

## Ministry Coordinating Committee

### Minutes

January 28, 2017

#### Morning Session

Present: Jeffrey Aaron, Annie Bancroft, Mary Pugh Clark, Kendall Cornell, Roger Dreisbach-Williams, Cheshire Frager, Irene Goodman, Irma Guthrie, Lu Harper, David Herendeen, Angela Hopkins,,Elaine Learnard, Anne Pomeroy, Emily Provance, Christopher Sammond, Anne Wright, Shannon Young

1. The Meeting began at 10:45 a.m. with a period of worship.
2. Check-in. Clerk Irma Guthrie invited Friends to share what brings us joy.
3. The clerk Reviewed the Agenda
4. Follow-up discussion of the morning program on the role of ministry within and outside of Quaker circles in response to the current political tensions.
  - a. What can we bring as Friends?
  - b. How do our lives minister to others?
  - c. What visions do we want to hold?
  - d. How do we raise up "that of God" in others?

Friends spoke to how we can be peacemakers within and outside our meetings; how our traditions of traveling in witness & ministry can serve us today and the importance of maintaining connections between and among meetings and yearly meetings; the importance of being a listening presence; analyzing systems that are out of whack, and recognizing our complicity; seeking ways to share with others and learn from others, building towards a society where all are respected and all participate; sending positive energy into the world; learning "to be contemplative loudly"; frequently speaking of the power of transformation and of the possibility of healing; holding a sense of hope & possibility, and knowing we are not the only ones who can hold that sense. A Friend spoke of the positive energy of the women's march, and knowing that those who held signs that "Love Trumps Hate" and "Hate does not make us Great" are our allies whom we should seek out; other Friends spoke of reaching out to our neighbors and finding common ground; that our lives bear witness, loving whoever God puts in our

path; knowing that language makes a difference, and that we can use language to open possibilities in situations where it is being used to narrow possibilities. Who can we support in living out their witness?

5. Support for Listening Friends at Sessions: MCC has been encouraged to consider ways to make the work of the Circle of Care & Concern more accessible. We could make a permanent sign, advising Friends that the green lanyards mean that the Friend is available to listen. During Summer Sessions, Gullen Lounge was used as an initial meeting space, and there were logistical problems if more people came for listening than there were available listeners. Could we have multiple color-coded lanyards for different functionalities? We might liaise with JYM, to encourage JYM volunteers who have the gift of listening to serve in the Circle.
6. Committee Reports.
  - a. Faith and Practice: David Herendeen presented a revised Handbook page for the Committee to Revise Faith & Practice (attached). Friends noted minor corrections and approved the page with the changes as noted.

A Friend raised a query about the readability of our YM documents: can people who have not finished high school understand our written documents? Can someone without a college degree or someone whose native language is not English understand our business minutes? Another Friend raised a concern for how the language of Faith & Practice reflects privilege. We want to be a more open and welcoming society to all people, in all our business and practice. A Friend reflected that we have resources within our religious society to help us make changes; and we are not utilizing the full diversity of those resources. We are challenged to make our meaning precise in simple language. A Friend reflected that our practice of editing from the floor of the YM can exclude others. The commercial standard for accessible language is 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> grade, not 12<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> grade, as are many of our documents.

Friends closed the morning session at 12:25 after a period of silent worship.

The afternoon session began at 2:15 with a period of worship. The recording clerk reviewed the minutes of the morning session. Friends approved the minutes of the morning session.

- b. Ministry and Pastoral Care: Anne Pomeroy reported that M&PC supports

the joint NYYM-NEYM Pastors & Elders retreat, 4/27-30/2017. Friends are invited to share information on that retreat with Friends carrying a concern for pastoral meetings. At Fall Sessions, the committee considered ways to support emerging ministers and leaders.

