield) presented the oral report of the 145 recorded occasions of intervisitation this year by 63 different Friends. All Friends are free to log visits through a “QuickLinks” on our website as they take place. He reviewed the who, what, when and where of the visits, and emphasized especially the why—because of the rewarding relationships and mutual enrichment that can be gained by reaching out to seize the widely-overlooked opportunities for intervisitation among our local meetings.

Various Friends’ expressions of appreciation and welcome arose from the floor. Letters of introduction from a visiting Friend’s home meeting were encouraged.

2014-11-17. The clerk then introduced Elaine Learnard, clerk of the Priorities Working Group, who reminded us of the Statement of Leadings and Priorities, approved this summer, which appears in our currently released *Yearbook*. She presented for a first reading the Working Group’s new proposals. Their purpose is to guide our future decisions on using our resources, and to provide a process for implementing the priorities and assessing that implementation. These draft minutes reflect the past three years of work, and are ready for distribution and consideration throughout the Yearly Meeting.

Members of the Working Group took turns reading aloud its proposed minutes embodying the proposals, including five Implementation Minutes and a Priorities Assessment Committee Minute. The latter includes language intended to be fit for inclusion in our *Handbook* upon an approval of the Yearly Meeting’s establishment of an assessment committee. The Working Group invited feedback and discussion before an expected second reading at our Spring Sessions 2015, at which time the Working Group expects to recommend that it be laid down.

Friends’ concerns and comments were offered from the floor, and will continue to be welcome over the coming months. Friends directed the clerk to distribute the proposals in accordance with the Working Group’s report.

2014-11-18. The reading clerk read the Epistle of the Quaker Youth Pilgrimage 2014. Twenty-six pilgrims from nine countries toured many localities in Peru and Bolivia, the first time the Youth Pilgrimage has been to South America. They understood God's purpose that we not be alone, as different forms of worship were experienced and, in due course, well appreciated. Games, songs and caring among the pilgrims and their hosts transcended barriers of language, forms of worship, and culture. Quoting George Fox, the pilgrims reported they felt the meaning of being patterns and examples as they walked across these new lands.

2014-11-19. The assistant clerk presided as Mary Eagleson (Scarsdale), as a member of the Liaison Committee by virtue of her clerkship of our Witness section, gave the second reading of a "Minute clarifying the role of the clerk and general secretary in representing NYYM," which had its first reading and consideration at this year's Summer Sessions (Minute 2014-07-39). The Liaison Committee recommended its approval today. With word changes to emphasize reporting all such interim statements back to the Yearly Meeting and archiving them, the minute is approved, as follows:

The NYYM clerk and general secretary are expected to represent the Yearly Meeting.

Between sessions, when the occasion for giving the Yearly Meeting a public voice seems urgent and appropriate, the clerk and general secretary are expected to represent the Yearly Meeting's known stands, along with the testimonies of the wider body of the Religious Society of Friends.

Such occasions could include, but would not be limited to, joining with other organizations in joint statements or actions, signing onto *amicus curiae* briefs, signing petitions and letters of concern as an organization, sending letters of concern to other yearly meetings affected by wars, terrorism and natural disasters, and making time-critical comments to public officials.

The clerk and general secretary should confer with each other and be in accord before taking action. If one or the other is not available to confer, the clerk or general secretary should confer with the assistant clerk and/or associate secretary.

Whenever possible, they should anchor their comments in our faith as Friends, articulating how our speaking out is linked to our testimonies, our *Faith and Practice*, and past minutes approved by the Yearly Meeting, and they should use the resources of the Yearly Meeting's committee members and individuals known to share deeply the relevant concern. If necessary the clerk may call a special meeting of the Liaison Committee to aid in their discernment.

Furthermore, these Friends can ask an individual member to speak for the yearly meeting in a specific instance in which the individual can draw on her or his expertise in the relevant area of concern.

At the next session, the clerk and general secretary will report on such statements and actions they have taken in the interim between sessions. Their actions and joint statements with other bodies will be archived in the NYYM office. When either or both are instructed by a minute of the Yearly Meeting in session, they are expected to report how they have carried out the task. This follow up may be done in writing to the relevant committees and individuals or, if appropriate, by reporting at the next session.

This minute is intended to clarify, consolidate and reiterate policies and processes based on precedents and current review by the Liaison Committee.

2014-11-20. The clerk called upon John Cooley (Central Finger Lakes), clerk of the General Services Coordinating Committee, who presented its recommendation that the Development Committee be authorized to conduct fund appeals at their discretion, instead of continuing our practice of prior approval of an annual appeal by the body of the Yearly Meeting. Friends approved.

2014-11-21. The clerk brought to our attention the Consent Agenda. The following Minutes 22 and 23 were approved in accordance with our consent agenda practice.

2014-11-22. The following nominations for Yearly Meeting service were approved:

Ministry and Pastoral Care (2017)
Emily Provance, 15th Street

Communications Committee (2015)
Jennifer Coonce, Brooklyn (attender)
Development Committee (2017)
Albert Hsu, Wilton
Personnel Committee (2017)
Lynn von Salis, Brooklyn
Friends United Meeting—General Board (2017)
Beverley Archibald, Manhattan
Young Adult Concerns Committee (2017)
Alanna Badgley, Poughkeepsie
Young Adult Concerns Committee (2017)
Audrey Jaynes, Montclair
Indian Affairs Committee (2017)
Rebekah Rice, Saratoga
Indian Affairs Committee (2017)
Rebecca Wolf, Rochester

2014-11-23. The following releases from Yearly Meeting service were received:

Committee on Conflict Transformation (2015)
Judy Meikle, Wilton
State of the Society (2016)
Joan Cope Savage, Syracuse
Junior Yearly Meeting Committee (2015)
David Gerhan, Schenectady
Elsie K. Powell House, Inc. (2016)
Cinda Putman, Albany
Elsie K. Powell House, Inc. (2018)
Catherine (Cathy) Wald, Amawalk
Friends Committee on National Legislation (2015)
Jonathan Collett, Butternuts

2014-11-24. Revisiting our minute 2014-11-11, a Friend rose to suggest a change in language as to our call to act that appeared to have the consent of the Indian Affairs Committee. Friends approved replacing the phrase “Our testimonies call upon us to act with integrity” with “We are called by God”.

2014-11-25. The reading clerk read a travel minute of Manhattan Monthly Meeting for Margaret Mulindi to travel and work in Kenya, already endorsed by New York Quarterly Meeting. The clerk offered it for endorsement by the Yearly Meeting. Friends directed the clerk to endorse the travel minute.

2014-11-26. The Sessions Committee, by Melanie-Claire Mallison, its assistant clerk, reported orally on these Fall Sessions. The attendance was the largest Fall Sessions attendance ever, including 170 adults, 26 teens and 2 younger children giving a total of 196 Friends. Melanie-Claire named the host committee's members and many volunteers and the host meeting and School, to all of whom we are grateful for their resourceful and generous service. The report was received.

2014-11-27. Melanie-Claire Mallison proceeded to read a report of the Sessions Committee. Friends received the report and invitation, which is included as follows at their request:

Dear friends:

Next year will be an auspicious year for us—2015 will be the 320th anniversary of the creation of the New York Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends. 2015 is also the 60th anniversary of our becoming a united yearly meeting, approved at Summer Sessions 1955. And finally, 2015 will be the first calendar year during which we will consider and worship on our shared Leadings and Priorities, approved at the 2014 NYYM Summer Sessions. (Find the full text of the Leadings and Priorities online at nyym.org)

Given these three historic events, NYYM's Session Committee has chosen to work them together into a theme for the 2015 Summer Sessions, being held July 19-25, at Silver Bay Association. Along with our two anniversaries, the first two envision statements from our Leadings and Priorities are; "We Envision A Yearly Meeting Deeply Grounded In The Practice Of Our Faith" and "We Envision A Yearly Meeting Made Up Of Strong, Vital Monthly Meetings." And while we are all encouraged to consider the six envision statements as one piece, our theme will be;

320 Years, One Faith.

60 Years, One Meeting.

Today, One Vision.

We invite all f/Friends to consider this theme as a starting point for every level of their Quaker work and worship through-out the entire year. For instance, the NYYM Communications Committee is already dedicating the January issue of *Spark* to these first two envision state-

ments. The articles will surely provide “food for thought” and prayer and action. Perhaps your meeting could host discussion groups to consider the envision statements and the articles in *Spark*. Perhaps your committee could consider its work with the envision statements in mind—how does our work further the practice of our faith and strengthen our Meetings? Certainly, First Day Schools and youth groups need a strong foundation in understanding Quakerism and a strong Meeting to support them as they discover their own faithful gifts.

We hope you will join us in celebrating New York Yearly Meeting, which is, after all, nothing without our faith and our meetings. We are 320 years strong because of you. Thank you.

Sincerely,
NYYM Sessions Committee

2014-11-28. The minutes were heard, corrected and approved in stages during the meeting.

2014-11-29. Friends returned to a period of silence to end the Fall Sessions, adjourning at 12:35 p.m. to meet again for Spring Sessions at Oakwood School, Poughkeepsie, N.Y., on April 10-12, 2015.

Attachments

General secretary’s message, as delivered to the body

See minute 2014-11-06, page 2.

This is our first time back together as a community since Summer Sessions. There, after days of real difficult wrestling with one another, we came to a powerful sense of unity, one which I can still touch back on in my heart. Friends who were there used language such as “a powerful movement of the Spirit,” “a Pentecostal experience,” and “conflict transformation.” While many of us who are here today were present then, many also were not, and I feel a need to perhaps help us bridge back to that time, that energy, that powerful presence of the Spirit aflame in open hearts. I hope we can touch back on that. And I hope that our sessions here, and our work going forward, are tempered by that experience of openness, joy, and spiritual power.

Summer Sessions—conflict, resolution, and what arose in me afterwards:

The words Community and Communion. And the sense that much of the conflict I had been witnessing revolved around an orientation to one or the other.

Description of Community—a powerful sense of connectedness: a “conference high.”

Description of Communion—the powerful feeling of gathered worship when “the power of the Lord is overall.”

I have been holding questions about these two experiences. Are they flip sides of the same coin? Part of a continuum? The same thing as experienced by different spiritual types? Does one lead to another? We need to become more conscious of these two different spiritual modalities, and how they play out in our life in community.

I am uncomfortable with the sense of “Community” as an end in itself, understood only as this nice thing that happens between people. Like all testimonies, it is rooted in something deeper. This wonderful experience we call “Community” is not just something happening between individuals. There is a spiritual dimension as well. As we open profoundly to each other, we also open to the Divine. I can feel that shift when it happens in a group I am facilitating. I can feel it when the whole temporary community at an FGC (Friends General Conference) Gathering makes this shift. It usually happens on Wednesday of that week, but sometimes on Thursday. And it is palpable, and huge. We need to understand and acknowledge the spiritual dimension of this experience.

My concern is that I experience those who favor one or the other—Community or Communion—as their way in to the Divine, as being often in conflict with one another. These are different entry points into participation in the Divine. But I see us looking past this in one another, not understanding their complementary nature.

If our richest spiritual experiences are happening away from our monthly meetings, what does that call us to?

Now I am going to make a broad generalization, and all generalizations are false in some degree, including this one. Most of our experiences of profound community are happen-

ing away from our monthly meetings communities. And most of our experiences of communion happen within our monthly meeting communities.

What does it mean that most of our experiences of deep community are happening away from our monthly meetings? What does this require of us?

As the goal of our worship is communion, and that is how I understand our practice as Friends, and that is not happening as often as we would like, what does that require of us?

Let me state a radical position: Without our monthly meetings, there is no reason to have a yearly meeting, or its sessions. There is no reason to have Powell House, its conferences, or its youth program. There is no reason to have FGC or its Gathering. How can we, how do we, take the spiritual riches we experience in these places, and live them out in our home communities? If our richest spiritual experiences are happening away from our monthly meetings, what does that call us to? How do we sustain that sense of openness, and bring it back to our monthly meetings?

There is a third strand to our communities, which I would call living in Truth. This is the dimension of our witness work. Recently, I had a refresher in that spiritual dimension.

Witness of Sandra Steingraber, Roland Micklem, and many others. And then a comfortable dinner in a good restaurant. I became aware of, I could feel the dissonance between those two, and a palpable sense of what in Seminary we called “middle class numbness” in the latter. That numbness denied the truth of the larger situation. In that restaurant, the world was a fine place, the current order benign, just and good. We could enjoy our meal in peace, not needing to worry. And it ignored the Truth that forces are actively at work that are destroying our planet, that money have corrupted both science and politics, and that the Empire will defend those forces against any who challenge them.

We have many Friends whose experience spiritually centers on having the courage to live in the Truth of our situation, to see clearly the school-to-prison pipeline, to see clearly our racism, to see clearly the destruction of our planet, to see clearly the genocide of peoples at home and abroad, to see clearly that we

are a country that tortures, that we send out drones to kill those we perceive to be our enemies, killing others in the process, to see clearly that we live amidst vast and accelerating economic disparity, Friends who are unwilling and unable to live out the numbness that says that all is well, fine, just and good, when it is not.

And in this yearly meeting, I have seen an attitude of conflict between “Witness Friends” and “Ministry Friends,” and could tell you stories about that.

We need all of these three strands, and more. We need all of us. These three strands complement, complete each other. We need to be conscious of when we are feeling in competition or conflict with those who come from a different spiritual orientation, and pause, and remember how they are a vital part of our community.

That is the unity that embraced us at Summer Sessions, and that is the unity we need to live out, consciously and fully.

Christopher Sammond

General secretary’s Written Report

See minute 2014-11-06, page 2.

This is our first time back together as a community since Summer Sessions. There, after days of real difficult wrestling with one another, we came to a powerful sense of unity, one that I can still touch back on in my heart. Friends who were there used language such as “a powerful movement of the Spirit,” “a Pentecost experience,” and “conflict transformation.” While many of us who are here today were present then, many also were not, and I feel a need to perhaps help us bridge back to that time, that energy, that powerful presence of the Spirit aflame in open hearts. I would invite those of you who were there to go back to that time, to touch back to that energy, and to bring some of that forward. And I hope that our sessions here, and our work going forward, might be tempered by that experience of openness, joy, and spiritual power.

My time at Summer Sessions was a week of listening to Friends who were angry, concerned, feeling alienated, feeling left out of the vision for the Yearly Meeting as elaborated by the Statement of Leadings and Priorities. It was one long conversation, with

the partners changing, but the content was pretty similar. As I pondered all those conversations in the weeks afterwards, the words “Community and Communion” kept coming to me, along with the sense that much of the conflict I had been witnessing revolved around an orientation to one or the other.

Each of us might use those words, but mean very different things. I will give you my descriptions. By “community,” I mean the feeling we experience of incredible openness of hearts and spirits, unity, and togetherness Friends often talk about experiencing at Summer Sessions, at an FGC Gathering, at a Powell House conference, where we refer to coming away with “a conference high.”

By “communion” I mean the powerful experience when we are in a gathered or covered meeting, when the silence gets so thick it is palpable, and the air gets heavy and full, and you can actually sense the presence and the unity of the Spirit in the room, with all there open in heart and spirit to each other and to God.

I have been holding questions about these two experiences. Are they flip sides of the same coin, part of a continuum, the same thing as experienced by different spiritual types? Does one lead to another? We need to become more conscious of these two different spiritual modalities, and how they play out in our life in community.

I am uncomfortable with the sense of “Community” as an end in itself, understood only as this nice thing that happens between people. Like all testimonies, it is rooted in something deeper. This wonderful experience we call “Community” is not just something happening between individuals. There is a spiritual dimension as well. As we open profoundly to each other, we also open to the Divine. I can feel that shift when it happens in a group I am facilitating. I can feel it when the whole temporary community at an FGC Gathering makes this shift. It usually happens on Wednesday of that week, but sometimes on Thursday. And it is palpable, and huge. We need to understand and acknowledge the spiritual dimension of this experience.

My concern is that I experience those who favor one or the other—Community or Communion—as their way in to the Divine, as being often in conflict with one another. These are

different entry points into participation in the Divine. But I see us looking past this in one another, not understanding their complementary nature.

Now I am going to make a broad generalization, and all generalizations are false in some degree, including this one. Most of our experiences of profound community are happening away from our local meeting communities. And most of our experiences of communion happen within our local meeting communities.

What does it mean that most of our experiences of deep community are happening away from our local meetings? What does this require of us?

As the goal of our worship is communion, and that is how I understand our practice as Friends, and that is not happening as often as we would like, what does that require of us?

Let me state a radical position: Without our local meetings, there is no reason to have a yearly meeting, or its sessions. There is no point in having a yearly meeting office, its staff, or certainly a general secretary. There is no reason to have Powell House, its conferences, or its youth program. There is no reason to have FGC or its Gathering. How can we, how do we, take the spiritual riches we experience in these places, and live them out in our home communities? If our richest spiritual experiences are happening away from our local meetings, what does that call us to? How do we sustain that sense of openness, and bring it back to our local meetings?

There is a third strand to our communities, which I would call living in Truth. This is the dimension of our witness work. Recently, I had a refresher in that spiritual dimension.

I was with my wife Barbara at the arraignment of Friends Sandra Steingraber, Roland Micklem, and ten others. We were at a rally and press conference just before they entered the court building. One after another gave powerful witness as to why they felt called to do whatever was necessary to stop a proposed massive natural gas storage facility in the salt caverns under Seneca Lake. They were willing to be arrested for blocking entry to the facility, and to go to jail, if need be. We stood out in the dark, with candles, for an hour and a half on a cold, windy evening, getting chilled to the bone, and deeply moved by their witness.

As the courthouse would not accommodate more than the defendants, their families and their lawyers, Barbara and I headed home at the end of the rally. It was late, and we stopped for dinner in a restaurant in Ithaca. We were enjoying a comfortable dinner in a good restaurant, with good food, music, people around us enjoying their meals, with a glass of wine or beer. We warmed up, settled in.

I became aware of, I could feel the dissonance between the scene where we had just been, and where we were now, and a palpable sense of what in Seminary we called “middle class numbness” in the latter. That numbness denied the truth of the larger situation. In that restaurant, the world was a fine place, the current order benign, just and good. We could enjoy our meal in peace, not needing to worry. And it ignored the Truth that forces are actively at work that are destroying our planet, that money has corrupted both science and politics, and that the Empire will defend those forces against any who challenge them. And I could feel that where we had been, that scene in the courthouse parking lot, had a lot more life in it than the cozy restaurant. And I wanted more of that life.

We have many Friends whose experience spiritually centers on having the courage to live in the Truth of our situation, to see clearly the school to prison pipeline, to see clearly our racism, to see clearly the destruction of our planet, to see clearly the genocide of peoples at home and abroad, to see clearly that we are a country that tortures, to see clearly that we live amidst vast and accelerating economic disparity, Friends who are unwilling and unable to live out the numbness that says that all is well, fine, just and good, when it is not.

And in this yearly meeting, I have seen an attitude of conflict between “Witness Friends” and “Ministry Friends,” and could tell you stories about that.

We need all of these three strands, and more. We need all of us. These three strands complement, complete each other. We need to be conscious of when we are feeling in competition or conflict with those who come from a different spiritual orientation, and pause, and remember how they are a vital part of our community.

That is the unity that embraced us at Summer Sessions, and that is the unity we need to live out, consciously and fully.

Treasurer's Oral Report

See minute 2014-11-09, page 2.

	Actual	Rounded
The opening balance:	\$204,093	(\$204,000)
Total receipts for the year:	\$370,955	(\$371,000)
Total disbursements:	\$396,617	(\$397,000)
Closing balance:	\$179,431	(\$179,000)
This is a net change of	-\$25,662	(\$26,000)
Net change at this time in 2013	-\$17,630	(\$18,000)

Report of the Development Committee

See minute 2014-11-10, page 3.

Twelve months ago, Matt Scanlon, clerk of Financial Services, reported to Fall Sessions that we had roughly eighteen months to explore whether we could increase revenues, or face substantially altering the way we structure our efforts as a yearly meeting. An increase in Covenant Donations has certainly been a part of that exploration, and Matt will be reporting on that aspect of our financial picture in his report today. The other part of the question of whether or not we can increase revenues has fallen to the Development Committee.

We are a relatively new committee, only being approved as a committee in summer of 2012. While we have filed *Advance Reports*, we have not yet reported to a yearly meeting session about our work. We are still in the process of building a development program in New York Yearly Meeting to help ensure that the needs and leadings of Friends in this yearly meeting will be better supported. But based only on the limited experience of the past two and a half years, we would answer Matt's question, "Yes, we can."

In 2012, our predecessor, the Development Working Group, just barely getting up and running, raised \$15,044. In 2013,

we raised \$22,960. This year, we will raise at least \$33, 394. (We hope to add to that number here at Fall Sessions, making our goal in the Operating Budget of \$34,000.) That is a 50% increase each year over the previous one. We have committed to raising \$40,000 for the 2015 Operating Budget.

We have been building this program from scratch, each year adding a new program or capacity. We have had to build slowly, as we are a small group. The first year, we put together an annual appeal. The next year, we did an annual appeal and looked to how we should prioritize the other options before us. This year, we added automatic donation services, and had ice cream socials and our first house party fund raiser. We have offered to host monthly meeting automatic donation pages on our service. We also received our first multi-year gift, a gift of \$40,000 over the next five years.

We are incredibly grateful for this gift, and equally grateful for the \$5 gift from an incarcerated Friend, and just as grateful for all the \$5 per month contributions we are receiving. Together, they are adding up to healthy, proactive support for the work being done by us as a yearly meeting. Thank you, each and every one of you.

In the coming year, we anticipate doing more house parties, pursuing other multi-year gifts, and increasing participation in our automated giving program, in addition to our annual appeal. As time allows, we hope to begin the work of inviting Friends into opportunities for planned giving to the Yearly Meeting.

We have heard some concerns that funds raised through development might overwhelm or undermine the core of what sustains this yearly meeting, our Covenant Donations. While we understand and respect those concerns, and welcome conversations about them, we do not see those risks as being substantive. In New England Yearly Meeting, each year for the past many that they have solicited contributions from individuals, both individual giving and giving by monthly meetings have gone up. Giving begets giving.

In our proposed 2015 Operating Budget, Covenant Donations make up 81% of our income, the proposed appeal, 7%. At what point should we become concerned that money raised through development might undermine the more important contri-

butions through Covenant Donations? That is a worthwhile question for us to consider, and we should do so. But we do not see ourselves nearing that level just yet, and are optimistic about the positive effect a coordinated development effort can have, not just in supporting crucial work done at a yearly meeting level, but also in better connecting individuals and meetings with that work.

Up until this point, we have asked the body for approval on a year by year basis to do an appeal for the coming year. We now will be reporting to General Services Coordinating Committee the idea of doing appeals on an ongoing basis, as we discern they are needed. We hope that this recommendation will then be on Sunday's agenda.

*Respectfully Submitted,
The New York Yearly Meeting Development Committee
Peter Baily
Tom Bonhag
Linda Hill Brainard
Joyce Ketterer
Ray Rios
Christopher Sammond*

NEW YORK YEARLY MEETING
SPRING SESSIONS
April 11–12, 2015

Oakwood Friends School, Poughkeepsie, New York
Saturday, April 11, 2015, 9:30 a.m.

Jeffrey L. Hitchcock (Rahway & Plainfield), clerk
Lucinda Antrim (Scarsdale), Assistant clerk
Karen Way (New Brunswick), Recording clerk
Sylke Jackson (Rockland), Reading clerk

2015-04-01. The meeting opened with silent worship. The clerk spoke of Spring, the season of transition, the season of Easter and rebirth. We have much work to do, but much work has already been done. What arises comes from beyond expectation. We really have and have always had only one agenda: to discern what God would have us do.

2015-04-02. The clerk introduced the members of the clerks' table and reviewed the agenda, reminding Friends to review the Consent Agenda, which will be considered tomorrow.

2015-04-03. Friends stood as their region was called. All regions were represented.

2015-04-04. Karen Snare welcomed us on behalf of the Nine Partners Quarter host committee and thanked Oakwood Friends School for support. Over 130 Friends have registered.

2015-04-05. Peter Baily, head of Oakwood Friends School, described renovations under way at the school, including several energy-saving projects. Oakwood serves as a small village to 155 students and many staff. Peter is finishing his 15-year tenure at Oakwood and will be continuing his work promoting education in Maryland. A new permanent head of Oakwood is expected for July 2016.

2015-04-06. The clerk welcomed Shan Cretin, general secretary of the American Friends Service Committee, who had presented to Friends on "Fostering Leadership for Social Change" on the previous night.

2015-04-07. The clerk reported one interim item approved by the clerk and general secretary and not reported previously:

2014-12-11. The clerk and the general secretary issued a statement entitled “Black Lives Matter,” which was widely distributed and is available on the NYYM website under the heading Social Witness.

2015-04-08. Minutes were approved to this point.

2015-04-09. Elaine Learnard (Conscience Bay) of the Priorities Working Group presented a revised proposal for two minutes addressing first the implementation of the Statement of Leading and Priorities that was adopted last summer (Minutes 2014-07-28 through 2014-07-32), and second, the assessing of that implementation. An initial version of the two minutes was presented to Friends at Fall Sessions with a request for consideration and comments. Elaine explained the process of revision, showing how elements of the minutes were simplified, clarified, and refocused based on suggestions from monthly meetings and individual Friends.

2015-04-10. Fred Dettmar (Purchase) read the proposed Implementation Minutes, which describe the situations and processes in which the Leadings and Priorities will guide decision-making in NYYM, particularly concerning financial actions. Friends spoke in response, asking for additional clarification on how the new process will work with budgeting and requests for funding. Priorities Working Group members emphasized that these minutes aim for coordination, not control. The process is expected to evolve as the Financial Services Committee undertakes that coordination over the coming years.

The first set of minutes was approved as follows, with one Friend standing aside:

Financial Implementation Minutes

1. All in service to the Yearly Meeting will be guided by the Leadings and Priorities in planning and undertaking their functions and activities. Financial Services Committee will use the Leadings and Priorities in proposing budgets and in discerning priorities among requests for funds. In making all budget requests, committees and other groups

and Friends in service to the Yearly Meeting, through their Coordinating Committees if possible, will provide information as requested by Financial Services Committee explaining how the proposed expenditure(s) further the Leadings and Priorities.

2. The treasurer of the Yearly Meeting Trustees and the clerk of Witness Coordinating Committee's Finance Subcommittee (or whoever oversees the Sharing Fund and the Sharing Fund Endowment) will be members ex officio of Financial Services Committee. Financial Services Committee also will seek to include regional and monthly meeting treasurers in its discernment.
3. Financial Services Committee will address revisions to its description in the Yearly Meeting's *Handbook* made necessary by these minutes, if any.
4. All committees, groups or persons undertaking fundraising or spending within the Yearly Meeting, to the extent consistent with the directions and limits of any gifts or trust instruments, will coordinate their fundraising and spending planning and actions with Financial Services Committee, so as to jointly further the implementation of the Leadings and Priorities.

2015-04-11. Elaine Learnard introduced the proposed Minute Establishing a Priorities Assessment Committee (PAC), which defines the structure, goals, and duties of a new committee under the care of Ministry Coordinating Committee. The PAC is intended to maintain and deepen connections between Yearly Meeting organizational structure and the monthly meetings. PAC will help achieve the accountability and transparency needed to assure that all our Yearly Meeting resource allocations decisions—whether they be about budgets, staff, volunteer activity or other “treasure”—will be rooted in the priorities of the monthly meetings.

2015-04-12. Fred Dettmer read the proposed minute. Friends spoke in response, emphasizing the importance of the entire body of the Yearly Meeting and expressing concern about creating yet another committee. We decided to lay over this concern for our Sunday meeting for worship with a concern for business.

2015-04-13. The remaining minutes of this session were approved.

2015-04-14. After announcements, we closed with quiet worship.

Oakwood School, Poughkeepsie, New York
Sunday, April 12, 2015, 10:00 a.m.

Jeffrey L. Hitchcock (Rahway & Plainfield), clerk
Lucinda Antrim (Scarsdale), Assistant clerk
Andrew Mead von Salis (Brooklyn), Recording clerk
Karen Snare (Bulls Head-Oswego), Reading clerk

2015-04-15. Following morning worship and a last-minute change of meeting room, we convened at approximately 10:15 a.m., and the clerk greeted us. Taking stock of our substantial remaining agenda, we were relieved of our main Priorities Working Group business, which it had been agreed overnight to re-examine for presentation again at our Summer Sessions 2015 under the care of the Liaison Committee.

2015-04-16. The Consent Agenda was addressed. In accordance with our consent agenda practice, the Yearly Meeting had been asked to release the following Friends under committee or other appointment from their service through July of the specified year, and these releases were approved:

Nurture Coordinating Committee, at-large (2015)

Julia Giordano (Bulls Head-Oswego)

Representative to Rural and Migrant Ministry (2015)

Jane Simkin (Poplar Ridge)

2015-04-17. Elaine Learnard (Conscience Bay), on behalf of the Priorities Working Group, citing its appreciation for the opportunity to do their work, requested that the Working Group be laid down. Friends approved.

2015-04-18. Mary Eagleson (Scarsdale), clerk of the Witness Coordinating Committee, introduced Pamela Wood (Morningside). She presented a seasoned and updated proposal, previously recommended by the Witness Coordinating Committee,

that the Yearly Meeting issue a public statement on solitary confinement. It affirms Friends' belief in personal transformation and nonviolence, and against psychological torture. It proposes a minute for our adoption, calling for a halt to the use of solitary confinement in prisons. The pending legislation, New York State bill (A.4401 / S.2659), is titled "Humane Alternatives to Long-Term (HALT) Solitary Confinement Act."

Some Friends stated a preference that our public statements and minutes express clearly the spiritual witness and the experience of the Society of Friends, such as are referred to in the proposal read by Mary Eagleson. Friends approved the proposal, including the Minute as follows:

The New York Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends calls on Governor Cuomo to support the reform of the practice of solitary confinement in the state correctional facilities and local jails of New York, as developed in the Humane Alternatives to Long Term (HALT) Solitary Confinement Act, Bill #A4401/S2659. With the enactment of the changes in the use of solitary confinement proposed in the Act, New York would become a leader in the effort to stop human rights abuses in the United States.

Friends also directed its clerk and general secretary to draft a cover letter to be issued to the Governor and members of the Legislature with the foregoing minute, so as to convey that witness and that experience to all the recipients.

2015-04-19. Mary Eagleson next introduced a concern for nuclear weapons non-proliferation. Only recently had our president's policy called for substantial bolstering of the United States' nuclear arsenal. The Witness Coordinating Committee now offered us an opportunity to commit ourselves to personal, local, and regional non-proliferation actions, as well as to state publicly our commitment to peace, by joining in the endorsement of an imminent event called "Peace & Planet: Mobilization for a Nuclear-Free, Peaceful, Just, and Sustainable World" in New York City on April 24 - 26, 2015. Friends approved.

2015-04-20. Mary Eagleson then introduced Robin Mallison Alpern (Scarsdale), who brought us an invitation to join the 2016 White Privilege Conference host team. This annual inter-denominational and secular conference of roughly 2,000

participants is to empower transformation of individuals and structures from roles in white privilege to building racial equity. The reading clerk read the invitation from Friends General Conference to join the host team. Robin, a member of the European American Quakers Working to End Racism Working Group, delivered a statement of the work and seasoning done to date by several named groups and committees of our yearly meeting, and explained the role and responsibilities of a host team member. These include pledging a sum between \$2,000 and \$5,000 to the Conference, in return for which we would receive free registrations to attend the conference in proportion to our donation. The Black Concerns Committee and multiple elements in our Witness Coordinating Committee have pledged a total of \$3,000, the sum Witness Coordinating had recommended, from existing budget lines.

Friends considered whether to co-host the Conference and to contribute the proposed \$3,000. Friends approved.

