

**New York Yearly Meeting
Fall Sessions
November 7-8, 2015**

**Doane Stuart School, Rensselaer, New York
Saturday, November 7, 2015, 9:30 a.m.**

*Lucinda Antrim (Scarsdale), Clerk
Jeffrey Aaron (New Brunswick), Assistant Clerk
Karen Way (New Brunswick), Recording Clerk
Karen Snare (Bullshead-Oswego), Reading Clerk*

2015-11-01. The meeting opened with silent worship.

2015-11-02. The Clerk introduced the members of the clerks' table and reviewed the agenda. The Clerk also reminded Friends to read the Consent Agenda, which will be considered tomorrow.

2015-11-03. Anita Paul (Schenectady) welcomed us on behalf of the Host Committee and thanked individuals for their work in preparing for the gathering. She also expressed appreciation for the excellent facilities at Doane Stuart School. Several visiting Friends introduced themselves.

2015-11-04. Friends stood as their region and meeting were called. All regions were represented.

2015-11-05. In the absence of a copy of his memorial minute, Friends were asked take some time to hold Jim Oltman in the Light. A member of Purchase Meeting, Jim died in July at the age of 84. Friends spoke their loving memories of him.

2015-11-06. Deborah Wood (Purchase), clerk of Nurture Coordinating Committee (NCC), reported on plans for the funds remaining in the Young Friends in Residence (YFIR) program, which was laid down in July 2014. NCC recommended that all of the money in the YFIR fund (\$21,563.52 as of September 30, 2015) be returned to the NYYM operating budget. NCC noted that \$5,000 of that total is already planned for the proposed Children and Youth Secretary. Friends approved the recommendation.

2015-11-07. Matthew Scanlon (Scarsdale), clerk of Financial Services Committee, presented the proposed budget for 2016 (attached). NYYM will need to draw some money from reserves in 2016 in order to implement the Leadings and Priorities. This is not unusual for a non-profit organization starting something new. Matt emphasized the importance of donations and volunteer work for the health of the Yearly Meeting. Projected expenses for 2016 are \$586,723, an increase of approximately \$46,000. Projected revenue from Standard Sources is \$551,282, an increase of \$11,000. The difference of \$35,000 will come from balances in several NYYM funds.

Matt listed the programs that are receiving additional funds, and several Friends came forward to explain expansions and new projects. Matt also noted which managed funds are being accessed to supplement revenue. After a period of questions, clarifications, and suggestions, Friends approved the 2016 Budget.

2015-11-08. Friends also agreed that any surplus from 2015 be transferred to the 2016 Operating Budget as Other Income.

2015-11-09. The minutes were approved up to this point.

2015-11-10. Paula McClure (Montclair), Treasurer of NYYM, reported on the financial state of NYYM as of September 30, 2015 (attached). Income, year-to-date, is \$329,840, 61% of the budgeted \$540,724. Disbursements were \$369,702, or 68% of the budgeted \$540,684. The corresponding numbers for 2014

were provided for comparison. Friends accepted the report. In response to a question on the “green” nature of our deposits, we were informed that NYYM deposits its CDs and money market accounts in the Carver Federal Savings Bank. Headquartered in Harlem, Carver was founded in 1948 to serve African-American communities whose residents, businesses, and institutions had limited access to mainstream financial services.

2015-11-11. Fredrick Dettmer (Purchase) of the NYYM Trustees, introduced Peter Phillips (Cornwall), who described the discovery that NYYM had no By-Laws and the subsequent process of creating them. A first reading of the By-Laws was given at Summer Sessions 2015. In presenting the second reading, Peter reviewed which sections were taken directly from Faith & Practice and which were added for clarification and legal compliance. Friends approved the second reading and thus the new By-Laws.

2015-11-12. Emily Provance (15th Street) reported on her intervisitation with Baltimore Yearly Meeting (BYM) at their yearly meeting sessions in early August 2015. Emily described BYM and their generous hospitality. They have a strong intervisitation program that reaches out to other yearly meetings and wider Quaker bodies. In their annual sessions, BYM tends to have more time in fellowship than NYYM or New England Yearly Meeting, but NYYM spends more time in worship. Emily listed a series of differences she found in BYM, along with some interesting new ideas. She noted that Baltimore and other Quaker groups all seem to be examining ideas around priorities and structure. Emily finished with positive examples of cross-pollination as ideas move from one group to another. Emily’s full report is attached.

2015-11-13. The remaining minutes of this session were approved.

2015-11-14. After announcements, we closed with quiet worship.

Doane Stuart School, Rensselaer, New York

Saturday, November 7, 2015, 1:10 p.m.

Lucinda Antrim (Scarsdale), Clerk

Jeffrey Aaron (New Brunswick), Assistant Clerk

Andrew Mead von Salis (Brooklyn), Recording Clerk

Sylke Jackson (Rockland), Reading Clerk

2015-11-15. The Clerk commenced the meeting at 1:10 in a spirit of worship. She introduced those at the clerks' table and reviewed the afternoon's agenda.

