

## **Piedmont Friends Yearly Meeting Representatives Annual Report Ninth Month 2020**

The fifth annual session of Piedmont Friends Yearly Meeting (PFYM) met via Zoom Video Conferencing on July 24-26, 2020. Due to the pandemic, our usual in-person gathering set for March 27-29, 2020 had been canceled. This virtual gathering brought together Friends from eight of the nine member monthly meetings and worship groups: Chapel Hill, Charlotte, Eno Friends of Hillsborough, Fancy Gap in Virginia, New Garden, Raleigh, Salem Creek, and Upstate in South Carolina. We welcomed visitors from Davidson, Swannanoa Valley Meetings and from Noblesville Meeting of Western Yearly Meeting. We missed Friends from Abington Meeting who were unable to attend.

We reflected on the weekend's query, *"What opportunities do Quakers find in the pandemic and the current awakening to injustice for creating the world we seek?"* We extend our deepest thanks to the team of volunteers from Chapel Hill Friends Meeting, Jeff Brown, Naveed Moeed, and Quaker Harmon, who provided technical support for the ZOOM conference calls throughout the weekend. The retreat registration totaled 114 adults.

After opening worship Friday evening, participants were sorted into small groups to reflect on queries about what impact the pandemic and the Black Lives Matter movement has had on their meetings, their communities, and themselves. Friends shared their pain and anguish as well as their hope and resolve.

Saturday morning Liz Nicholson and Hilary Burgin, Friends from Quaker Voluntary Service, led participants in a workshop tied to the weekend's theme. Their listening exercise, which centered on the query *"What is Spirit's call to you in this moment?"* was rich, deep and powerful. Sunday's presentation on advocacy tools for connecting with legislators, provided by Bobby Trice (Friends Meeting of Washington and Friends Committee on National Legislation) and Christine Ashley (Eno Friends Meeting of Hillsborough and Friends Committee on North Carolina Legislation [FCNCL]), was informative and well attended. Friends gained useful knowledge and strengthened their skills to complete important work.

To prepare for the Saturday afternoon Annual Sessions, Sally Freeman and Paul Klever, Co-Clerks, sent reports as advance documents to allow us to focus on community building during this time of quarantine. They included the Clerk's Report, Communications Committee Report, Nominations Report, Statistics and Spiritual Condition Reports, and reports from Quaker organizations.

Henry Schneider opened the Annual Sessions by reading the PFYM Mission Statement.

*"As a Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, we seek to foster a loving community of affiliated monthly meetings and worship groups by increasing and strengthening connections among members, attenders, and seekers and with other Friends' organizations. Our primary goals are to nurture monthly meetings and worship groups by supporting spiritual growth and to witness to our collective truth in the wider world."*

An epistle committee was appointed consisting of Alice Carlton, Leslie Rountree and Sue Adley-Warrick (Raleigh). This summary of the annual meeting was approved at the August Interim Meeting and will be distributed widely to Friends.

Highlights from the Co-Clerks' report included a pilgrimage to Philadelphia in May 2019, the

establishment and activities of the PFYM Executive Committee, the Piedmont Friends Fellowship (PFF) Fall Retreat, the activities of the Interim Meeting (IM) including fellowship with NC Fellowship of Friends at IM November meeting, the first Zoom calls for PFYM Meeting Clerks, and PFYM Clerk's activities engaging with the wider world of Quakers. We approved the new position of PFYM Representative to FCNCL.

This year we expressed appreciation for the work of Friends Committee on North Carolina Legislation (FCNCL) whose formation was approved at last year's Annual Sessions and is now fully functional. We encourage Friends to visit [fcncl.org](http://fcncl.org) and sign up for action alerts.

PFYM Nominating Committee, clerked by our own Leslie Rountree, gave its report. We approved the appointment of Sally Freeman and Paul Klever (Eno) as rising Co-Clerks, Gary Hornsby (Salem Creek) as Assisting Clerk, Alice Carlton (Chapel Hill) as Recording Clerk, and Marian Beane (Charlotte) as Clerk of the Communications Committee. We also approved Marian Beane as PFYM Rep to FCNCL.

One of the most meaningful parts of our time together was the sharing out of the silence our responses to the query: *What has been most on the hearts of your meeting this year? And What is on your heart, in awareness of the pandemic and the awakening to racial injustice?* We also remembered those who have passed from our midst during this year.

Chapel Hill Representatives attend four PFYM Interim Meetings in June, August (jointly with PFF Reps), November, and February to take care of business and plan the PFYM Annual Meeting.

The August Interim Meeting approved a letter of support and condolences from PFYM to Friends at Brummana Friends Meeting in Beirut following the tragic events there. The letter and response are in this month's CHFM newsletter.

We value the fellowship we enjoyed this weekend and opportunities to strengthen and deepen our connections with each other. Serving as meeting representatives to PFYM is a fulfilling role, and we urge others in Chapel Hill Meeting to consider this in the future.

Submitted by Representatives: Alice Carlton, Leslie Rountree, Ann Miller