

SIERRA-CASCADES YEARLY MEETING OF FRIENDS

DRAFT MINUTES

*Quarterly Gathering – October 28, 2023
Eugene Friends Church, Eugene, Oregon, and online*

Opening

After a period of centering worship, Yearly Meeting co-clerk Norma Silliman (Camas Friends) welcomed Friends and prayed that we would be Spirit-guided in our work together.

We send our love to Erin Craig, co-clerk (direct member) who had intended to be here in person but had to change plans at short notice to accompany Eli Craig to Seattle in response to a family situation. Sarah Katreen Hoggatt (direct member) is at the clerks' table to support the clerks in Erin's absence. We rejoice in Eli's and Erin's marriage two weeks ago. **We minute our recognition that Erin's surname is now Craig.**

Norma Silliman opened our meeting for worship for business by acknowledging the indigenous people of this area who cared for this land before today's majority population arrived and claimed ownership.

Sarah Sarah Katreen Hoggatt continued with this information:

Eugene and the Willamette Valley area are the ancestral homelands of the Kalapuya Indian Tribe along with others—the Chelamela, the Winefelly, the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians, the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, the Cayuse, the Umatilla, and the Walla Walla, and likely others as well. Native peoples inhabited western Oregon for thousands of years before European settlers arrived. Today the Kalapuya are part of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde and are reclaiming their language and life-ways.

This land acknowledgment is only one step in remembering the people whose land we are on. It does not replace the need for additional work toward right relationship with Indigenous Peoples or reparations.

Quaker business is done in worship, walking through the process together as a spiritual community, listening for God's will for us to be clear. (We ask ourselves: Is this message for you, an individual/small group, or the whole group gathered today?) We appreciate Gil George's reminder for us to make space for people whose voices are not heard as often as others.

Norma gave guidance for Friends present in person and attending on Zoom who wish to be called on by the clerks. When we speak, we are asked to introduce ourselves by our names, church membership or direct membership, and our pronouns or related preferences.

Welcoming youth, visitors and first-time attenders

We welcomed Espen Bock (direct member, North Valley Friends) to speak on behalf of young Friends. Espen read the following report from last night's Dungeons and Dragons event, and described its specific Quaker flavor.

Hello friends! Last night a group of young friends and adult friends met for meeting for worship for Dungeons and dragons. We all agreed afterward that it was a great success. We had 5 players and a leader, called a Dungeon Master. We all worked together to tell a story of magic, kindness, and peace. The unique Quaker ness of this was that all our characters were pacifists, which lead to creativity and new experiences. We communicated and laughed together as we progressed through the story. The amount of dialogue and speed (or lack thereof) on each and every decision was very reminiscent of other Quaker meeting for worship services we'd attended, albeit with a different goal in mind. 3 of our players were relatively or completely new to DND, and all 3 said afterward that it had been a great experience. We are thankful we got this opportunity and space to make this event happen, and would love to make it a regular occurrence. Thank you friends.

We received this report with gratitude for the successful event and those who participated and helped with the hosting.

Norma read a travel minute from Berkeley Friends Church, introducing Micah Bales and Steve Sims.

Dear Friends of Sierra-Cascades Yearly Meeting (SCYM)

Grace and peace to you in the Spirit!

The bearers of this travel minute are Micah Bales and Steve Sims. Micah is one of the pastors of Berkeley Friends Church, and Steve is clerk of the meeting (church). The intent of their visit to the SCYM quarterly meeting is that our two groups get to know each other better and gain discernment about possible closer ties between our two bodies, as well as extending the hand of fellowship and strengthening bonds of love and mutual concern between SCYM and Berkeley Friends Church.

In the precious name of our Savior,

(signed)

Dorothy Kakimoto, assistant clerk
Berkeley Friends Church

We received this letter from Berkeley Friends Church and welcomed Micah and Steve.

Joe Snyder (Multnomah Friends Meeting, North Pacific Yearly Meeting, he/him) introduced himself. He was among those helping with last night's youth gathering with a concern for Dungeons and Dragons.

Appointment of a representative for Friends World Committee for Consultation's World Gathering next year

Gil George (West Hills Friends Church and on the staff of FWCC Section of the Americas, he/him) explained the plans for the FWCC's World Plenary Meeting, August 5-12, 2024. Gil spoke about its theme, "Living the Spirit of Ubuntu: Responding with hope to God's call to care for creation and one-another," about its online component, and about the young adult Friends gathering that will precede it (August 1-5). Each yearly meeting is asked to appoint one person as a designated online participant and one person to attend in South Africa. Other online participants may also

sign up, and there are 100 places set aside for at-large participants on a first-come, first-served basis. More complete information is at this Internet site: <https://fwcc.world/wpm/>

Cherice Bock (direct member; North Valley Friends Church) commented on the environmental impact of travel related to FWCC and similar experiences. The emissions that come from our airplane flights go directly into the atmosphere, and our planet's carbon budget is exhausted. There has to be a point where Friends say "no, we can't participate in this destruction anymore." Where is the balance between the blessings of personal attendance and the recognition of the harm of carbon-fueled travel? Can we exercise the discipline of making meaningful carbon-offsetting commitments, such as committing to a vegetarian diet or foregoing a number of other trips, for each instance where we nevertheless choose to do this kind of travel?