2015-11-16. The Clerk called upon Matthew Scanlon (Scarsdale), clerk of the Financial Services Committee. He introduced a first reading of the new Handbook section on that committee by describing the ways in which the text reflects our Leadings and Priorities as well as current practices and needs. He read the new text in full, and invited comments from individuals at the committee's meeting later today. The reading was received.

2015-11-17. Barbara Menzel (New Brunswick), clerk of the Personnel Committee, introduced two interim, part-time Friends who were currently fulfilling some of the tasks of the Young Adult Field Secretary, Gabrielle Savory Bailey (Chatham-Summit), while her leave of absence continues. Their extensive experience with youth and young adults was reported. Emily Provance (15th Street) will be working with young adults and their meetings. Jillian Smith (Saratoga) will handle communications and media.

2015-11-18. Emily Provance (15th Street) and Rachel Pia (Syracuse), co-clerks of the Meetings for Discernment Steering Committee, came forward. They introduced the new Handbook pages proposed for the Meetings for Discernment and for their Steering Committee, and read the text of each in full, including some history and background as well as purpose and process. Friends' input was invited on these pages also.

2015-11-19. Christopher Sammond (Poplar Ridge), our General Secretary, was invited to present his report. His oral presentation began with what news and hopes he had heard in traveling throughout the Yearly Meeting, which varied depending on who spoke and their circumstances. Amid that variety, an overriding theme was a desire that we "become one Yearly Meeting." He cited a Youth Institute, a Quaker Outreach Roundtable, other outreach and advancement events, and individual and covenant donations to New York Yearly Meeting, as reflecting new enthusiasm for our direction. Attention to earthcare, advance dialogue to prepare for budgeting our new ideas, and keener awareness of our community experience in "moving toward greater Light" were all encouraging signs Christopher saw among us. The report was received.

2015-11-20. Next, Friends heard an announcement from Anne Pomeroy (New Paltz) and Lucy Harper (Rochester), co-clerks of the Spiritual Nurture Working Group. They have been working with six monthly meetings so far to design and present workshops and retreats around the Yearly Meeting, and present the "Tending the Garden" retreat series at Powell House. They distributed for our reference color brochures of their offerings.

2015-11-21. Arlene Johnson (Chatham-Summit), taking the lectern, introduced a presentation by several teens and adults who created an Alternatives to Violence Project program for local area youth in the immigrant community. This was the first AVP youth camp in the nation. In response to news of violence in their New Jersey area, the project grew into an annual AVP summer camp. It has been

supported by groups including our Witness Activities Fund and by 1,800 hours of volunteer labor. Stuart Sydenstricker, an adult coordinator, opened an AVP “Fishbowl” style talk in which teens and a parent spoke their personal impressions and experiences. Specific AVP techniques and lessons have proved powerful, so that self-respect and mutual respect have grown. Seeing this personal benefit has led parents to take a basic AVP workshop. Stuart concluded that Friends can use effectively the AVP experience of the Light working within us in many new settings. Friends moved into some minutes of worship to hold what we had heard.

2015-11-22. The minutes of this session were read, corrected and approved.

Powell House, NYYM's Conference & Retreat Center, Old Chatham, New York

Sunday, November 8, 2015, 10:15 a.m.

Lucinda Antrim (Scarsdale), Clerk

Jeffrey Aaron (New Brunswick), Assistant Clerk

Melanie-Claire Mallison (Ithaca), Recording Clerk

Elaine Learnard (Conscience Bay), Reading Clerk

2015-11-23. Friends gathered in worship.

2015-11-24. Our Clerk introduced those at the clerks' table. She also acknowledged the Elders holding us through-out the room. The Clerk reviewed today's agenda, noting that via a dream she had this morning, she is learning to listen to the Light in new ways, and so the agenda has shifted. Our Clerk invited us all to listen in new ways for The Word.

2015-11-25. Our Reading Clerk read the following poem provided by the Committee on Conscientious Objection to Paying for War:

Conscientious Objector

by Edna St. Vincent Millay

(1934)

I shall die, but that is all that I shall do for Death.

I hear him leading his horse out of the stall; I hear the clatter on the barn-floor.

He is in haste; he has business in Cuba, business in the Balkans, many calls to make this morning.

But I will not hold the bridle while he clinches the girth.

And he may mount by himself: I will not give him a leg up.

Though he flick my shoulders with his whip, I will not tell him which way the fox ran.

With his hoof on my breast, I will not tell him where the black boy hides in the swamp.

I shall die, but that is all that I shall do for Death; I am not on his pay-roll.

I will not tell him the whereabouts of my friends nor of my enemies either.

Though he promise me much, I will not map him the route to any man's door.

Am I a spy in the land of the living, that I should deliver men to Death?

Brother, the password and the plans of our city are safe with me; never through me

Shall you be overcome.

(Edna St. Vincent Millay lived quite close to Powell House, towards the Massachusetts' state line. Her home, like the Shaker sites in the area, is worth visiting.)