2015-04-21. John Cooley (Central Finger Lakes), as clerk of the General Services Coordinating Committee, brought us several reports. First, he read a treasurer's report from Susan Bingham, our treasurer, and he commended to our attention the copies of the financial statements that were made available to us. Their numbers are rounded to the nearest dollar. Our balance of moneys on hand gained \$11,393 over the budget and calendar year 2014. To the end of February 2015, our net change from year-end was a loss of \$6,517, as is typical of our first-quarter operations. The report was received.

The treasurer and Financial Services Committee clerk proposed to carry over \$11,000 of the operating surplus from 2014 to our 2015 budgeted income, the plan that had been noted in the 2015 budget proposal that we approved at Fall Sessions 2014. Friends approved.

2015-04-22. John Cooley introduced two personnel items. The General Services Coordinating Committee had examined for some time a proposed position of Children and Youth Secretary, a field secretary position to be funded from existing available sources within the Yearly Meeting and from an anticipated multi-year grant from the Shoemaker Fund. Our Young Adult

Field Secretary and our new Children and Youth Secretary would coordinate with New England Yearly Meeting's existing Religious Education and Outreach Coordinator and a young adult field secretary to be newly established, so as to share their respective experience and mentoring for the mutual benefit of each yearly meeting's staff members.

Friends received the oral report.

2015-04-23. Barbara Menzel (New Brunswick), clerk of the Personnel Committee, reported that the Committee has taken stock of the first four years of the work of our Young Adult Field Secretary, Gabrielle Savory-Bailey (Chatham-Summit). Barbara told us, at Gabi's request, that Gabi was now commencing a medical leave, but she had drafted the substance of a thorough report to the Shoemaker Fund of her work over the past four years. Barbara summarized several of the report's highlights for us, including increased participation and new depth in the growth of our young adults and their community. Personal connections and care change lives, and we need awareness of opportunities for that. Our young adult community is often centered at the local level, which we need to appreciate. A new concern has arisen for the need to nurture our children and teens—our future young adults—to ensure continued growth. The Personnel Committee has recognized Gabi's remarkable gifts.

The oral report was received, with one Friend recorded as standing aside. Friends moved into a period of worship rich with personal perspectives and heartfelt appreciation for Gabi and her difficult yet faithful and successful work, which has served all of us.

2015-04-24. John Cooley reported on our audit. A new auditor, O'Conner-Davies, had been retained, and an agreement for additional work (preparation of the consolidated financial statements necessitated by our current financial structure) to be done by our bookkeeping firm had just been finalized. The oral report was received.

2015-04-25. Irma Guthrie (Perry City), clerk of the Ministry Coordinating Committee, introduced Mia Kissel Hewitt (Chatham-Summit), clerk of the Advancement Committee.

She reported that the Committee had received three requests for assistance with meetinghouse repair totaling approximately \$7,200. The Lockport-Brinkerhoff Funds have only about \$1,300 available. The Advancement Committee recommends approving \$1,200 to Quaker Street Meeting for some of the required painting and water system work at Quaker Street meetinghouse. The requests from Albany Meeting and Poplar Ridge Meeting for roof repair assistance are reported to us as unmet to date. The Committee invited all individuals, monthly meetings, and regional meetings to assist such meetings in need.

Friends received the oral report and considered and approved the recommended funding.

2015-04-26. Irma Guthrie introduced a first reading of two proposed sections of our book of discipline, *Faith and Practice*. Lucy Harper (Rochester) and Anne Pomeroy (New Paltz), of the ad hoc Task Group on Recording Gifts in Ministry, report that the proposed language was approved by the Ministry Coordinating Committee at Fall Sessions 2014. They alternately gave us several examples of the experiences shared and the work done in the group in moving from differences to a clarity and unity on the text presented. These touched on, among other things, the authority of monthly meetings, the accountability of the Yearly Meeting and its committees, and the inclusiveness of our community. Anne read the proposed change in the Spiritual Care of Members section, which adds a clause concerning nurturing gifts in ministry. Lu read the section now re-named from “Recording of Gifts in Ministry” to “Care of Ministries and Recording of Gifts in Ministry,” which reflects multiple changes in language and three new paragraphs, all as had been distributed electronically in preparation for this first reading.

The first reading of the proposed sections was heard.

2015-04-27. The clerk called on Melanie-Claire Mallison (Ithaca), assistant clerk of the Sessions Committee. She reported orally, thanking our host meeting, committee and school. A total of 148 participants, including 6 youth, attended this weekend. She looked forward to our Summer and Fall Sessions. The report was received.

2015-04-28. The minutes of this session were read, corrected and approved in stages during the course of the meeting.

2015-04-29. The Yearly Meeting then adjourned, to meet again for Summer Sessions at Silver Bay, New York, on July 19-25, 2015.

THE 320TH NEW YORK YEARLY MEETING
MINUTES—SUMMER SESSIONS
July 19–25, 2015

Silver Bay, New York

Monday, July 20, 2015, 3:30 p.m.

Jeffrey L. Hitchcock (Rahway & Plainfield), Clerk

Lucinda Antrim (Scarsdale), Assistant Clerk

Roger Dreisbach-Williams (Rahway & Plainfield), Recording Clerk

Sylke Jackson (Rockland), Reading Clerk

2015-07-01. The clerk welcomed F/friends to the 320th session of New York Yearly Meeting. Those at the clerks' table were introduced, and the agenda was presented—including a reminder to review the Consent Agenda which will be taken up on Wednesday night.

2015-07-02. The clerk welcomed visitors:

2015-07-03. John VanDyke Wilmerding, from Putney [Vermont] Meeting, New England Yearly Meeting, is carrying a concern for developing an anti-racism training curriculum, based around the Alternatives to Violence Project, for working with white people to address their, and one another's, racism in new ways.

2015-07-04. A traveling minute was received from Friends General Conference for Carolyn Lejuste who is attending as the Yearly Meeting Visitor for FGC. The clerk was directed to endorse the minute.

2015-07-05. David Male from Middleton Monthly Meeting, Ohio Yearly Meeting was welcomed and brought greetings.

2015-07-06. Minutes 1-5 were approved.

2015-07-07. Clerk of the Ministry Coordinating Committee Irma Guthrie (Perry City) presented the State of the Society Report. Unlike in the recent past no queries were suggested. Twenty-four of seventy-four meetings responded in various ways and common themes emerged:

Quality of Worship and Spiritual Ministry—Friends described meeting for worship as welcoming, comforting and joyful, a spiritual home, well-grounded in the Light.

Spiritual Growth—Meetings are laboring to foster growth in the Spirit in different ways, striving to provide a welcoming, safe place for seekers.

Witnessing to Friends Principles—Friends participate in a broad range of witness activities in their communities, including Earthcare Witness, AVP, Amnesty International, AFSC, FCNL, Christian Peace Teams, Witness against Torture, prison ministry, war tax witness, gun control, sustainable agriculture, and work to overcome racism.

Personal and Family Relations—Because so many meetings are facing an aging membership, many have been having conversations on aging and now have members who have completed ARCH [Aging Resources Consultation and Help] training.

Relations with Community and Other Religious Groups—Many Friends meetings are affiliated with local interfaith organizations; some have participated in ecumenical retreats; others mention exchanging speaking engagements with other religious bodies.

Concerns That Test Us—Some of our meetings report significant and growing concerns regarding aging and dwindling membership rolls, small or non-existent First Day programs and the difficulties of maintaining meetings both spiritually and physically. Nevertheless, in nearly every report there is a sense of hope and an unwavering commitment to the worship that unites us in the cause of Love.

Friends received the report. (See page 82.)

2015-07-08. General Secretary Christopher Sammond (Poplar Ridge) presented his report: He spoke of the response to his report following his sabbatical in which he spoke about the need for personal transformation and eliminating our reliance on hydrocarbons for energy. There was excitement about eliminating hydrocarbons, but no one mentioned personal transformation.

He dreams of a Yearly Meeting that people attend, where there are no “Yearly Meeting Friends” and “Monthly Meeting

Friends”; where we aren’t trying to maintain or recreate who we used to be but energetically becoming who we are called to be; where our strengths as a powerhouse of ideas, accomplishments, finances and spiritual vitality are the core of our self-image and the basis of our lives; where limits are set on those in our midst whose behavior is destructive of the community; where we take responsibility for healing the wounds of racism; and where we can talk about money.

“I want to live in a Yearly Meeting that is being transformed by God. A Yearly Meeting that is setting the world ablaze.”

Worship and ministry followed.

Friends received the report. A version is attached (page 48).

2015-07-09. The clerk reported on the following interim action:

In late May a Certificate of Insurance was issued to Oakwood School as the Yearly Meeting co-sponsored the Quaker Spring event held at Oakwood School. Quaker Spring is a gathering of people from across the country, many from the East Coast, who seek an experience of the Inward Christ in Community.

2015-07-10. The reading clerk read a travel minute for Robert Kazmayer (Sunfire) to attend the Parliament of the World’s Religions to be held October 15-19, 2015 in Salt Lake City, Utah. This leading has grown out of a concern that all of the world’s spiritual leaders have a vital role in combating the hatred that is tearing the world apart. Sunfire noted the call of the Parliament’s leadership to “all faith communities to move against violence and hatred,” and that this call is in harmony with Quaker testimony since the start of our movement in the seventeenth century.

The clerk is directed to endorse the travel minute.

2015-07-11. A travel minute was heard for Heather M. Cook, who carries a concern for preventing and healing from all types of violence, and particularly sexual violence, by helping individuals, relationships, and communities strengthening their capacity for awareness, compassion, and commitment to engage with challenging work. This ministry emerges from her own experience with violence, and a yearning for a path of healing.

The clerk is directed to endorse this travel minute.

2015-07-12. Friends heard a travel minute for Rachel Pia to travel under the care of, and serving, Friends General Conference's New Meetings Project. Rachel is part of a team that works with Friends considering the formation of a new meeting.

The clerk is directed to endorse this travel minute.

2015-07-13. Minutes 7-8 are held for revision. Minutes 9-12 were approved.

2015-07-14. The meeting closed with announcements and a period of silent worship.

2015-07-15. Minutes 7-8 were approved along with additional wording in Minutes 10 and 12.

Silver Bay, New York

Monday, July 20, 2015, 7:15 p.m.

Jeffrey L. Hitchcock (Rahway & Plainfield), Clerk

Lucinda Antrim (Scarsdale), Assistant Clerk

Karen Way (New Brunswick), Recording Clerk

Elaine Learnard (Conscience Bay), Reading Clerk

2015-07-16. Friends gathered in worship. The clerk reviewed the agenda for the evening.

2015-07-17. The reading clerk read a travel minute for Rebecca MacKenzie, who is a member of Quaker City Unity Friends Meeting in New England Yearly Meeting. Rebecca plans to offer programs in New England and New York with the goal of creating a human presence on Earth that is spiritually centered, environmentally resilient and sustainable, and socially just. The clerk was directed to endorse the minute.

2015-07-18. The clerk introduced Friends United Meeting (FUM) General Secretary Colin Saxton. Colin thanked NYYM for our partnership with FUM in carrying out projects around the world. Colin reviewed some of the many extraordinary programs that FUM supports, but said that FUM is more truly a worldwide community of people joined together in the shared experience of love's transforming power. He will be available for questions and discussion during the week.

2015-07-19. A memorial minute was read for Nancy Caldwell Sorel, a long-time member of Bulls Head-Oswego Monthly Meeting, who died in February at the age of 80. Known to all as a kind, generous and loving spirit, Nancy was also a noted historian and author. She wrote about women journalists in war and about the experience of childbirth, and contributed many nationally published essays. Nancy first encountered Quakerism in London, and was led to volunteer for a UN program building homes for World War II refugees in Austria. Later she participated with her husband Ed in the Easter Sunday pilgrimage across the Peace Bridge to Canada to deliver medical supplies for North and South Vietnam. Nancy and Ed collaborated on books in their long relationship and raised a devoted family. She attended Yearly Meeting sessions regularly, serving as recording clerk and on many committees, and blessed us with her rare ability to speak truth from love. Friends spoke movingly of her openness and warmth, and the joyful energy she brought to serving the Yearly Meeting.

2015-07-20. Director of Communications for NYYM Steven Davison (Yardley, PA; about to transfer his membership to Central Philadelphia Meeting in Philadelphia YM) spoke of how much he loves his job, the people he works with, and the people he works for. It has been an active year for NYYM in communications, particularly in press releases and website expansion. Using the large projection screen, Steven gave us a tour of the current website. Among other things, the website contains links to many videos and series of videos. There are also links to resources for monthly meetings: forms, booklets, curricula, and libraries of information and advice on topics such as racism and transforming conflict. There are also extensive resources on the Yearly Meeting and all its committees and concerns. There are online versions of Yearly Meeting publications such as *Faith and Practice*, the *Handbook*, the *Yearbook*, *Spark*, and so on. There is an online forum for viewing and contributing content on various topics. Steven encouraged Friends to spread the word of these riches to our monthly meetings, and to volunteer to help with posting content to the website.

2015-07-21. NYYM representative to the Executive Board of the New York State Council of Churches Sara Niccoli (Brooklyn) reported on the work of the Council. The organization works to create a shared vision for advocacy, spiritual life, and education. This has been a busy year for advocacy, particularly for New York state budget topics such as addressing rural poverty, correcting inequality, raising the minimum wage, and other worker issues. The Council has also worked to ban fracking and support marriage equality. Friends can participate in letter writing campaigns and the annual retreat in October.

2015-07-22. The work of the Aging Resources, Consultation and Help (ARCH) program was presented by Callie Janoff (Brooklyn), one of the ARCH coordinators. Callie presented surprising statistics to help us understand the growing population of people aging. The goal of ARCH is for all seniors and differently-abled members to be cared for by their meetings appropriately. To do this, ARCH offers training for volunteers to become Visitors, experts in the resources and understanding needed to support a humane and spiritual experience of aging. ARCH hopes to have at least two Visitors for each monthly meeting, and several training opportunities are available. Through educational workshops, supportive retreats, and advocacy, the ARCH organization helps meetings grow old gracefully, supports caregivers, and reaches out to aging incarcerated fellow citizens. Barbara Spring (Albany) is retiring at the end of December 2015. Thus the ARCH organization is being restructured with Callie Janoff as director and several local coordinators to be appointed. Callie urged monthly meetings to ask for help and send volunteers for training. Friends spoke from the floor, adding positive stories of help from ARCH.

2015-07-23. Nurture Coordinating Committee clerk Deborah Wood (Purchase) presented a description of the Leadings and Priorities Working Group being created under the care of the Liaison Committee. The group will assess how the Yearly Meeting as a whole is living into the priorities approved at the 2014 Summer Sessions. This assessment will weigh both the use of money and the use of Friends' time and energy. If the Working Group finds that the priorities are not being utilized,

or not having sufficient impact, in consultation with monthly meetings, the group will advise ways that the yearly meeting committee structure can better support this work.

The composition of the working group and the mechanics of its operation are attached to these minutes (page 53).

2015-07-24. Meeting for Discernment Steering Committee clerk Roger Dreisbach-Williams (Rahway & Plainfield) reported on the concerns that arose at the March 7 Meeting for Discernment held at Old Chatham Meeting. Friends at that gathering heard a call to pray for the monthly meetings within NYYM, to love one another and to do what that entails. With that in mind, a specific concern was raised to bring mental health issues into the Light. Everyone would benefit if our meetings could become a safe place for Friends to bring their whole selves into the faith community, including those mental health concerns that in the past might have been stigmatized. The Steering Committee thus brought forth a recommendation to develop a workshop blending pastoral care and professional mental health care. This concern is being forwarded to Ministry Coordinating Committee.

2015-07-25. Friends received the preceding reports.

2015-07-26. Committee to Revise *Faith & Practice* clerk Irma Guthrie (Perry City) gave a first reading of several revised paragraphs in the section on Covenant Relationships. Friends who have comments should bring them to the committee.

2015-07-27. Minutes 16-26 were approved and the meeting closed with quiet worship.

Silver Bay, New York

Wednesday, July 22, 2015, 7:15 PM

Jeffrey L. Hitchcock (Rahway & Plainfield), Clerk
Lucinda Antrim (Scarsdale), Assistant Clerk
Karen Way (New Brunswick), Recording Clerk
Karen Snare (Bulls Head-Oswego), Reading Clerk

2015-07-28. Friends gathered in worship. The clerk reviewed the agenda for the evening.

2015-07-29. A travel minute was read for George and Margery Rubin from Medford Monthly Meeting of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. Friends directed the clerk to endorse the minute.

2015-07-30. The clerk introduced Lynn and Steve Newsom of Quaker House, from Fayetteville Monthly Meeting, and both North Carolina Yearly Meeting Conservative and Piedmont Friends Fellowship Yearly Meeting. On Friday they will give a report on Quaker House and its work to bring Light to the military.

2015-07-31. The clerk introduced Chris Jorgenson from Friends Meeting at Cambridge, New England Yearly Meeting. Chris is at Silver Bay to tell us about Casa de los Amigos, a Quaker guest house in Mexico City.

2015-07-32. Ministry Coordinating Committee and Committee to Revise *Faith and Practice* clerk Irma Guthrie (Perry City) gave a first reading of the revised section “Revision of the Discipline” from *Faith and Practice*. Friends who have comments or suggestions should bring them to the committee. A second reading will be offered at next year’s summer sessions.

2015-07-33. John Cooley (Central Finger Lakes), clerk of General Services Coordinating Committee introduced Peter Phillips (Cornwall) to present the first reading of the proposed By-Laws of New York Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, Inc. Copies of the full text were distributed to the body. Peter explained that the yearly meeting was incorporated in 1901, but never had by-laws of the corporation. To fix that omission, the Trustees have drafted a set of by-laws consistent with our *Faith and Practice* and with current law. Peter reviewed the major sections of the by-laws, noting that there is no provision in the proposed version for removing a trustee or an officer of the corporation. In general, the power to make decisions rests with the members, but no individual member or monthly meeting is liable for the actions of the corporation. Members may expend corporate funds to further the work of committees, but committees are accountable to the members for work they undertake.

Friends who have comments and suggestions should bring them to the Board of Trustees. The Trustees plan to present a second reading at Fall Sessions.

2015-07-34. Minutes 28-33 were approved.

2015-07-35. The reading clerk read the Epistle from Britain Yearly Meeting from May, 2015. Friends in Britain described how they felt called to identify and understand the root causes of social and economic injustice in the world. They spoke of an urgent readiness to take corporate action—to bring together and use the resources of the yearly meeting and Friends around the world. “We can’t do everything,” they wrote, “but we can all do something.”

2015-07-36. Members of the White Privilege Conference Task Group introduced the 17th Conference, to be held April 14-17, 2016, in Philadelphia, PA and co-hosted by New York Yearly Meeting and Friends General Conference. Elizabeth “Buffy” Curtis (Mohawk Valley) asked the body three queries:

Have any of you experienced white privilege? Who among you is open to learning more about white privilege? Who is willing to help with this task? Nearly everyone stood and quite a few Friends came forward.

Charley Flint (Rahway-Plainfield) and Robin Alpern (Scarsdale) spoke about the long work in this Yearly Meeting of discerning, understanding, and addressing white privilege and the ubiquitous influence of racialization. They reviewed the Yearly Meeting’s history of speaking out against racism and called for turning values into action. With this in mind, Friends were urged to attend the Conference and to register early as it may be over-subscribed.

The White Privilege Conference Task Group has been formed within Witness Coordinating Committee to publicize, support, and encourage our participation in the conference. Several committees contributed members to the task group: Black Concerns Committee, Young Adult Concerns Committee, Task Group on Racism, European American Quakers Working To End Racism, Prisons Committee, and Indian Affairs Committee. There are also some at large members. Additional task group members are welcome.

2015-07-37. The clerk presented the Consent Agenda for approval, reminding Friends that, after advance opportunity for expressing concern, items on the Consent Agenda require no discussion. Friends approved minutes 2015-07-38 through 2015-07-40 in accord with the Consent Agenda.

2015-07-38. Friends approved the nominations for service to the Yearly Meeting. The nominations can be found following the minutes and epistles of this Summer Sessions, in the listing of “Friends Under Appointment to New York Yearly Meeting” in the *Yearbook*.

2015-07-39. Friends received these requests for release from service:

Colleen Hardiman	attender, Purchase	Epistle, 2015
Elizabeth Edminster	Fifteenth Street	<i>Faith & Practice</i> , 2017
Jeffrey Aaron	New Brunswick	Trustees, 2018
Richard Regan	Rochester	Committee on Sufferings, 2016
Anne Wright	Scarsdale	Committee on Sufferings, 2015
Jeffrey Hitchcock	Rahway & Plainfield	<i>Faith & Practice</i> , 2016
Dennis Haag	Adirondack	Powell House Corporation, 2017
Mark Hewitt	Chatham-Summit	Junior Yearly Meeting, 2016

2015-07-40. The *Handbook* page for NYYM Trustees is amended to include the appointment of a Trustee to the Audit Committee.

2015-07-41. Three nominations were made for Friends outside the Yearly Meeting, requiring separate approval.

2015-07-42. For Oakwood Friends School Board: Ralph Skeels of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting.

Friends approved.

2015-07-43. For Oakland Friends School Board: Elizabeth Porter of New England Yearly Meeting.

Friends approved.

2015-07-44. For Powell House Committee: Esther Gilbert of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting.

Friends approved.

2015-07-45. Ministry Coordinating Committee clerk Irma Guthrie (Perry City) gave the second reading of the revised section “Care of Ministries and Recording of Gifts in Ministry” (appended, page 55). Friends approved.

2015-07-46. Minutes 35, 36 and 45 were approved (minutes 37-44 having been approved as they were presented or as part of the Consent Agenda).

2015-07-47. Meeting closed with quiet worship.

Silver Bay, New York

Friday, July 25, 2014, 3:30 p.m.

Jeffrey L. Hitchcock (Rahway & Plainfield), Clerk

Lucinda Antrim (Scarsdale), Assistant Clerk

Roger Dreisbach-Williams (Rahway & Plainfield), Recording Clerk

Sylke Jackson (Rockland), Reading Clerk

2015-07-48. The clerk welcomed Friends with a message:

A ministry of love without an understanding of justice is a tool of the privileged.

A witness of justice without an understanding of Spirit is like a rudderless ship that takes us no place and may do harm as it collides with others in the harbor.

When we do it well, our ministry and our witness are not so different. They are really the same thing.

We are NOT the Religious Society of the privileged.

We are NOT the Secular Society of Friends.

We are the Religious Society of Friends.

My pathway into the Yearly Meeting, nearly 20 years ago, came through our witness activities, and from there I grew a broader understanding of who we are.

When I became assistant clerk, I was pulled into a journey of spiritual development that still continues. I came to understand that our Yearly Meeting had experienced hurt and division in the not so distant past, and that many

Friends had worked hard to heal those wounds and ground us in Spirit. Eventually I came to see and understand how that spiritual work, and our collective and growing understanding of Spirit-led eldership was, and is, the foundation of our Yearly Meeting.

If we lose that, we lose ourselves as a yearly meeting.

I have felt myself held, and I have experienced our Yearly Meeting being held by Friends who have done this work of eldership. There is some mystery to it. But it is a learnable task and role, and one that does not necessarily have to do with age.

I believe that our foundation remains strong; and that it will be this way as long as we attend to it. And then we have, and will have, something on which to build our collective witness and ministry.

It feels to be so wonderful to be part of that.

He introduced those at the clerks table and reviewed the agenda, cautioning Friends that while we have time, we do not have as much time as earlier sessions this week.

2015-07-49. Lynn and Steve Newsom reported on the work being done at Quaker House, Fayetteville, NC. It was a report of extensive ministry to our military men, women and families; as well as to youth who need to reconsider their relationship to the military. They will be with us through the end of sessions.

2015-07-50. General Services Coordinating Committee clerk John Cooley (Central Finger Lakes) introduced the following:

2015-07-51. The Trustees' Report was presented by Linda Houser (Purchase). A report of their activities is attached (see page 57). Two minutes were brought for our approval:

2015-07-52. The dividends received from the Martin Leach Fund will be re-designated from "for distribution by the Advancement Committee" to the Operating Fund.

Friends approved.

2015-07-53. The dividends received from the Florence Stevens Fund will be re-designated from "for distribution by the Trustees" to the Operating Fund.

Friends approved.

2015-07-54. The Treasurer's Report was presented by Paula McClure (Montclair). Total receipts, \$234,467 (compared to \$197,529 last year); Total expenses, \$218,192 (compared to \$219,951 last year). For the first time in many years, receipts to date exceed expenditures.

2015-07-55. The Financial Services report was presented by Matthew Scanlon (Scarsdale).

We reviewed the description of Financial Services in the *Handbook* which includes revising the budget process in order to more closely track the priorities of the Leadings and Priorities approved last year, and the preliminary expense and revenue estimates for the 2016 fiscal year.

2015-07-56. We heard the Epistle from Belgium and Luxembourg Yearly Meeting:

Thirty-eight Friends gathered—a rare event when so many Friends were able to be together. Under the guidance of Helen Meads and Andrea Freeman they explored their theme: “Leaning into the Silence, Leaning into the Light.” During the weekend they learned we could be flexible and pragmatic, whilst maintaining their enthusiasm. “We take a new sense of experimentation into our worship.”

2015-07-57. Friends received these reports.

2015-07-58. Friends approved minutes 48-51 and 54-57, minutes 52 and 53 having been approved when presented.

2015-07-59. Friends next considered “A Call to Pope Francis and the Roman Catholic Church to formally repudiate and revoke the ‘Doctrine of Christian Discovery’” to be sent as a letter to Pope Francis. The letter says, in part:

“We are grateful for your recent words in Bolivia, recognizing the humanity and dignity of the Indigenous Peoples of the Americas and of the world, and apologizing and asking forgiveness for ‘grave sins’ and ‘crimes’ against the native people of America in the name of God.”

“Several Papal Bulls, notably the Papal Bull *Inter Caetera*, issued in the 15th and 16th Centuries, express the doctrine that certain human beings, because they were not Christian, are not entitled to fundamental dignity and rights.

This doctrine has led to exploitation, discrimination and genocide carried out throughout the following centuries against many peoples of this earth, including the area now known as the United States of America. The Doctrine continues to cause further harm and suffering to indigenous peoples within the borders of the United States and in many other places around the world.”

The words of his encyclical *Laudato Si*, that “disregard for the duty to cultivate and maintain a proper relationship with my neighbor, for those whose care and custody I am responsible, ruins my relationship my own self, with others, with God and with the earth” are cited along with examples from the Gospels where Jesus accepted those whose faith is different.

The time has come, we believe, to repudiate the Doctrine of Christian Discovery so that we may all join with our Indigenous sisters and brothers to meet “the urgent challenge to protect our common home [which] includes a concern to bring the whole human family together to seek a sustainable and integral development” (*Laudato Si* 13).”

A copy of our 2013 minute repudiating the Doctrine of Discovery is to be included.

2015-07-60. Friends asked that revisions be made to the letter before it is brought back for final approval this evening.

2015-07-61. Friends World Committee for Consultation Committee’s report was presented by Michael Clark (Old Chatham), Emily Provance (Fifteenth Street), Isabella Aguirre (Purchase) and Sylke Jackson (Rockland). Isabella Aguirre and Sylke Jackson shared their experiences at the Quaker Youth Pilgrimage and the Section of the Americas gathering in Mexico City. The gatherings revealed the power of connecting and communicating within a faith whose divisions and branches are numerous and complex. Friends saw how Quakers in their corners of the earth bring a wild flowering of goodness to their communities. The love, strength, and faith of the world body of Quakers inspired New York Friends and deepened their grounding in the spirit. Michael Clark (Old Chatham) reported on plans for the future, including a restructuring—including the suspension of the Quaker Youth Pilgrimage—to conform

to available funds which are much less than in the past, and advised Friends to take their copies of *Faith & Practice* because they will be asked questions. The full report is attached (page 59). Friends received this report.

2015-07-62. Ministry Coordinating Committee clerk Irma Guthrie (Perry City) brought forward the following announcement and proposed action for approval:

2015-07-63. Margaret Webb is recorded as having gifts in the ministry.

2015-07-64. The Meeting on Ministry & Counsel is suspended for another year.

2015-07-65. Minutes 59-64 were approved.

2015-07-66. The Epistle from New York Yearly Meeting received its first reading.

2015-07-67. Minute 66 is approved.

2015-07-. Friends gathered in worship before adjourning.

Silver Bay, New York

Friday, July 24, 2015, 7:15 p.m.

Jeffrey L. Hitchcock (Rahway & Plainfield), Clerk
Lucinda Antrim (Scarsdale), Assistant Clerk
Andrew Mead von Salis (Brooklyn), Recording Clerk

2015-07-69. Junior Yearly Meeting Co-coordinator Dawn Pozzi (Rochester) was introduced to welcome us to the Friday evening celebration in our meeting for worship. She gave her farewell from the Coordinator role, and introduced Rebecca Wolf (Rochester) as her successor. Rebecca introduced her new Co-coordinator, Eleanor Rosenberg (Ithaca).

2015-07-70. Rebecca Wolf brought on the 1st and 2nd graders to present their Epistle. Led by Will Tesdell, Faith Brzostoski, and Andrew Wolf on guitar, they lined up silently onstage with the huge yellow submarine scenery they had painted. We learned of their week from their unison sign-language for “me too!” as

we heard of experiences with nature, visitors, worship and their other activities, followed by a spirited rendition of the “Yellow Submarine” song itself that animated the entire meeting.

2015-07-71. The 3rd and 4th graders marched on to pantomime as their leaders, Theresa Oleksiw, Kai McGiver and David Gerhan recited the events of their week. Their silence broke only at appropriate moments such as bawling their eyes out when “saying good-bye” to each day, gasping at the specter of an encounter in the bear cave, and snoring just enough in worship.

2015-07-72. An eager onslaught of 5th and 6th graders followed, with adult leaders Bryant Henning, Virgil Bunting, and Margie Morgan-Davie. Tallulah Klein, Caroline Lape, Jack Kane, River Festa-Rios and Devante Hooper alternated in reading their Epistle; the rest of the group demonstrated—and even satirized—the events, guests and activities of their week.

2015-07-73. Eric Menzel and Abigail Byrtus, clerks, led on the Junior High (7th, 8th and 9th grades) group. Chelsea-Clare Wilhelmsson, Jack Lawson, Starianna Wolf, Irena Rosenberg and Analea Blackburn MC’d as they lined up to deliver each day’s key word, ending in “Peace” for Friday. Mark LaRiviere, Susan Stillman and Patrick DiGiovanni provided adult guidance. The group’s chosen clerks next year are Analea Blackburn and Kaya Gibbs-Hobgood, with alternate clerk Abigail Byrtus.

2015-07-74. On came the high schoolers, sitting silently until their clerks were ready to speak. Then we were told by their clerks, Soren Grunder, Amariah DiGiovanni, and Simon Michaud, that Juliet Ramey-LaRiviere and Kwame Gibbs-Hobgood were chosen as next year’s clerks, with Elsa Mohlke and Roman Gavrila as alternates. Their supporting adults were Sylke Jackson and Luke Jones. All their graduating seniors were named, and those remaining to carry forward were acknowledged. Finally, Erin Clark and Columbine Loza read their Epistle, brimming with poetic images, rhythm and rhyme as well as with spirit, and praising the potential of rising toward the future on “this pretty little planet.”

2015-07-75. The Epistles of these Junior Yearly Meeting groups were received. Rebecca Wolf concluded by expressing gratitude for the loving support the Junior Yearly Meeting program has enjoyed, and our young Friends left us gracefully to continue our business.

2015-07-76. The meeting waited in renewed centering worship. The clerk introduced those at the clerks' table and reviewed the rest of the agenda

2015-07-77. The clerk introduced Emily Boardman (Cornwall), who read the portions, amended since its first reading this afternoon, of the proposed letter to Pope Francis, Bishop of Rome, urging repudiation of the centuries-old Doctrine of Christian Discovery and remediation of its past and continuing harms. (Minute 2015-07-59,-60.) She reported that each objection heard earlier has been addressed in whatever way may be feasible. A copy is attached (page 64).

Questions about the language were raised; explanations were given and some edits were made. The letter was approved for the clerk to issue to the Pope.

