

To All Friends Near and Far:

Greetings from the second annual sessions of the Sierra Cascades Yearly Meeting of Friends. We met in Canby, Oregon near the overlap of the Molalla and Atfalati Kalapuya native lands. Thank you to all who have been holding our ongoing formation in the Light of Love. We deeply appreciate the encouragement and visitors you have sent our way.

Our times of worship preparation were facilitated by Matt Boswell of Camas Friends and focused on three times of sitting with queries and scripture. In our opening night we sat with the queries “To whom do I need to pay attention?” And “To whom do we need to pay attention?” This we heard in conjunction with Mark 10:46-52. On our second day we prepared for our first business session with the queries “Who is our responsibility? What is our responsibility to them?” and the scripture (Matthew 15:21-28). On our last day we sat with the queries “What do I need to learn to more faithfully and effectively care for others? What do we need to learn to more faithfully and effectively care for others?” and the scripture (Luke 4:38-40) These queries and scriptures helped focus us on our call as we looked at the possibilities of connecting to other Friends organizations.

In our business and committees, we are working on establishing our organizational DNA and on holding space for healing from the traumas of the past. Our speaker for the weekend, Benigno Sanchez-Eppler, under the care of New England Yearly Meeting, shared with us in a way that spoke to our condition of bravely facing into the work of healing. His words were a balm to our souls, reminding us of the ways in which we can draw upon our experiences of wounding to better carry the healing light to others among us.

Benigno shared the image of quilts he had seen, made by North Seattle Friends Church from scraps and rejects to show how beauty can come from a place of feeling or being cast-off. We are indeed experiencing the pains of our birth. At times, we feel fear and pain when we long for hope and joy. We are like a collection of tattered remnants, and we cannot imagine how we could be made into a beautiful whole. Some worry that essential pieces will be thrown out and beloved individuals fear they won't fit our new shape knowing personally the deep pain of exclusion. We sometimes fear the loss of connections to our past traditions that have given life. Benigno reminded us that our crisis is not over, because crises are a part of life that will continue into our future. Yet as we choose to trust in the master quilter, we find hope. We are indeed being made into a beautiful whole. Our rough edges are being knit together and nothing is wasted. We lift up our hearts and trust, knowing that the destination is not yet clear, and are learning that trust is all the Lord requires of us. We pray that this alone will be a witness in this broken world.

We are also doing the difficult work of considering how to be affiliated with Friends organizations in the wider world. Our ministries have been grown and nurtured through life-giving relationships with other Friends' bodies and this is a source of joy and love for our

Friends globally. Yet we are clear in our commitment to be fully Christ-centered, fully Quaker, and fully inclusive (of all people including LGBTQ+), and any organizational affiliation must not hinder our call. In our times of listening about whom we may be called to affiliate with we are trying to be attentive to the voice of the Spirit without allowing that voice of the Light of Love to be filtered through the distorting effects of our birthing pain. During our time of listening we found clarity to join with the work of Friends World Committee for Consultation and Friends Committee for National Legislation.

As Benigno shared about the ragged scraps, we consider that maybe the best church is a quilt.

Wishing you Light and Love on Your Journey

Cherice Bock Co-clerk

Sarah Katreen Hoggatt Co-clerk

Sierra Cascades Yearly Meeting of Friends

*Epistle Committee:*

*Gil George (Clerk)*

*Jade Souza*

*James Hibbs*

*Ministers Recorded:*

We are overjoyed to record our witness of the giftings of the following ministers:

Cherice Bock: Call to prophetic ministry of education and activism for social justice.

Matt Boswell: Call to both pastoral and academic ministries that create communities who are growing in their expressions of love for God and neighbor.

Ruba Byrd: Call to pastoral care—counseling, chaplaincy, spiritual direction-- with a heart for peace and justice.

Patty Federigi: Call to quilting ministries of healing and mercy both in the Pacific Northwest and internationally in Burundi and Congo.

Leann Williams: Calling to pastoral care and healing body work through massage therapy.