2015-11-26. Judy Meikle (Wilton), reporting for the Yearly Meeting Task Group for the White Privilege Conference (April 14-17, 2016, Philadelphia), invited us all to participate actively in the conference, of which NYYM is a host. She told us the many ways many communities of faith are connecting in support of racial justice. She reminded us of our own yearly meeting's work on this

issue. Next April, Judy said, we can continue to put our words into action by getting on the bus and attending the White Privilege Conference. She summarized the workshops of past conferences, giving us a taste of what may happen in April. The conference theme is “*Let Freedom Ring – Reimagining Equity and Justice in the United*” – you will find like-minded people to talk to and explore issues, especially since about two thousand people attend. Judy asked us to consider if we are led to attend and be part of the 100 participants promised from NYYM. The conference is a joyful occasion. Spread the word. Registration opens on Monday, January 18, 2016 (Martin Luther King, Jr. Day). Friends spoke to their support and appreciation of this work. Judy’s full report is attached.

2015-11-26. Judy Meikle (Wilton), reporting for the Yearly Meeting Task Group for the White Privilege Conference (April 14-17, 2016, Philadelphia), invited us all to participate actively in the conference, of which NYYM is a host. She told us the many ways many communities of faith are connecting in support of racial justice. She reminded us of our own yearly meeting’s work on this issue. Next April, Judy said, we can continue to put our words into action by getting on the bus and attending the White Privilege Conference. She summarized the workshops of past conferences, giving us a taste of what may happen in April. The conference theme is “*Let Freedom Ring – Reimagining Equity and Justice in the United States*” – you will find like-minded people to talk to and explore issues, especially since about two thousand people attend. Judy asked us to consider if we are led to attend and be part of the 100 promised from NYYM, and if so, to save the date now and to contact members of the YM Task Group to sign on to the list serve. She also encouraged us to talk up the conference at our Monthly Meetings, asking them to consider sending one – but even better two – people, especially identifying young Friends who would benefit from this work. The conference is a joyful occasion – spread the word. Friends spoke to their support and appreciation of this work. Registration opens on Monday, January 18, 2016 (Martin Luther King, Jr. Day). Judy’s full report is attached.

2015-11-27. Robert (Sunfire) Kazmayer (Easton), speaking for Witness Coordinating Committee, read a “sign on” letter, circulated by the Global Food and Water Watch consortium, protesting hydraulic fracturing (fracking). The full text of the letter is attached. Sunfire also read the cover letter that WCC recommends NYYM attach to the signed statement. Friends spoke in support of the GF&WW letter and approved asking both our Clerk and our General Secretary to sign on.

2015-11-28. NYYM approved our endorsement of the above letter, and our cover letter below. Both will be sent electronically to Global Frackdown to Paris.

The New York Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends meeting (representing eighty-four Quaker meetings and worship groups in New York, New Jersey and Connecticut) at its fall session on November 8, 2015, approved our Yearly Meeting Clerk's and our General Secretary's signing this letter. It is consistent with our stand on hydrofracking and climate change given in the minute (resolution) shown below.

New York Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends Minute on Hydrofracking
Approved Fall Sessions, November 11, 2012.

New York Yearly Meeting has considered the potential consequences of High Volume Hydraulic Fracturing (also known as HVHF, horizontal hydrofracking, or fracking) in New York State. We oppose hydrofracking in New York State and beyond. We urge our political representatives to prohibit the practice of HVHF in New York State. As Quakers, we experience the Divine through loving and truthful relationships with all people and all creation. After extensive efforts to inform ourselves about fracking we have concluded that it is inconsistent with our faith and practices which include a commitment to integrity, community, equality and care of God’s creation. We observe that the natural gas industry and government agencies have

placed financial gain over the health of our communities and the environment. We see no legitimate reason to exempt hydrofracking from existing laws protecting water, air, land, and health, as is currently the case. In other states where horizontal hydrofracking has been performed, it has resulted in the loss of vast amounts of fresh water, the release of toxins into the environment, damage to communities, and cost to the tax payers.

We support legislation and incentives which promote research, development, and use of renewable and sustainable energy; support local farms and farmers; protect the air and water; enforce accountability for industries that risk environmental harm; and create economic policies that promote work for New York State residents that they can do in good conscience. We urge all citizens to thoughtfully consider the long term effects of hydrofracking on the water, land, local economy, infrastructure, services, and the community as a whole. We are encouraged by the many communities coming together to seek a way forward based on truth and respect. We are called to stand against fracking, and invite others to join us in opposition to this practice.

2015-11-29. Karen Snare (Bullshead-Oswego) read an epistle from the Friends General Conference Central Committee, attached. Central Committee has had to face the hard task of reorganizing their programs within the realities of their long-term financial situation. However, FGC will continue to be “a blanket of many colors...and the blanket warms us all.” Friends spoke to their appreciation of the work FGC has done, their concern for staff who have lost their jobs due to the restructuring, and acknowledged the deep listening of all those involved.

2015-11-30. Deb Wood (Purchase) brought a report on behalf of Nominating Committee, including new nominations listed below. These were approved as follows: Friends approved the nominations of those within the NYYM. Friends approved the nomination from outside of the NYYM. Friends accepted the request for release from service.

Committee on Conflict Transformation

Class of 2018

Wilber Bontrager Farmington Friends

Committee of Conflict Transformation

Class of 2018

Mason Barnet PhYM *

NYYM Trustees

Class of 2020

Keith Johnson Chatham Summit

Sessions Committee

Class of 2018

Linda Houser Purchase

Release from Service

Kathleen (Kate) Lawson (New Brunswick) New Jersey Council of Churches, Sessions Committee, Worship at YM

(* by permission of the NYYM)

2015-11-31. The consent agenda, attached, was approved. Friends approved also the nominations of

those being co-opted.