2015-07-78. Nominating Committee clerk Elaine Learnard (Conscience Bay) brought forward the following additional nominations:

Advancement	2018	John Choe ('15)	Flushing
State of the Society	2018	Marissa Badgley ('15)	Poughkeepsie
Development	2018	John Choe ('15)	Flushing
Young Adult Concerns	2016	Scott Daly ('15)	Brooklyn (attender; co-opted)
Young Adult Concerns	2018	Jens Braun ('15)	Old Chatham
Indian Affairs	2018	Charles Brainard ('15)	Fifteenth Street
Indian Affairs	2018	Elizabeth (Buffy) Curtis ('15)	Mohawk Valley

These seven nominations were approved.

2015-07-79. Nurture Coordinating Committee clerk Deborah Wood (Purchase) reported that the Yearly Meeting had received a minute from Brooklyn Meeting, joining in an initiative of Canada Yearly Meeting by advocating that New York Yearly

Meeting limit its periodic donations to Friends United Meeting so as not to support general programs that are subject to FUM's hiring policy, which discriminates in hiring against some employees' marriages.

Because of developments within FUM's General Board, openings have been discerned by our Nurture Coordinating Committee for a constructive resolution of the initiative. The Yearly Meeting office will be asked to send a letter describing these to each monthly meeting, and Friends who wish to engage in the issue will be invited to explore the possibilities with the Coordinating Committee.

Friends received the report.

2015-07-80. Sessions Committee clerk Roseann Press (Housatonic) reported on this week at Silver Bay. 506 registrations were received; 137 were for Junior Yearly Meeting and 41 overall were from first-time participants.

Our fund-raising efforts yesterday were summarized. The Tagless Tag Sale brought in \$1,044.17, the Fun(d) Fair realized \$1,000.00, and Café Night took in \$6,125.40.

We looked forward to our upcoming Sessions. Friends were earnestly invited to plan on attending Fall Sessions, hosted by Northeastern Regional Meeting, at Doane Stuart School in Rensselaer and at Powell House, November 6-8, 2015; and Summer Sessions 2016 at Silver Bay next July 24-30.

2015-07-81. The Epistle was given its second reading by Elizabeth Gordon (Binghamton), incorporating many suggested improvements made upon this afternoon's first reading. The power of many specific elements of our experience this week is conveyed in its clear yet poetic words; we are truly as "variegated yet gathered" as a bouquet.

With additional elements requested from the floor, the Epistle was approved for issuance to Friends everywhere. (See page 67.)

2015-07-82. The minutes of this session were read, corrected and approved.

2015-07-83. The meeting concluded in worship, the clerks stepping down to sit among the body of the Yearly Meeting. Friends rose at 9:40 p.m., to meet again in November at our Fall Sessions as noted in minute 2015-07-80 above.

General Secretary's Report

New York Yearly Meeting, Summer Session, 2015

The following is a reconstruction of what I shared in a message to the body. It is very close to what I said, but may vary slightly from the actual words spoken.

I have been reading a book strongly recommended to me by a general secretary of another yearly meeting, Edwin Friedman's *A Failure of Nerve*. Friedman started out as a marriage and family counselor, and then went on to work with a myriad of churches and synagogues, helping them with the problems in their communities. He noticed that he was seeing the exact same problems and patterns in the religious communities that he had been working with as in his family counseling. He later did consulting work for large corporations and non-profit organizations, seeing the same patterns in those systems, and doing leadership training based on his experience of how all these systems work. He eventually went on to serve as a consultant to two US presidents. He saw the same patterns in all these communities, from family to religious community to large organization to a national government- what allows for growth, and what undermines it.

A Failure of Nerve was his last book, a culmination of his many years of experience working with these systems and issues of leadership. In one chapter, where he was decrying the then (1996) trend for all different kinds of new leadership techniques and a reliance on gathering more and more data, he said his advice to all leaders was to forget all the technique stuff, stop trying to amass more and more data, and for each leader to differentiate him or herself in their respective system by giving their "I Have a Dream" speech.

As I was less than two weeks away from giving a general secretary's report to this body, I held the question: what might I say as my "I Have a Dream" speech? As I held that question, a night or two later, I had a dream where I essentially gave that speech. So today I will share my "I Had a Dream" speech, and then after, will give you a bit of a "I Have a Dream" one.

So here is the dream: I am at a Quaker gathering. There has been a group of 4-5 women who have been working together on

a project- looking at the question of revitalizing the Religious Society Of Friends. I sit down to the table where they had been diligently working, and a well-known Friend from this yearly meeting tells me they will be coming back soon to resume their work, and that they need that space. So I vacate, and go into a large spacious room, and reflect on the fact that at every Quaker gathering I go to, I find a deeper, more open, more loving, spiritually connected aspect of myself or way of living, but when I go back to my regular life, I lose that.

I go back into the room, and say I think I have something to offer their discussion, if there is room for that. They say that they had wanted and expected my input, and even though it is almost lunch, they definitely want to hear what I would say. I talk about how before I leave for any Quaker gathering, I spend a lot of time and energy catching up all my affairs, getting everything in order, and that this takes a lot of energy. I come to the gathering, and by degrees, open to my heart and spirit, and come to a place of spiritual depth that I want to live from always. I go home with great resolve to change my life so that I live more from that place, but it isn't very long before I find myself caught up in my old pace.

I am about to go on with my talk, when a man across the room, grumpy and impatient, says "It's 1:00; lunch is starting," and abruptly gets up and leaves. I then talk about how my General Secretary report after my sabbatical had two main points: that our practice as Friends has deep and transforming power to it, how we need to look at how our use of time affects our ability to practice it better; and the dire need for all of us to stop burning hydrocarbons, based on my research and my work doing local organizing against hydrofracking.

At this point, a young girl, perhaps eight, loudly proclaims a desire to go sit with another, and with her mother's consent, crosses the room to happily sit on another woman's lap. I then go on to say that I had many, many comments on the hydrocarbon part of my talk, but no comments on the part where I talked about us needing to embark upon inner transformation through the practice of our faith—not one.

The woman who had been recording for the meeting shows me her yellow legal paper, on which she has only jotted 4-5

words to capture what I had just said, and asks if I would be willing to write up what I had just said for the minutes. Friends are appreciative of my comments.

So that's the dream. In the days after it, I was inclined to identify strongly with the "I" character in the dream, and to challenge us to engage with the transformative power of our practice as Friends. But in the last day, and especially this morning during Meetings for Discernment, it became clearer to me that I carry all the characters of the dream within me. I carry the very busy committee. That's a part of me. I carry the man who really doesn't want to hear about transformation. He's a part of me. I carry the little girl who isn't much interested in transformation, but is happy to leave her mother's lap, for the arms of another matronly woman. And I even carry that mother, and the other woman, as well. And I see us all carrying these different characters, as well. This is our community. This is all of us.

So what are we to make of this?

Our capacity to work diligently and earnestly can be a virtue, but it can also be displacement activity, keeping us from the much more difficult work of inner change and growth. I see a lot of us in that committee, working so hard, so busily. One of my favorite bumper stickers is "Jesus is coming, look busy." It is less frightening to attend to a lot of work than to undergo transformation.

The man who really isn't interested in transformation, but would rather go eat lunch, that guy is in all of us. In the many monthly meetings and individuals I work with, I encounter a deep, deep spiritual hunger. I also encounter an equally powerful fear of change and of losing control. Much as we consciously want to change and grow, there is a part of each of us that fights against it. There is also a child in each of us, able to be joyfully present and loving, but not much interested in this message, or perhaps even what our practice might mean for them.

And I need to say that the part of the dream which spoke about my post sabbatical report was true. Not one person, not one, engaged with me about my naming us as being called by God into transformation through deepening our practice as Friends. We are that scared of it. We need to be aware of that truth about ourselves.

So what do I dream about for us?

- I dream of a yearly meeting where many Friends engage deeply in our practice as Friends, and go through “the flaming sword,” the “tempering fire.” As I read through our State of the Meeting reports, I kept hearing from meetings “We are old, we are gray, we are tired, we are afraid for the life of our meeting.” I did not read “We may be old, but we are on fire with the experience of God. Our worship is powerful and uplifting. We have much to share with the world.”
- Katherine of Sienna said, “If you are as you should be, you will set the world ablaze.” I dream of a yearly meeting setting the world ablaze.
- I dream of us being a yearly meeting which recognizes, and lives from our strengths. We have many. We have incredible strength of vision and action. We created AVP, which has taken off and is transforming people literally around the world. The Bolivian Quaker Education Fund came from us, an incredible work in this hemisphere. More recently, the work of our Conflict Transformation Committee has gone viral across this continent. And our ARCH program is being picked up and emulated in other yearly meetings throughout North America. And in the works, we have new initiatives in the workshops on spiritual nurture for monthly meetings launched by our Spiritual Nurture Working Group and the planned Outreach Roundtable. And then there is the Youth Institute, teaching better ways of nurturing the spiritual lives of our children, and some Friends initiating the exploration of using marketing techniques learned from business experience to spread the word of who we are as Friends. We are a powerhouse. Can we own that?

We also have great economic strength. After the 2008 economic downturn, unlike many yearly meetings and Quaker institutions, we did not have deficit budgets. When the Powell House boiler broke down, Powell House was able to raise \$50,000 to fix it, in a very short time. We have tremendous economic resources.

We are blessed with great spiritual strength, as well. We

have a network of Friends who are deeply engaged in our practice, who have reaped some of the benefits of that, and who are able and willing to teach from that experience.

We are incredibly strong. Yet I rarely see us living from that self-image. I dream of a Yearly Meeting which knows its great strength, and lives from it.

- I dream of a yearly meeting where Friends come from across our yearly meeting to attend our Spring Summer and Fall Sessions. I noted with deep discouragement and sadness how many meetings, when we did our roll call last night, were not present with us. It was about half of our monthly meetings. And many others had only one person here. I'm sure I was not the only person deeply disheartened by this. We have to do whatever it takes to change this. A part of us is not present. This is not OK. We must change this. I dream of a yearly meeting where that is the exception, rather than a painful norm. And I dream of being a yearly meeting where the terms "yearly meeting Friend" and "monthly meeting Friend" no longer have any meaning.
- I dream of a yearly meeting that is not trying to maintain or recreate who we used to be, but is living boldly and powerfully into the future. Over the years, I have watched many monthly meetings, at a time of contracting membership, devote all their energy to maintain who they just were, or even to try to recreate who they used to be quite some time ago. There is no life in this. When I have seen these meetings let go of trying to recreate or maintain, but open themselves to who they are in the present, with their gifts and blessings, I have seen those same meetings, again and again, that were stagnant, thrive. I dream of a yearly meeting living boldly into the future.
- I dream of being a part of a yearly meeting that is skillful at setting limits with those in our midst whose behavior is destructive of community. In so many of our monthly meetings, the fabric of our community is torn asunder by the actions of one or two Friends. We need to learn how to become skillful at saying "We love you. We want you to be with us. And, these specific behaviors must stop." We don't know how to do this. And we need to learn how

to empower our Ministry and Counsel or Pastoral Care committees to know that they have the authority to do this work.

- I yearn to be part of a yearly meeting that deeply engages with the reality of racism in our culture, so painfully laid bare by the recent murders in Charlotte. We need to be an active part of addressing this scourge in our society.
- And, I dream of a yearly meeting that is comfortable talking about money. In so many of our monthly meetings, and at our sessions, I witness a great discomfort and reluctance to talk about money. This is not an aspect of Quaker culture, it is upper middle class white culture. We need to learn how to do this differently. At any session, one of us may be asked to serve on a committee, or we could be asked for a contribution. In each case, we are asking that person to share their time, talent, and treasure towards our common enterprise. We are not offended to be asked to share our time, talent and treasure when we are asked to serve on a committee; if not led to do so, we simply say, “No.” Can we approach the requests for time, talent and treasure that involve money with the same degree of candor and openness? We need to learn how to do this.
- Finally, and first and foremost, I dream of a yearly meeting that sets the world ablaze. Go set the world ablaze. Go.

Leadings & Priorities Working Group

See minute 2015-07-23, page 36.

During Summer Sessions 2014, New York Yearly Meeting united on a set of Leadings & Priorities to guide yearly meeting activities and budget decisions through the next five to eight years. A body to monitor how these priorities are being implemented and to report regularly to the yearly meeting will be needed. Another aspect that will need continuing attention is the disconnect between monthly meetings and worship groups and the yearly meeting.

The working group will assess how the Yearly Meeting as a whole (both the yearly meeting committee structure and our constituent monthly meetings) is living into the priorities. This

assessment shall weigh both the use of money and the use of Friends time and energy. If it finds that the priorities are not being utilized, or not having sufficient impact, in consultation with monthly meetings, it will advise ways that the yearly meeting committee structure can better support this work. The working group will be under the care of Liaison Committee.

The headings for the priorities are as follows:

- We envision a yearly meeting deeply grounded in the practice of our faith.
- We envision a yearly meeting made up of strong, vital monthly meetings.
- We envision a yearly meeting gathered together into one body.
- We envision a yearly meeting that nurtures our children, youth and young adults.
- We envision a yearly meeting that supports and amplifies our witness.
- We envision a yearly meeting that is accountable and transparent.

The composition of the working group will be as follows:

- NYYM assistant clerk
- Representative from Ministry section
- Representative from Meetings for Discernment
- Representative from Advancement Committee
- Representative from Powell House, JYM, Youth Committee or Young Adult Concerns
- Representative from Witness section
- Representative from General Services section
- Representative from ARCH or Aging Concerns Committee
- It is important that each region has representation, and that Farmington-Scipio have at least two representatives. Any region that does not have a representative will need to appoint a representative each year to the working group. Farmington-Scipio will need to have at least two representatives from different geographic areas.
- General Secretary, ex-officio
- The immediate past clerk of NYYM will be available for consultation as the group feels the need for input from that source.

Representatives would be appointed by the region, section or committee(s) following Summer Sessions each year.

The assistant clerk of NYYM will be convener for the group. The assistant clerk may be asked to serve as clerk. As representatives are appointed, the assistant clerk will work with the appointing groups to maximize as wide a geographic distribution of members as possible. The group will meet at least once a year to prepare a report for Summer Sessions.

A few general, open-ended queries will be developed by the working group about the health of the meetings that are being contacted. In addition, the group will compose two or three queries to shed light on the implementation of each priority.

Each member of the working group will be responsible for being in regular communication with about eight monthly meetings or worship groups, including prison worship groups. The first contact will be an email to the clerk or contact person, followed within two or three weeks by a phone call. The phone call will be made prior to each yearly meeting session. A responsible person from the monthly meeting or worship group—clerk, clerk of M&C, clerk of Trustees, or a former clerk as examples—will be asked some or all of the queries. Working group members will be expected to make a visit to three of their meetings each year, so that all monthly meetings and worship groups would have a visit every three years in addition to the phone contact.

Working group members will read all of the State of the Meeting reports each year.

Faith & Practice—Section on:

Care of Ministries and Recording of Gifts in Ministry

See minute 2015-07-45, page 40.

In cases when a member has given public ministry which is sustained, consistent and enlivening and has rendered this service to such an extent as to afford a basis for discerning the nature of those gifts and calling, the monthly meeting on ministry and counsel should carefully consider whether there is evidence of a gift in the ministry that should be officially named or recognized. Friends should bear in mind that such recording of gifts of ministry is a recognition of the gift of the Spirit to the

community and a recognition of the need for care and nurture of that gift.

When the monthly meeting on ministry and counsel is satisfied that a member carries a gift in the ministry that they consider to be of suitable character, they should consult with the member about officially recognizing his or her gift and then report this to the monthly meeting. If the monthly meeting approves, the monthly meeting's ministry and counsel should prepare a minute for the consideration of the yearly meeting's Ministry Coordinating Committee, with a copy to the regional or quarterly meeting ministry and counsel for their information. Ministry Coordinating Committee should refer the proposal to a designated committee for examination and recommendation. If, after due consideration, the way seems clear, the designated committee shall forward their recommendation to the Ministry Coordinating Committee, who may approve the recording and furnish a copy of its minute to the monthly meeting, the individual, and the region of which the individual is a member. The action should also be reported to the yearly meeting for record. If Ministry Coordinating Committee does not approve a proposal to record, they should so inform the individual and the originating meeting.

The recording of an individual's gifts in ministry carries a responsibility on the part of Friends in the monthly, regional and yearly meetings to nurture, support and hold accountable the individual in the exercise of those gifts, including by being present during the exercise of the gifts, knowing the spiritual condition of the individual, hearing reports of the ministry, etc.

In naming the gift of ministry, the monthly meeting carries the primary responsibility for nurture and oversight of the gift throughout its life cycle, including naming changes in the gift and its possible withdrawal. Care committees, peer groups, etc. may provide structures for this work, which may also be carried by the regional meeting.

In recording the gift of ministry, Ministry Coordinating Committee carries a concern for both the individual carrying the gift and the meeting in which the gift is manifested.

In cases where the gift has been withdrawn, a proposal to rescind the action recording the member as a minister may

originate with ministry and counsel of the monthly meeting of which the minister is a member or with the Ministry Coordinating Committee. Final action rests with the Ministry Coordinating Committee. The individual concerned and the monthly meeting to which that person belongs shall be notified before final action is taken, and care should be exercised that any rights involved are fully safeguarded.

The status of a minister is transferable with the certificate of membership from one monthly meeting to another and from one yearly meeting to another. It is expected, however, that a minister planning to engage in the pastoral ministry in another yearly meeting will endeavor to meet the requirements of the yearly meeting to which transfer is made.

New York Yearly Meeting Trustees Report

See minute 2015-07-51, page 41.

Last year at this time we approved the Statement of Leadings and Priorities. Even before they were approved the Trustees were taking them to heart in our work, trying to more transparent and open to the Yearly Meeting members.

The Trustees of New York Yearly are not “them,” but members of the Yearly Meeting entrusted by the body to oversee the Funds given to us over many years by Friends to use for the Yearly Meeting’s benefit.

In the past year the Trustees have met several times and have communicated by email in between.

Last fall we approved a total of \$36,000.00 from the funds under our care to be added to the 2015 Operating Budget, for operating funds, audit, insurance and the Young Adult Field Secretary.

In getting ready for the combined audit the Trustees had homework to do. We needed to develop financial guidelines, which were approved in April, determine the values of the properties owned by the Yearly Meeting, appoint a liaison to the Audit Committee and amend our *Handbook* page to allow a Trustee to be appointed to the Audit Committee. This had not been possible in the past. We will continue to work with the new auditors and the Audit Committee to supply the information

they may require.

At our Spring meeting we approved a grant to the Conflict Resolution Committee for the distribution of its film *Conflict in the Monthly Meeting : Crisis or Opportunity?*

At our June Meeting we approved support for the ARCH Program: \$5,000.00 for 2015 and \$5,000.00 for 2016.

We also approved the Draft By-Laws of New York Yearly Meeting, which have been presented at these sessions and to be brought to another session for approval.

The Trustees received a request for funding the new position of Child and Youth Field Secretary, from the Personnel Committee, for a total of \$20,000.00 over the next five years. We approved seeking the consent of the body at 2015 Summer Sessions for the redesignation of the Martin Leach Fund (estimated annual distribution of \$2,890.00) and the Florence Stevens Fund (estimated annual distribution of \$5,794.00) for the use of the operation budget in the expectation that those new monies in the total estimated amount of \$8,864.00, will be available for this purpose.

We continue to work on grantee accountability. Recipients of funds under the Trustees care should complete the Grantee Accountability Report and submit them to the Trustees for review. The Trustees have agreed that recipients will be informed that subsequent distributions may be delayed or withheld until reports are submitted.

The Trustees have a fiduciary responsibility to the Yearly Meeting to ensure that the funds in our care are disbursed pursuant to the wishes of our donors.

We approved at one of our meetings to investigate having the funds under our care “rationalized, modernized and released of restrictions via a court proceeding pursuant to legal requirements.

*Linda S. Houser, clerk
New York Yearly Meeting Trustees*

FWCC Committee report to Summer Sessions 2015

See minute 2015-07-61, page 43.

Grab your copy of *Faith and Practice* and join us on a journey of spiritual discovery across cultures, languages, theological divides, and varied spiritual experiences.

Our Mission is: “Answering God’s call to universal love, the Friends’ World Committee for Consultation brings Friends of varying traditions and cultural experiences together in worship, communications and consultation, to express our common heritage and our Quaker message to the world.”

We want to share our FWCC experiences since the last summer sessions, starting with the 2014 Quaker Youth Pilgrimage that traveled for a month among the Evangelical Quakers in Bolivia and Peru. Isabella Aguirre, Purchase Meeting, was the NYYM representative in a group of 26 youth pilgrims from Bolivia, Cuba, Guatemala, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Mexico, Peru, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

Quaker Youth Pilgrimage

July 22August, 21, 2014

(reported by Isabella Aguirre)

The Youth Pilgrimage was my eye opener to Quakerism and a reawakening to my faith with trials and tribulations along with adventure and friendships. “You do not really know what you have till you lose it.” What they say is true. I missed hot water, I missed sleeping in a real bed instead of on hay or sleeping bags. I missed the feeling of a heater when the day was just too cold to bear. But most of all I missed being treated equally. That was the most difficult to bite my teeth into. The funny thing is in this time of trials it seems to be the time you see the most clearly, find the best of friends, meet people who will change your life.

So, one part of my experience of evangelical Quakerism in the Andes was women sitting on floors separate from the men who sat on benches, people telling you what to believe as if they are the only passage to which you can hear the voice of God, not being able to look into elders’ eyes because if you do that means

you disrespect them, and not being able to be yourself, dressing the way you want or even walking the way you want just because you are a woman.

The other part of my experience of evangelical Quakerism was experiencing the many ways that we are the same: we care about each other, see the good in one another, want to see better days, and believe that we are the change. I saw how much we need to hold each other up by seeing the way the Peruvians and Bolivians live, wondering if there will be enough money for the next meal, some people living without roofs above their head to protect them from the severe mother nature with rain and snow falling on the child's faces as they sleep. If you ever heard the song *Ojala Que Llueve Cafe en El Campo*, a song about how if only it would rain coffee no one would have the pain they have, this would be the place that song is talking about.

The funny part is maybe some may think "yes, that is what poor is." I am not quite sure because everyone there is family. There is trust like no other. I remember one time we were going into the city after meeting for worship and a mother let her children on their own go into town with us. They share whatever it is they have even though it is all they have. Everyone says hi to each other on the street. I wonder if the fact that we do not have that makes us poor.

I never knew how strong people could be though they had been through tough times. Now I do. I never knew how devoted to god a quaker could be, now I am starting to get an idea. I never knew how much one could give, now I am starting to give that way. I think traveling as a young Quaker has made my roots to Quakerism all that much stronger and my soul all that more devoted.

I am so grateful I had the chance to experience such a great place.

And here is the epistle on the pilgrimage:

<http://www.fwccemes.org/emes/quakeryouthpilgrimage>

Friends World Committee for Consultation Section of the Americas gathering: Friends Woven Together in God's Love

March 1215,
2015. Mexico City, Mexico.

(Reported by Sylke Jackson)

Friends gathered from across the Americas to meet in Atizapan de Zaragoza, just north of Mexico city, for the Section of the Americas gathering. Friends from 31 yearly meetings across 5 branches of Quakerism met to prayerfully consider the future leadings of the committee.

Quakers worshipped together in many different styles—for some a first experience of programmed, unprogrammed, evangelical, silent, or singing communion with the divine. All messages were either simultaneously or consecutively translated which created an atmosphere of listening, respect, and the understanding that no culture or language was primary. A diverse people shared their relationships with God and the callings that they receive in that relationship.

We approved a restructuring of FWCC which involves representatives taking over some of the duties previously fulfilled by staff. This allows the committee to continue to do its work even though funding for the organization has dropped considerably. The Quaker youth pilgrimage was laid down and a working group will consider how to offer young people other spiritual leadership opportunities. Structural changes, appointments, and initiatives that were approved can be viewed in detail at: http://fwccamericas.org/events/2015_SectionMeeting/index.shtml.

One of the most moving parts of the gathering was a daily meeting with our home groups. In these groups of 10 to 15 people, we became closer and considered queries that deepened our connections to each other and our faith.

In my bilingual home group I got to know a couple from LA that is actively working to partner with poor communities to create housing. Even their own home is witness to their faith: it has a front yard that is like a little park with benches, a water fountain, and mini library for neighbors to enjoy. They have constructed a “back house” in the yard where they are able to offer a local homeless man a place to live.

Another in my group was a former director of the Casa de los Amigos, a Quaker founded center for peace and international understanding in Mexico city. Visiting the Casa after the conference opened up a new vision for me of how people can live in

community. The atmosphere of mutual respect and commitment to social justice was palpable. Sitting in the called meeting there with others from the conference, I had a deep sense of the wild flowering of goodness on the planet and how people in their corners of the earth harness the power of love to bring great beauty to the world and each other. In the meeting I felt something like what Thomas Kelly talked about in *Holy Obedience* when he described being “blown by a tempest of unbelievable power which leaves one’s old proud self utterly, utterly defenseless, until one cries, ‘All Thy waves and thy billows are gone over me’ (Ps. 42:7). Then is the soul swept into a Loving Center of ineffable sweetness, where calm and unspeakable peace and ravishing joy steal over one.” (Thomas Kelly, *Holy Obedience*, 1939)

I had a taste of that release from the old self and a sense the sweetness and freedom of being immersed in visionary Quaker community.

Another Quaker I got to know was from Chiquimula, Guatemala. I had heard the story of how she hid under a table while everyone else in the restaurant was shot dead in a drug gang related massacre. She was waiting to meet her husband and give him a birthday cake. I was amazed by her faith and poise when she spoke about her experience as a plenary speaker in Kenya at the FWCC World gathering. At the section gathering in Mexico we became friends and looked after each other a bit, as friends do. I came to understand that after traumatic experiences, going out in the world takes a lot of courage. And she has that courage. It feels like an honor to know these Friends and witness their contributions and be inspired and changed by how they live their lives. The communion with these Quakers and many others gave me a glimpse of a life that I would like to live. A life that is actively contributing to the creation of a transformed world and that is freer from concerns that seem so important now. Being at the conference revolutionized my internal sense of what is possible.

The gathering in Mexico revealed the power of connecting and communicating within a faith whose divisions and branches are numerous and complex. One road to solving problems is to split off and part paths, but another is to affirm our connections

and our value to each other. FWCC strengthens our witness by encouraging mutual understanding and helping us love each other as a world body of Quakers.

We are looking forward to future FWCC events.

At these summer sessions, the New York Yearly Meeting approved four representatives to the International Representatives World Plenary Meeting in Peru in January, 2016. In keeping with the FWCC focus on youthful leadership, two of our reps will be under 35 years old. The theme of that worldwide gathering will be “Living the Transformation.” The objectives of the world gathering correlate nicely with the NYYM priorities:

1. Developing the young leaders. We need a Pilgrimage for Quaker Youth in all Sections of the world. (Our focus on nurturing the youth and young adults.)
2. Creating a living ministry. Encouraging membership and spiritual growth for young Friends and seekers. Deepening our traditional spiritual practices by sharing and explaining them to other branches of Quakers, while also experiencing new spiritual practices and language.
3. Sustaining life on Earth. Inspired by the Kabarak Call for Peace and Ecojustice, working for Quaker worldwide collaboration through the ongoing environmental, economic and spiritual changes.
4. Equipping the Friends World Committee for Consultation as an organization to face these challenges and support this work going forward. (Our priorities of supporting and amplifying our witness in the world and of becoming more transparent and accountable.)

More information about the worldwide gathering in Peru is available online (at <http://fwcc.world/peru/index.html>). There are open positions available on a limited basis for those who wish to attend and have not been named as official representatives of their yearly meeting.

Please visit the FWCC table in the Inn for maps of Quaker Yearly Meetings around the world and more information. And feel free to check in with any FWCC committee members.

Letter to Pope Francis

Call to Pope Francis, Bishop of Rome, and to the Roman Catholic Church, to Formally Repudiate and Revoke the “Doctrine of Christian Discovery”

See minute 2015-07-77, page 46.

Dear Pope Francis, Bishop of Rome:

We in the New York Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends are called to answer “that of God” in our Indigenous neighbors as in every person. We therefore begin by expressing gratitude for your recent words in Bolivia, recognizing the humanity and dignity of the Indigenous Peoples of the Americas and of the world, and apologizing and asking forgiveness for “grave sins” and “crimes” against Native Peoples of America in the name of God. We too in the Religious Society of Friends have been complicit in the wrongs done to Native Peoples, and we unite with the call for justice that we hear in your words.

We believe that the deepest movement towards seeking forgiveness includes steps to remediate the evil that occurred as a result of those acts. In this case, the acts were founded in several papal bulls, notably the papal bull *Inter Caetera*, issued in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, which expressed the doctrine that certain human beings, because they were not Christian, were not entitled to fundamental dignity and rights. In particular, rights that this Doctrine denied to them included the right to control over their ancestral homelands and the right to remain and live there in peace, the rights to self-government and civil organization, and even the right to life itself. The Doctrine of Discovery stated that any “Christian prince” whose representative first came upon such lands (“discovered” them, in the language of the papal bulls) was entitled to own and control the lands and to displace, kill, or enslave the inhabitants. This Doctrine is referred to as the Doctrine of Christian Discovery, or sometimes just the Doctrine of Discovery.

This Doctrine has led to and served as justification for exploitation, discrimination, and genocide carried out throughout the following centuries against many peoples of this earth, including the area now known as the United States of America. This Doctrine has been absorbed into our thinking, our culture,

and our social fabric. It has been formally engrafted onto the law of the United States, as well as other nation-states, and remains in effect today. The harm that this has caused continues into our current age and today's society. The Doctrine continues to cause further harm and suffering to Indigenous peoples within the borders of the United States and in many other places around the world.

We are moved by the words of your encyclical *Laudato Si*, that “disregard for the duty to cultivate and maintain a proper relationship with my neighbor, for whose care and custody I am responsible, ruins my relationship with my own self, with others, with God and with the earth.” (*Laudato Si* 30) Jesus showed by example that we must be open and accepting of all as brothers and sisters, even those whose faith is different from ours, when He healed “pagans” such as the servant of the Roman centurion and the daughter of the Syrophenician woman, spoke with and accepted water from the Samaritan woman at the well, and gave the parable of the “good Samaritan” (Matthew 8:5-13; Mark 7:24-30; John 4 :7-27; Luke 10:25-37).

The traditional practices of our Indigenous sisters and brothers are founded in great respect for our common mother, the Earth. Traditional teachings require taking no more from the Earth than necessary to sustain life and preserve it, considering at every step the effect of one's actions for seven generations into the future. But the Doctrine of Christian Discovery expressed in the papal bull *Inter Caetera* denies Indigenous People full control even of the land that has been left aside for them to dwell on. Because Native Peoples were considered “pagans,” control of the land passed to and remains with those who claimed the land in the name of “Christian princes.” The time has come. we believe, to repudiate that doctrine so we may all join with our Indigenous sisters and brothers to meet “the urgent challenge to protect our common home [which] includes a concern to bring the whole human family together to seek a sustainable and integral development” (*Laudato Si* 13).

In 2012, New York Yearly Meeting approved a minute of conscience, a formal statement repudiating the Doctrine of Discovery and calling for instituting the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples of 2007 as law of the

land. A copy of that minute is attached. We believe that continuing revelation is available to all.

We direct this appeal to you in particular as you visit our country, because you, as Pope, are both the head of the Roman Catholic Church and the direct successor to those who issued these papal bulls, which we believe to be so contrary to the foundational teaching of Jesus and Holy Scripture, as well as your namesake Francis of Assisi. We call upon you and upon the Roman Catholic Church to repudiate and revoke, clearly and formally, this pernicious doctrine, which was enunciated by your predecessors, and we ask you in turn to call upon the nations and peoples of the world to repeal and renounce any laws, policies, or acts based upon this doctrine and to take appropriate steps towards healing the harm that has resulted from it.

