

Report on Meeting for Discernment – 2/26/2011 – Plainfield Meetinghouse

We met around the query, sent to Meetings in advance: “What concrete things have you been doing to help realize that which God is calling forth?” We heard responses from more than two dozen meetings. We joined in gathered worship and at the end of the day we can say:

The work of building community continues – it never ends. We have been commissioned to seek deeper faithfulness, purer love, and greater joy. We have also experienced worship that can readily be described as grounded in love or as Christ present - suffusing us with Spirit, lighting us on fire, sending each of us into the silence to find that part of the work which is ours to do. Some will be truth-tellers, others will be truth-listeners; some will build meetings, others will maintain them, some will welcome new Friends in while others will go out into the world.

Friends spoke of meetings that are growing, physically, spiritually, in participation, outreach and witness. There are meetings on the edge of something new that want to hear from others about their experiences.

The time of lamenting the diminished size of our meetings seems to be passing. We heard from Friends who are getting out and doing the work of making their meetings vital places within large communities, places that Friends want to tell others about and invite them to share the experience. It is time to be joyful and enthusiastic about being a Friend, time to laugh and praise God with genuine gratitude.

A Friend spoke to the condition of many present: In listening to tape recordings made by the founders of his meeting, he learned that they had the same challenges and concerns that the meeting faces today – building community, becoming more faithful, and leading lives of integrity. He sees this as a cause for comfort rather than discouragement. “The work we are about today is what Friends have always been about. Those we remember as eminent Friends dealt with them just as we are doing today. Our doubts and concerns were theirs as well. And we are just as capable of being faithful as they were.”

Some Friends spoke of feeling that they had beheld the burning bush which is not consumed; shared the bread of heaven; been offered the light of faith and hope which overcomes all doubt and despair. We experienced God’s love and truth. We’ve been shown that we no longer have to accept the status quo as being OK. We’ve been asked to leave this room transformed, carrying forth whatever part of today’s message is ours. The challenges are great but together we can meet them with confidence and joy.

The next Meeting for Discernment will be on Tuesday, July 19, 2011, during the week of NYYM Summer Sessions. We hope you will join us.

The Meetings for Discernment Steering Committee: *Janet Hough (clerk, Chappaqua), Ann Davidson (Farmington), Lu Harper (Rochester), Carolyn Emerson (Conscience Bay), Elizabeth Edminster (15th Street), Roger Dreisbach-Williams (Rahway/Plainfield), Heather Cook (Chatham-Summit; NYYM clerk), Christopher Sammond (Bulls Head-Oswego/Poplar Ridge; NYYM General Secretary)*