- c. Spiritual Nurture Working Group: Anne Pomeroy announced upcoming retreats in February and May and invited us to encourage Friends to attend.
  - d. Task Group on Racism: Mary Pugh Clark reported that at their Fall meeting the committee had a lively discussion of their experience of white privilege within and outside the YM. The committee pondered how to introduce multicultural experiences to Friends. Angela Hopkins announced that the Friends Center for Racial Justice in Ithaca is now open, and has been receiving sojourners from across the country. Ithaca Meeting and The Center are united in the care of the call for racial justice; the center's work is under the care of Ithaca meeting. The Center's first event is 2/17-21/17 as a capstone of Ithaca's community reading of Michele Alexander's book, *The New Jim Crow*. The Center is available for committees within and across YMs to meet in. The Center is currently booked through April, and the cost is very affordable, with no one turned away because of cost.
7. Approving the Appointment of Angela Hopkins as MCC representative to Meeting for Discernment Steering Committee. As Angela is not currently a member of Ministry Coordinating Committee, we are happy to coopt her now with the request that Nominating Committee bring her name to the body at Spring Sessions for approval as an at large member. Friends approved coopting Angela and approved her appointment to the Meeting for Discernment Steering Committee.
  8. Jeffrey Aaron reported on the work of the Alternate Membership Pathways working group. Co-clerks are Marissa Badgeley and Jennifer Swan; Jeffrey Aaron is serving as an advisor. The working group is planning a weekend at Powell House June 16-17. The working group is looking for funds for scholarships for the Powell House retreat. Jeffrey noted that the concern for alternate forms of membership is arising in other Yearly Meetings as well. The working group is reaching out to other groups that might wish to attend the retreat. Friends invited the working group to include people of color in their outreach. As one possibility, a Friend invited the working group to consider the formation of a "virtual monthly meeting" under the care of New York Quarter.
  9. Report from Mia on her classes: Irma Guthrie shared an email from Mia Kissil-

Hewitt on her classes at ESR. Mia had been pre-approved for a class next semester but will not be continuing classes at ESR next semester, due to health concerns. She asked whether Friends would be willing to continue to hold those funds for her for later. Friends approved holding the funds, and moved into a period of worship as they held Mia in the Light.

10. Announcement

- a. Irma Guthrie announced that there are 3 Friends in the YM who are currently in the process of being recorded in the Ministry: Beth Kelly, Darlene Farley & Rev. Jeff Jensen.

11. David Herendeen announced that he has been appointed to Ministry at YM Sessions, which has not met and which has no designated clerk. Herb Lape and Beverley Archibald are the other committee members. The Committee has a possibility for a Bible Study leader. The committee is responsible for vespers, worship sharing groups, elders at Sessions, community worship (in coordination with Junior Yearly Meeting), Bible Study, and Coffee, Communion & Conversation. A friend suggested that when a sub-committee is not functioning, it becomes the responsibility of the at-large members of the coordinating committee to help out. Another Friend cautioned that the work of a coordinating committee should not be the work of a sub-committee. A concrete way to support the committee is to sign up ahead of time as elders for sessions. Jeffrey Aaron stated that the Clerk of the Coordinating Committee or the YM Clerk has the authority to call a meeting when a committee is dysfunctional. Friends encouraged David Herendeen to convene a meeting of the committee soon, and encouraged Ministry Coordinating Committee clerk Irma Guthrie to work with Ministry Coordinating Committee members at large to identify potential committee members. Elaine Learnard, as co-clerk of the Nominating Committee, noted that this is a problem across the Yearly Meeting, and that the Nominating Committee had not been able to find additional members. Roger Dreisbach-Williams and Angela Hopkins expressed willingness to work with the Clerk to identify ways to support the committee. Christopher Sammond raised up the need for a clear plan for succession before a committee clerk goes off the committee. He reminded us that the accountability queries can help us in our discernment and planning, and reminded us that the work of this committee is important for the life of our sessions.

12. Friends returned to our discussion of simple language. Christopher mentioned that we have an opportunity to review language Steve Davison has drafted for the website. Friends wished to continue to explore the holy experiment of using clear and simple language in our work and find ways to bring the concern to the

Yearly Meeting body.

13. The recording clerk read the minutes of the afternoon's sessions. Friends approved.
14. The Meeting closed at 4:35 p.m. to join Friends in worship.