Epistle

The 320th New York Yearly Meeting Summer Sessions • July 19–24, 2015 Silver Bay, New York

To Friends everywhere,

We gathered again in this the 60th year of a re-united meeting, Hicksite and Orthodox, and the 320th since our founding. The cottonwood trees along the shores of Lake George sent the tiny clouds of their seeds like emissaries of Light through our work, play, and worship. After several years of hard but fruitful labor around our leadings and priorities, during which we “sat in the shadows in order to better see them,” to quote the week’s Bible study leader Mary Kay Glazer, we felt an ease and a unity.

Young Adult Friends strove to inject joy into the yearly meeting where and when they could. They participated in community-building events with the Silver Bay staff, facilitated an intergenerational dinner conversation, served the yearly meeting by working with youth, and linked kayaks far out on the lake for corporate worship. “We couldn’t tell where heaven began,” one Friend recalled. “We savored the light of summer.”

In the absence of our Young Adult Field Secretary, who is on leave, Young Adult Friends leaned into learning Quaker process with the general secretary and others, with particular interest in the practice of standing aside and in corporate discernment. The Young Adult Concerns Committee struggled with planning and scheduling, features felt to be all the more important because of the inherent transience of young adulthood.

We were grateful for the language and spirit of a substantive revision to our *Faith and Practice* on the recording of gifts in the ministry. We subsequently recorded the gifts in ministry of Margaret Webb, pastor of Farmington Friends Church. We celebrated the broad and deep contributions of Barbara Spring as she looks forward to her retirement as coordinator of the Aging Resources Consultation and Help (ARCH) program and welcomed Callie Janoff as she transitions into her role as director.

The plenary speaker, our own Don Badgley of Poughkeepsie Meeting, enjoined us to live and work from our spiritual core and become again Publishers of the Truth. He posited that the very survival of the Religious Society of Friends depends on it. He called us to “return to, and share with the world, radical ministries that arise in Experiential Worship.”

From our experience of worship has arisen a recognition of the suffering and injustice caused by racism and white privilege. Having been moved in the spring to become co-hosts, with Friends General Conference and other groups, of the 2016 White Privilege Conference, we nurtured the growing community of those intending to participate in the conference. In worship sharing we are actively learning about past and present racism.

Amid the display tables at a busy thoroughfare of our gathering stood a 6x9-foot mock solitary confinement cell of the type in which thousands of incarcerated Americans live and suffer. Many of us felt a quickening to work against mass incarceration and specifically, against solitary confinement, as well as a new hopefulness in large part due to the concrete actions described by our energetic visitor, Five Mualimm-ak, himself a victim of prolonged isolation in New York State prisons. Friends wrote scores of cards and letters to New York state elected officials asking them to support the HALT Act (Humane Alternatives to Long-term Solitary Confinement), which restricts the use of solitary confinement.

In the shade of a great white pine planted jointly in 1989 by Chief Jake Swamp Sr of the Mohawk nation and the American Friends Service Committee, we came to unity on a letter to Pope Francis exhorting him to repudiate the Doctrine of Christian Discovery that has caused and/or justified such suffering, destruction, and genocide in the Americas and around the world.

Our Healing Center, which has reached a decade of service, rests atop a hill overlooking Silver Bay. Through the loving touch and presence of a core of Friends committed to spiritual healing ministry, its energy emanates through all our work and worship in ways both palpable and precious.

Among us one day after Bible study a small child was heard to sing as if to herself over and over, “Don’t you see our flowers are

here. Don't you see our flowers are here." Perhaps we did see. Perhaps we were, as our clerk Jeffrey L. Hitchcock had invited us to be at the start of the week, "tender with and open to one another as we [met] the openings, challenges, and struggles of the week." We feel great peace, and offer to you this bouquet, variegated yet gathered—who we are and how we grew here.

MINISTRY SECTION

State of Society Report

June, 2015

For the State of Society report this year the constituent meetings of New York Yearly Meeting were asked to use the guidelines set forth in the current edition of our *Faith & Practice*, which recommends “a searching self-examination” by the meeting and its members. Unlike in the recent past no queries were suggested. Meetings responded in various ways and several common themes emerged.

Quality of Worship and Spiritual Ministry

“... those treasured moments when the Spirit gathers us into one body with a common leading.”

Friends described meeting for worship as welcoming, comforting and joyful, a spiritual home, well-grounded in the Light. Still, while feeling refreshed and renewed in the silence, treasuring the moments when Spirit gathers Friends into one body, some Friends shared that waiting in expectation can be a challenge and some expressed a desire to cultivate an inward stillness that goes beyond silence.

Some meetings expressed their appreciation of the depth and richness of worship in their meetings, noting that there seems to be more substance in vocal ministry, spiritual counsel, and deep feelings of love. Others expressed the concern that vocal ministry is rare and more would be welcomed. Some find it difficult to achieve a comfortable balance between silence and spoken messages.

Spiritual Growth

Meetings are laboring to foster growth in the Spirit in different ways, striving to provide a welcoming, safe place for seekers. Most meetings hold study sessions, worship sharing or discussions arising out of various Quaker or non-Quaker writings. These sessions are reported to be deep, received prayerfully and without judgment. Sharing from wide-ranging faith traditions

found among Friends and attenders helps open Friends to diverse spiritual journeys.

Some meetings schedule hymn singing once a month or use the natural world to evoke or broaden connection to Spirit. Others have been making an effort to understand early Friends, finding joy and fascination in exploring our Quaker heritage.

Meeting for worship with a concern for business is also experienced as a ministry, a time when Friends can speak truth and be listened to deeply. Friends report that depth in worship aids corporate discernment, though lovingly dealing with diversity of leadings is ever a challenge.

Discovering and nurturing the gifts of members and attenders as they are led to fill the roles of those who can no longer serve also fosters the spiritual growth of our meetings, as does honoring the joy and growth of the Spirit-led work of our children and youth. One meeting mentioned a gratitude box from which messages are taken out and read periodically. Meeting retreats either at the meetinghouse or at Powell House also contribute to spiritual growth, as do mid-week meetings in homes, joint gatherings of several small meetings, pot-luck meals, picnics, or gathering at a local restaurant.

Witnessing to Friends Principles

Friends participate in a broad range of witness activities in their communities. Some of these activities include earthcare witness, working for peace, AVP, Amnesty International, AFSC, FCNL, Christian Peace Teams, witness against torture, prison ministry, war tax witness, gun control, sustainable agriculture, and work to overcome racism. The Friends' tradition of Spirit-led witness in the world remains constant and strong in our meetings.

Personal and Family Relations

Because so many meetings are facing an aging membership, many have been having conversations on aging or offering workshop on late-life issues for children of aging parents. Some meetings have been holding monthly life-story sharing for elders or sponsoring a care-givers' group. Many meetings now have members who have completed ARCH (Aging Resources Consultation and Help) training.

Friends are offering rides to meeting and to medical appointments for those no longer able to drive. Some are reaching out by phone and email, delivering meals and paying visits to the homebound, sometimes holding meeting for worship with them.

In worship, Friends “hold in the Light” those who are ill and also make meeting attendance as comfortable as possible for the disabled. Some meetings have installed such services as an assisted-listening device or microphone in the meeting room for those who are hard of hearing. Friends who need pastoral care are receiving it from members, committees, and clearness committees.

Many meetings mention a sense of community with First Day School families and some report activities such as a parent luncheon discussion or nurturing a teen group as they learn Quaker process. Intergenerational activities have been offered, such as outings to baseball games, to visit a bee-keeper, a family picnic, kayaking, holiday celebrations, and crafts projects.

Relations with Community and Other Religious Groups

Friends carry our faith into the community and welcome the community into the meetinghouse. Many Friends meetings are affiliated with local interfaith organizations; some have participated in ecumenical retreats; others mention exchanging speaking engagements with other religious bodies.

Many meetings have scheduled events and activities at the meetinghouse, open to the community, such as tag sales, arts projects, fairs, open houses, contra-dances, and healing prayer meetings. In the community, Friends have participated in local parades, a blessing of the animals, a booth at a local festival. Some have joined with other local organizations to offer scholarships to high school students.

Many meetings are participating in activities to help the less fortunate: assisting at a homeless shelter; supporting and working at a food pantry or soup kitchen; providing clothing for the needy; visiting nursing homes; providing weekend food for free-lunch school children.

Participation in Wider Friends Activities

Members from nearly every meeting participate in the work of Yearly Meeting, quarterly or regional meetings. Inter-visitation with other meetings has increased and many meetings report attendance at Powell House weekends, Quaker Youth Pilgrimage, Young Adult Friends retreats.

Concerns that Test Us

As it has been for many years, some of our meetings report significant and growing concerns regarding aging and dwindling membership rolls, small or non-existent First Day programs, and the difficulties of maintaining meetings both spiritually and physically.

Many mentioned that their diminishing numbers create an increasing burden on the few who remain. Maintenance of buildings and grounds requires energy and is often costly. Small numbers can sometimes make upkeep seem overwhelming, especially when there is a historic meetinghouse and cemetery to maintain. Nevertheless, it is clear that despite these concerns, Friends across the Yearly Meeting are sustained and inspired by the Divine Source that nourishes our souls and lights the path before us. In nearly every report there is a sense of hope and an unwavering commitment to the worship that unites us in the cause of Love.

Joy Weaver, for the committee

Ministry Coordinating Committee

Ministry Coordinating Committee (MCC) focused this past year on deepening the spiritual life of our Yearly Meeting. We spent much time in worship in our meetings listening to Spirit for guidance in ways we might live into this work. The sharing during these times of worship was often deep and rich.

This process was especially helpful as we discerned ways to support the work of the Priorities. Questions that arose from our worship together included: How do we listen to one another across our faith experience? How can we stay open to the leadings of Spirit and deeply grounded in our faith and also be deeply gathered into one body? How can we hold a deep understanding of the joy of mutual accountability in our thinking

about how to be transparent and accountable to one another from monthly meetings to the yearly meeting?

Friends were heartened by the developing intervisitation that connects Friends and meetings and lessens the sense of isolation or insularity among some meetings, creating reason for hope. As members of MCC, we are invited into intervisitation. Towards this end we approved several new Friends to serve on the Intervisitation Working Group.

Friends noted that we need to take the filters off our hearts that result in lack of diversity and asked how we might take under our care the fostering of a spirit of welcome and hospitality. How can we invite those we meet into deeper relationship?

We spent some time discerning how the State of Society report reflects the spiritual life of our yearly meeting and how to support the committee in its work. We were clear that the report should be a synthesis rather than a summary. This work is still in process as we discern our way forward.

We approved changes to the process of Recording Gifts in the Ministry for *Faith and Practice* that was brought to Spring Sessions for a first reading. We also approved changes to the section in *Faith and Practice* on Covenant Relationships, which will come to the Yearly Meeting in Summer Sessions for a first reading.

The committees under our care continued to do good work throughout the year. We heard reports from the Task Group on Racism, the Advancement Committee, the Committee on Conflict Transformation, the Committee to Revise *Faith and Practice*, Ministry and Pastoral Care, the Spiritual Nurture Working Group, and Worship at Yearly Meeting Sessions, as well as the ad-hoc committee to Record Margaret Webb in the ministry. The reports on all of this work reflected the ways each committee lives into its role of supporting the spiritual life of our yearly meeting.

To this end the Spiritual Nurture Working Group has been planning a retreat series at Powell House (“Tending the Garden,” which began January 2015) that will be accompanied by offerings of regional and local retreats starting Fall 2015. The Working Group also collaborated with Advancement on a weekend retreat for members of Advancement, Ministry and

Pastoral Care, SNWG, and Young Adult Concerns Committee.

MCC supported the Task Group on Racism's request that the Yearly Meeting sponsor the White Privilege Conference in Philadelphia in 2016; held the committee to record Margaret Webb in the ministry in the Light as they worked to find times to meet together; and approved an addition to the *Handbook* page for the Committee on Conflict Transformation that reflects additional financial resources for their on-going work in and out of NYYM.

In conclusion, this was a year of movement of the Spirit. Ministry Coordinating Committee spent much time listening to how we can best lead our Yearly Meeting forward and connect each other through that which is eternal.

Irma Guthrie, clerk

Advancement Committee

This past year, the Advancement Committee felt called to support and participate in the planning and implementation of a weekend retreat in March of 2015 called "Spirit Leading Our Work." One of the main purposes of the retreat, the collective energy for which arose out of Fall Sessions 2014, was to take a closer look at the charges of several NYYM bodies that share, in some significant ways, closely-related charges: Ministry & Pastoral Care, the Spiritual Nurture Working Group, Advancement Committee, and the Young Adult Concerns Committee--all participants in the retreat. Retreat participants were called to examine each body's stated purpose, discuss areas where confusion and possible duplication of effort exist, and seek greater clarity for more productive collaboration going forward. With respect to Advancement, out of the March retreat and subsequent discussion at Spring Sessions, several concrete and promising outreach efforts appear to be taking shape, at both the yearly meeting and local meeting level. Advancement was clear at Spring Sessions that the energy and leadings to pursue greater outreach efforts in NYYM at all levels have the attention and continuing support of Advancement.

In addition, the committee received and considered various requests for the funds it oversees: The Lockport-Brinkerhoff

Fund, for repairs to meetinghouses; the Lafayette Avenue Fund, for the training of present or potential meeting workers; and the Leach Fund, for the general work of the Advancement Committee. Please speak to a member of the committee for more information about these funds.

Mia Kissil Hewitt, clerk

Committee on Conflict Transformation

The Committee on Conflict Transformation had the opportunity to be of service to several bodies in the Yearly Meeting during 2014, including monthly meetings, worship groups, individuals, and the Yearly Meeting organization. It also was active outside of New York Yearly Meeting.

At different times during 2014 the Committee comprised as few as four and as many as seven members, at various times including members from Farmington-Scipio, Purchase, All Friends, New York, Nine Partners, and Northeastern regional and quarterly meetings. The widespread geography of the Committee created challenges in arranging face-to-face Committee meetings and in responding to requests for services. The wide net also means that we are collectively more aware of and more familiar with more of the Yearly Meeting than if we were closer to each other. We have adopted the practice of visits being accompanied by an elder, increasing the challenges in planning visits and workshops. The Committee met six times during 2014, four times by phone and twice in person.

The film that was made in September 2013 was completed and posted on the Yearly Meeting web site. Plans were undertaken to make the film available on YouTube and, in DVD form, to monthly meetings and other Quaker bodies; however, these efforts were not complete at the end of 2014.

The Committee was called upon by monthly meetings, individuals and Quaker entities, and assistance was offered on the usual confidential basis. At Summer Sessions, the Committee again led a morning worship-sharing group.

Three one-day workshops were held outside the Yearly Meeting during 2014. Two were at the request of Friends World Committee for Consultation, in Sacramento, CA, and High Point, NC. A third was held at Chapel Hill Friends Meeting in North

Carolina. Each inviting body covered the travel expenses of the Committee and made an additional contribution to the Yearly Meeting to assist the Committee in its work and relieve the Yearly Meeting of demands on its operating expenses. During the year, further inquiries to conduct workshops were received from Adelphi (MD) Meeting, All-Maine Friends, All-Kentucky Gathering, the FGC Gathering, and Woolman Hill Conference Center. Workshops were planned for 2015 at Woolman Hill, All-Maine, and the FGC Gathering.

Within the Yearly Meeting, workshops were held during 2014 at Long Island Quarter and at Purchase Quarter. With these two workshops, every quarterly and regional meeting in the Yearly Meeting except Nine Partners and Butternuts has hosted a Committee workshop.

The Committee was clear to support the training of one of its members at Eastern Mennonite University.

The Committee timely submitted to Ministry Coordinating Committee its responses to the Accountability Queries. It also approved and submitted to General Services Coordinating Committee a description of its fund, which maintains contributions from those attending its workshops and other revenue related to the Committee's activities.

Peter Phillips, clerk

Meetings for Discernment Steering Committee

The Meetings for Discernment are beginning their ninth year of service to the Yearly Meeting. The Steering Committee met by conference call, on average monthly, and in person during Yearly Meeting Sessions. We are charged with having six at-large members who serve on a rotating basis, along with representatives from Ministry, Witness, Nurture and General Services Coordinating Committees, the clerk, assistant clerk, and general secretary. We are currently seeking representatives from the General Services, Witness and Nurture Coordinating Committees.

Two Meetings for Discernment were held over the past year, one during Summer Sessions at Silver Bay and one in March

hosted by Old Chatham Meeting, with attendance ranging between approximately 65 and 120.

In committee meetings this year, we have examined our original charge and considered how we have met, or could meet, its many parts. In particular, we have considered the charge to bring firm recommendations to committees, monthly meetings, and other groups based on the ministry rising up at Meetings for Discernment. Thus far, we have rarely made such recommendations.

Now we are in discussion and discernment as to how we might make recommendations more regularly, so that the joys, needs, and concerns that Friends express in worship at Meetings for Discernment can reach those who should hear those concerns.

We are also considering the relationship between Meetings for Discernment, the Statement of Leadings and Priorities, and the State of the Meeting/State of the Society reports in understanding more completely how Spirit is moving throughout the NYYM body.

We do not feel that we have answered these questions in their entirety, and we will continue to consider them. One thing is becoming clear: The representatives of the coordinating committees are much more capable of seeing concerns that relate to their agendas than the Steering Committee is without their participation.

New York Yearly Meeting Summer Sessions, 2014, were dominated by consideration of the report from the Priorities Working Group. In keeping with our charge to “work with issues that transcend the scope of any individual monthly meeting or Yearly Meeting section, allowing significant blocks of time to the Friends gathered so that they can labor in God’s time for discernment,” we devoted the morning session to consideration of the following queries:

What are your hopes and dreams for your monthly meeting, for your regional/quarterly meeting, and for New York Yearly Meeting over the next 3-8 years? Where might God be leading us?

In the afternoon we considered how we were going to achieve the vision that we described in the morning.

At Old Chatham we had one set of queries for both sessions:

What is happening in your monthly meeting that the rest

of us need to hear?

What is happening in your monthly meeting that the rest of us might hold?

Ministry that was given at Summer Sessions 2014 included:

“When the meeting for discernment was first proposed, I was extremely dubious. I was concerned about usurping things that were the prerogative of the business meeting. I was wrong. From my sense, what the meeting for discernment has done is to teach people the depth of worship that is possible, the space out of which messages can be given. I was particularly touched this morning by the quality of the extended worship and then the messages that arose from the body.”

Following are qualms that people have expressed to the clerk about participating in the Meeting for Discernment, and the clerk’s personal experience with these concerns.

You Want Me to Sit in Worship For TWO Hours? ...

My first experience of extended worship was at a Powell House weekend when I discovered that there would be worship from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. Without a strong sense of needing to do something else, I went—with trepidation. The first hour was no problem, a bit of anxiety, a few moments of inattentiveness, which continued into the second hour, and then I experienced a deeper sense of stillness than I had ever known before. That experience has stayed with me ever since and is something that I need to come back to for my own spiritual well-being.

... On THOSE Benches?

Even comfortable chairs can cause pressure points after a while, and many of us have bodies that require some movement from time to time. All of this is normal and acceptable in extended worship. Getting up and walking around, stretching, whatever your body requires, is perfectly acceptable.

That’s Not Extended Worship!

The Meeting for Discernment began as extended worship, but the practice was quickly modified to include queries. After a period of gathering worship, a clerk reads the queries. Friends then have an opportunity to consider them in prayer before the clerk asks for ministry. This is focused worship. Friends who

have been given ministry to share are asked to wait to be recognized by the clerk, who manages the pace of the meeting to retain deep worship and give the time needed to let the ministry work in us and to clear our hearts and minds for the next message.

(At the recent Meeting for Discernment at Old Chatham there were 58 messages given in seven hours of worship. No one felt rushed, and within 15 minutes of the scheduled end, the clerk voiced the sense that we had completed our response to the queries, and that Friends could share ministry on other topics.)

Now That's Ministry!

Part of what happens in the Meeting for Discernment is that with the extra time, and the presence of elders holding and grounding the worship, deep messages come to the surface. Thus far, these messages start coming in the middle of the afternoon, or after five hours of worship, and they are ministry that those present are unlikely to ever forget.

This year, the sessions at Silver Bay will be on Monday morning and Wednesday afternoon. It is an experiment, and we will see if we receive the same quality of ministry that regular participants have become accustomed to. We will also see if there is a change in the depth of our work together in the business of the Yearly Meeting. (There is a sense that the Meeting for Discernment has improved the quality and efficiency of the sessions concerned with business.) These factors will be evaluated and considered in future planning for Summer Sessions.

Roger Dreisbach-Williams, clerk

Ministry and Pastoral Care Committee

The work of this committee continues to be the support of pastoral meetings in our Yearly Meeting. The committee supports the NYYM/NEYM Pastors retreat in the fall and the Pastors and Elders retreat in the Spring. These retreats provide support and retreat time for the pastors. The committee continues to look at developing the relationship between pastors and their ministry partners, Ministry and Counsel committees. One focus of this year's Pastors and Elders retreat was on sustaining vital ministry.

The charge of the committee is broad. This year the committee joined with Advancement and Spiritual Nurture Working

Group to examine the scope of work each body has. A retreat was held that included these three bodies and Young Adult Concerns Committee. Our work was enlivened by the retreat. Our role is to support individuals and their leadings. We have added to our numbers and are looking forward to growing the work we do. We continue to seek members who are interested in the work. We meet twice a year and as the work requires.

The committee continues to administer the Stevens Fund for superannuated ministers, yearly meeting workers, and their spouses.

The Intervisitation Group continues its work. It is developing a group of Friends able to travel to serve the meetings in our yearly meeting.

Anne Pomeroy , clerk

Committee to Revise *Faith and Practice*

Members of the Committee to Revise *Faith and Practice* met regularly at Summer, Fall and Spring Sessions. We welcomed visitors who joined us and brought ideas, experience, and insight that helped us in our discernment on several occasions.

This year the committee approved editorial changes to the sections referring to Representative Meeting, replacing them with Fall, Spring, and Summer Sessions to reflect our current practice. We also confirmed the previous approval of the definition of Worship Groups and the new Advice and Query on the Environment for inclusion in the latest printing of our Book of Discipline.

This year we brought our suggested changes to the sections on Growth and Reconciliation and Covenant Relationships to Ministry Coordinating Committee (MCC). MCC approved the changes to the latter with a slight edition but sent the former back for more work. The section on Covenant Relationships will come to Summer Sessions for a first reading.

We initiated contact with Friends engaged in spiritual healing work for ideas on how to include this growing work in our book. We are still waiting to hear from them. We hope to draft a statement of some kind in the next year.

One of the sections in *Faith and Practice* that has needed

updating is the section referring to the Yearly Meeting on Ministry and Counsel, particularly the part related to Recording Gifts in the Ministry. We were aided in this work by an ad hoc committee of MCC that brought a draft of a suggested revision to Fall Sessions. MCC approved the draft, which was subsequently brought to Spring Sessions for a first reading.

The committee began work on revision of Section G (The Yearly Meeting) and Section H (Representative Meeting) with the expectation of combining the two sections and dropping the one on Representative Meeting. This is still in its working stages. The clerk was aided in this work by the clerk of General Services whose help was much appreciated.

We continue to be challenged to create a statement that will guide Friends in the use of electronic communications that reflects the on-going changes in the media while holding us to our practice of listening to Spirit as we discern way forward.

It is clear that much of our Book of Discipline is timeless and will always reflect the Truth of who we are as Friends and that some sections will need on-going revisions as we open to continuing revelation. The Committee to Revise *Faith and Practice* remains open to discernment about where we are called to work.

Irma Guthrie, clerk

Spiritual Nurture Working Group

The Spiritual Nurture Working Group (SNWG) has been planning a retreat series at Powell House “Tending the Garden,” which began January 2015) that will be accompanied by offerings of regional and local retreats starting Fall 2015. The Working Group also collaborated with Advancement on a weekend retreat for members of Advancement, Ministry & Pastoral Care, SNWG, and Young Adult Concerns Committee. Meetings of the SNWG are open to all who share a concern for the work of spiritual accompaniment in support of ministry, spiritual nurture, and spiritual formation, at the local meeting level and beyond. The work of the group is discerned at meetings at sessions and at occasional retreats. Please let us know if there is some way we can support spiritual nurture work you are already doing.

Lu Harper & Anne Pomeroy, co-clerks

Committee on Sufferings

The committee on sufferings has not been called on this year

Committee on Worship at Yearly Meeting Sessions

At Fall (15th Street Meeting) and Spring (Oakwood Friends School) Sessions, the Worship at Yearly Meeting Sessions committee helped the quarterly meeting host committees by inviting additional Friends who have the spiritual gift of eldering. These Friends from the wider yearly meeting body were asked to sit on the facing chairs as well as sitting in the body during meeting for worship and meeting for business in worship. They prayerfully grounded and held the body in the Light, being radiators of God's Love.

At Summer Sessions 2014 (Silver Bay), the Worship at Yearly Meeting Sessions committee helped oversee the many activities under the care of the Ministry Coordinating Committee. At meeting for worship and meetings for worship with attention to business, the committee invited and coordinated Friends sitting on the facing chairs as elders. These Friends provided a prayerful presence and helped remind us that we are connected spiritually. The committee helped coordinate and lent support to the additional worship opportunities at Silver Bay, including Worship Sharing Groups, the Healing Center, hymn singing in the Chapel, meetings for worship at the Boathouse, Early Morning Coffee and Conversation, as well as Meetings for Worship for Racial Healing, Worship with Friends in the Spirit of Christ, and Worship with Friends for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Concerns. The JYM clerks coordinated the community worship with us, serving as elders when we gathered in the boathouse after dinner. The committee contacted the Bible Study leader, Maggie Edmondson, pastor at Winthrop Friends Meeting in New England Yearly Meeting, and provided grounding and support for her and the body those four nights. Anita Paul and the committee worked together for the programmed portion of the closing worship on Saturday, choosing hymns, providing eldering and spiritual support. The committee identified three Friends, Mary Kay Glazer, Kate

Lawson, and David Gerhan to bring the message for Silver Bay's Monday—Wednesday vesper services in the Chapel.

We thank all the myriad Friends who served as worship sharing leaders, elders, healers, holders-of-the-space, speakers, and music makers.

Ann Davidson, clerk

GENERAL SERVICES SECTION

General Services Coordinating Committee

The Coordinating Committee (GSCC) has met at each of the three Yearly Meeting Sessions and the January Coordinating Committee weekend since last year. Some of our between-meeting business is handled through emails and conference calls. The clerk and other yearly meeting officers and staff handle a significant portion of the work of the General Services Section.

As clerk I have made several visits to the yearly meeting office. Our representatives on GSCC are often busy with their own committees' business. GSCC has only three at-large members, rather than the six to eight recommended in the *NYYM Handbook* description.

Work of the several committees and trustees in our section can be reviewed in their own reports.

Highlights have included

- increased fundraising through the Annual Appeal, under Development Committee's direction;
- Audit Committee's facilitating the selection of a new auditor and the accounting required to consolidate our operating and trustee accounts;
- review and coordination of the ARCH program's plan for fundraising to make a transition in their work and staffing;
- evaluation and approval of the proposed Children and Youth Field Secretary position, with attention to associated costs and grant application;
- attention to the general and liability insurance of NYYM and the protocols and documentation for child safety measures in the programs we conduct at each of our Sessions;
- focus on how the identification of priorities and leadings of the Yearly Meeting affects each of our section committees;
- completion of negotiations with New York Quarterly Meeting related to cost sharing (rent) for NYYM office space at 15 Rutherford Place in New York City.

In order to facilitate transparency and engagement, the minutes of GSCC meetings are readily available at nyym.org. Other committees are invited to post theirs as well. Send the minutes or other documents with instruction to Steven Davison, communications director.

John Cooley, clerk

Audit Committee

The primary responsibility of the Audit Committee is to assure that an annual audit of Treasurer-Managed and Trustee Accounts is performed in a timely fashion, to review these audit results and recommendations, and to assure that recommended bookkeeping adjustments are made in a timely fashion. During 2014, members of the Audit Committee (including the liaison member from the Trustees) solicited and received audits for the 2013 Financial Statements (one from the Treasurer, and one from the Trustees), reviewed the draft audits, and responded to the findings and recommendations of the final audit. The audit of the 2012 Treasurer-Managed Accounts had been completed in 2013; the audit of the 2012 Treasurer-Managed Accounts had been delayed by illness of the auditor, but this was approved by the Trustees in early 2014. So in summary, these primary tasks were completed and the audit process is now up to date.

In keeping with recommended Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP), a decision was made in 2013 to solicit a new audit firm. This process continued in 2014 with the distribution of a Request for Proposal (RFP) to the three audit firms who had responded to NYYM's earlier Request for Information (RFI). Three bids were received, and since the bidders were all considered to be qualified, interviews were held with each of them at the NYYM offices, under the expectation that greater familiarity with NYYM's accounting practices might enable (some of) them to reduce their initial bids. This was accomplished and final bids were received by early November, 2014. In the process of the interviews, however, it became apparent that significant bookkeeping adjustments would be required in order to conform to GAAP recommended practices, including the generation of a single, consolidated Financial Statement for

NYYM. In view of the time required to make these changes, a revised Statement of Work (which is one portion of the RFP) was generated, and updated final bids were received. The Audit Committee reviewed these bids and selected a winning bidder in mid-December. Negotiations were then undertaken on a sole-source basis to engage NYYM's bookkeeper to make suitable accounting changes, and to engage the winning bidder of the auditor solicitation. The common practice in these businesses is to use letter contracts (termed engagement letters) to secure bookkeeping and auditing services, and these were reviewed and finally approved by the Trustees and by General Services Coordinating Committee at Spring Sessions, 2015.

The Audit Committee is now in the process of supporting and monitoring the bookkeeping changes following closure of the 2014 NYYM fiscal year. Since the GAAP process for audit requires two years of financial statements, it was decided to hold a "review", which is an informal audit, of the first year's consolidated financial statements (2014), recognizing that these initial records would not be fully GAAP compliant, and to hold a full audit GAAP audit of the 2015 Consolidated Financial Statements. The "review" of the 2014 consolidated financial statement is expected to occur in August of 2015, and to be completed before the end of 2015. The Committee will continue to oversee any subsequent bookkeeping adjustments and any additional changes recommended by the auditors during the remainder of 2015 and early 2016.

The Committee has held approximately 15 teleconferences during 2014-2015, and three or four meetings at the Yearly Meeting office, in the course of completing the above tasks. In addition, the committee anticipates the need for some minor changes in the Audit Committee *Handbook* listing in 2015 in order to bring our procedures in keeping with GAAP recommended practices. It is possible that other procedural changes will be recommended to bring NYYM into compliance with other GAAP recommended practices, and that some of these may require future action by the body; however, these changes are likely to be of an administrative nature and seem likely at this time to be also consistent with good Quaker practice.

Tim Johnson, clerk

Communications Committee

The work of the Communications Committee proceeded with *Spark* and revisions to the website. We invite members to share your views of the changes to the website and the kinds of changes you would like to see. Among the changes are pages about the Yearly Meeting Priorities, several reorganized sections (About Quakers, Find a Meeting, and Social Witness), and a new section for videos produced by and about Quakers. We have begun plans to completely redesign the website, including making it more accessible on mobile devices. We hope that Friends will volunteer to assist at various stages, by preparing new content, testing the new site, and migrating content from the old site to the new one. Please contact the communications director if you are interested.

We continue to search for new topics for *Spark* and welcome your suggestions and reactions to material we have published. We printed our first issue in color. We continue to expand our outreach through Facebook and Twitter.

We helped to connect a few Friends involved in ham radio with each other.

A well-received *Annual Report* was sent to members at the end of 2014.

Adam Segal-Isaacson, clerk

Development Committee

The Development Committee has met regularly this year, both in person and by conference call. Our goal is to help the members and attenders of NYYM monthly meetings to understand the mission and work of the Yearly Meeting, to recognize the need for financial support, and to raise the funds to address the gap in the fiscal year's budget. To date, we have raised approximately \$23,000 through mailings and personal solicitations, and we hope to raise a total of \$40,000. We have found it to be quite challenging to raise the level of funding needed to support the active and varied ministries of the Yearly Meeting, and we deeply appreciate the generosity of the Friends who have supported this critical effort.