2015-11-32. Claire Simon (Montclair), Spring Fall Sessions Liaison, brought the Sessions Committee report. She offered our thanks to the Host Committee, the Host Region, and the Powell House staff. She reported that 121 adults attended these Fall Sessions, and at least six young friends participated in the Youth Program. During their time together the youth made and served soup at a local homeless shelter, participated in AVP activities, and created an AVP “puzzle” epistle.

2015-11-33. John Cooley (Central Finger Lakes) brought a report from General Services Coordinating Committee, of which he is clerk. First, GSCC has approved the Aging Resources Consultation and Help (ARCH) proposal to Friends Foundation for the Aging for a 2016 grant to continue ARCH’s work in NYYM. Nurture Coordinating Committee, under whose care are the Committee on Aging and ARCH, also reviewed and approved the proposal. Second, GSCC approved the application to Shoemaker Fund for a new three-year grant, for which New England Yearly Meeting is the lead applicant and NYYM is secondary. If approved by Shoemaker, this grant, titled “Fostering Vibrant Multigenerational Meetings,” will be combined with provisions we have in our approved 2016 budget, thereby enabling us to hire a 70% part-time Children and Youth Field Secretary. NYYM Personnel Committee has drafted a job description in hopeful preparation for the awarding of this grant. We should know the decision from Shoemaker within a month. Friends asked for clarification on how grants are created and approved on behalf of the NYYM. John explained that grants, written by a committee and approved by a coordinating committee, are generally intended to provide the Yearly Meeting with an avenue for testing a program or position. As the end of the grant draws near, the Yearly Meeting has the opportunity to evaluate the program or position and decide if it should in some way be sustained via the operating budget. Actual practices may vary according to the original grant-requesting committee’s guidance.

2015-11-34. John then reported GSCC has approved the NYYM Trustees continuing to name a liaison to the Audit Committee (but not the treasurer of the trustees) and has approved associated changes to the Audit Committee’s NYYM Handbook page (attached), which he presented for first reading.

2015-11-35. Mary Eagleson, clerk of Witness Coordinating Committee, brought forward announcements from Witness. A fund is being created in conjunction with the NYYM Treasurer to support friends attending the White Privilege Conference. Anyone can make a donation to this fund and the WPC Hosting Task Group (see minute 2015-11-26 above) is asked to decide on the particulars of the distribution of the funds and announcement of all information on the fund. Second, the Quaker Earthcare Witness line item in the Sharing Fund is laid down, because QEW is a national organization, not a Yearly Meeting committee. Contributions from the YM to QEW will be made via a different line in the Sharing Fund. Third, the NYYM Earthcare Working Group will now have a line in the Sharing Fund, as will European American Quakers Working to End Racism Working Group.

2015-11-36. The minutes were read and approved as amended.

2015-11-37. Friends settled into open worship before adjourning.

ATTACHED REPORTS

[1] APPROVED BUDGET FOR 2016 — [link](#).

[2] TREASURER'S REPORT — [link](#).

[3] NYYM BY-LAWS — [link](#).

[4] EMILY PROVANCE'S BYM REPORT:

**Report on Visit to Baltimore Yearly Meeting Sessions 2015
to New York Yearly Meeting Fall Sessions 2015
submitted by Emily Provance, Fifteenth Street Monthly Meeting**

Dear Friends,

Some of you might not know--I certainly didn't--that Baltimore Yearly Meeting does something really cool. Every summer, they informally ask a number of other yearly meetings to send a representative to their summer sessions, specifically for the purpose of intervisitation. This year, Jeff Hitchcock and Christopher Sammond asked me if I would go. I jumped at the chance, and I spent August 5th through August 9th with Baltimore Friends at Frostburg University in Maryland.

Actually, I've done quite a lot of visiting in the past little while. Since March, I've been to FWCC's Section of the Americas (that's Friends World Committee for Consultation), an event in Ohio sponsored by FUM (that's Friends United Meeting), FGC's gathering in North Carolina (Friends General Conference), our own summer sessions at Silver Bay, New England Yearly Meeting's sessions in New Hampshire, and then Baltimore's sessions. So while I'm going to focus on Baltimore's sessions--since that was what I was asked to report on today--I don't think I can stop myself from also mentioning lessons learned in other places. I'll try not to let it sound too much like "what I did on my summer vacation."

I'll start with the basic stats. Baltimore Yearly Meeting consists of fifty monthly meetings, all unprogrammed, in Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and the District of Columbia. Like New York Yearly Meeting, Baltimore Yearly Meeting is affiliated with FGC, FUM, and FWCC. Baltimore Yearly Meeting runs two summer camps, which are clearly very dear to Friends' hearts, but they have no conference center analogous to Powell House, so most adult Baltimore Friends--if they go to retreats at all--go to Philadelphia Yearly Meeting's Pendle Hill.

