

Old Chatham Monthly Meeting Of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)

P.O. Box 165
Old Chatham, NY 12136
USA

10 July 2016

Deb Wood, Clerk NYYM Nurturing coordinating Committee
3217 Kendal Way,
Sleepy Hollow, NY 10591

Dear Deb Wood and NC Committee,

Attached is the minute and the introduction approved by OCMM 10 July 2016. A hard copy will follow by snail mail. Mary Lou Peck, Clerk

2016-07-01: The Meeting approved the minute as follows:

Old Chatham Monthly Meeting remains deeply troubled by the issues of discrimination represented by the personnel policies of Friends United Meeting, as we have been for decades. We have unity as a Meeting in recognizing the great injustice of FUM's discriminatory hiring policy. In expression of our discomfort with FUM's *personnel* policy, OCMM discontinued its direct financial support of FUM nearly a decade ago. *Members of Old Chatham Meeting recently met with Colin Saxton, FUM General Secretary, to discuss the matter. While we understand there is lack of unity within the FUM board relative to the personnel policy, there has as yet been no change in the policy.*

Currently, some among us feel strongly that all concerned will best be served were New York Yearly Meeting to continue engagement with FUM, witnessing to equality and justice. Many others within OCMM are disheartened and discouraged that discrimination and exclusion continue to be a part of the FUM personnel policy, which affects not only lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered and queer staff and volunteers, but also co-habiting unmarried heterosexuals who wish to serve through FUM.

We are deeply troubled that our financial covenant with NYYM includes allocations for FUM, and feel that this underwriting of discrimination must end. Despairing of the possibility for long-overdue change within FUM, many feel strongly that, as a matter of integrity to core Quaker beliefs as reflected in the testimonies *upheld in NYYM's Faith and Practice*, we must entirely dissociate from FUM.

While called to distance ourselves from discriminatory FUM policies, OCMM desires to recognize the important work done by programs under FUM's care. In that two of our members have served at Ramallah Friends School, we are aware of this witness to equality in education and to peace in the face of war, and we see it as worthy of support.

Our witness to justice and equality is not intended to be a form of punishment or financial pressure on FUM. Rather, it is an embodiment of OCMM's beliefs regarding human dignity, civil rights, morality, and self-respect, and is Spirit-led action reflecting our best intentions to live up to the Light given us.

As we continue seeking a way forward, we hold New York Yearly Meeting in the Light, even as we ask to be held. We trust that, as we continue to worship and witness and wait together, way will open and we will continue to live in a spirit of reconciliation and in unity with the Spirit.

Old Chatham Monthly Meeting minutes its intentions with regard to our relationship with Friends United Meeting:

- 1) **Beginning with our next covenant payment to New York Yearly Meeting, Old Chatham MM instructs our Treasurer to deduct the amount which we understand would be forwarded to Friends United Meeting;**
- 2) **OCMM will redirect the FUM portion of our NYYM covenant as a contribution to the Ramallah Friends School;**
- 3) **OCMM will support individual Friends who, as a matter of conscience, presently wish in no way to support FUM programs; our Treasurer will deduct a corresponding amount from our contribution to Ramallah Friends School;**
- 4) **OCMM encourages NYYM Nominating Committee to seek qualified self-identified LGBTQ Friends to serve on the FUM Board.**
- 5) **OCMM requests that NYYM continue to labor with the discriminatory issues which so trouble us, and to consider whether continued financial support of and membership in FUM is in keeping with NYYM testimonies and the Light given us.**

2016-07-02: The Clerk is charged with communicating this minute and the preamble, to the Nurture Coordinating Committee of the NYYM, with a copy to be sent to Brooklyn Monthly Meeting, as well as to the Clerk of Northeast Regional Meeting.

2016 - 07 - 03: Old Chatham Monthly Meeting approves that the Treasurer begin withholding 1% of our NYYM covenant donation in support of minute 2016-07-01, subject to adjustment as the identified line items are clarified, utilizing input from the Finance Committee and others as appropriate.

EC: Clerk, Brooklyn Monthly Meeting
Clerk, Northeast Regional Meeting.

In peace
Mary Lou Peck, Clerk OCMM