Our electronic donation option through the Yearly Meeting website has been active on line for approximately one year now. It has become a source of recurring and one-time donations. We look forward to the ways this electronic option will continue to draw members, attenders, and other Friends and friends to support the important work of the Yearly Meeting and its staff.

In July of 2014, we hosted an ice cream social at Summer Sessions, as a way of increasing awareness of the annual appeal. In connection with the Climate March in New York City in September, we hosted a fund-raising reception at a Friend's home. At Spring Sessions on the Oakwood campus in April, we hosted an awareness reception at the head's house. Each of these events has resulted in new or increased donations to the annual appeal. At this year's Summer Sessions, we plan to have donor envelopes available as well as technical support for making on-line donations.

Our work has been challenging because of the geographical distance between members of the Development Committee and our busy schedules. Phones and computer technology have helped us in our work, and we have received the active and consistent support of our general secretary. We are committed to supporting the Yearly Meeting and welcome everyone's engagement in our fundraising efforts on behalf of an organization that is crucially important to all of us.

Peter Baily, clerk

Financial Services Committee

Financial Services Committee met to draft the 2015 Budget. The budget is on page 70.

Committee on Expenditure of the H.H. Mosher Fund

Last year, at our annual sessions at Silver Bay, we distributed \$3,523.89 in books and CDs. This included \$3,512.08 for gifts to 68 monthly meetings, worship groups, prison worship groups, and Friends institutions (mostly schools). We gave gift books to 12 individuals (staff, recorded ministers, presenters at NYYM,

and first-time visitors at our Yearly Meeting from other yearly meetings).

Please visit the Book Table, located just inside the front door to the lobby at Silver Bay to replenish your local meeting's libraries' shelves with up to \$50 worth of free books again this year. If your meeting is not sending a representative to Summer Sessions, please ask a neighboring meeting that is planning on sending a Friend to select books totaling \$50 for your meeting as well. Everyone is invited to sign up for an hour or two to help us sell and distribute the books.

Ruth Ralston, for the committee

General Secretary's Report

Whew! What a year this has been. Between the work of the Priorities Working Group, ramping up our development capacity, clarifying the work and leadings in the areas of advancement, religious education, and pastoral care, supporting initiatives in outreach, and developing a new staff position to support children, youth, their families, and monthly meeting outreach, we have taken on, and accomplished, an enormous amount in this past year. Much of the time, I have felt like I was running hard just to keep up. That is not a bad thing. It is a sign of just how much life and energy is being unleashed in our yearly meeting.

In addition to supporting the above initiatives, and more, I made twenty-two visits to worship groups, monthly, and regional meetings since my last report. I consider that aspect of my work the most valuable, as well as the most enjoyable, service I have to offer. I am most well-used in visits when I am asked to lead a retreat or workshop on topics such as opening to greater depth and power in worship, learning tools for more careful discernment in vocal ministry and worship for business, and fostering greater spiritual community. Seven of my visits last year were such opportunities, and each and every one was a considerable blessing.

That work is so valuable, and so much needed across our ninety-some monthly meetings and worship groups, that I gave considerable attention to working with committed Friends to create a yearly-meeting-wide program of local retreats avail-

able to monthly meetings and groups of monthly meetings. These retreats will cover a range of topics devoted to helping our worshiping communities to grow in the depth of our rich practice as Friends. We expect to launch that program this fall.

I also put a great deal of time into helping Friends to get our development program on a sounder footing. Many on the committee, myself included, have been learning as we go, not initially being experienced in the ways of asking Friends for money. We have been gaining strength and momentum as a committee, gradually growing different facets of a program which seeks to bring in much-needed income in addition to our Covenant Donations. When the yearly meeting body was clear to unite with the Statement of Leadings and Priorities, one Friend wondered, "Will we be willing to pay for what we have prayed for?" I believe we will, and we can, and this committee is where the rubber meets that particular road.

Our Personnel Committee has been working with our Youth Committee to develop a job description for a new Children and Youth Field Secretary position. I have put in many hours supporting that work, developing budgets, working on a grant, and hearing Friends out on both their enthusiasm for, and concerns about, this proposed position. I have been working with my counterpart in New England Yearly Meeting to create a cooperative grant proposal whereby we mentor their equivalent of a Young Adult Field Secretary, and they mentor our new staff person. We are both excited at the prospect of our two yearly meetings learning and cooperating together in this joint venture.

I also represent us in the wider Quaker world. In the past year, I attended two FUM General Board meetings, clerked the North American Ministries Committee, attended the FUM Triennial, attended the FGC Gathering, and the FGC consultation on Spiritual Deepening. I also helped plan and provided leadership at the FUM Stoking the Fire gathering and attended the annual Superintendents and Secretaries Retreat.

I am also responsible for the good functioning of our staff, and for working in collaboration with the Yearly Meeting clerks. I am incredibly grateful for the fine, skilled, and hardworking staff with which we are blessed. They make my job much easier than it would be otherwise. And I have greatly enjoyed working

with our gifted clerk and assistant clerk.

My work is incredibly multi-faceted. Here are some of the other ways I spent my time this past year: Of course, I attended Spring, Summer, and Fall Sessions. I also attended Budget Saturday, Meetings for Discernment, and Coordinating Committee Weekend. I was part of a contingent that met with the New York State Department of Community and Correctional Services (DOCCS) leadership in Albany, and, like many other Friends this year, participated in a weekend Undoing Racism Workshop, and in the Climate March. I also helped plan and facilitate the two Pastors Retreats (which are a significant boost to our New York Yearly Meeting pastors and their meetings); the retreat clarifying the respective roles of Advancement, Ministry and Pastoral Care Committee, the Spiritual Nurture Working Group, and the Young Adult Concerns Committee. I also planned and helped facilitate the Northeast Regional Christ-centered Friends Retreat.

I must admit I struggle at times to keep all these balls in the air at the same time, and sometimes fail to do so. Since I began this work almost eleven years ago, the work of the Yearly Meeting has grown enormously. And it continues to do so. At times it is hard to keep up. More and more, my role has shifted to supporting others in their leadings, rather than taking a lead role or being the initiator. That is an infinitely better feeling than that of feeling like I am prodding things along.

This is an exciting time to be in a leadership role in this yearly meeting. We have embraced a vision for our common work, one which feels Spirit-led. We are trying to get our feet under it, and to gain traction. And, by degrees, I see us doing so. The next few years will be pivotal as we seek to more fully own our common vision and to make that vision a reality. It is a blessing to be a part of that work.

Christopher Sammond, general secretary

Nominating Committee

It's possible that we on Nominating have more opportunities to really get to know people all around the Yearly Meeting than do folks on any other committee. To present a good set of nominations for the consent agenda each year, we ask for recommenda-

tions, we listen to messages in meeting for worship, we laugh at a joke in line for ice-cream, we enjoy hospitality during meetings away from home, we read *Spark*, we work on other committees, we follow the work of the coordinating committees . . . you get the idea; if you are reading this, you do it, too. But the next step is the real privilege: we get to call up a person even if we have never met and ask her how she thinks her gifts align with the work of the Yearly Meeting. Sometimes we are tapping into a leading he has been coming into for a long time; sometimes we are striking a light for someone just discovering her gifts. It is an encounter that can fill us with joy, show us a new part of an old friend, make us a new friend, enlighten our own searching.

It's also work. Lots of emails and phone calls, lots of information to keep track of. A few meetings with the rest of Nominating (Spring, Fall, at least four mornings at Summer Sessions) and a few conference calls. We have a lot to do, with fifty-some-odd committees that need Spirit-led Friends to take up the tasks and the commitment each year at the end of Summer Sessions.

It's not work everyone wants to do. We usually do not have a full complement of representatives from the regions—this current year, we have about half of what we could have—but the work does get done. So please read this paragraph as a plea to every region to encourage Friends to think about taking on this work even if they think they “don't know anybody.”

It's not about filling slots.

It's all about identifying gifts and skills, and matching them with needs for ministry and outreach in the yearly meeting.

It's appreciated. Sometimes the appreciation comes in good suggestions for new ways to do it and new ways to think about the work of the Yearly Meeting, sometimes as “I don't know how you do it” and a quick hug, sometimes in a loud “thank you” after Sessions. But most important is the appreciation shown when committees work well and Spirit can be seen in action.

It's work all of us can do, and it's challenging and rewarding. We look forward to your suggestions, recommendations, and participation as we finish our work at Summer Sessions and start on the new year. And we look forward to finding out about your gifts.

Elaine Learnard & Deborah Wood, co-clerks

Personnel Committee

Personnel Committee has been meeting on a regular basis. Our work together involves the yearly evaluation of staff and an ongoing review of policies and procedures in relation to staff of the Yearly Meeting. We have spent time reviewing the benefits offered to staff and clarifying our policies in relation to benefits. This year we have had liaisons to both the Supervisory Committee for the general secretary and the ARCH staff. In this way, Personnel Committee is able to coordinate our work with the work of other committees that interact with staff.

We have spent considerable time working on the creation and funding for a Child and Youth Field Secretary. In conjunction with that work, some of us have met with and collaborated with the Youth Committee to develop a shared vision for the position. We are currently seeking support for the possible position from the Trustees and a grant from the Shoemaker Fund.

Barbara Menzel, clerk

Yearly Meeting Staff Reports

Aging Resources, Consultation and Help (ARCH) staff

As your ARCH Program celebrates seven years of serving the body of New York Yearly Meeting as we all face aging concerns and concerns of our differently-abled Friends, we have had a year of exciting milestones and anticipated changes.

Visitor Network. The core of our program is our network of over 120 volunteer Visitors. This year those volunteers delivered meals, worshiped at the bedside, organized caregiver support groups, advocated for accessibility in their meeting-houses, facilitated filing of advanced care directives, and much more. Your ARCH coordinators support this work by organizing the initial training for Visitors, offering individual support and referrals to Visitors, and providing opportunities for further enrichment and training.

Visitor Training. A delightfully intergenerational and lively training weekend retreat was held in Syracuse in the spring of 2015. Another is now scheduled for the fall of 2015 in Ocean Grove, NJ. Participants and facilitators grew in their

understanding of what “old” and “disabled” mean for each of us individually, and for our meetings. We gained a deeper understanding of specific needs, concerns and the gifts of those we call elderly, seniors, disabled, or old.

Visitor Training 2. We packed Powell House this fall with a weekend retreat for seasoned ARCH Visitors. Your ARCH Visitor network was renewed and re-invigorated with opportunities to reflect and share about their work and their meetings. Visitors gained new skills in the areas of pastoral care for those living with Alzheimer’s and for coping with hearing loss. Perhaps most importantly, each visitor developed and facilitated a “mini” three-minute workshop for the group on a topic of their choice, resulting in increased facilitation skills and a sense of confidence in sharing their expertise.

Workshops: Workshops related to aging issues have been an important ARCH offering and outreach from the beginning. The most popular workshop to date has been Quaker Values and End-of-Life Decision Making. Everyone over 18 years old needs to have their advance directives, a Healthcare Proxy and Living Will, and this workshop is an intergenerational experience and a very meaningful discussion of Quaker values. ARCH has created a new advance directive document incorporating Quaker values for use in workshops and for individuals.

Life Stories work is a fun and important focus for older adults that can readily be shared and enjoyed by young teens and adults of any age. A common outcome of the Life Story workshop is growth in personal understanding and some clarity about the journey others have made through life.

ARCH staff and Visitors are pleased to consider workshop topics to accommodate the interests of Quaker gatherings.

Outreach. Friends Foundation for the Aging has been excited about the ARCH program and has for several years thought that ours is a strategy that might work for other yearly meetings. Consequently ARCH has been making outreach presentations: 12/14 at Sandy Spring Meeting, MD, Baltimore Yearly Meeting (BYM); 2/15 to Bloomington Meeting; and 4/15 to Patapsco Meeting, BYM. These have been one-and-a-half-day sessions, working with the meeting, ministry and pastoral care, or board of directors, in addition to offering a workshop

to members, such as “Spiritual Opportunities of Aging” and “Anger and Forgiveness.” Also, New England Yearly Meeting is in the planning stages of a program they’ve named “SAGE: Support Across Generations for the Elderly.” ARCH has been part of conference calls and will continue to assist them in getting SAGE up and running.

Aging in Prison. ARCH staff and members of our Committee on Aging Concerns have made several visits to prison worship groups to listen and learn from the aging concerns of our incarcerated Friends. In response to the growing epidemic of aging incarcerated people in our area, ARCH is teaming up with prison visitors to offer visits to incarcerated friends regarding their own aging or their concerns for their family members outside. One incarcerated Friend was granted compassionate release near the end of his life, and an ARCH Visitor was able to facilitate his admission to a hospice residence where he worked, when no other nursing home or facility would agree to admit him.

Transition. At the end of 2015 we will say goodbye to one of our founding coordinators, Barbara Spring. While the entire ARCH network will miss her expertise, energy, and integrity, we see an opportunity to reimagine our staff arrangement. Administrative tasks will be consolidated with a director position, one person to go to with your referrals and inquiries, and to mind the details of our budget and scheduling. New local coordinator positions will be distributed geographically around our Yearly Meeting to cut down on travel time, and to provide better insight and cohesion for groups of Visitors closer to home.

Your ARCH staff gratefully serve our whole body, young and old, with the support of the Friends Foundation for the Aging. The ARCH program is guided by the Committee on Aging Concerns, whose report is on page 128. In the years to come we anticipate deepening our worshipful service and continuing to grow in community.

*Callie Janoff, Anita Paul, and Barbara Spring,
ARCH coordinators*

Gabrielle Savory Bailey, Young Adult Field Secretary

Prepared by Steven Davison, NYYM communications director, and Christopher Sammond, general secretary. Gabrielle Savory Bailey is on an extended leave of absence. Earlier in 2015, she prepared a report on the first four years of her service as Young Adult Field Secretary for the Shoemaker Fund, a major funder of the position. This Advance Report has been excerpted and adapted from that report, and so covers the years 2011 to 2015, not just the year since Summer Sessions 2014, as is usually the case with Advance Reports. Thus it speaks in a third-person voice, rather than in Gabi's own voice, as has been her practice in the past.

Since the beginning of the Young Adult Field Secretary position in 2011, there has been a shift away from Young Adult Friends (YAF) programming as a separate group focused on Summer Sessions and YAF retreats, and towards Young Adult Friends being well-integrated into their local meetings and the yearly meeting committee structure and sessions. This new focus has yielded great results. We are able to see more clearly the constituency of YAF in New York Yearly Meeting (NYYM) and better understand and meet the needs of these Friends. But the benefits of the position extend beyond just the population of young adults and include attitudes and practices in local meetings and in the wider Yearly Meeting.

In an attempt to measure the results of her work, Gabi conducted two surveys of Young Adult Friends, in 2012 and in 2015. We have learned a great deal from these surveys. They highlight Gabi's personal gifts and the effectiveness of her ministry, in particular, as well as highlighting the value of the position to the Yearly Meeting in general. They also have provided unique and valuable insights into the needs of Young Adult Friends and into aspects of the collective life of the Yearly Meeting.

The impact of the Young Adult Field Secretary

Here are some highlights from the survey results regarding the impact of this position and of Gabi as the Young Adult Field Secretary:

- **YAF involvement in meeting life.** More Young Adult Friends are active in their local meetings, attending worship, and serving on local meeting committees, and more are attending Yearly Meeting Sessions, including Spring and Fall Sessions, and serving on Yearly Meeting committees.
- **Tokenism on the wane.** The more that Friends at both the local meeting level and the Yearly Meeting organization view Young Adult Friends in terms of their gifts rather than just seeking to fill a slot with a young person, the more Young Adult Friends get involved and the more satisfied they are with their experience of service. The Yearly Meeting is doing a better job of this than local meetings are, perhaps because of Gabi's persistent presence and messages at Yearly Meeting sessions, and the difficulty of visiting the large number of local meetings.
- **Young Adult Concerns Committee** has been revitalized after a collapse in 2011.
- **Regional YAF networks.** Several regional YAF networks have emerged over the past several years.
- **Leadership.** Gabi has assumed a leadership role in cultivating a network of YAF staff and workers across the continent and across branches of Quakerism. Staff from other yearly meetings are adopting some of Gabi's insights and practices. Also, some NYYM YAF have participated in Quaker life beyond New York Yearly Meeting, including Quaker Voluntary Service and the Young Adult Friends Conferences at Pendle Hill.
- **Ministry to families.** When Gabi began her work, no parents participated in either the Young Adult Concerns Committee or the wider YAF community. Now parents regularly participate. She not only has brought families into the community, but also has done much to bring their needs to the attention of both local meetings and the Yearly Meeting, and has ministered to those needs herself in important ways.
- **Individual pastoral care.** Many YAF have turned to Gabi for personal counsel and she has become an important mentor, not only to individuals but also to the wider YAF community.

- **Religious education of YAFs.** Recognizing that unfamiliarity with Quaker process, jargon, and culture impedes YAF participation in meeting life, Gabi has conducted “seminars” in these areas for groups of YAF at sessions, and conducted running explanatory comment sessions during the sessions themselves. Many YAF come to Gabi personally for guidance on issues like meeting membership, Quaker process, marriage under the care of the meeting, and Quaker faith and practice.

What we have learned

We have learned some important things about our Yearly Meeting and about this position as we look forward.

- **Personal care and connection matter.** This level of effective spiritual nurture needs direct personal contact, not just newsletters and Facebook accounts. And that means a lot of travel.
- **Gifts, not tokens.** Young Adult Friends—well, all people—want to be known as people, not as members of a category, and they want to participate in meeting life as an expression of their gifts, not as tokens representing their population. When engaged as persons with spiritual gifts of value to the meeting, Young Adult Friends become more engaged in response.
- **Pastoral care.** The Young Adult Field Secretary has been called upon to provide pastoral care for a wide range of personal concerns, some of which are serious. This position was not conceived to require training as a mental health professional. We need to develop a network of contacts to whom the Young Adult Field Secretary can turn for advice and to whom she can refer the people who come to her when it’s appropriate.
- **Religious education.** We have not prepared our Young Adult Friends to be informed, effective participants in Quaker meeting life. They report that they do not know Quaker process, Quaker history, Quaker jargon, or Quaker structures well enough to participate the way they want to, and they are a little unhappy with us that they now have to play catch-up. They yearn for what they term a “Quaker

toolkit”—they want to be equipped with the essentials that would empower them to fully contribute to meeting life. This points to a failure in the religious education of our youth: neither local meeting First Day Schools, nor the Yearly Meeting institutions have prepared our young people to be fully equipped young adult Friends.

Steven Davison, Communications Director

The year since our annual sessions in July 2014 has been very productive for your communications director. I have made some significant improvements in the Yearly Meeting’s website, experimented with new ways to communicate through social media, published *Spark* in color for the first time, and have done quite a bit of witness outreach communications on behalf of the Yearly Meeting.

Website (www.nyym.org)

I have reorganized some sections of the website and installed new navigational aids to make it easier to find our content and I have added a great deal of new content.

Resources for meetings. I have created a new page with links to resources of special value to local meetings. A link to this page appears in the “NYYM Info” sidebar on the right-hand side of all pages. This Resources for Meetings page is an addition to the already established Resources section of the website, which lists print and other resources on more than fifty Quaker subjects.

NYYM Info section—for members and regular visitors to the website. I have created a new tab in the main menu titled “NYYM Info” that leads to a portal for the areas of the website used most by NYYM members and meetings, by Yearly Meeting committee members, and by other regular visitors to the site.

Social Witness section. This section has been completely reorganized and some new content has been added, though parts of this section are still under development. You can access the Social Witness section from the Social Witness tab in the main menu.

About Quakers section. I reorganized the About Quakers section as a welcoming and informative introduction to Friends’

ways for seekers and first-time visitors to the site, accessible from a tab in the main menu.

Videos. I have created a new section just for Quaker videos accessible from a tab in the main menu, with an extensive library of links to videos by and about Quakers. In addition, the website now features a video on the home page, which I rotate every week or so. So keep coming back to our website to see what we are highlighting that week.

NYYM Sessions Portal. I have created a new page with links to the web pages for New York Yearly Meeting Sessions going back through Spring 2010.

Find a Meeting. I have reorganized the Find a Meeting section, putting all the ways to find a meeting on one page, accessible from the main menu.

Website traffic report

Overview. We have had 21,400 visits to the website since Summer Sessions 2014 (ten months—August 1, 2014 through May 31, 2015), an average of about 2,100 a month. Of these, two-thirds are new visitors (67.7%). However, almost 60% of visitors leave right away. Assuming that most of these bounces are new visitors, then roughly 1,750 new people stayed to check us out a little more, an average of between five and six people a day.

Devices. Of these visits, 14% were by people using a mobile device and 7% were by tablets, which means that 20% of our visitors are no longer using their computers to visit us. This highlights the need to upgrade our website to be more device-friendly.

Demographics. Our age and gender demographic information is limited by technical factors, but the data we do have appears below. Forty-four percent of our visitors are male, 56% female.

Age	% Users	% New Users
65+	25.2	19.9
55–64	23.4	17.3
45–54	13.9	15.1
35–44	10.9	12.9
25–34	16.5	20.7
18–24	10.2	14.2

How people find us. This is how people find us:

Organic (or general) search	55%
Direct search (typed the url or used a bookmark)	26%
Referral (sent by other websites)	17%
Social media	3%
Email	0%

Social Media—Facebook & Twitter

I use our Facebook page and Twitter primarily to broadcast information about things that are more timely than the items published in *InfoShare* or the Around the Yearly Meeting section of *Spark*. Enough Friends followed the #ClimateMarchQuakers hashtag I created for the People’s Climate March in September 2014 that I feel it’s a useful way to organize and communicate during events, especially big ones like the Climate March, where it would otherwise be hard to find each other or communicate.

So—like us on Facebook (Facebook.com/NewYorkYearlyMeeting) and follow us on Twitter, at communications@NYYMTweets.

Press releases and witness communications

This was a very active year in the area of press relations and communicating our witness to the world. I sent out press releases about our letter to President Obama asking him to ask for the release of Leonard Peltier from prison, about our minute of conscience and letter to officials in New York State regarding solitary confinement, about our support of the People’s Climate March, and advertising presentations by Shan Cretin, general secretary of AFSC at Spring Sessions and anti-fracking activist Sandra Steingraber at a fundraiser after the Climate March.

Spark

We published *Spark* in color for the first time in May 2015. The themes for the year were as follows: September 2014—Stepping into Religious Education; November 2014—Climate Change, Social Change; January 2015—We Envision . . . Implementing the Yearly Meeting’s Priorities; March 2015—Quakers and Other Faiths; May 2015—Summer Sessions.

Walter Naegle, Administrative Associate

This is my 13th year working for NYYM. It is a joy to work at 15 Rutherford Place with other Quaker organizations that share my values. The environment is friendly, non-competitive, and supportive, and fosters growth at the personal and professional level. The surrounding neighborhood is a welcome respite from the busier parts of Manhattan, and is within walking distance of my home.

My primary task is maintaining both the card file and the electronic version of the NYYM database. Information in the database can be easily sorted and used for a variety of tasks, including mail merge operations, statistical compilations, and email blasts. 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 our community. These records are the basis for compiling registration lists for the various Yearly Meeting sessions (Spring, Summer, Fall), as well as Meetings for Discernment and other events. The mailing lists for *Spark* and the Sharing Fund appeals are also generated from this information, as well as the global email list for those interested in NYYM news and *InfoShare*. We recently began to use the database to track contributions.

I work closely with monthly meeting recorders who keep us up to date with information about new members, births, transfers, deaths, and who provide the statistics about their meeting that appear in each NYYM *Yearbook*. Once a year each Recorder receives a printout of their meeting's members which they compare with their records for accuracy. I organize the announcements about our membership that appear in *Spark*.

I work with my supervisor, Helen Garay Toppins, on NYYM finances, processing payment vouchers, reviewing bank statements, preparing bank deposits and sending out acknowledgments for contributions to the Sharing and Equalization Funds.

I assist in collecting photographs and illustrations for use in *Spark* and *InfoShare*, and work on both the Alphabetical and Committee sections of the *Yearbook*. I collect the Epistles, State of the Meeting Reports, and memorial minutes that are made available at Summer Sessions.

Routine tasks include answering the telephone, reviewing/responding to email, opening mail, ordering office supplies, and shipping out copies of *Faith and Practice* and NYYM *Yearbooks*.

My ongoing work with the legacy of my late partner, Bayard Rustin, continues to complement my work with Quakers. I was one of three authors of a recent young person's biography, Bayard Rustin, *The Invisible Activist*, published last November by Quaker Press of Friends General Conference. The book has been doing well, and during the first week of May, Jacqueline Houtman (the principal author) and I visited several monthly meetings and Friends schools in the Northeast, talking about Bayard's life and work, and his relevance to today's world. Although he is principally known for his work in the African-American civil rights movement, his ideas about poverty, police/community relations, and LGBT issues continue to be relevant today.

Helen Garay Toppins, Associate Secretary

My job, one that I truly love, continues to be a challenging balancing act. There is a continuous push-pull between my administrative duties and my desire to be get out into the field more.

My administrative duties seem to grow by leaps and bounds. I supervise the Yearly Meeting's administrative associate and communications director; provide staff support for the Yearly Meeting general secretary, clerk, treasurers, section clerks, and committee clerks; process payment vouchers; proofread *Spark* and *InfoShare*; compile the committee section of the *Yearbook*; serve as the registrar for our Summer Sessions held at Silver Bay; respond to seekers who contact the yearly meeting office; and respond to queries from the general public. I read every issue of every monthly meeting newsletter and share their contents with yearly meeting staff, officers, committees and Friends, as needed.

My field work encompasses worshipping behind prison walls.

Some of the most gathered worship that I experienced this past year has been with our Quaker prison worship groups. I participated in planning and facilitating a retreat for small meetings and worship groups held at Powell House. I helped plan and facilitate a public event held at 15th Street Meeting. I visited monthly meetings and worship groups. I would love to get out into the field more and visit even more monthly meetings and worship groups. What I love more than anything is advancement and outreach. I want to organize more public events for Friends.

I would be remiss if I ended my report without acknowledging all of the help and support that I receive from my staff colleagues and from countless NYYM volunteers.

Records Committee

Friends Historical Library (FHL) reports that 11 meetings have deposited records between 2011 and 2014. Additionally, records were deposited by the yearly meeting office and one yearly meeting committee. Other older records have been acquired through purchase or donation.

We encourage the deposit of new records. Two-year (or longer) compilations may be sent to Friends Historical Library for storage, preservation and access. They are also able to accept electronic records. They have specific standards for electronic records deposits. We can get details if meetings are interested. Please be aware that the Quaker Cloud does not have an automatic transfer of records to FHL; plan to transfer any records stored there to FHL separately.

We had a conversation this year with Ancestry.com. They are very interested in our records as an addition to the other Quaker collections that they have added in the last year. This conversation is still in its early phases, but we would be interested in Friends responses to the possibility of our older records (perhaps up to 70 years ago) being in Ancestry.com.

Our records are our stories; our journey with God/Light/Spirit as we move forward together. Records are fragile and easily lost. We have the tools to care for them—please use them.

Bridget Bower, clerk

Sessions Committee

320 Years, One Faith.

Three hundred and twenty years ago, New York Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends was born, and George Fox asked that we gather each year to know one another. Sessions Committee came along at some point to take care of the “nuts and bolts” of such gatherings, and over the course of 2014, we met three times. The basics of those sessions are: Spring Sessions, held in Rochester NY, brought together 130 participants, including four young Friends and four little ones; Summer Sessions, held at Silver Bay Association, was attended by approximately 500 people, 125 who were part of Junior Yearly Meeting; and Fall Sessions in New York City drew the most participants in the last twenty years—198 people attended, including 26 young Friends and two little ones! But our gatherings are more than numbers and nuts-n-bolts—we gather in worship, in sunshine, in hugs, and in unity.

We would like to especially thank again our host regions and committees who have so ably created youth programs for our Spring and Fall Sessions. To think that only a few short years ago, there was nothing offered for our young friends, and now, each Session brings a new and amazingly crafted program for all ages. This work is by definition “tricky,” since attendance is as unpredictable as the weather that sometimes affects our sessions, but the people who come to work with our youth do so with a joy and dedication that is truly inspiring.

60 Years, One Meeting.

In 1955, the two factions of the Yearly Meeting came together and worked to rejoin into one New York Yearly Meeting. Since that year, our Summer Sessions have been held at Silver Bay Association. However, Sessions Committee is actively seeking a more central and possibly more reasonably priced location to meet. So far, the venues contacted are either unable to take on another large conference in the summer, unable to accommodate the number of participants NYYM Summer Sessions typically garners, or do not meet our requirement of affordability. Still, we persevere. If you know of a location we should query, please contact our clerk!

Today, One Vision.

Like most NYYM committees, we have only just begun to plumb the depths of the approved Leadings and Priorities, discovering how they affect and focus our work, but as George Fox directed us all, gathering together to know one another and see each other's faces can only serve to strengthen our Faith, our meetings, and our witness to the world. Sessions Committee chose this year's theme in support of the Leadings and Priorities, and we will continue to do so over the coming years. We may be concerned with the nuts and bolts, but we are Friends first, and our work means nothing without your presence and the guidance of the Divine, which we seek always to discern.

Roseann Press, clerk

Supervisory Committee for the General Secretary

The Supervisory Committee for the general secretary (SCGS) has met regularly this year, both in person and by teleconference. The committee typically meets with the general secretary for a period of time, followed by an executive session without the general secretary present. In addition, a designated member of the committee is responsible for checking in with the general secretary on a monthly basis (by phone), for any updates that may be important.

The SCGS carries out a range of supervisory activities, providing guidance and support to the general secretary and evaluating his performance. As part of the evaluation process, we ask the general secretary for a self-evaluation. We invite monthly meeting and yearly meeting committee clerks to share observations about their interactions with the general secretary throughout the year.

In the late fall, the committee reaches out formally to monthly meetings and to committee clerks for observations, affirmations and concerns regarding the general secretary's work, and then compiles and synthesizes those responses into a draft document that is shared with the general secretary. The document is compared with the priorities and work plan that have been jointly developed by the committee and the general

secretary working in collaboration, and a final draft is written and approved. The SCGS keeps this document on file and shares it with the clerk of the Personnel Committee, who maintains the Yearly Meeting’s personnel files.

The priorities and work plan for the new year grow from the past year’s evaluation document, and from the stated priorities of the Yearly Meeting. The committee regularly supports the general secretary in evaluating how best to prioritize his work in line with the annual objectives and in view of emerging demands on his time.

Spee Braun, clerk

Trustees, Lindley Murray Fund

At our annual meeting early this year, the Trustees considered fourteen applications for awards from the Fund’s 2014 income. Although some of the projects were new, all of the applying organizations had received awards in previous years. With the applications, we also considered letters of thanks for the prior year’s awards and accounts of how last year’s grant was used. Each application was evaluated with respect to how it fit the mission of the Lindley Murray Fund (see last year’s report and the Yearly Meeting *Handbook*).

The amounts listed below were awarded to projects or ongoing work of the following thirteen organizations:

American Friends Service Committee	2,800
Alternatives to Violence Project-NY	1,450
Amerinda	1,500
Creative Response to Conflict	1,000
Friends Committee on Nat’l Legislation	2,000
Friends General Conference	3,900
<i>Friends Journal</i>	2,700
Indian Affairs Committee	1,450
Long Island Council of Churches	1,800
Oakwood Friends School	6,000
Powell House	2,50
Redemption Center	1,000
Youth Service Opportunities Program	<u>1,775</u>
	\$ 29,925

The total was \$850 less than was available for disbursement last year. An additional disbursement of \$2,426 was made to the NY Female Association (of New York Quarterly Meeting), in accord with the arrangement that 7.5% of the Fund's income is allocated to the Association.

At our regular annual meeting and at a subsequent special gathering Trustees discussed how we might change the format of our work. Further research is needed regarding the terms of the original trust and its amendments. With proper legal process we believe the "trustees" could become committee members for the disbursement of funds, and that the fund might even be consolidated with a simplified grouping of other NYYM endowment funds.