Baltimore Yearly Meeting overflows with the gift of hospitality. Baltimore Friends reached out to me by email weeks before their sessions. They helped me plan my travel and met my shuttle van at midnight, after which two Friends walked me across the college campus to my room and even helped me make my bed. Friends sought me out at meals and specifically invited my participation in both business sessions and committee meetings.

Intervisitation has real life in Baltimore Yearly Meeting. Friends there don't just receive visitors; they also send them. The members of Baltimore Yearly Meeting's Intervisitation Working Group visit multiple yearly meeting sessions every summer. They also visit one

another's local meetings pretty frequently.

The desire to meet one another and build relationships extends to Baltimore's approach to the sessions themselves. Each day of the week featured a plenary in which a speaker--often someone from outside Baltimore Yearly Meeting--offered a presentation on either the work of a broader Quaker organization (such as AFSC) or topics related to Friends' social justice concerns (such as the work of one presenter who has developed a new approach to the study of economics, centered in earthcare).

I didn't manage to access a full schedule of youth programs and young adult groups in Baltimore. However, in chatting with one of the "adult presences," I discovered that the teens, at least, have full-day programming in Baltimore Yearly Meeting, starting mid-morning and going into the night. They develop most of their schedule themselves, with adult presences taking part in all of their activities. Baltimore teens hold their own Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business every night at about ten o'clock. Each age group, starting in middle school, has a clerk that reports to the body on the last day.

Many more things are happening in Baltimore that Friends here might find worthy of note. Their Peace and Social Action Committee (roughly analogous to our Witness Coordinating Committee) is experimenting with ways of using the yearly meeting website to enable monthly meetings to connect with one another and coordinate witness efforts.

Their clerk and interim meeting clerk (two different people, as used to be the case in New York Yearly Meeting) have begun hosting conference calls in which committee clerks can share the work of their committees with one another, to prevent redundancy and to allow for committees to build on one another's work. The calls also serve as a way for committee clerks to learn more from one another about best practices of clerking.

Baltimore's approach to writing and revising the committee handbook pages is radically different from our own, and my sense is that it might be considerably more efficient.

And, believe it or not, their business meeting minutes are much longer than ours.

Baltimore Friends had questions for me, too. One Friend was fascinated by our system of covenant donations. Several wanted to know about elders, the function of which is less widely understood in Baltimore. Many asked about our pastoral meetings. A couple wanted to know more about how we manage our State of Society report.

One more thing I found interesting . . . everywhere I went this summer, Friends were talking about their priorities. Most of you know how much time has been devoted to that in New York Yearly Meeting.

Baltimore Yearly Meeting is working on the same thing, although they're approaching it a bit differently, mostly by looking at their yearly meeting culture; they've formed two groups, one called the Growing Diverse Leadership ad hoc working group, the other called the Healthy Organization and Purposeful Evolution Committee. (In case you were frantically trying to figure out that acronym, it spells HOPE.)

New England Yearly Meeting, FWCC's Section of the Americas, FUM, and FGC are also all in

the midst of (or just beginning, or just finishing) considerable restructuring or reprioritizing. What I find strange is that, in all of this work surrounding structure, culture, and organization, there doesn't seem to be an effort to assemble Friends from all these different groups to ask the bigger--and I think, very relevant--question, "What is God's purpose for large Quaker bodies?"

On the whole, visiting Baltimore and attending the other gatherings was an overwhelmingly positive and very educational experience. It also allowed for some great cross-pollination.

In Baltimore, I met a Friend who's exploring the question, "How can the Yearly Meeting Ministry and Counsel Committee best support local meetings?" And I got the chance to come back to New York and put that Friend in contact with someone here who's asking the very same thing. In New England, I met a Friend who's been exploring new approaches to the State of Society Report. I connected her to a Friend serving on our own State of Society Committee. At the FUM gathering in Ohio, I met a Friend that I was later able to recommend as a guest speaker at Friends Seminary. And in the van on the way back to the airport following FWCC in Mexico City, I met a Friend who invited me to an outreach roundtable in April in New Hampshire, which inspired the outreach roundtable held at Shrewsbury on October 10th of this year--which 25 Friends from 18 meetings attended.

God is moving in astounding ways through the entire Religious Society of Friends. I am grateful for the chance to bear witness to some of this movement. I have lots more to share . . . but I promised Cindy I would only take ten minutes, so my time is probably up. I'm excited to continue the conversation with anyone who'd like to do so.

[5] FINANCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE NYYM HANDBOOK PAGE — [link](#).

[6] HANDBOOK PAGE PROPOSED FOR MEETINGS FOR DISCERNMENT — [link](#).

[7] HANDBOOK PAGE PROPOSED FOR THE MEETINGS FOR DISCERNMENT STEERING COMMITTEE — [link](#).

[8] GENERAL SECRETARY CHRISTOPHER SAMMOND'S REPORT — [link](#).

[9] YEARLY MEETING TASK GROUP FOR THE WHITE PRIVILEGE CONFERENCE REPORT.

Good morning Friends

My name is Judy Meikle. I am a member of Wilton Meeting and appointed by the Prisons Committee to the Yearly Meeting Task Group for the White Privilege Conference which is being held in April 2016 in Philadelphia. Our Group is tasked to build a significant presence of New York Yearly Meeting Friends at the conference and I have a few minutes this morning to share with you our sense of excitement and enthusiasm about this task, and why we believe this is a huge opportunity for our Yearly Meeting.