A Friend summed up the decision facing us concerning our World Plenary Meeting participation: We might choose to have a participant in South Africa for the in-person event, or we might forgo such an appointment. On appointing such a participant, a Friend asked: Can those who already plan to attend from our yearly meeting based on their staff or committee duties choose a representative from among them for our Yearly Meeting's one allocated in-person space? Alternatively, do we need to await a nomination from the Nominating Committee?

Other questions that were raised:

In view of climate change awareness: How do we weigh the importance of an in-person participant coming home and sharing their experience with the rest of us, compared with online participation by a number of others? Whom do we trust to make that judgment? Additional consideration: the potential impact of an event such as the World Plenary for someone under 30.

What consideration had Friends World Committee itself given to this concern? Gil George responded that the delay in scheduling this gathering, and the limitation of attendance to one person per yearly meeting, resulted from discussions within FWCC about climate impact. FWCC has also proposed "hubs" for Friends to gather locally and share virtual attendance so that they would have a group sense of participation without long-distance travel.

A Friend added that there would be an environmental cost attached to forgoing opportunities for understanding other people's viewpoints. When people don't experience other people's stories and situations, grievous conflicts can result, with environmental consequences. We should take the time needed to understand how FWCC reached the mixed conclusion that it did.

It was suggested that interested Friends could provide Judy Maurer and the Communications Committee with the information we might need to make good decisions on our World Plenary participation, and put that information into the Yearly Meeting's newsletter. No decisions were minuted on this concern today.

Nominating Committee

Matt Boswell (Camas Friends, he/him) commented on our previous willingness to appoint representatives to organizations we do not have formal affiliation with. He reported the following nomination: Johan Maurer for Friends Peace Teams, and summarized the mission of Friends Peace Teams as presented on their Web site, <https://friendspeaceteams.org/>

Johan Maurer (Camas Friends) explained that being appointed by a yearly meeting would mean being eligible to participate in FPT governance beyond FPT's Europe Group where he is presently active. One Friend raised a caution: What does it mean for us as Sierra-Cascades Yearly Meeting of Friends to appoint a representative who would have a governance role? Would there be an implication that we are potentially intervening in the governance of an organization with which we are not affiliated? Johan responded that, in his activities with FPT governance, if it comes to that, he would not represent himself as acting on behalf of our Yearly Meeting. His appointment would simply tell FPT that he is an accountable member of Sierra-Cascades Friends. He would also feel free to tell us about FPT's financial appeals, which we can respond to or ignore as we are led.

Another Friend observed that having a representative on Friends Peace Teams might help us learn more about the organization should we later have a discussion about closer affiliation.

Question: what are the travel requirements of serving on Friends Peace Teams. Johan responded that travel is not required.

With these understandings, **Friends approved this nomination.**

As a related matter, Norma Silliman asked Johan to read a letter that he had written to the clerks this morning. The letter follows:

I woke up this morning with a question buzzing through my head: is there anything we Friends should be saying concerning the most recent crises afflicting parts of the world where we and our extended Quaker family are working for peace?

"Statements" by Quaker bodies, especially predictable institutional language ("What a surprise -- the Quakers are for peace!") are not necessarily the highest priority on any agenda. But three specific thoughts have been occurring to me that I thought might be worth sharing, whatever we might have the leading or freedom to say as a group.

1. In all of these places where death and mayhem are raining down from the skies, there are peace workers who need support, prayer, and encouragement. Let's become as aware of their work as we can. Let's continue to seek and encourage those among us with the gifts and desire to be the next generation of peace workers.
2. The systemic principalities and powers (Ephesians 6) claim the right to define our enemies. In our public conversations and advocacy, let's deny them that right and, in the name and authority of the Prince of Peace, continue to proclaim the universality of God's love.
3. Whatever the circumstances or provocations or history, the answer to cruelty can never be ... more cruelty.