Mary Hannon Williams, treasurer of the NYYM Trustees, met with those of us who could attend the special meeting on March 29. For now we will continue receiving applications and discerning the best use of funds, but we are open to the possibility of changing our role if there is consolidation or realignment of endowment funds as Mary Williams analyzes the ways that NYYM supports causes in complementary or overlapping ways. This is a long range project.

Applications for next year's awards are due by December 15, 2015.

John Cooley, convener

NYYM Trustees

The Yearly Meeting Trustees handle all business matters relating to property transactions, including specific management of bequests and deeds of trusts received by the Yearly Meeting in a fiduciary capacity. The Yearly Meeting Trustees manage the assets of several trust funds which, for the most part, consist of a number of bequests or gifts made to the Yearly Meeting over the past 300 years.

The Trustees met several times since Summer Sessions 2014. We approved new Corporation By-Laws and Financial Guidelines, initiated more stringent grantee accountability requirements, and are working on other items needed for the combined audit.

The Trustees' Financial Report to the Yearly Meeting is posted to the Yearly Meeting's website quarterly and the complete list of Trusts with short descriptions may also be found there.

We continue to discuss how we can be more transparent and use the Funds in our care more efficiently and in support of Yearly Meeting priorities.

*Linda S. Houser, clerk (President)
New York Yearly Meeting Trustees*

NYYM Trustees Financial Report

Regularly Distributed Funds	YE 2014 Value	2014 Distribution
NYYM Operating Budget		
Cheeseman Memorial	\$18,048	\$707.52
Helene E. Kenmore	28,614	1,121.69
Stamford-Greenwich	97,808	3,682.46
Treasurer's	240,908	9,443.70
<i>Total</i>	\$385,378	\$14,955.37
Advancement Committee Funds		
Martin Leach	72,193	2,830.00
Women's	10,829	424.52
<i>Total</i>	\$83,022	\$3,254.52
Indian Affairs (sub-fund in Sharing Fund)		
Enzo Ferrante	12,431	487.32
Levinus Painter Scholarship	8,169	320.22
Mae D. Barton	70,821	2,776.22
<i>Total</i>	\$91,421	\$3,583.76
Mosher Committee		
Henry H. Mosher	\$94,573	\$3,707.32
World Ministries (sub-fund in Sharing Fund)		
Agnes Lawrence	\$209,360	8,207.00
Dikran B. Donchian Mission	108,290	4,245.00
Ella J. Chapman	50,535	1,981.00
Ellen Collins Missionary	72,193	2,830.00
Ellen L. Congdon	28,877	1,132.00
Loder Chapel	7,219	283.00
Mary F. Thomas	12,995	509.40
Smyrna Meeting	5,198	203.76
Sutton-Haviland	3,610	141.52
<i>Total</i>	\$498,277	\$19,532.68

Fund	YE 2014 Value	2014 Distribution
Powell House		
Ella L. Burdge	\$60,173	\$2,358.79
Emma Cheeseman Bruns	128,215	5,026.08
Maria W. Barton	93,273	3,656.36
<i>Total</i>	\$281,661	\$11,041.23
Friends Historical Library		
Irving B. Rymph	\$140,416	\$5,504.34
John B. Cox Memorial	24,560	962.77
<i>Total</i>	\$164,976	\$6,467.11
Manasquan Monthly Meeting		
Ella J. Burdge	\$60,173	\$2,358.79
Oakwood Scholarship		
Dikran B. Donchian	\$36,097	\$1,415.00
Educational	178,317	6,990.12
George H. Carpenter	165,972	6,506.18
Henry Y. Ostrander	14,005	549.04
High Point	87,498	3,429.98
Lotta Merrill Scholarship	16,388	642.42
Simeon Loder	83,022	3,254.52
<i>Total</i>	\$581,299	\$22,787.24
Oakwood Administrative		
Edward B. Underhill	\$3,610	\$141.52
Ellen Collins	108,290	4,245.00
Grace & Freeman Shepherd	71,471	2,801.72
John G. Lane	721,931	28,300.00
Loder-Clark	36,097	1,415.00
Oakwood Endowment	72,193	2,830.00
Oakwood Biblical	5,775	226.40
Skaneateles	28,877	1,132.00
Slocum Howland	72,193	2,830.00
<i>Total</i>	\$1,120,437	\$43,921.64
Friends Foundation for the Aging		
Margaret B. Dietrich	\$122,151	\$4,788.36

Fund	YE 2014 Value	2014 Distribution
Nine Partners Quarterly Meeting		
Albert B. Merritt	\$6,714	\$263.18
Highland Mills	6,425	251.86
Milton Meeting	27,289	1,069.76
Magill	2,738	107.35
<i>Total</i>	<u>\$43,166</u>	<u>\$1,692.15</u>
Total Regularly Distributed	\$3,526,535	\$138,090.17

DIVIDENDS HELD PENDING REQUESTS (Retained Income Funds)

Fund	YE 2014 Value	2014 Distribution	Retained Income
Donor Restricted Requested by Named Approvers			
Brinkerhoff	\$17,615	\$1,250.00	\$210.89
Lindley Murray	831,197	33,275.00	32,352.28
Lockport	20,311	1,250.00	715.10
Mahlon York	243,074	9,975.00	7,128.82
Sharing Endowment	543,237	10,000.00	17,591.24
Stevens	153,187	6,000.00	13,505.82
Sufferings	23,732	0.00	11,288.40
Total Named Approvers	<u>\$1,832,354</u>	<u>\$61,750.00</u>	<u>\$82,792.56</u>
Donor Restricted Approved by Trustees			
Caleb Sutton	\$8,013	\$1,250.00	\$1,308.82
Edward Underhill-Yorktown	25,048	0.00	4,066.24
Jesse P. Haines	40,153	5,000.00	3,891.26
Monkton Ridge	43,309	748.00	14,123.02
Morris Cemetery	14,816	0.00	18,605.52
Nathaniel Smith	15,882	0.00	777.15
Sophia M. Beers	6,496	0.00	884.89
Total Trustee Approved	<u>\$153,718</u>	<u>\$6,998.00</u>	<u>\$43,656.91</u>

Fund	YE 2014 Value	2014 Distribution	Retained Income
Approved by Trustees with No Donor Restrictions			
General Fund	\$14,532	\$0.00	\$5,905.68
Florence Stevens	144,709	0.00	20,871.86
<i>Total Unrestricted</i>	\$159,241	\$0.00	\$26,777.55
Total Retained Income	\$2,145,313	\$68,748.00	\$153,227.01
TOTAL NYYM FUNDS	\$5,671,848	\$17,882.35	

Trust Expense	2014 Disbursed	Ending Balance
Trustee Administration	\$17,882.35	6,504.12

NURTURE SECTION

Nurture Coordinating Committee

The Youth Committee (in collaboration with the Powell House Youth Program Directors) this year has made progress in engaging Yearly Meeting Friends of all ages in conversations and hands-on practice around creating multi-generational faith communities. The Youth Weekend in the fall of 2014 was well attended and brought new ideas. In March, the Youth Institute was able to train some Friends in Faith & Play (a storytelling First Day School practice) and offered workshops on a number of topics of interest to those working with youth and others to create strong spiritually supportive meeting communities. A Nurture weekend planned for the fall of 2015 will continue the focus on integrating children into the spiritual life of the meeting.

Programming to encourage youth to participate in Spring and Fall Sessions needs more attention. We plan to work with Youth Committee, JYM Committee, yearly meeting leadership, and Sessions Committee to strengthen the planning so as to increase the relevance of the activities and therefore attendance.

At Summer Sessions 2014 drug and alcohol abuse was significantly reduced. It seems that JYMers and young adults took responsibility for making this happen. We will work to continue this trend.

The Resource Library is now under the care of Bulls Head-Oswego Meeting, and is being catalogued. Over the coming year, NCC will be working to make this resource more accessible to monthly meetings.

By the time this report is published, NCC will have responded to a minute from Brooklyn Meeting asking for further consideration of NYYM's support of FUM while the personnel policy discriminating against non-celibate LGBT volunteers and staff remains in place. While NCC is in sympathy with the concern, we feel that Brooklyn would need to bring their minute to New York Quarterly Meeting for further seasoning.

It has been determined that the financial resources in the Young Friends In Residence (YFIR) Fund came largely from

New York Yearly Meeting, and NCC has let the NYYM Treasurer know that, because no similar program is contemplated in the near future, these funds should revert back to NYYM.

The NCC web page still needs work—another challenge for the coming year!

Deborah Wood, clerk

Committee on Aging Concerns

The main function of the Committee on Aging Concerns is to oversee and support the ARCH program, and the report by the ARCH staff on page 106 describes well their very good work.

To perform its important role, the Committee meets regularly at Summer, Fall, and Spring Sessions, in a 24-hour retreat every September, and on conference calls at least twice between Sessions. Meanwhile each staff member has had a Committee liaison who provides regular support.

Committee members, like the staff members, are eyes and ears of the ARCH program, sending feedback from their monthly and regional meetings and providing insights from other NYYM committees and from personal and professional experiences.

As ARCH moves through a significant change in the way the staff is structured and functions, our Committee will work closely with the NYYM's Personnel Committee to make sure ARCH staff policies are consistent with those applying to all NYYM staff and that appropriate and effective methods for support and evaluation are in place.

Our Committee helps shape and review ARCH's annual grant request to the Friends Foundation for the Aging and is now also working closely with the general secretary, the Development Committee, and other relevant NYYM entities to identify funds beyond the annual grant from Friends Foundation for the Aging. We see our efforts as a way to assist—and in no way compete with—other NYYM development efforts.

Meanwhile Committee members continue to attend ARCH workshops as elders or active participants, recommend ARCH services to their meetings, and apply ARCH practices as they are led.

Dare Thompson, clerk

Epistle Committee

During 2014 Summer Sessions the Epistle Committee prepared the outgoing Epistle from New York Yearly Meeting to Friends everywhere.

The Committee also selected Epistles from among those received from other yearly meetings to be read at 2014 Fall Sessions and 2015 Summer Sessions.

The main task of the Committee is to prepare the outgoing Epistle. The work is done during Summer Sessions, beginning on the third day and focusing on the fourth and fifth days when the Epistle is presented, revised, and approved. Those on the Committee should enjoy the process of corporate composition and have gifts for discerning the state of the meeting and putting it into a few well-seasoned words. Patience and humility are also required, but the joy and spiritual intensity of the work, and the satisfaction of accomplishment, are ample rewards.

Elizabeth Gordon, Colleen Hardiman, Kate Moss

Friends General Conference representatives

No report submitted

Friends United Meeting Representatives

Service on the FUM General Board has changed markedly over the past few years. Meetings used to be tense, fraught, and guarded. They are now open, worshipful, and often light hearted. The board works hard to assist FUM staff in leading a large organization serving Friends on a global scale. FUM is actively supporting Friends ministries in East Africa, Palestine, Cuba, and Belize. The North American board now meets twice a year, instead of the previous three times. Most of those meetings are in Richmond, Indiana. However, next June we will meet in Cuba for the first time, and about every three years, we meet in East Africa with the African board.

During the day of discernment following the 40 Days of Prayer practice, there was a loud and clear call for FUM to fully support a renewed North American ministry. FUM's North American Ministries committee had already been sponsoring workshops across this continent, focused on nurturing monthly

meetings and churches. That work continues, and the board has also taken up the challenge of envisioning what might constitute a North American ministry which gives meaningful support to the life of the Spirit across FUM's diverse constituency. We have begun that discernment with remarkable candor and faithfulness.

FUM has also been engaged in a capital campaign to try to create a sustainable financial base and organizational structure to do the work we are called to do. We have already raised \$777,000 of the \$3,000,000 goal. Many of the ministerial accounts of various international field staff which were in substantial arrears have now been paid off, and in general, the financial position of the organization is very healthy.

The position of Kenyan National Friends Education Secretary, held by Zaddok Malesi, to which NYYM gave meaningful support, had to be laid down due to lack of funds. Most of these funds had come from North America and Europe. But now, Kenyan yearly meetings and schools have made a commitment to revive the position, and are raising the funds to do so. Zaddok had been the point person for the implementation of the peace curriculum in high schools across Kenya. It is hoped that that work may now continue.

FUM is a global organization, dealing with substantial economic, cultural, and theological differences across our diverse constituencies. As we continue to move farther and farther from the colonial model of being in relationship across such boundaries, we wrestle with what it really means to be a global organization living out our testimony of equality. It is a breathtaking opportunity to try to live out the Blessed Community, the "Kingdom of God," here on earth. As such, it is both a challenge and a joy to be a part of that experiment.

*In Service, Beverly Archibald, Margaret Mulindi,
Christopher Sammond*

Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC) Committee

“The purpose of the Friends World Committee for Consultation is to encourage fellowship *among all the branches of the Religious Society of Friends.*”

It is a time of excitement for Friends involved with Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC) as we explore and experience our physical and spiritual connections to other branches of Quakers.

In the summer of 2014, Isabella Aguirre (Purchase Meeting) represented New York Yearly Meeting on the month-long Quaker Youth Pilgrimage visiting Evangelical Friends communities in Peru and Bolivia. The 26 pilgrims were from Bolivia, Cuba, Guatemala, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Mexico, Peru, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The bilingual leaders were from Bolivia, Canada, and the United Kingdom. Within their own group, their epistle tells how they made real the purpose of FWCC: The pilgrimage makes us understand that it is God’s purpose that we are not alone. Whether our worship is programmed for a whole morning one day a week, or an unprogrammed spiritual moment that lets the silence work and enables us to listen to the voice of God or sometimes a semi-programmed union of the two, we are united in faith to praise God.

The 2015 FWCC-Section of the Americas was held in March near Mexico City. It is no more difficult for our representatives to travel there than to the west coast and it is easier for Friends from Central and South America to obtain visas. NYYM was represented by Sylke Jackson, Gloria Thompson and Emily Provance. The report from that gathering says: “Friends from 31 yearly meetings across five branches were woven together at the Meeting of FWCC’s Americas Section. . . . Friends worshiped in multiple styles, shared experiences and prayer in small, diverse home groups, heard reports on FWCC work in the last two years, and approved sweeping programmatic changes during bilingual business to prepare FWCC for the years ahead, in accordance with the new strategic plan for 2015-2020: Weaving the Tapestry.”

Committee members have made personal connections with Friends in Cuba and the Casa de Los Amigos in Mexico City that we would like to deepen and encourage inter-visitation. NYYM reps also made connections with El Salvador Yearly Meeting (Evangelical) and would encourage anyone interested in sojourning among Central American Friends to contact the committee to explore the possibilities. Gloria Thompson continues serving as the Northeast Region co-clerk for FWCC and is named to the Section of the Americas executive committee.

In 2016, the FWCC will have a world-wide International Representatives Meeting in Peru. NYYM will name four representatives to this gathering (held every four years now). In keeping with FWCC's theme of developing leadership, we plan for two of our representatives to be under 35 and two to be first time attenders at a world-wide gathering.

Michael Clark, clerk

Junior Yearly Meeting Committee

The Junior Yearly Meeting (JYM) Committee, is responsible for Junior Yearly Meeting, the program for Friends under the age of 18 attending Summer Sessions. The JYM coordinators in 2014, Dawn Pozzi and Melanie Claire Mallison, organized a spirit-filled program for 125 youth with the remarkable assistance of 23 volunteers.

The day-to-day work at Silver Bay (and the planning ahead time) is done by coordinators appointed by the committee and the 20-30 adults they recruit who volunteer to help. JYM youth and adult facilitators actively participated in many ways in Summer Sessions in 2014. As they have done for decades, they helped organize and put on events to raise money—\$7,287, for the Sharing Fund and Powell House. The high school group was led by teenage clerks, who now routinely attend a clerking workshop in the winter and plan their session at the JYM planning weekend in the spring. The high school students started their morning in worship sharing groups with the adults.

JYM's 2014 summer session included some changes, with fewer volunteers for each age group, some increased focus on interaction with the greater summer session community, and continued focus on developing Quaker process within the youth

sessions. The recent practice of JYM joining the entire NYYM at the end of morning session, which we had folded into our practices after some difficulty over several years, was stopped in 2014. We would like to know if this practice will be brought back. A new practice was started, in which Sylke Jackson acted as liaison between the business meeting and JYM groups; each day, she reported to the older groups the events of the business meeting and the Summer Session community. This was so well received that we added the position to the JYM committee, with Sylke filling that role.

In the JYM committee meetings there is ongoing dialogue and listening about the impact of the program, integration of spirit and Quaker themes, and alcohol and drug use. We have added a financial clerk position to our committee, thankfully filled by Margie Morgan-Davie, to respond to a request from Nurture Committee to have a process and oversight in place to anticipate and account for expenditures. We talk about how to structure age groups and recruit volunteers. There is some sense that Friends want to continue spirit-led change of JYM in some ways.

*Aldona Januszkiewicz (co-clerk) &
Emily Provance (recording clerk)*

Oakwood Friends School

We are embarking on a period of transition at Oakwood Friends School, and it is in that spirit that we write this report. Since its founding in 1796, Oakwood has undertaken two major campus moves, survived at least two significant fires, endured multiple wars, all while educating and graduating thousands of students. Over the span of more than two centuries, Oakwood has been guided by many leaders, at the administrative level and within the Board of Managers. Yet throughout its history, the school has remained firmly committed to its founding values of inclusive community and rigorous education grounded in the life of the spirit.

Last fall, Peter Baily shared with us his plans to conclude his tenure as Head of School, effective this summer. In August, he will be called to new work in the wider realm of independent education, as executive director of the association of indepen-

dent schools of Maryland and Washington, DC. Responding to this news, the Board of Managers appointed Chad Cianfrani to serve as interim head during the 2015-16 academic year. Simultaneously, the Board formed a search committee to select a new permanent head, who will take office in the summer of 2016. Chad Cianfrani has served Oakwood ably for the past ten years, as teacher, coach, dorm parent, advisor, and, most recently, as Assistant Head for Operations and Technology.

In his message to the school community last fall, Peter wrote, “In the fifteen years that I have spent at Oakwood, I have been privileged to work with curious, kind, engaging and witty students, utterly dedicated and skilled colleagues, and a Board of Managers that has been unfailingly wise, supportive, and hard-working. Our alumni around the country and around the world have confirmed for me again and again the life-changing power that Oakwood has had, generation after generation. In the passage of these years, we have admitted hundreds of new students, sent hundreds of graduates off to college and to the wider world, and our community has been blessed at every turn by the rich diversity that our students and their families have brought to us. Our loyal alumni, parents, friends, and Friends have contributed significant resources to the annual operating budget, to fund campus enhancements, and to support major renovation projects. New York Yearly Meeting has provided a tangible link to our Quaker heritage and our spiritual core. Our students and faculty have distinguished themselves in extraordinary ways, in the arts, on the athletic field, and in the classroom and laboratory. Their commitment to serve others is a part of the fabric of their lives. We have celebrated faculty weddings and we have welcomed thirty-five faculty babies into our community. We have experienced profound moments of grief together, and I will always be grateful that we were in Oakwood’s meeting room, in extended worship, as the events of 9/11 tragically unfolded. Just as we have supported one another in times of sadness, we have felt times of unfettered joy, and we have laughed together, a lot.”

As we conclude this school year, we have completed several important campus renovation projects, funded by generous friends and alumni of the school. The first floor of the

Main Building, circa 1924, has been transformed into a light, energy-efficient, accessible space for three art studios, a student lounge, and several offices. On the north façade, we have added an outdoor porch, patio, and garden, adjoining a grassy quad that's perfect for casual outdoor games. We re-designed the west wing of Lane Auditorium, built in 1920, and created a gracious theater lobby and an airy new music room above it. Finally, this summer, we are beginning work on an array of solar panels that will ultimately provide the bulk of our year-round electrical needs.

As we move through this period of exciting transition and growth, we are especially mindful of all of you who support Oakwood Friends School, however far you may be from the campus. None of the school's work could be done without those who have helped to sustain and nurture this institution over the years. Alumni, members of the Board of Managers, parents, faculty, staff, administrators, friends of the school and Friends in New York Yearly Meeting and beyond, all work together to make this school an exceptional place for young people to learn and to form the values that will guide them on the varied paths of their lives. Thank you for holding us in the Light.

Peter F. Baily, Head of School

Libby Levinson Moroff '54, President, Board of Managers

Elsie K. Powell House, Inc.

Powell House is the retreat and conference center of New York Yearly Meeting. Its mission is to foster the spiritual growth of Friends and others and to strengthen the application of Friends testimonies in the world.

In 2014-2015, Powell House continued its work in support of its mission by offering youth and adult programming; providing space for NYYM activities such as JYM Planning, ARCH Visitor Training, and Coordinating Committee meetings; providing support to a Meeting for Discernment; and hosting eight monthly meeting retreats and seven Friends school retreats. In March 2015, Powell House hosted the first Youth Institute, a joint venture between the NYYM Youth Committee and the Powell House Youth Directors, designed to broaden and deepen connections among Friends and uplift a holistic, multigener-

ational approach to youth programming. The Powell House property and buildings are in good shape and withstood a cold, snowy winter with minimal need for repairs. Financially, the year ended solidly in the black.

In 2014-2015, Powell House reviewed its programming in light of the NYYM Statement of Leadings and Priorities and found continuing relevance in old favorites—Arthur Larrabee’s clerking Weekend; Creativity and Spirituality, which for the third year filled both houses with a joyful, multigenerational gathering; a silent retreat—as well as new weekends including Holding the Meeting, Pastoral Care, and The Sacred Journey. The intergenerational Spring and Fall Work Weekends, Messiah Sing, and New Year’s were full and lively. In all, total attendance at Powell House adult and intergenerational programs was 710 adults and 138 children, a 30% increase over the previous year. 95% of the attenders were from NYYM, with many of the rest coming from Philadelphia Yearly Meeting and New England Yearly Meeting.

Powell House’s Youth Program served 266 youth and adults, including attenders coming from 29 different monthly meetings in NYYM. On average, participants attended three weekends during the year. The Youth Program expanded this year by sending a contingent of high school students to the Climate March in New York City and adding a weekend for senior high school students and young adults, designed to help bridge the transition to adulthood. This summer, a service trip to El Salvador is planned.

The Powell House Committee has started the process of hiring a new Executive Director. After twenty-two years of faithful service, Ann Davidson will be retiring in June 2016. Applications for the position are being solicited and a Search Committee has been formed, jointly comprised of members of the Powell House Committee and the larger NYYM community. In addition, the Powell House Committee continues its stewardship of the buildings and grounds by developing a list of necessary capital projects and strategizing how to fund them.

Powell House continues to seek the best way forward in support of its mission to foster the spiritual growth of Friends and others and to strengthen the application of Friends testi-

monies in the world. In 2014-2015, we were heartened by the NYYM community's response to these efforts, including the increase in financial support from NYYM and the increased attendance at adult and youth weekends. In January 2015, the NYYM general secretary brought the Powell House Committee a message he had received over the course of the night before. The message voiced support and love, and encouraged us to more deeply explore the possibilities inherent in the treasure that is Powell House. At this time of transition, Powell House is in a secure place with stable finances and meaningful programming. The challenge going forward will be to explore without fear the next stage of our existence, in order to ensure that Powell House continues to provide those who come here opportunities for transformation and a place to deepen their relationship to Spirit and to one another.

Elizabeth K. Powers, President of the Corporation

Powell House Financial Report, 2014

**Statement of Financial Position
As of March 31, 2015 and 2014**

	March 31, 2015 (unaudited)	March 31, 2014 (audited)
ASSETS		
Current Assets		
Bank Accounts/Investments	\$ 1,149,269	\$ 1,040,513
Accounts Receivable	(29,134)	1,009
Other Current Assets	<u>(2,324)</u>	<u>82</u>
Total Current Assets	1,117,811	1,041,604
Fixed Assets	<u>1,718,108</u>	<u>956,843</u>
Total Assets	\$ 2,835,919	\$ 1,998,447
LIABILITIES AND EQUITY		
Current Liabilities		
Accounts Payable	\$ 3,156	\$ 6,056
Other Current Liabilities	<u>(362)</u>	<u>22,675</u>
Total Current Liabilities	2,794	28,731
Total Liabilities	\$ 2,794	\$ 28,731

	March 31, 2015 (unaudited)	March 31, 2014 (audited)
Total Net Assets	\$ 2,833,125	\$ 1,969,716
Total Liabilities & Equity	\$ 2,835,919	\$ 1,998,447

LIABILITIES AND EQUITY

Current Liabilities		
Accounts Payable	\$ 3,156	\$ 6,056
Other Current Liabilities	(362)	<u>22,675</u>
Total Current Liabilities	2,794	28,731
Total Liabilities	2,794	28,731
Total Net Assets	\$ 2,833,125	\$ 1,969,716
Total Liabilities & Equity	\$ 2,835,919	\$ 1,998,447

Statement of Activities For the years ending March 31, 2015 and 2014

	March 31, 2015 (unaudited)	March 31, 2014 (audited)
INCOME		
Contributions	\$ 66,545	\$ 76,075
Guest fees	309,929	286,305
Investment income	29,791	18,817
New York Yearly Meeting	65,240	70,319
Rental income	7,200	3,320
Other revenue	<u>996</u>	<u>3,345</u>
Total income	\$ 479,701	\$ 458,181
EXPENSES		
Administration & Office Expenses	\$ 29,149	\$ 33,391
Adult & Youth Program Direct Costs	20,534	18,830
Annuities	0	730
Buildings & Grounds	69,311	78,075
Fundraising	3,146	3,367
Housekeeping & Food	42,017	31,569
Personnel	291,745	283,253
Total Cash Expenses	\$ 455,902	\$ 449,215
NET CASH INCOME	\$ 23,789	\$ 8,966

Young Adult Concerns Committee

The Young Adult Concerns Committee has met (electronically) fairly regularly over the past year on a bi-weekly schedule such that each month one meeting focuses on committee business and the second on spiritual nurture.

Though we enjoy and benefit from our time together, the committee as a whole has lacked energy, as evidenced in no one stepping up to be clerk or recording clerk, and our not organizing any formal gathering of the committee outside of YM sessions and events. Nevertheless we feel we have contributed as Young Friends to the energy of various initiatives such as mini-retreats around the yearly meeting and our contribution to the “Spirit Leading our Work” multi-committee retreat weekend. These opportunities have enabled us to expand our connections with one another, with YAF, and with the larger body of Friends in New York. For this, we are grateful.

We have missed Gabi’s presence during her maternity and subsequent leaves.

Our challenge may be similar to that of the larger Yearly Meeting: we have a deep sense of the value of Friends and Quakerism in our lives, and yet the business and tasks of day-to-day life make it difficult to participate more fully in a corporate spiritual practice.

Alanna Badgley, co-clerk

Young Friends in Residence Committee

No report submitted.

Youth Committee

The Youth Committee continued working on its charges to:

- facilitate communication and exchange of resources and information among youth, youth workers, and the committees and groups with a concern for youth within New York Yearly Meeting;
- support Spirit-led, intergenerational youth work in monthly meetings and worship groups, regional meetings, and Yearly Meeting;

- articulate to the Yearly Meeting as a whole the comprehensive needs and goals concerning youth.

The Youth Committee met with representatives of the Yearly Meeting Personnel Committee at 2014 fall sessions and prior to 2015 spring sessions to provide input on the proposed youth field secretary position. If that position is funded, the Youth Committee looks forward to nurturing a close collaboration between the youth field secretary, the Powell House programs (family and youth), JYM, the young adult field secretary, and the Youth Committee itself as they all work together to support local meetings and to connect families with children to other families, to local meetings, and to the wider Quaker community.

The Powell House youth directors worked closely with the Youth Committee to hold the first Youth Institute in March 2015. The objectives of the institute were to offer take-home skills, broaden and deepen connections among Friends, and to uplift a holistic, multigenerational approach to youth programming. These were joyously and wonderfully met by 40 people from 22 monthly meetings of New York, New England, and Philadelphia Yearly Meetings. A summary report of that first institute is included as part of this report (on the next page).

Moving forward, the Youth Committee offers to coordinate Youth Institutes in other regions of the yearly meeting. We intend to bring together people interested in creating multigenerational meetings that joyfully include and call to friends of all ages. While some workshops could be replicated, each Institute will be different in structure and content, based on the needs and interests of that region and the available facilitators. The goal is to draw out the collective wisdom and experiences in our yearly meeting and to support each other. The Committee looks forward to the proposed youth field secretary being an integral part of coordinating and promoting the Youth Institutes.

We encourage meetings to contact the Youth Committee if you would like to have a youth institute in your area.

Mark LaRiviere, clerk

Youth Institute Summary Report

March 27-29, 2015

Powell House Conference and Retreat Center

On March 27-29, the Youth Committee, in conjunction with the Powell House Youth Directors, held it's first Youth Institute. The objectives of the Institute were to offer take home-skills, to broaden and deepen connections among Friends, and to uplift a holistic, multigenerational approach to youth programming. These were joyously and wonderfully met over the intense day and a half we were together.

The Institute was intentionally held simultaneously with the Friends General Conference Faith and Play training workshop led by Melinda Bradley to make optimal use of the Powell House facilities and to allow for those working with youth to intermingle during meals and free times. Between the two programs there were 40 participants from 22 monthly meetings and three yearly meetings. Twenty-five percent of the participants were under 25 years old and about fifteen percent were mid-sixties and up. Thirty participants, including all of the younger friends, were in the Youth Institute.

Plenary sessions of the Youth Institute consisted of worship through community building activities and games intermingled with small group discussions. Friday evening, friends spoke of why they were Quakers, what they experienced in meeting for worship, and at its best, what they experienced in their faith community. They then shared why they wanted children to participate in Quaker meeting and what they hoped children would experience in worship and with their faith community. Saturday morning began by looking at what people need to be whole and then sharing what meetings were doing well for their children. Saturday evening we focused in self-selected small groups on four questions that arose during the day:

- How do you make the intergenerational activities (worship/religious education/gatherings) work?
- How can small rural meetings attract folks under 50 and young families? What kinds of outreach to the community can we do that would let folks know who we are and that we exist?
- Re-thinking our definition of good kids and bad kids. What

do they need from us? What can we learn from them?

- Following a review of the advices and queries around sexuality and teens in three different yearly meeting *Faith and Practices* this question arose: Do we encourage teens to explore transient but interesting and satisfying sexual encounters or do we encourage them to reserve sex for committed relationships?

We offered six 90-minute workshops during the day on Saturday:

- Creativity and Spirituality
- Spiritual Development in Youth
- Using Games in Spiritual Work
- Teens and Quakerism Today
- Exploring Sex and Gender Issues
- Service/Learning Projects: Identifying and Leading

The workshops were facilitated by Friends from around New York Yearly Meeting with significant experience in working with youth (or being youth). They were highly interactive and experiential, raising many good questions and forging strong bonds between participants. Additionally there were a number of resource lists and informational materials prepared and disseminated.

Sunday morning we looked at next steps specifically around future Youth Institutes. Participants completed a survey to identify potential topics, formats and locales. The Youth Committee will use this information to help design future events. See the Appendix for a list of suggested topics to delve into. We closed the Institute with a moving experimental worship session that morphed into traditional open worship.

Appendix: Suggested Topics for Further Consideration

From the March 27-29, 2015 Youth Institute

- Intergenerational Play
- Engaging the entire meeting in multigenerational religious education and worship
- Integrating children into worship

- Integrating older youth into committee work in a meaningful way
- Experimental worship
- Helping people of all ages explore and express their faith
- Attracting and keeping young folks and families.
- How to reach critical mass in First Day School
- Learning and Practicing the actual teaching of First Day School curriculum
- Creating engaging, exciting Quaker curriculum
- How to use art in spiritual education
- Incorporating the out-of-doors in youth work
- Fostering activism
- Sex and gender, sexuality and teens
- Good kids/bad kids, accepting different kinds of kids
- Thoughts about working with youth
- Quaker feminists and activists
- Quaker teens and current events
- Going off to college and finding other Quaker meetings
- Quaker Quest-type program for young adults
- Training on how to be a Quaker mentor to youth
- Coming of age process
- Quaker parenting
- Quaker nurture of kids in the modern world (sexuality, angst, social media, alcohol, violence in video games etc.)
- How to have mental health discussions with teens
- Spiritual growth in youth
- Growing joy together
- Safety issues
- Music, youth, and spirituality
- Youth discernment/conflict resolution
- Developing youth leadership skills

WITNESS SECTION

Witness Coordinating Committee

The Message

Silence, they say, is the voice of complicity.
But silence is impossible.
Silence screams.
Silence is a message,
just as doing nothing is an act.