First I want to state why I believe this is a particularly important moment in the movement for racial justice and a time when Quakers are being called to step up.

Last week, I participated in a national tele-conference with more than 100 white leaders from

congregations and faith communities from around the country. The conference was convened by SURJ – the acronym is for Showing Up for Racial Justice – a group that began several years ago in response to a call from people of color requesting that more white folks join in the cause for racial justice and actively show up at events and actions. With attacks on black churches, attacks on students of color in their schools and the ongoing deaths of people of color on our streets at the hands of the police, this call has become increasingly urgent and there is a critical need for white congregations and faith communities to respond.

SURJ leadership reported that what were once small numbers of people among faith communities has now become a flood and they are looking for ways to connect and ways to move from thinking about problems of racial justice to taking collective action. Leaders from different denominations reported how they are using different strategies –focus groups and racial justice potlucks, sharing stories and hosting events. There was a strong desire to connect with congregations of color.

A Quaker from Minnesota spoke of the racial justice work of AFSC and Friends General Conference and how Friends will be significant sponsors of next year's annual White Privilege Conference in Philadelphia.

I was greatly moved by this National inter faith response to the crucial questions asked of us by the Black Lives Matter movement – Questions such as will you show up and support us in our hour of need? Will you step into leadership in your own communities and stand with us as we challenge inequality and injustice? Will you do the hard work necessary to understand our lived experience?

Friends in New York Yearly Meeting have responded to that call in many ways. For example, individual Friends are bearing witness to the systematic racism within the criminal justice system. Friends are standing with the Black Lives Matter movement at rallies and marches protesting police violence. The Yearly Meeting has spoken strongly in support of racial justice and equity, through a minute on racism and white privilege (2009), an Apology to Afro-Descendants (2013), renunciation of the Doctrine of Christian Discovery (2013) followed by a letter to the Pope in 2015 requesting that he too denounce the Doctrine, and a statement in support of Black Lives Matter (2014). At Summer Sessions this year, the numbers in our racial healing worship group swelled during the week from 17 to 35 as we considered how to maintain our faith and spiritual practices in the face of the brutality and despair of racism.

Next April, we can continue our momentum and keep putting our values into action by showing up in powerful numbers at the White Privilege Conference! We are already members of the host team and the task group has begun planning how to get a metaphorical (or literal) busload of New York Yearly Meeting Quakers to Philadelphia!

Let me describe the conference. It is a three-day experience described by facilitators and participants as transformative. It brings together a multi-racial community in an intensive learning environment with workshops from beginner to advanced levels, plenary speakers, film screenings, and spaces to share and learn from each other.

Here's an A-Z sampling from last year's more than 120 workshops:

- Active Listening for Social Justice
- Building Anti-Racist Schools – talking about race and racism with children

- Compassion and Anti-racism
- Disease and Race
- Equity in the Environmental Movement
- Facilitating Difficult Conversations
- Get the Hell Out of Here! – the church leading the way
- How Do We Talk About Privilege – For Real!
- I Can't Breathe – Integrating disability studies into our intersectional anti-racist perspective
- Karate Chops, Nerds and the Asian Invasion
- Learning from the Elderly – Jim Crow's Legacy
- Monologs vs. Dialogs
- Not Whistling Dixie – breaking down the white wall of privilege
- Our Minds – Their Message
- Police Accountability & Citizen Oversight
- Race(ing) to the Border – the Colonial legacy of U.S. immigration policy
- Stop Blaming White People **Let Freedom Ring – Reimagining Equity and Justice in the United**
- Teaching the New Jim Crow
- US Colonialism & White Supremacy in Puerto Rico
- We are Mike Brown – how the lost voices from Ferguson helped spark an international call for justice
- You Mean There's White People In My Movie?

So who might attend the White Privilege conference? The theme of the conference in April is **States**. All Friends with a concern for peace and justice and equity will have a reason to attend.

Friends witnessing for indigenous peoples' rights, LGBTQ concerns, earthcare – you Friends will surely find the conference of interest. Friends engaged in youth ministry and working in education, involved with immigration issues or conflict transformation – you will find like-minded people to talk to. This conference is a really good place for Friends who are beginning to think about white privilege and what they can do. You will not be alone if this is your first step into anti-racist work and challenging inequality.

What are the details?

- Dates - Friday April 15 to Sunday April 17 2016.
- Separate Youth Action Project for high school youth meets Friday and Saturday then joins the main conference on Sunday.
- Registration opens on Monday January 18 (MLK day).
- 2000-2500 available registrations could sell out fast. Register early!!
- Register through the FGC website. They offer a substantial discount on the full conference fee of \$375. Last year the FGC rate was \$184
- Other costs that Friends will need to budget for are travel, accommodation and food.
- FGC is working on ways to keep these costs down including local hospitality.

What do we ask of you at this time?

- First ask yourself if you are led to attend the conference.
- If the answer is maybe, be sure to let a member of the Task Group know and sign up for

regular email updates by contacting Jeff Hitchcock.