Finally: I'm one of the "elders" for the weekly online prayer meeting for Ukraine sponsored by the Friends World Committee for Consultation's European and Middle East Section. We are now also holding the situation in Palestine and Israel in the Light. Here's information on that meeting and how to get a link:

<https://fwccemes.org/calendar/ukraine-worship>

More information relating to Friends and Palestine on the FWCC EMES site:
<https://fwccemes.org/news/quaker-attention-on-peace-in-Israel-and-Palestine>

Johan Maurer excused himself to attend the memorial service for Raelene and Lon Fendall, in Newberg. Keith Barton, co-recording clerk, took on the primary recording role.

Norma Silliman called for a pause to reflect on the grief we carry about these concerns, to take some deep breaths.

Cherice Bock at Friends General Conference Gathering, Monmouth, Oregon

Our letter of introduction for Cherice Bock was endorsed by Friends General Conference. Sarah Katreen Hoggatt read the endorsement, as follows:

Greetings, Friend,

We apologize for the tardiness of this endorsement of Friend Cherice Bock's letter of introduction. Cherice graciously visited the 2023 Friends General Conference Gathering of Friends July 2 - 8, this year at Western Oregon University in Monmouth, Oregon. She was an evening plenary speaker where she joined a panel including Margery Post Abbott and Gretchen Castle engaging in a conversation entitled, "Abiding Together in the Life and Power" addressing the concern for the future of the Religious Society of Friends as wise women from diverse Quaker traditions. Cherice was also an afternoon presenter at a session entitled, "A Quaker Ecology: Meditations on the Future of Friends."

The FGC community received much wisdom and compassionate guidance from the ministry Cherice carries. She enriched the Friends General Conference community and inspired all with whom she crossed paths. She is very much appreciated.

Much Love, Jessica & Kate
Jessica Bucciarelli and Kate Jaramillo, 2023 Friends General Conference Gathering
Co-Clerks.

We **received** this letter with appreciation for Cherice's service at this FGC gathering.

Nominating Committee, continued

Matt Boswell completed his Nominating Committee report, explaining that most appointments happen at Annual sessions, but there are still areas of need on several committees: Youth committee has only one member and has been pretty inactive, but there is some participation. The other committee is Coordinating, which is very active but small. Members include Ruba Byrd, Eugene; Judy Maurer, Camas; Bethany Lee, West Hills; plus the two co-clerks are members per the Bylaws. Nominating Committee could also use more members.

Equity and Inclusion Committee

Andrew Franklin (Camas Friends, he/him) presented a recommendation for consideration by the Yearly Meeting. A year ago, we adopted a proposal of right relationship with Native Peoples. This proposal quotes the minute on Indigenous People.

[Link to full set of recommendations from Equity and Inclusion](#)

[Link to more specifics on the Healing Center](#)

First proposal: \$75,000 for the Tlingit village of Kake, Alaska to start the work on their Regional Cultural Healing Center, a healing center that would address a host of problems that are related to the way the Native population has been treated. Their plan is to re-purpose a U.S. Forest Service building for the Village of Kake Cultural Healing Center. They are in dire need to start the work. We'd like to know, Can we do this now? We have this money available; they are in need.

Second proposal: \$100K for grants and scholarships.

Third proposal: \$25K to connect with local indigenous people in the Willamette Valley.

Andrew then presented slides showing the income inequality between sectors of US population and Alaska Natives and Native Americans. Here are links to those slides:

[E&I proposal slide data](#)

[E&I proposal background data slides](#)

We do know that Oregon YM sent staff to the school in Kake. Eric Muhr (Hillsboro, Silverton, Barclay Press, he/him) clarified the historical connection SCYMF has to this project, pointed out that the money we have been referring to as our “inheritance,” is not our money, that in accepting it we also accept responsibility to address the harm done to the Tlingit people of Kake.

We approved contributing \$75,000 from our inherited funds to the Village of Kake Cultural Healing Center. We discussed possible additional disbursements from the \$125,000 remaining in the second and third proposals brought by Equity and Inclusion but other disbursements remain to be considered at the next gathering.

This committee report generated discussion about other possible uses for our “inheritance”, such as:

- To address the stolen labor of African-Americans;
- To address discrimination against “racial and sexual minorities;
- To support future justice initiatives in the future
- SCYMF’s future work to support indigenous groups should include robust participation by indigenous people.
- To spend some of the funds for internal work of SCYMF.

A friend commented that whatever we do today should be only a beginning for our work in this area. It does not fully discharge our responsibilities to indigenous people and others who still need restorative justice.

Announcement: Barclay Press Bookstore and Cherice Bock's book signing

Announcement was made that Barclay Press bookstore was open during lunch and that Cherice Bock would be holding a book signing at 1:30, before we resume meeting for business after lunch.