Let who you are ring out & resonate
in every word & deed.
Yes, become who you are.
There's no sidestepping your own being
or your own responsibility.
What you do is who you are.
You are your own comeuppance.
You become your own message.
You are the message.

In the Spirit of Crazy Horse,
Leonard Peltier

In its minute on Leadings and Priorities, the Yearly Meeting approved the statement “We envision a Yearly Meeting that supports and amplifies our witness. Meetings and Friends look to the Yearly Meeting to be an active presence in the broader society for Friends’ faith, values, ministry and witness.” Witness Section is that part of the Yearly Meeting specifically charged with “the responsibility to be an active voice for Friends’ faith, values, ministry, and witness in the world, and to support Friends’ active witness.” During the year 2014, constituent committees of the Witness Section and the Witness Coordinating Committee as a whole have supported Friends’ witness in a number of ways.

A minute originally proposed by the Indian Affairs Committee calling for the release from prison of Leonard Peltier was brought forward by Witness Coordinating Committee (WCC) and approved by the body in November (minute 2014-11-15).

The coordinating committee has been working on a minute

in support of the Humane Alternatives to Long Term (HALT) Solitary Confinement Act, which would reform the use of solitary confinement in New York State and local correctional facilities. The minute was originally drafted by Morningside Meeting and endorsed by New York Quarterly Meeting; Witness Coordinating Committee approved bringing this minute to the body for approval. Because of needed wording revision, it was presented at Spring Sessions 2015 and was approved.

Another action supported by WCC and presented at Spring Sessions 2015 was a request that the Yearly Meeting sponsor the White Privilege Conference scheduled for 2016.

Witness Coordinating Committee approved a \$3,000 contribution to the conference from the coordinating committee, including \$1,500 pledged by the Black Concerns Committee. This was also approved by the body.

Another part of the Leadings and Priorities reads, “We envision a yearly meeting that is accountable and transparent... We envision a yearly meeting whose structure and operations are well understood by all Friends, and that is a faithful expression of the leadings of those Friends that make up the Yearly Meeting.” The Witness section is responsible for raising and distributing money for the Sharing Fund; in addition, some Witness committees are charged with distribution of funds arising as income from bequests. The finances of the Sharing Fund itself have not been entirely transparent, even to the members of the coordinating committee, and we have spent time and effort to understand the finances and to develop policy for their administration.

One portion of the Sharing Fund is set aside to support the witness of local meetings; this line is called the Witness Activities Fund (WAF). In 2014, the following grants were made from the WAF:

1. \$1615.34 to support travel to El Salvador by two AVP facilitators in support of the developing AVP network in that country.
1. \$2,000 to Brooklyn Friends Meeting to help support a Sharing the River of Life Teach-In on honoring Native treaties and protecting the Earth. It took place at Brooklyn Meeting on April 25-26, 2014 and was co-sponsored

by the Two-Row Wampum Renewal Campaign, Brooklyn Friends School, Brooklyn Friends Meeting, and others.

1. \$138.29 to Ithaca Meeting for their support of a “Roots of Injustice, Seeds of Change” workshop on June 20, to explore indigenous issues and concerns.
1. \$175 to Scarsdale Meeting to hold an AVP mini workshop in White Plains to introduce AVP to the wider community.
1. \$2,264 in support of a charter bus from Farmington-Scipio Regional Meeting to the People’s Climate March in New York City; renting the bus enabled members of that regional meeting to attend their gathering on Saturday, ride the bus overnight, and participate in the march on Sunday.
1. \$800 in support of a charter bus from Powell House to permit youth attending a conference the weekend of the Climate March to attend the march as a group.

All local meetings are encouraged to develop their own witness activities and, if funds are needed to help implement those activities, to apply to the Witness Activities Fund for support.

Another line recently added to the Sharing Fund budget is called “Witness to the World.” Its purpose is to increase the amounts our yearly meeting is able to contribute to non-Quaker organizations whose missions we support, such as the National Campaign for a Peace Tax Fund, the National Religious Campaign against Torture, and the New York and New Jersey Councils of Churches. It is also used to support such Quaker organizations as American Friends Service Committee, Bolivian Quaker Education Fund, Friends Peace Teams, Quaker Earth-care Witness, and William Penn House.

Mary Eagleson, clerk

Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP), Inc.

The Alternatives to Violence Project has been called the quint-essential Quaker outreach program. AVP workshops create a communal safe space for people to open to Spirit and conscience and that openness invites transformation that can lead to healing on all levels—physical, emotional, spiritual—in both the

individual and the community. AVP is based on the recognition that there is a Transforming Power (Spirit, God) that exists in us and can work through us. In workshops, we actively affirm the good in ourselves and others. Equality, integrity, and community are lived in workshops and form the foundation for exploring peaceful solutions to conflict. We practice active listening and seeking true consensus.

Through AVP, we bring Light and Love and Truth to ourselves and others, as well as whole communities that are often suffering from oppression and neglect. We are blessed to bear witness to transformation and healing in ourselves and in others.

At the advanced level, we are growing the breadth of special topic workshops that allow for more in-depth exploration of a particular focus. In 2014 we offered Level 2 workshops on domestic violence, reliability, accountability, parenting from inside prison, anger, forgiveness, re-entry from prison back to community, relationships, manly awareness, and trauma resiliency.

AVP New York's work in 2014

We held 172 full (18-28 hour) workshops in 2014. Two hundred nineteen incarcerated facilitators served either on-team or on support for at least one workshop and 110 outside (civilian) facilitators served on-team, up from 87 in 2013.

The number of hours our volunteers put in is impressive. Inside facilitators volunteered more than 17,050 hours and outside facilitators more than 8,440 hours to hold more than 3,910 in-session workshop hours with 2,096 participants in full (18 hour minimum) workshops and 662 participants in mini workshops.

We added a third Landing Strip in 2014. We now meet every Wednesday at the Redemption Center in Bed-Stuy, Brooklyn. We continue to meet twice monthly in Manhattan and monthly in Rochester to offer a welcoming hand to people coming home from prison as well as to people in the community who are interested in AVP.

Our Work in Prisons.

We held 156 full workshops inside fifteen prisons including two for hearing-impaired participants (Wende CF) and six in

Spanish (Sing Sing CF) with 1,902 participants. Three all-facilitator workshops focused on strengthening our facilitation skills and addressing conflict on-team. We trained 166 new apprentice facilitators inside the walls.

We are back at Elmira Prison! Due to personnel changes, DOCCS discontinued our program at Elmira in 2012. We were re-instated and in 2014 offered eight workshops and expect to grow to twelve this year.

Our annual Forum Day was held at Groveland this year and seventeen inside facilitators joined with thirteen outside facilitators from across the state. Inside facilitators planned the day and tried out some new exercises. Our spring newsletter featured Groveland facilitators.

Our Work in Communities.

We held 15 full (18 hour minimum) workshops with 151 adults and 31 youth and trained 26 adults and 16 youth apprentice facilitators. We also held six mini workshops with 93 youth and twelve mini workshops with 74 adults. These totals include workshops held in schools.

In Brooklyn, we held a basic workshop with seven, mostly homeless participants at the East New York Urban Project, and in Flushing (Queens) we held a basic workshop with nine participants representative of this ethnically-diverse community.

In the Catskill Area Council, we held one full Level 1 (basic) workshop at a Methodist church and a mini with Safe Against Violence volunteers.

In Rochester, we held a full, second-level special topic workshop on racial justice with thirteen participants.

In the Mid-Hudson Area Council, we held one training for facilitators (Level 3) workshop, graduating twelve apprentice facilitators and two, two-hour mini workshops with thirty-six participants.

In Buffalo, we held a full Level 1 workshop with thirteen participants from Buffalo Peacemakers Gang Intervention and Outreach and three, twelve-hour mini workshops with thirty-five participants.

The Westchester Area Council held six full workshops with seventy-four participants in Purchase, White Plains, Scarsdale, and Yonkers. Fourteen completed all three levels of workshop

and became apprentice facilitators. We also held a facilitator reunion day to hone our skills and share new exercises.

In Albany we held one Level 1 workshop with eight participants.

Our Work in Schools.

We held two full workshops and six mini (12-hour) workshops with youth; all were associated with schools.

At Oakwood Friends School, we held two Level 1 workshops with thirty-one high school students from the REAL Skills after-school program.

In Buffalo, the Niagara Frontier Area Council held a mini with twelve St. Joseph's Collegiate Institute sophomores.

At Franklin School we held five mini workshops—two Level 1, two Level 2, and one training for facilitators workshop with 81 student participants. Sixteen students completed all three levels. We also held four mini workshops with forty-five teachers, administrators, and staff at Franklin.

In Mount Vernon Schools we held twenty-four one-hour introductory sessions with approximately 480 middle and high school students.

Our Gratitude.

Many thanks to all who do this work and who make this work possible.

Shirley Way, Office Coordinator

*Alternatives to Violence Project, Inc. (AVP-NY)
Financial Report, 2014*

	<u>2014 actuals</u>
INCOME	
Direct public support	
Contributions—individual	\$ 18,936.90
Contributions—churches/meetings	1,635.00
Area Councils revenue	<u>180.00</u>
<i>Total direct public support</i>	\$ 20,751.90

2014 actuals

Indirect public support	
Contributions—NYYM	
Sharing Fund	\$ 5,509.78
Lindley Murray	<u>1,779.00</u>
<i>Total contributions—NYYM</i>	<u>7,288.78</u>
<i>Total indirect public support</i>	\$ 7,288.78
Program service revenue	
Manual sales	\$ 2,485.45
Annual meeting fees	1,612.00
Dividends & interest-securities	13,719.94
Miscellaneous revenue	<u>2,551.14</u>
<i>Total program service revenue</i>	<u>20,368.53</u>
Total income	\$ 48,409.21

EXPENSE

Program services	
Certificates & TP cards	\$ 1,235.00
Annual meeting expenses	1,612.00
Landing Strip—NYC	830.02
Landing Strip—Rochester	132.99
Manuals	1,446.72
Newsletter	2,521.59
Scholarships	1,446.00
Volunteer expenses	472.77
Workshop expenses	298.17
Fundraising expenses	1,329.43
Promotional materials	305.43
Retreats	<u>-4.80</u>
<i>Total program services</i>	<i>\$ 11,625.32</i>
Management & general expenses	
Payroll expenses	\$ 22,142.48
Payroll service fees	371.72
Investment fees	50.00
Supplies	432.58
Telephone & telecommunications	995.10
Website	300.00

	<u>2014 actuals</u>
Printing & copying	\$ 0.00
Postage	581.44
Postmaster	80.00
Bank Service Charges	10.00
Rent	1,500.50
Travel & meetings expenses	49.00
Insurance—Liability	667.79
Insurance—Workman’s Comp	268.00
Filing fees—NY State	75.00
Equipment purchases	<u>328.00</u>
<i>Total management & general expenses</i>	<u>\$ 27,811.61</u>
Total expense	<u>\$ 39,436.93</u>
Net ordinary income	\$ 8,972.28
Unrealized gain/loss	<u>-861.92</u>
Net income	<u>\$ 8,110.36</u>

American Friends Service Committee Northeast Region

The AFSC Northeast Region has programs from Maine to Pennsylvania that focus on Immigrant Rights, Healing Justice, Economic Justice, and Peace. All of the regional programs are directly connected to AFSC’s national efforts in support of these issues.

In New York and New Jersey, AFSC programs concentrate on Healing Justice and Immigrant Rights.

Healing Justice

In New York and New Jersey, the Healing Justice and Prison Watch programs empower individuals harmed by criminal justice policies and violence to heal and transform the conditions under which they live. The programs recognize and advance the worth and dignity of all people in and around the criminal justice system. Program staff disseminate public information on human rights abuses and healing opportunities; respond to needs of incarcerated people and those harmed by criminal acts; influence individual administrators and policy

makers; and provide expertise to coalitions, advocacy groups, community organizations, students, writers, and the media.

AFSC's Prison Watch Program, based in Newark, monitors human rights abuses in U.S. federal and state prisons. In particular, the program promotes national and international attention to the practices of isolation and torture.

The Campaign to End the New Jim Crow, led by AFSC in New York City, advocates for a paradigm shift in the use of incarceration and the continued punishment imposed by the collateral consequences of conviction and imprisonment. The campaign provides support to communities of color who are disproportionately impacted by incarceration.

AFSC's Hope Lives for Lifers Project, also based in New York, works with young men, ages 16–24, who are serving long sentences, including those sentenced to life without the possibility of parole. AFSC helps them in their quest for freedom and in their efforts to leave prison stronger and ready to reintegrate into their communities.

This year both Healing Justice programs have provided education and outreach to thousands of individuals on the issues raised by mass incarceration and conditions of confinement, and have provided support and organizing tools to people in prison to help them advocate for themselves.

Immigrant Rights

The overarching goal of the Immigrant Rights Program (IRP) in Newark is to achieve policies that respect the rights and dignity of all immigrants, including a fair and humane national immigration policy. The Immigrant Rights Program's successful integration of legal services, advocacy, and organizing has made a dramatic difference in the lives of immigrants in New Jersey and beyond by ensuring that immigrant voices are heard in policy debates, by assisting immigrants with challenging immigration cases, and by changing the narrative about immigration issues to influence policy. AFSC offers legal services to immigrants who are in detention, facing deportation, seeking to reunite with families, or in need of protection. AFSC also organizes in immigrant communities, training emerging leaders and ensuring that those people most affected by immigration policy are advocates for change.

This year AFSC's Immigrant Rights Program expanded its legal services work to include a pilot "universal representation" program that ensures that all low-income immigrants who are detained in New Jersey and facing deportation hearings before the Elizabeth Immigration Court receive legal representation. The new program has greatly increased AFSC's capacity to represent detained immigrants.

At the same time, AFSC continues its work in opposition to immigration detention, organizing campaigns and providing support to individuals whose lives have been impacted by the detention and deportation systems.

Intern Program

The New York and Newark offices host an internship program each summer. Through the support of a generous donor we are able to offer stipends to these interns. AFSC also receives interns and volunteers throughout the school year. In the summer of 2015, AFSC is hosting thirteen interns between New York and New Jersey.

Other Regional Work

AFSC's work outside New York and New Jersey includes longstanding work on economic justice, peace, and healing justice. Staff work on trauma healing and reconciliation with Native Americans in Maine, provide opportunities for young people to engage in advocacy and organizing efforts on issues of their choosing, support coalition work in their communities toward social justice, and relate with Quaker meetings on issues of concern.

New Programs

In New Hampshire, AFSC staff are actively involved in the Presidential Primary Campaign, training people on bird-dogging techniques to share AFSC positions on important issues. The theme of AFSC's work in New Hampshire (and Iowa) is Governing Under the Influence, as staff expose the growing corporate influence on elections and legislative policies.

AFSC staff is working to develop a Youth Leadership Institute in Philadelphia, the first AFSC program in the city in decades. Northeast Region staff members are partnering with staff in

Philadelphia to develop the program plan, with hopes to launch in January 2016.

Amy Gottlieb, Associate Regional Director, Northeast Region

Barrington Dunbar Fund for Black Development

As a follow-up to the adoption of New York Yearly Meeting's Statement of Leadings and Priorities, the Barrington Dunbar Fund for Black Development sent an invitation to apply for funds to all monthly meetings in NYYM. The response was overwhelming. We received more requests than we could fund. What follows are some of our giving highlights:

Breathing Space, 89 Dryer Road, Hurleyville, NY 12747, is a healing community designed to create a safe place for people returning home from prison. Our grant was for barn improvements to expand temporary housing and space for Alternatives to Violence Project workshops. For more information visit breathingspaceny.org.

College & Community Fellowship, 475 Riverside Drive, New York, NY 10115, supports higher education for formerly incarcerated women. Our grant was for college scholarships. For more information visit collegeandcommunity.org.

Earthcare Mid-Atlantic Regional Transition Hub, Kingston, New York 12401. Our grant was for the development of prototypes for urban agriculture training for people returning home from prison. For more information visit midatlantic-transition.org.

The Sarah Powell Huntington House, New York, NY 10009, is a homeless shelter for formerly incarcerated women and their children. The staff works with families to secure safe and stable housing, support school enrollment, seek employment, and find healthcare providers. Children receive tutoring and homework help. Our grant was for educational supplies. For more information visit wpaonline.org.

Operation Unite cultivates well-rounded, progressive youth by providing programs that foster a sense of direction, self-esteem, and social consciousness. They sponsor the Hudson Black Arts and Cultural Festival, Youth Government

Days, and provide scholarships for students living in Columbia and Greene Counties. Hudson Meeting, 343 Union Street, Hudson, NY 12534, also contributes to this program. For more information contact Hudson Meeting.

Peconic Bay Executive Meeting, Wainscott Chapel, 65 Main Street, Wainscott, NY 11975. Our grant was for their Latina Student Scholarship Fund. For more information contact peconicbayfriendsmeeting.org.

The Redemption Center, 186 Herkimer Street, Brooklyn, NY 11233, provides a supportive atmosphere for individuals being discharged from correctional facilities, substance abuse treatment centers, and the shelter system who want to reconstruct and improve their lives. Our grant was for repairs for their new Ozone Park, Queens Center. For more information contact theredemptioncenter.net.

Rural & Migrant Ministry has offices in Poughkeepsie, NY 12602; Lyons, NY 14489; and Ithaca, NY 14850. They support programs for migrant farmworkers and the rural poor. Our grant was for their summer camp for rural and migrant children. For more information visit ruralmigrantministry.org.

The Paul Schreurs Memorial Program Fund, 1 James L. Gibbs Drive, Ithaca, NY 14850, provides educational opportunities for youth who, without assistance, might be unable to pursue their education beyond high school. Our grant was for their disadvantaged students' college tour. This program is also supported by Ithaca Meeting.

Wind of the Spirit, 120 Speedwell Ave. Morristown, NJ 07960, is an organization of faith for immigrants and non-immigrants who honor a tradition of hospitality for those who need it, without discrimination of race, immigration status, religion, or sexual orientation. Wind is active in various low income communities in New Jersey. Our grant was for subsidizing their Alternative to Violence Project workshops.

Youth Service Opportunities Project (YSOP) conducts overnight workcamps that engage youth and college students in meaningful service experiences. Participants learn about the lives of those most neglected by our society. Our grant was earmarked for participants from East Harlem, NY.

Youth scholarships—the committee is very concerned about racial diversity in Quaker schools. We awarded funds to disadvantaged Black and Latino students attending Brooklyn Friends, Friends Seminary, Oakwood Friends, and Westbury Friends schools. We also provided scholarships for participants of color for the Powell House Youth Program.

Helen Garay Toppins, clerk

Black Concerns Committee

Black Lives Matter

The Friends Committee for Black Concerns (FCBC), the successor to our Yearly Meeting's Race Relations Committee, is charged with broadening and deepening communication among all ethnic groups; developing among Friends a keener awareness of the violence of racism; stimulating involvement of Friends in today's racial crisis; encouraging Friends to work to overcome the handicaps of the past; increasing awareness among Friends of the history and contributions of people of African descent both within and outside of the Religious Society of Friends; and to support, enhance, and deepen the multiracial character of the family of Friends. It is a huge charge given to a small committee.

During Black History Month we co-sponsored a public event with Fifteenth Street Meeting. Muriel Tillinghast, a former Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) field secretary, coordinated civil rights groups in Mississippi during Freedom Summer. She led a conversation on race and movement by connecting the lessons she learned in Mississippi to today's racial challenges. FCBC would like to co-sponsor public events with other meetings. Please let us know if you are interested in doing so.

We promoted Friends' attendance at the 2015 White Privilege Conference (WPC), which was held in Kentucky. We are encouraging New York Yearly Meeting Friends to attend next year's White Privilege Conference, which will be held in Philadelphia April 14-17, 2016. The Black Concerns Committee has earmarked a substantial part of our budget to provide for scholarships and travel support.

Many Friends have asked us exactly what the WPC is. It is

not a conference designed to attack or degrade white folks. It is not a conference designed to rally white supremacist groups. The conference examines concepts of privilege and oppression and offers solutions and strategies to work toward a more equitable world. The organizers are committed to a philosophy of “understanding, respecting and connecting.” WPC brings together high school and college students, teachers, university faculty, nonprofit staff, activists, social workers and counselors, healthcare workers, and members of the spiritual community and corporate arena. Annually, more than 1,500 people attend from more than 35 states, Australia, Bermuda, Canada, and Germany. Participants may obtain Continuing Education Credits, 1-3 hours of academic credit at either the undergraduate or graduate level, or earn a graduate certificate in Diversity and Social Justice. If you are interested in attending the WPC with other Friends from NYYM please let us know.

The committee continues to encourage Friends to participate in anti-racism training and workshops and we offer financial support to sponsor Friends’ attendance. We highly recommend the Undoing Racism Workshops given by The People’s Institute for Survival and Beyond. Their workshops focus on understanding what racism is, where it comes from, how it functions, why it persists, and how it can be undone. They use a systemic approach that emphasizes learning from history, developing leadership, maintaining accountability to communities, creating networks, undoing internalized racial oppression, and understanding the role of organizational gatekeeping as a mechanism for perpetuating racism. We also recommend workshops offered by the Center for the Study of White American Culture—What White People Can Do About Racism and Raising Anti-racist White Children. If you are interested in any anti-racism training, please let us know.

We gave financial support to the NAACP for their work in Ferguson, MO, and to the NAACP Legal Defense Fund for protection of voting rights. We also supported the AFSC Liberation Summer Camp, the United Negro College Fund, and the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture. We continue to provide scholarships for young people of color attending Powell House youth programs.

Naceo Giles, clerk

Bolivian Quaker Education Fund

During the fall of 2014, the Bolivian Quaker Education Fund (BQEF) Board met for our annual face-to-face meeting in St. Louis, Missouri, hosted by Barbara Stanford and the St. Louis Meeting. We were joined by Alicia Lucasi, who had journeyed from La Paz to represent the staff in Bolivia. Our hosts were wonderfully welcoming, especially while being in the middle of providing support to Ferguson protesters and gearing up for their cold-weather work serving the homeless in their area.

The meetings reflected the experience we have gained over more than a decade in effectively running a small education-based Non-Governmental Organization, as well as the challenges of budgets and fundraising among Friends, many of whom already support a great number of wonderful Quaker projects and initiatives.

The program continues to support between forty and fifty scholars at the university level. 2014 saw the number of individual and meeting sponsors grow to cover most scholarships.

In January some cracks and settling at the student residence in Sorata reached a point where engineers judged part of the buildings to be unsafe. Consequently that aspect of our program has been put on hold until the end of the rainy season, when substantial soil tests can be done to evaluate the problem. We hope the residence can open again for the second semester.

We look to expand our connections in the Quaker world and are encouraged by the participation of Friends on our Board and committees from yearly meetings across the country and even as far away as Ireland. Nevertheless, NYYM Friends remain well represented among those carrying important aspects of organizational leadership and work.

The effects of supporting higher-level education on the lives of young Bolivian Friends continues to inspire us as we hear stories of opened doors, of individuals growing into skills and confidence, and opportunities gained that were not available in even the very recent past. We delight in the friendships formed as volunteers get to know students and their families and sponsors learn of students' struggles and successes.

BQEF appreciates NYYM's and particularly World Ministries Committee's support and encouragement as we continue to uphold the organization's mission of education and nurturing cross-cultural friendships.

Jens Braun, NYYM representative to BQEF

Committee on Conscientious Objection to Paying for War

The 2014-15 year was one in which our Conscientious Objection to Paying for War Committee focused on program and goals, however modest, rather than structure. The Committee continues to have far too few members. Even some Friends who are firmly committed to supporting conscientious objection and seriously concerned by taxes for war have declined to be appointed, as they work on other compelling aspects of peace. Yet we remain keenly aware of—and deeply inspired by—the Yearly Meeting's overwhelming leading several years ago to stand and work for conscience in the face of our nation's demands to pay for war.

Our active members and attenders have consulted among ourselves and with other resource people regarding developments in the advocacy of a federal Peace Tax Fund—including through an April letter writing campaign, and have individually aided conscience witness efforts, including supporting one person's tax witness, advising on a NYYM amicus brief for free exercise of religion in the face of restrictive local regulation, and leading a session for the subject for one of our Yearly Meeting regional gatherings.

The two presently active members of the committee share the role of contact person. The committee has held no meetings and has spent no money. We anticipate continuing and developing our work. But we also understand that there may soon be a proposal to re-structure the Witness section's peace and justice activity, which may lead to our absorption into a larger committee or some other change in our status as the Yearly Meeting continues to implement its priorities.

For the Committee, Jens Braun and Andy von Salis

Earthcare Working Group

The priorities identified by the NYYM Priorities Working Group (PWG), gathered from the corporate body, are intended to strengthen the Yearly Meeting and its constituent meetings. The Earthcare Working Group (EWG) discerned ways in which Friends can minister to the Earth as they support the Yearly Meeting's priorities. EWG modeled witness to our unity with and concern for the protection of the Earth through the implementation of the priorities. In so doing, our intent is to motivate and inspire spiritual deepening within the corporate body of NYYM through the expansion of its concern to encompass all of Creation.

Priority: We Envision a Yearly Meeting Deeply Grounded in the Practice of Our Faith. Considering the testimonies in relation to earthcare, the EWG asked monthly meetings, "How does climate change relate to Friends' testimony on Equality?" Earthcare Connectors who traveled under the weight of the Earthcare concern listened deeply to Friends throughout the yearly meeting and recognized a deep, universally shared concern for vulnerable populations. This shared concern highlighted the intersection of earthcare with other witness concerns. Those who are most vulnerable to social injustice, racism, mass incarceration etc., are also affected disproportionately by climate change and economic contraction. They bear the preponderance of the burdens and enjoy little or no benefits of environmental policy. The EWG therefore plans to explore further and raise awareness among Friends of the benefits of collaboration among witness committees, specifically in the area of eco-justice, where Friends' universal concerns for vulnerable populations overlap.

Priority: We Envision a Yearly Meeting Gathered Together into One Body. Six earthcare ministry "Connector Friends" traveled to local meetings and appropriate Quaker convocations under the weight of the earthcare concern to listen deeply and engage Friends, monthly meetings, and others in conversations about the environment. The EWG also conducted an April 2014 earthcare workshop at Powell House that combined the Pachamama Alliance's Awakening the Dreamer Symposium and the Transition Towns movement's training for local resil-

ience, building against the backdrop of climate change resource depletion and economic instability. Funds were allocated to offer financial assistance to participants.

Priority: We Envision Strong, Vital Monthly Meetings. EWG compiled environmentally conscious practices, Earthcare Resources, and Eco-spirit Mindful Living Suggestions lists for dissemination to local meetings online and at Earthcare Connectors talks.

Priority: We Envision a Yearly Meeting that Witnesses to the World on Our Behalf. The Earthcare Working Group supported NYYM's corporate mobilization, catalyzed by the New York Metropolitan meetings, of hundreds of Friends to take part in the largest and most diverse climate-related demonstration in history on Sunday, September 21, 2014 in New York City. The People's Climate March was timed to coincide with a gathering of world leaders for the United Nations Climate Summit 2014 intended to "galvanize and catalyze global climate action." The Quaker presence in the March was publicly recognized and strong. EWG also supported the spiritual witness of Friends in the promotion of a talk by anti-hydrofracking activist Sandra Steingraber during fall sessions 2014.

Patricia Chernoff & Pamela Boyce Simms, co-clerks

European American Quakers Working to End Racism Working Group

EAQWER, a small but active working group of white anti-racist Friends, spent its fourth year under the care of Witness Coordinating Committee.

At Summer Sessions we offered a Racial Listening Project, inviting Friends to tell us their story. Several took advantage of the opportunity. We supported the Racial Healing Worship sponsored by the Task Group on Racism. We asked all worship sharing groups to focus one day on the query: How is Spirit leading you to bring about racial justice and reconciliation? Our member Mary Pugh Clark made three visits to Junior Yearly Meeting to discuss racism with middle and high schoolers. We provided a display table with books on race relations and white privilege.

At our three annual weekend meetings, we continued working on personal issues of internalized dominance patterns and white privilege. We discussed Cornel West's *Race Matters*, noting how much is unchanged since the book was published over 20 years ago. During one meeting we were very privileged to host Buffy Curtis, Liseli Haines, and three members of the Abenaki Nation who had all taken part in the Two-Row Wampum Renewal Campaign in August 2013. The five paddlers movingly shared their experience of the two cultures working in harmony, the power of nature, and the importance of the Good Mind.

In response to Friends General Conference's invitation to NYYM to join the host team for the 2016 White Privilege Conference, we named Robin Alpern to serve as a liaison. Robin attended planning meetings in Philadelphia. At Spring Sessions, EAQWER presented a request on behalf of the Witness Coordinating Committee that NYYM join the team; this was approved.

EAQWER views the involvement of NYYM in the White Privilege Conference as one way to follow up on the Apology to Afro-Descendants (see nyym.org/?q=Apology-AfroDescendants). We consider it is important, even our responsibility, to keep this topic, "the next steps following the apology," in front of us and consider it in our actions. We informally supported Brooklyn Meeting in its spring 2015 program to consider the Apology and discern a way forward toward ending racism.

In April-May, EAQWER provided scholarship funds supporting Robin Alpern to attend the five-day conference at Pendle Hill on Ending Mass Incarceration and the New Jim Crow.

We continue to have representatives at Witness Coordinating Committee and liaisons to Indian Affairs, the Task Group on Racism, and Black Concerns Committee. We added a liaison to the Prisons Committee.

In considering our budget request for 2015, we noted how EAQWER's plans serve the implementation of the Leadings and Priorities:

Our work helps fulfill two of the leadings and priorities in particular. 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 barri-

ers 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.

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.

Expenditures 2014-15:

Program	
Honoraria to Two-Row paddlers	75
NYYM resource Library to be spent on anti-racist books	75
Neighbors of the Onondaga Nation (NOON)	100
Southern Poverty Law Center	55
White Privilege Conference	55
Pendle Hill Conference	<u>250</u>
Total	\$610

Administrative	
Total travel	<u>\$132.05</u>
Grand total	\$ 742.05

Robin Alpern, for the Working Group

Friends Committee on National Legislation representatives

Since 1943, Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) has carried Quaker witness to Capitol Hill. Delegates bring the concerns and testimonies of Friends to bear on policy decisions. Governed by a General Committee of 184 Quakers representing 25 yearly meetings and 7 Quaker organizations. FCNL has 17 registered lobbyists. In 2014, Friends in FCNL made 750 personal visits to congressional offices in DC and in local districts.

In November, 2014 Cynthia Schlegel, NYYM's newest delegate, and I carpooled to Washington DC for the FCNL Annual Meeting, Policy Institute, and Lobby Day. Parker Palmer was the keynote speaker. Senator Chris Murphy (CT) was

awarded the Ed Snyder Award for his leadership on calling for cuts in the military budget and Rep. Rush Holt (D-NJ), who is retiring, shared his thoughts on “where do we go from here?” to close the conference. During the lobby day Cynthia met with the New York Congressional delegation. I met with the Connecticut delegation, including Rep. Jim Himes from the 4th District of Connecticut. All delegates were asked to encourage our representatives to speak out in favor of the ongoing negotiations with Iran. I brought Matt Donahue, an Iraq War veteran and FCNL staff member, to meet Rep. Jim Himes from Connecticut’s 4th District. Matt spoke in a compelling way about how often the US government has put young men and women in harm’s way without a mission that makes sense to those risking their lives on behalf of our nation. He advocated for diplomacy instead of sword rattling while Jim and I listened. Subsequently, Jim did issue a statement in favor of diplomacy in a moderately worded public statement.