- Save the date
- Help us get the word out.
 - Take information back to your Monthly Meetings. There is a flyer available on the table.... And a packet has already been mailed to every Meeting Clerk.
 - Encourage people to attend the conference and to sign up for the email updates. Ask that the Meeting identify at least one, preferably two people to attend the conference.
 - In particular, ask if there are high school youth who are interested in attending. Mike and Chris are planning to take a group from Powell House so that is an exciting option. Contact them for more details
 - Identify sources of funding within your Monthly Meeting to help support Friends who are expressing an interest in attending the conference.
 - Friends may need financial help in the form of scholarships. Donations to assist Friends with the cost of attendance can be made to the Yearly Meeting. Please write checks to NYYM and write WPC in the memo line.

Friends, please listen to how spirit is moving among us. How are we hearing the call from communities of color to show up for racial justice? One way we can do this is to gather together in a critical mass in Philadelphia in April. As you spread the word about the White Privilege Conference, please know that the gathering is a joyful one. It is not an atmosphere of blame and shame but a coming together to celebrate the work that we all do to fight inequality. Thank you for all that you do and for your support of the conference.

[10] TEXT OF ORGANIZATIONAL SIGN ON LETTER

Organizational Sign-On Letter

Dear Head of State/Parliamentarian:

As the Conference of Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Paris (COP 21) approaches, we implore you to take bold action. This means not just setting emissions -reduction targets, but also by explicitly addressing the fundamental, science-based need to keep fossil fuels in the ground. Specifically, we call on you to reject hydraulic fracturing (fracking) and the use of acidization for oil and natural gas production and all of the related infrastructure.

Last December, Governor Cuomo of New York finalized a review of the health impacts of fracking and moved to ban the practice in his state. This move followed the lead of countries such as France and Bulgaria, which have also banned fracking. Such precaution is a response to mounting scientific evidence concerning the negative impacts of fracking, which include air and water pollution, public health problems, and earthquakes, not to mention the significant impacts that frac sand mining, pipelines, and other infrastructure projects have on communities, the environment, and public health.

With respect to climate impacts, it is true that burning natural gas produces less carbon dioxide than does burning coal or oil. For this reason, fracked gas has been touted as

having climate benefits and billed as a bridge fuel.[\[1\]](#) However, the reality is that fracked gas is a bridge to climate chaos with no exit in sight. There are three basic reasons why.

First and foremost, increased natural gas use in the electricity sector does not just displace other fossil fuels, it also displaces cleaner solutions, such as solar, wind and energy efficiency. These solutions are paramount to meeting the climate challenge, yet fracking and an expanded energy infrastructure based on gas will continue to forestall their deployment.

Second, more natural gas, and thus more of the potent greenhouse gas methane, is leaking from well sites and pipelines than previously thought, and methane is a more powerful greenhouse gas than previously understood.[\[2\]](#) As a consequence, the increase in methane emissions that comes with using natural gas instead of other fossil fuels offsets, and may outpace, the decrease in carbon dioxide used to justify switching to natural gas.

Third, setting aside the industry's problems with methane leaks and looking at carbon dioxide alone, extracting and burning fracked gas threatens to release significantly more carbon dioxide than the world can afford. To avoid the irreversible effects of climate change, almost all of the natural gas that could be extracted by fracking must actually stay underground, unburned. That is the case even if aggressive global action is taken to wind down the use of oil and coal.

To illustrate this final point, it is widely accepted that no more than one-third of proven reserves of fossil fuels can be consumed prior to 2050 if the world is to have a better than 50-50 chance of avoiding 2 degrees Celsius of warming. But there are two ways in which this statistic understates the problem. First, it is only based on proven reserves — before accounting for most of the fracked gas, fracked oil, Arctic oil and tar sands oil now targeted. Almost all of this oil and gas must stay underground. Second, the estimate of “unburnable” proven reserves derives from dated climate science, and the 2-degree threshold is too permissive. Now, climate science is clear that surpassing even 1.5 degrees of warming will lead to unacceptable impacts, particularly in the Global South.

Put simply, we cannot afford to continue down an energy path that relies on fossil fuels if we are to maintain the stability of our climate and the health of the planet. Despite this fact, vested interests have succeeded in convincing many governments that fracking for shale gas is a harmless “bridge fuel” toward renewables. This is a dangerous and deeply flawed point of view.

The world is facing a climate crisis that has already brought devastating impacts that will only escalate to catastrophic levels without swift action. Fracking amounts to inaction, and it is anathema to developing sustainable energy systems available to all and premised on the efficient use of safe, abundant, affordable and renewable energy resources, subject to regional conditions and constraints.

At the Paris climate summit, it must be made clear that fracking for shale gas, tight gas, coalbed methane and tight oil, as well as other extreme fossil fuel extraction methods, are incompatible with climate stability. We implore you to support a ban on fracking and related processes, both as national policy and toward international agreements, and to make explicit the need to maximize the amount of fossil fuels to be kept underground and unburned.