Finance Committee report and offering

Dave Cundiff (Direct Member and Olympia Friends Meeting; he/him) recognized Diane Beebe, treasurer and other members of Finance Committee, and extended welcome to any interested in joining the committee. He reminded Friends that the role of Finance Committee is not to “drive the bus or decide who rides, but to maintain the engine and pay for insurance and gas.”

SCYMF Profit and Loss statement and Balance Sheet were briefly reviewed. Diane Beebe clarified that the total settlement SCYMF received from NWYM was \$352,000.

It was explained we do not post our balance sheet on the website, only the Profit/Loss statements due to security concerns. Dave then presented a brief report on the structure of SCYMF's life insurance and disability insurance policies. To keep these policies current, our Yearly Meeting needs accurate information about each church's employees. Tim Rochholz has volunteered to collect this information on behalf of the Finance Committee; he needs to know whom to contact in each church.

Note: Other committees that need contact persons for each meeting include:

- Safeguarding
- Coordinating
- Communications Committee.

An offering was held. It was announced later that the offering yielded \$1,770 from in-person attenders. Dave later reported that the proceeds were at least \$1,920 with on-line contributions through the Tithely app.

Safeguarding Committee

Mark Pratt-Russum reported for the Safeguarding Committee. The committee brings the request they made at Annual Sessions for a second reading. [The request is at this link.](#)

Safeguarding has had two situations come up lately that required work by committee members to investigate and advise. In view of this experience, the committee reports needing support for the intensity of their work.

Issues to be worked out with the assistance of Coordinating and Finance are:

- Financing the support position
- Following labor laws
- HR aspects, such as performance expectations, responsibilities, pay, hours, limits and clear communication with Safeguarding

- Advertising the position and hiring/contracting for the position

Friends affirmed the importance of Safeguarding's work, and encouraged Safeguarding to finish developing their proposal to hire staff support. The Safeguarding Committee is welcome to share their proposal with Coordinating Committee if it is ready before the next quarterly gathering in February.

Gathering Committee

Meg Rice (West Hills Friends, she/her) reported that our next gathering will be at Camas Friends on Feb 24, 2024.

Venue for Annual Sessions is not yet secured. The Committee has received requests for annual sessions to last 3 days which increases the cost. They report that they are still gathering information.

Meg and Rachel Hampton were recognized for the work they and their committee do to plan our gatherings.

Structure, Roles and Processes Working Group

Leann Williams (Northern Idaho, Friends in Common, she/her) introduced herself as the reluctant clerk of this working group. She reported on the group's meetings and activities, including:

- Sent out a survey in August to anyone who has been involved with SCYMF committees; 40 people responded making 22 pages of responses. The top concerns were a perceived lack of trust and a lack of clarity.
- Conducted listening sessions/interviews with former clerks, including co-clerks and committee clerks were then held in late Sept.-early Oct.
- Wrote two working group reports, including a compilation/summary of these activities, which were published in SCYMF newsletters; (it would be great to have links here)
- Met with Faith and Practice Oct. 21 to better understand their work on writing drafts for SCYMF's mission and values.

Leann finished with words of encouragement, saying that we are really diverse and that there is a strong love for SCYMF. Grace is a communal act. Only as we feel connected to others will grace flow back and forth.

Structures, Roles and Practices Working Group, recommends that we prioritize defining who we (SCYMF) are. Faith and Practice Committee is working on this. The Working Group's full report is posted in SCYMF website advance documents, [at this link](#).

Nurture of Ministry

Mark Pratt-Russum shared his experience that recently led to serving on Nurture of Ministry. Summer was starting when he moved to Portland in 2010. A week later, he attended NWYM and introduced himself as the new youth pastor at West Hills Friends. This generated some dismay. Initially he did not see much reason to engage with a yearly meeting, but over the years noticed that some people at West Hills Friends Church put most of their energy into SCYMF. This was puzzling. Some people were doing ministry through hospice care, climate guidance, support of LGBTQ+ in rural Idaho. This is what Nurture of Ministry committee seeks to support. Of course, we also help with

the formal recording of ministers in SCYMF. Mark invited Friends to join Nurture of Ministry to represent the ministries of SCYMF.

Faith and Practice

Derek Lamson reported for the Faith and Practice Committee. Faith and Practice prepared posters with excerpts Eugene Friends Church's statement of beliefs, and has posted these excerpts with requests for Friends' comment. Derek thanked Friends for providing comments, which will be used to develop Faith and Practice's next steps.

Consideration of the minutes of our 2023 Annual Gathering

Norma apologized for not bringing this earlier. Clerks aim to provide Minutes of our gatherings as soon as possible after each member meeting, take comments and make corrections and finalizing those minutes at the opening of the following meeting.

There were no comments or corrections received after the minutes were posted on the website in early October, and none requested today.

The minutes of the Annual Gathering were **approved**.