At the annual meeting, FCNL’s priorities for the 114th Congress (2015-2016) were approved. They can be found at fcnl.org/priorities. In the spring FCNL convened a spring lobby weekend attended by 300 students. FCNL runs an active Young Fellows (internship) program and has established a new Advocacy Corp program for young people to organize in their own communities. See futureadvocate.org to learn more.

We encourage all Friends to consider joining our delegation or speaking out on the issues cited in the priorities or writing a letter to the editor. The ongoing work of FCNL staff includes:

- 1) Mass Incarceration: Support of the Sentencing Act bipartisan legislation (S.502/HR.920) that would cut by half the length of mandatory sentences, give judges discretion on sentences for many drug offenses, and allow thousands of federal prisoners to seek fairer sentences.

- 2) Prevent Violent Conflict through reversing years of under-funding of diplomacy in comparison to the outsized military budget.

- 3) Peacebuilding: Working with Quakers in Burundi to prevent violence surrounding the 2015 elections. Thanks, in part, to FCNL’s efforts the Obama administrations Atrocities Prevention Board is also focused on preventing violence in Burundi.

4) Repeal the Pentagon's 1033 Program—Get Tanks off Main Street: The transfer of military equipment to police departments is both a symptom and a cause of the militarized approach to policing in communities like Ferguson, Missouri.

5) Disarmament of Nuclear Weapons: Eliminate funding for the B-61 nuclear bomber, oppose efforts to undermine the new START Treaty with Russia, and adequately fund programs to secure nuclear materials all over the world.

6) Native American Advocacy: Working to support the revival of native languages, provide increased funding for the education of Native children, acknowledge the governing authority of tribal councils, and protect sacred sites from the intrusion of commercial interests.

There is much work to be done

Diane Keefe, clerk

Friends Peace Teams representatives

After more than 20 years of providing nurturing care for Friends engaged in grassroots peace work in communities riddled with severe violence around the world, we are pleased to report that we continue to abide by our Quaker beliefs, to live into our values, and to use the very peace tools we offer in all our workshops to govern our organization in the manner of Friends. We are working on increasing publicity and our outreach to Friends communities, on enhancing our communications to share news of our work more widely, on bolstering our infrastructure without increasing “non-program” expenses, and on seeking and welcoming new members to the Friends Peace Teams Council, our governing body. We are especially pleased to welcome Kirsten Mandala from Portland, Oregon as our new, part-time Communications Specialist to work on our websites and opportunities via social media.

The major happening with the African Great Lakes Initiative of Friends Peace Teams (AGLI) this past year has been the great interest from other larger organizations in using the Healing and Rebuilding Our Communities (HROC) program in other settings. Catholic Relief Services in the Central African Republic (CAR) invited two AGLI HROC delegations to introduce the program there. They were so pleased with the program that they hired

our HROC-Burundi program manager, Florence Ntakutimana, full-time to put the HROC program in CAR on a firm footing. Then the Church of the Brethren in Northern Nigeria, where Boko Haram is creating chaos, sent four people to our August HROC International Training in Rwanda and then three more for the February Training. The Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) (which is four times the size of AFSC) has taken up the program with the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria, while a MCC volunteer has received a nice grant from MCC to introduce and expand the program in eastern Congo. In Kenya, great progress has been made in reconciliation on Mt. Elgon after the conflict there and the introduction of AVP in the Kakuma Refugee camp. HROC-Burundi has received a number of grants towards making the upcoming Burundi elections peaceful. After 12 years, AVP in Rwanda has finally received permission to do AVP in their prisons, and 10 workshops have been done so far.

Peacebuilding en las Américas (PLA) supports Alternatives to Violence Project and Community Based Trauma Healing workshops with nine programs—five in Colombia, two in Honduras, and one each in Guatemala and El Salvador. The programs reach many young people, people who have been or are resisting becoming forcibly displaced by violence, domestic abuse victims, and the large numbers of people struggling to survive in an atmosphere of insecurity and violence caused by criminal and drug gangs and political instability. In Honduras the group in La Ceiba have trained the first inmate AVP facilitators who will work alongside Mennonite and other volunteers to live more nonviolently inside the El Porvenir National Prison. The three Central American programs are working with AVP International to do pilot workshops with personnel from Plan International, a huge international child sponsorship program. If these workshops become integrated in Plan's work, it could extend AVP to 68 countries. (Other pilots are being held in Nigeria and Rwanda.) Colombian programs now include AVP work with a congregation of Franciscan nuns who work throughout the country. PLA has hired a Communications Editor to help us develop web and print materials for information and outreach.

The Asia/West Pacific Initiative (AWP) has been very active with grassroots peacebuilding in Indonesia, Nepal, Philippines, Palestine and Israel, and South Korea. New and active Friends in Australia have been supportive with energy and generous with resources. There is a powerful new video created about the power of visiting (Silaturahmi) and the value of being a listening presence in communities struggling with decades of common violence. Nadine Hoover visited Quaker AVPers in South Korea and served on a team for a trauma healing workshop that was well received. Nick Rozard's work on inexpensive, locally-produced water filters is going well. An invitation to exhibit the artwork from *The Power of Goodness*, a book of 25 stories of nonviolence and reconciliation around the world, was sent to selected prominent museums worldwide inviting them to schedule a premier exhibition of this children's artwork from Chechnya, Russia, Europe, and North America. Joe Di Garbo and Nadine will support Miriam Abu Turk in Hebron and her team in apprentice facilitating the AVP Trauma Healing Workshop in Ramallah. Our persistent question of whether Palestinians and Israelis can be brought together for peace work is leading to some interesting possibilities that our peace team will continue to explore.

Shirley Way, representative

Friends Peace Teams Financial Report, 2015

**Statement of Activities
Year Ending October 31, 2014**

	Unrestricted	Temporarily Restricted	Total
Support			
African Great Lakes Initiative	\$ 285,492	\$ 41,249	\$ 326,741
Asia West Pacific Initiative	26,645	970	27,615
Peacebuilding en las Americas Initiative	26,941	8,367	35,308
Net assets released from restrictions (Note E)	16,772	(16,772)	—
<i>Total Support</i>	<i>\$ 355,850</i>	<i>\$ 33,814</i>	<i>\$ 389,664</i>

	Unrestricted	Temporarily Restricted	Total
Revenues and Gains			
Investment Income	\$ 92	–	\$ 92
Contributions	18,098	–	18,098
Meeting Income	13,234	–	13,234
Peace Quest	6,177	–	6,177
<i>Total Revenues and Gains</i>	<i>37,601</i>	<i>–</i>	<i>37,601</i>
Total Support, Revenues and Gains	\$393,451	\$ 33,814	\$427,265
Expenses			
Program Services			
African Great Lakes Initiative	\$ 295,433	–	\$ 295,433
Asia West Pacific Initiative	25,737	–	25,737
Peacebuilding en las			
Americas Initiative	48,887	–	48,887
<i>Total Program Services</i>	<i>370,057</i>	<i>–</i>	<i>370,057</i>
Supporting Activities			
Management and General	26,498	–	295,433
Fundraising	4,953	–	4,953
Total Expenses	\$ 401,508	–	\$401,508
Changes in Net Assets	(8,057)	33,814	25,757
Net Assets, Beginning of Year	\$ 23,063	\$ 24,708	\$ 47,771
Net Assets, End of Year	\$ 15,006	\$ 58,522	\$73,528

Indian Affairs Committee

This past year has opened doors to change and possibility. The committee is open to how we may be led along new paths while maintaining the partnerships and ties we have worked hard to nurture.

The Two-Row Wampum Renewal Campaign has been laid down, and no further activities are planned in connection with this campaign. There may be other paddling journeys, but they will not be organized on such a comprehensive scale and may only include paddlers from Native Nations. We need to find new leadings and ways of expressing the energy and enthusiasm generated by that epic journey.

One exciting possibility is the “Roots of Injustice, Seeds of Change” interactive workshop developed by Colorado Friend

Paula Palmer with the support of Boulder Friends Meeting. Paula has been traveling to facilitate this workshop and has presented it at Friends General Conference Gathering and other venues. Members of the committee were inspired to participate in these workshop presentations and have felt called to help facilitate them. These workshops could be part of outreach to local and regional meetings, bringing to Friends new insights and the conviction that we must move forward in ways that bring about a “right relationship” with Native peoples.

We have maintained our long-standing partnerships with these Native initiatives within the Yearly Meeting geography: Akwesasne Freedom School, The Akwesasne Task Force on the Environment, The American Indian Community House, Kanatsiohare:ke Mohawk Community, and the Ndakinna Center. In May, we will be the guests of Kanatsiohare:ke for our second Indian Affairs Committee retreat. At this retreat, we will seek new leadings and ways to move forward. These might include new directions or taking more active roles in the work our Native allies are doing, such as assisting the Task Force with their environmental efforts, volunteering at the Freedom School’s annual Quilt Auction, doing service work for Kanatsiohare:ke’s annual Strawberry Festival, or assisting the Ndakinna Education Center with their many programs.

Last year’s Lindley Murray Fund Grant was earmarked for a new youth mentoring program through the American Indian Community House (AICH) in Manhattan. AICH had to move to a new location, and the mentoring program could not take place this year. The grant did make other summer youth programs possible, including day workshops teaching survival skills and living in harmony with the land, health and fitness activities, and a family community camping trip that included bike rides, night hikes, and a general focus on health. We hope their mentoring program can come to fruition in the near future. This year’s Lindley Murray Grant will be given to the Ndakinna Education Center’s Abenaki Language Preservation Project.

To date, the committee’s work has led us to partner more strongly with Haudenosaunee Nations in the eastern areas of New York. We would like to extend our partnerships to include the more western areas and find connections with the Cayuga

Nation and the Seneca Nation. Blossom Garden Friends School has a long-standing connection with the Seneca people, and this Quaker connection may help us move in this new direction. We might also find ways to form connections with the Lenape-Ramapough Nation in New Jersey, the Shinnecock Nation on Long Island, and Native peoples in western Connecticut.

The Committee was led to bring forward a minute calling for the release of Leonard Peltier. This minute was approved by the gathered body of the Yearly Meeting and sent to President Obama as well as shared more widely. We hope Mr. Obama will grant Leonard Peltier a pardon and thus secure his release from prison and his return to his family. There are many unjustly incarcerated people and Mr. Peltier's unjust conviction and incarceration have become a rallying point both against unjust incarceration and against unjust treatment of Native Americans.

We cannot lay aside our work to undo the pernicious influence of the Doctrine of Discovery, particularly in view of recent actions taken to grant mining operations on sacred Apache lands, to move the XL Pipeline forward across lands sacred to the Lakota and other Nations—ongoing environmental injustices and transgressions against the sovereignty of Native Nations.

We continue to offer the Marjorie Sexton Scholarship to a student at Onondaga Community College and modest stipends to Native students from a wide variety of Nations. These small stipends create a web of connection and a network of possible future collaboration.

We are inspired to move into the new year with enthusiasm and hope, and we have a strong commitment to learn from the wisdom of Native elders and allies. We invite all interested to join us!

Susan Wolf & Emily Boardman, co-clerks

Latin American Concerns

The subject of Latin American Concerns is huge, far greater than any one person can faithfully encompass. Free Trade Agreements, immigration laws, official language laws, the various military interventions by the US and other countries in

South and Central America, Haiti, Cuba, and other Caribbean countries, Canada as it concerns French-speaking Canadians inside and outside Quebec, as well as the US itself, which can be considered a Latin American country—all of these aspects only begin to outline the scope of these concerns.

While I am not an expert in any of these subjects I continue to care about the people whose lives are affected and disrupted by these and related concerns.

I receive updates on Haiti from Mark Schuller who worshiped with Flushing Meeting when he lived in New York and has been traveling to Haiti and writing about Haiti for a number of years. I pass these updates along to the Peace and Social Concerns Committee of Morningside Meeting, which carries a continuing concern for the people of Haiti. I would be happy to share these updates with anyone who is interested in receiving them. I also welcome requests for information, programs, and collaboration by NYYM Friends and committees where our concerns overlap. I continue to believe in having a presence in the Yearly Meeting with these concerns.

Naomi Paz Greenberg, resource person

National Campaign for a Peace Tax Fund & Peace Tax Foundation

No report submitted.

National Religious Campaign against Torture

No report submitted

New Jersey Council of Churches

The board of the New Jersey Council of Churches (NJCC) meets twice a year, weather permitting, at their office in Trenton, New Jersey. The office has one paid employee who coordinates board and committee meetings as well as sharing relevant information to members via email.

Each member of the board is involved in Christian ministry either professionally or as dedicated volunteers, as pastors,

teachers, counselors, and administrators.

At this time, efforts are directed towards improving services to inner city adults and youth living in low-income or poverty situations.

A good deal of energy has been directed towards improving and reducing the length of stay in solitary confinement within the NJ Department of Corrections.

Each year the NJCC hosts several informative conferences and lectures open to the public as well as members.

Kate Lawson, representative to the Governing Board

New York State Council of Churches

No written report submitted; oral report on page 35.

Prisons Committee

The Light behind the Walls

The work of the Prisons Committee is grounded in our faith that there is that of God in each person, that gives to each of us the possibility of change and transformation as we listen to that still, small voice. To witness to that possibility to people who are incarcerated in prisons is to give them the opportunity to see themselves in a different light and to communicate the opportunity to change through spiritual growth. This helps us ground ourselves in the practice of our faith.

This year we have continued to supply worship groups with copies of *Faith & Practice* and other materials, which the Worship Groups use to inform themselves more deeply about the Religious Society of Friends. Several of the worship groups have held Days of Reflection, retreats or quarterly meetings this year, when they have had the opportunity to reflect on the relevance of our testimonies and other topics. We work to support a greater grounding in our faith. (Priority 1 of the approved Statement of Leadings and Priorities)

This year we have seen some shrinkage in the number of worship groups, and attendance has been down in most of them. Both the Eastern and Sullivan Worship Groups have been laid down. A number of factors have contributed to this. Some men have been released and some have died. There have been

many transfers to other correctional facilities. Some of the men who have been transferred have requested a Quaker meeting, but in one case, the Clinton Correctional Facility has turned the request down. At all three meetings of the Prisons Committee this year, volunteers have expressed frustration with the difficulties various worship groups have been having with the Department of Corrections. Retreats, quarterly meetings and Days of Reflection have been disallowed. It has been difficult to get volunteer paperwork processed. A meeting with the Department of Corrections is needed and we hope that such a meeting will take place in 2015, which we hope will strengthen these worship groups.

In June this year we celebrated the 40th anniversary of the Auburn Prison Preparative Meeting. The event brought together many Friends from around the Yearly Meeting who had participated in the Meeting during its history. The men spoke of the Meeting as one of the few places where they are treated as human beings.

These prison worship groups serve many of the same functions as a monthly meeting. They introduce attenders to Quakerism, conduct Quaker studies, and participate in business meetings. As these worship groups are often under the care of regional and monthly meetings, serving these worship groups serves the monthly meetings. Over the years Friends from prison worship groups have been accepted into monthly meeting membership while still incarcerated. Some have been active members upon release. By assisting these groups to become strong and vital, the NYYM Prisons Committee strengthens monthly meetings. Money to support travel of volunteers and special speakers to various Worship Groups contributes to the vitality of the groups. (Priority 2)

Men in prison are often isolated, receiving no visits or letters for years at a time. Some of the money in our budget goes for Christmas and birthday cards and motto calendars. These are sent both to men in the worship groups and to anyone who has formerly been part of a worship group. Men are often transferred to facilities that do not have a worship group. The cards, calendars, and food that the Prisons Committee may provide for special events are a form of nurture for people who have

received very little care. In a number of cases the cards and calendars may be the only mail someone who is incarcerated receives. It is important to the men that they are remembered and cared for. Providing the sense that they are “seen” conveys our faith in the growth and change we hope to support. We hope to maintain a sense of connection and where possible establish new worship groups. In addition, money is set aside to help the formerly incarcerated attend NYYM to give them the opportunity to participate in the body. (Priority 3)

Because many members of the Yearly Meeting have been involved in prison work of various kinds, we are aware of the problems associated with incarceration and re-entry. For that reason we have contributed to organizations that work on these issues or assist the formerly incarcerated with re-entry. We have contributed to the Redemption Center, run by a former member of one of our worship groups, and which is a facility to which some members of our prison worship groups are released. At our table at Summer Sessions, we provided material on some of the issues that are the result of mass incarceration. We have had discussions on the solitary confinement minute. In these ways we hope to witness our faith to the world. (Priority 5)

Pam Wood, for the Prisons Committee

Right Sharing of World Resources

The year 2014 was one of transition for Right Sharing of World Resources (RSWR). With the resignation in April of our general secretary, Betty Tonsing, we returned to search mode. Sylvia Graves once again graciously stepped in as interim general secretary while the search committee carried out its work. A key to its successful completion was the realization that the pool of potential candidates would be much larger if the new general secretary were not required to move to Richmond, Indiana, where the office is located.

In December, the board approved the appointment of Jacqueline (Jackie) Stillwell, a Friend from New Hampshire, who has been an avid supporter of RSWR since her teenage years. Jackie understands Friends; she is currently completing her term as clerk of New England Yearly Meeting. She was previously the executive director of the Meeting School, and

brings from that experience and others an understanding of fundraising, which RSWR so critically needs. She will travel frequently to Richmond, but otherwise will work remotely. The other members of the staff, Todd Knight and Sarah Northrop, live in Richmond and the office will remain there.

It is of course disruptive to lose a general secretary, but the interim months were not time wasted. When an organization has a strong leader as its executive, the board may be content to follow that person's lead. In the absence of our general secretary, the board of RSWR has settled in to its proper function, developing policy and devising fundraising plans.

Within New York Yearly Meeting, there is a faithful contingent of RSWR supporters. Any of those Friends who would be interested in forming a working group to make RSWR better known among us are warmly invited to get in touch with our "point person," Mary Eagleson.

Distributions from the Sharing Fund paid to RSWR during the year 2014 were \$2,461.88. This is a little less than half the cost of a typical grant to a grassroots NGO in India, Kenya, or Sierra Leone.

As Friends are aware, Sierra Leone is one of the three West African nations hard hit by the ebola epidemic. There was so much illness, and so many deaths, that the nation's food supply has been compromised. Working with our partner organization in that country, the YMCA of Sierra Leone, RSWR first assisted with efforts to contain the spread of the disease through dissemination of information; now, we hope to increase the number of grants we can make to help people replant and rebuild. Towards that end, the Witness Coordinating Committee has set aside \$1,000 and the World Ministries Committee has pledged \$1,000 in additional contributions, earmarked for use in Sierra Leone.

These funds were received by RSWR at a critical time. The board very much wanted to fund more than the usual number of grants to projects in Sierra Leone, but was aware that there are costs of supporting a project in addition to the amount of the grant sent to them. To be successful, groups of desperately poor women need support in the form of visitation and training by our field representatives, and the cost of this work is accounted for separately from the grant amounts. The extra \$2,000 provided

by New York Yearly Meeting made up for most of the additional support costs and the board did approve eight projects in Sierra Leone, rather than the two or three it has approved in the past.

Mary Eagleson, RSWR resource person

Rural and Migrant Ministry

Rural and Migrant Ministry (RMM) has several well-established projects that promote youth empowerment. Youth Arts Group (YAG) is described in its mission statement as a culturally diverse group in which high school-age individuals come together with a determination to create change in their lives and communities. The Youth Economic Group (YEG) based in Liberty, New York, has the goal of encouraging young people to work cooperatively in creating economic opportunities that result in positive change in their lives. In the Poughkeepsie area there is a summer camp program and there is a newer smaller day camp in Sodus.

Other efforts of Rural and Migrant Ministry are directed toward increasing the awareness of issues related to migrant workers among state legislators and within faith communities. The organization has hardworking and dedicated staff members and volunteers.

In my two years of association with RMM, I have been uncomfortable with some areas of incompatibility between their organizational procedures and Quaker process. More significantly, I have also seen that a commitment to existing programs coupled with financial limitations makes it unlikely that the organization will be able to expand in the near future to embrace the issues of farm workers in central New York to which I personally am committed. I therefore made the personal decision to resign as liaison between NYYM and RMM and as a board member of RMM.

In spite of my personal decision, I would like to be sure that NYYM Friends are aware that Rural and Migrant Ministries does fill a role in New York State and among religious communities that I do not believe is being filled by any other organization active in multiple areas of the state.

Jane Simkin, representative

William Penn House

No report submitted

Committee on World Ministries

The World Ministries Committee (WMC) is a grant-making committee that has as its “ministry” the ability to bring about changes in the world by funding the leadings of NYYM Friends through the work of dedicated local meetings and Quaker organizations. With funds from bequests and the Sharing Fund, WMC has been active since 1889 in supporting projects worldwide that encourage peace, education, trauma healing, and assistance with emergencies.

Grant applications are received throughout the year via email to the clerk. The committee meets twice a year, or more often if warranted, via teleconference, usually in late May or June and again in late November. Prior to the teleconference, the grant applications are disseminated electronically for review to all committee members.

Each application must have a budget, a general timetable for implementation of the project, and also a NYYM member (or members) who will take responsibility for oversight to insure that the funds will be used within the parameters of the grant request. The committee also requires a brief report after nine months on the project.

If approved, grant requests are also based on the amount of funds available to the committee at the time of the teleconference.

This fiscal year, WMC approved grants to:

Orchard Park Friends Meeting – textbooks and shipping for Crossroads Springs Friends School, Hamasi, Kenya

Brooklyn Friends School – for a teaching project with donated laptops at Kisangura Friends School in Tanzania

Schenectady Meeting – for famine relief, distributed by Friends in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe

Bolivian Quaker Education Fund – Newton Garver Scholarship Fund, for scholarships for two students for one year each

Youth Service Opportunities Program – for the Fellows Program

FWCC-Section of Americas – to assist with training and support of traveling ministers in Central and South America

Friends Peace Teams-Asia West Pacific – four scholarships for preschool teachers who use AVP in their school and parenting education

Friends United Meeting – sponsorship of three rural Kenyan girls from Turkana and Samburu to attend secondary school

Friends United Meeting – workshops with AGLI (African Gr Lakes Initiative); partial support for the ministry of Friends Church Peace Team Program Coordinator

Cuba Yearly Meeting – grant administered by FUM; rebuilding and repair of Quaker meetinghouse in Holguin, Cuba for permanent Institute of Peace (materials only)

Cuba Yearly Meeting/Cuba Institute of Peace – administered by Friends United Meeting; courses at Cuba Institute of Peace about Quakerism for ministers in Cuba

Right Sharing of World Resources – for their cooperative work with “team partners” in Sierra Leone to help fight the Ebola epidemic

We who serve on WMC feel blessed that we have the ability to enable Friends to do this work by spreading “Quaker love in the wider world” to those who need our help. It is to that end that NYYM Friends are encouraged to apply for grant funds. We feel strongly that in this ministry, within our limited means, WMC does make a difference!

Requirements for grant proposals are posted on nyym.org and inquiries to the clerk are always welcome. Email to: sweisfeld@juno.com or write Susan Weisfeld, 11 Perry Place, Bronxville, NY 10708.

Susan Weisfeld, clerk

LIAISON COMMITTEE

The Liaison Committee consists of the Yearly Meeting clerk, assistant clerk, the clerks of the four coordinating committees, and the general secretary. The Yearly Meeting clerk serves as clerk of the Liaison Committee. It is the committee's practice to meet in expanded form during Summer Sessions Monday through Friday mornings with the addition of the Yearly Meeting recording clerks, the Yearly Meeting reading clerks, and a representative from Junior Yearly Meeting. The Liaison Committee is responsible for planning Coordinating Committee weekend, usually held in late January at Powell House.

The Committee serves in an advisory capacity to the Yearly Meeting and Yearly Meeting clerk as needed. The Committee continues its practice of meeting regularly each month by conference call, with occasional called meetings. 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.

Throughout the year the Liaison Committee discussed the ongoing business of the Yearly Meeting with particular attention to the work of committees under the various sections (General Services, Ministry, Nurture, and Witness). At Fall Sessions 2014 the Committee brought forward a minute clarifying the role of the Yearly meeting clerk and general secretary when acting upon matters in between business sessions. Over the course of the year the Committee has labored under the weight of a concern for implementing the Statement of Leadings and Priorities approved at Summer Sessions 2014. With the laying down of the Priorities Working Group at Spring Sessions 2015, the Liaison Committee has taken on the work of coordinating this work at the level of the Yearly Meeting organization and currently is in the midst of discerning way forward.

Jeffrey L. Hitchcock, clerk of New York Yearly Meeting

SPRING AND FALL SESSIONS

Representatives appointed by monthly meetings

All Friends

Chatham-Summit	Mia Kissil Hewitt
	Jill Nanfeldt
Dover-Randolph	William Hal Haydock
Montclair	Susan Bingham
Ridgewood	.....
Rockland	.....

Butternuts

Binghamton	Christine Barnaby
	Andrei Israel
	Joyce Thomas
Butternuts	Sarah Faith Dickinson
Hamilton	.....
Mohawk Valley	Liseli Haines
Unadilla	.....

Farmington-Scipio

Alfred	.....
Buffalo	.....
Central Finger Lakes	John Cooley
Collins	James Hall
Elmira	.....
Farmington	Ann Davison
	Jennifer Perry
	Barbara Popenhusen
Fredonia	Grace Pérez-de-la-Garza
	Ronald Peterson
Genesee Valley	Suzanne Blackburn
Ithaca	Steven Mohlke
	Shirley Way
Orchard Park	.....
Perry City	Bridget Bower
	Irma Guthrie

Poplar Ridge	Ruth Ann Bradley
	Rebecca Schillenback
Rochester	.....
Syracuse	Evelyn Kennenwood
	Rachel Pia

Long Island

Conscience Bay	Carolyn Emerson
	Elaine Learnard
Jericho	Anne Smith
	Morley Smith
Manhasset	.....
Matinecock	.....
Peconic Bay	.....
Shelter Island	.....
Westbury	.....

New York

Brooklyn	.....
Fifteenth Street	.....
Flushing	Cheshire Frager
Manhattan	.....
Morningside	Helen Garay Toppins
Staten Island	.....

Nine Partners

Bulls Head-Oswego	Karen Snare
Catskill	.....
Cornwall	F. Peter Phillips
New Paltz	.....
Nine Partners	.....
Poughkeepsie	Fred Doneit, Sr.
	Dare Thompson

Northeastern

Adirondack	.....
Albany	.....
Easton	Robert Kazmayer Jeannine Laverty
Hudson	.....
Old Chatham	Lyle Jenks Lucy Pracher
Quaker Street	.....
Saranac Lake	Beatrice Beguin
Saratoga	Lori Dawson
Schenectady	Anita Paul

Purchase

Amawalk	.....
Chappaqua	.....
Croton Valley	.....
Housatonic	Linda Chidsey Linda Fitch Ann Schillinger
Purchase	.....
Scarsdale	Anne Wright
Wilton	Martha Gurvich Albert Hsu

Shrewsbury & Plainfield

Manasquan	.....
New Brunswick	.....
Rahway & Plainfield	.....
Shrewsbury	.....

**MEMBERS OF THE YEARLY MEETING
RECORDED IN THE MINISTRY**

James Atwell	Butternuts
Sunday Blackmon	Albany
Ruth Ann Bradley	Poplar Ridge
Linda Chidsey	Housatonic
Maria Crosman	Adirondack
Ann Davidson	Farmington
Regina Baird Haag	Adirondack
Soo Ho Han	Orchard Park
David Herendeen	Farmington
Nadine Hoover	Alfred
Alice Houghtaling	Schenectady
Janice Ninan	Collins
Anita Paul	Schenectady
Roxanna Pinkerton	Chappaqua
Frances F. Sokol	Butternuts
Margaret Webb	Farmington

YEARLY MEETING PASTORS

Thomas W. Fiet	Nine Partners
Regina Baird Haag	Adirondack
David Herendeen (interim)	Manhattan
Janice Ninan	Collins

STATISTICAL REPORT—2015

Prepared from reports sent by Monthly Meeting Recorders

Total Members 2014	Total Members 2015	ADDED			REMOVED						
		Adults	Youth	Birth Request	Transfer	Death	Release	Transfer ³	Discon- tinuance		
ALL FRIENDS											
109	Chatham-Summit	101	95	6	0	2	1	2	9	0	0
38	Dover-Randolph	38	38	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
114	Montclair	110	106	4	0	1	0	1	4	0	0
54	Ridgewood ²	50	49	1	0	0	1	1	0	4	0
53	Rockland	52	49	3	0	2	0	1	0	1	1
368	Total	351	337	14	0	5	2	5	13	5	1
BUTTERNUTS											
14	Binghamton	14	13	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
20	Butternuts	18	18	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0
23	Hamilton ²	23	23	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
19	Mohawk Valley	19	18	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
25	Unadilla ²	21	21	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0
101	Total	95	93	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Total Members 2014	Total Members 2015	ADDED			REMOVED		
		Adults	Youth	Birth Request Transfer	Death Release	Transfer ³	Discon- tinuance
LONG ISLAND							
16	16	0	0	1	0	1	0
43	43	0	0	0	0	0	0
32	34	3	0	3	0	1	0
34	34	0	0	0	0	0	0
57	56	6	0	0	0	1	0
10	13	0	0	3	0	0	0
13	12	1	0	0	0	0	0
87	82	6	0	0	0	1	0
292	291	16	0	7	0	4	0
NEW YORK							
253	247	219	28	0	14	1	0
196	205	186	19	0	3	1	0
31	29	24	5	0	1	0	0
13	13	11	2	0	0	0	0
61	61	61	0	1	0	1	0
4	4	3	1	0	0	0	0
558	559	504	55	0	19	6	0

Total Members 2014	Total Members 2015	ADDED			REMOVED				
		Adults	Youth	Birth Request	Transfer	Death	Release	Transfer ³	Discon- tinuance
NINE PARTNERS									
50	44	44	0	0	0	0	0	1	3
13	13	13	0	0	1	0	1	0	0
40	42	33	9	0	2	0	0	0	0
40	42	39	3	0	2	0	0	0	0
3	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
61	58	56	2	0	1	0	2	2	0
207	202	188	14	0	6	0	5	2	3
NORTHEASTERN									
62	62	56	6	1	0	0	1	0	0
59	59	57	2	0	1	0	0	1	0
48	47	45	2	0	0	0	1	0	0
14	11	11	0	0	0	0	0	2	1
54	56	53	3	0	2	0	0	0	0
20	22	22	0	0	2	0	0	0	0
20	25	23	2	2	1	4	0	0	0
30	35	30	5	0	2	0	0	0	0
17	17	17	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
324	334	314	20	3	8	4	2	3	1

Total Members 2014	Total Members 2015	ADDED			REMOVED						
		Adults	Youth	Birth Request	Transfer	Death	Release	Transfer ³	Discontin- tinuance		
PURCHASE											
5	Amawalk ¹	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
79	Chappaqua ¹	72	8	0	1	0	0	0	0		
8	Croton Valley	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
21	Housatonic	19	0	0	0	0	0	0	2		
145	Purchase	140	8	0	0	3	0	0	0		
98	Scarsdale	101	97	4	0	4	0	1	0		
92	Wilton	89	84	5	0	0	0	2	1		
448	Total	451	426	25	0	5	3	1	2	0	
SHREWSBURY-PLAINFIELD											
41	Manasquan	41	38	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	
33	New Brunswick	35	35	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	
90	Rahway- Plainfield	88	84	4	0	1	0	2	0	1	
32	Shrewsbury	31	26	5	0	0	0	1	0	0	
196	Total	195	183	12	0	1	1	3	0	1	0
3,260	Yearly Meeting Total	3,241	3,084	217	4	57	16	43	22	20	5

1 Figures submitted for 2014 and 2015 were inconsistent.

2 2014 figures repeated; figures for 2015 not available at press time.

3 Figures in the Transfer columns reflect both transfers within NYYM and members joining or leaving NYYM. This accounts for the statistical variance in the report.