Sincerely,

[11] FRIENDS GENERAL CONFERENCE CENTRAL COMMITTEE EPISLTE:

Epistle: Central Committee
October 25, 2015

To Friends Everywhere;

This weekend, over 130 Friends from fifteen yearly meetings and several directly affiliated monthly meetings gathered at the Pearlstone Retreat Center in Reisterstown, Maryland, to discern the future direction of Friends General Conference. We had hard choices to make. We had hoped to be talking about extending and expanding our programs. Instead, we spent the weekend deciding how to strengthen our fiscal foundations in the wake of a feasibility study that lifted up questions about how we use our resources.

We have come to realize that Friends General Conference cannot continue to rely on infusions of wealth from periodic fundraising campaigns, and must learn to make do with what comes in each year to our annual fund, supplemented by prudent spending from our reserves. Although this lesson has been a painful one, we feel confident in moving forward that we are approaching solid ground. We have agreed on program cuts that will bring us closer to a balanced budget, and are committed to living into a long-term sustainable budget. We know that the process of periodically pruning programs and refining goals is normal and natural, and we have seen other Quaker organizations go through a similar process in the past few years.

We have chosen to focus on three main goals: fostering and nourishing collaboration among yearly and monthly meetings, growing and strengthening the Religious Society of Friends, and fostering more inclusive community. We are regretfully laying down our Traveling Ministries Program, and will be unable to continue Quaker Quest and New Meetings, which were funded by grants that have now run out. We will be discontinuing our self-publishing program, QuakerBridge. Couple Enrichment, which has been under FGC's care for 47 years, will continue as a largely independent project. We have approved these changes with a heavy heart, understanding the impact these decisions will have on Friends who use the programs, the devoted volunteers who provide ministry and witness through them, as well as the impact on our beloved staff who have helped coordinate and carry out the work.

Nevertheless, we face the future with faith and hope. Most of the services offered by FGC are still available to Friends, as are the resources developed by past programs. QuakerBooks required less of a subsidy than expected this year and seems to be growing stronger in its new premises at Pendle Hill. In addition to the traditional book tables, it is partnering with Quaker and Fair Trade vendors to offer new kinds of merchandise. Our new Spiritual Deepening program will soon be available to monthly meetings everywhere. The Quaker Cloud is beginning to reach its potential as a Quaker web collaborative, responsive to Quaker needs, and is providing services to a growing number of meetings. The FGC Gathering this past summer attracted far more Friends than expected, and our 2016 Gathering in St. Joseph, Minnesota promises to be just as wonderful. Our diversity work also continues, and we are actively preparing for the White Privilege Conference in Philadelphia in 2016 as part of the hosting team.

This year at Central Committee, we devoted an evening to exploring and reflecting on the continuing destructive impact of the Doctrine of Discovery and the efforts that are being made by people of faith, including a number of our yearly and monthly meetings, to have it renounced.

As the governing body of Friends General Conference, we are committed to shepherding FGC to a sustainable future, so that it can serve the Religious Society of Friends for years to come. We might think of FGC as a blanket of many colors, knitted by many hands. Though some colors of yarn are added over time and others dropped, the work is never lost, and the blanket warms us all. We have been humbled and strengthened by our experience this weekend, and look forward to faithfully carrying forward the work and ministry of Friends General Conference.

[12] CONSENT AGENDA, Fall Sessions, NYYM, 2015

1] The Committee on Conscientious Objection to Paying for War is laid down and is replaced with a working group. Approved by Witness Coordinating Committee. For more information, contact Mary Eagleson, Clerk, Witness Coordinating Committee.

2] Nominations:

MCC

Ministry and Pastoral Care

Class of 2018

Emily Provance 15th Street

State of Society

Class of 2018

Marissa Badgley Poughkeepsie

GSCC

Communications

Class of 2018

Miranda von Salis Brooklyn

Development Committee

Class of 2016

Radames (Ray) Rios ('15) Catskill (attender, co-opted)*

Susan Weisfeld ('15) Scarsdale

Karen Tibbals ('15) Rahway & Plainfield

Class of 2018

Sandra Beer Old Chatham

Sara Niccoli Brooklyn

John Choe Flushing

NCC

Epistle

Class of 2018

Rima Segal Rochester

Oakwood Friends School Board of Managers

Class of 2018

William Reagan ('15) Easton

Elsie K. Powell House

Class of 2020

Anna Staab Brooklyn

Jillian Smith Saratoga

Young Adult Concerns Committee

Class of 2016

Mauricio Alexander Brooklyn (attender, co-opt)*

Class of 2017

Isabella Aguirre Purchase

WCC

Indian Affairs

Class of 2018

Joseph Kulin ('12) Saratoga

National Religious Campaign Against Torture

Class of 2018

Judy Meikle Wilton

Quaker Earthcare Witness

Class of 2016

Pamela Boyce Sims ('15) Hudson (attender, co-opted)*

(* by permission of the NYYM)

3] Corrections:

Two Friends were incorrectly listed in the Summer Sessions consent agenda as having new terms starting following Summer Sessions. These Friends were in the midst of existing terms and should not have been shown as starting in a new class. Friends are asked to approve this confirmation of the correct information as to their committee classes:

Indian Affairs

Class of 2017

Rebekah Rice Saratoga

Friends World Committee for Consultation

Class of 2017

Gloria Thompson Manhattan

[13] AUDIT COMMITTEE NYYM Handbook Page — [link](#).