

**Piedmont Friends Fellowship
Yearly Meeting Formation Committee
Minutes
18 May 2014 at New Garden Meeting**

In attendance:

Marian Beane*	Charlotte Friends
Julie Stafford**	Charlotte Friends
Christina Connell	Salem Creek Friends
Dorothy Mason	New Garden Friends
Debbie Parvin	New Garden Friends
Martin King	Raleigh Friends
Carol Morris	Raleigh Friends
John Cardarelli	Salem Creek Friends
Dee Edelman	Salem Creek Friends

*Clerk ** acting Recording Clerk

The meeting began with a period of silent worship. We then shared news of some committee members not able to meet with us today, and checked in briefly. The Davidson Meeting representative, Barbara Gardiner has informed us that she is clear not to continue as an active participant going forward, but asks to remain on the mailing list and maintain contact.

Committee minutes. The minutes of 23 February 2014 were approved as earlier distributed by email.

Review activity toward yearly meeting formation

March

- The information session on the Yearly Meeting Formation work at the PFF Spring Retreat had 12-15 in attendance, and several members of our committee were able to participate.
- The committee's work was considered at the PFF Annual Meeting and a minute of support was prepared for the work going forward.
- The report on the Yearly Meeting Formation Committee work was also considered at the PFF Representative Body meeting, and Representative Body minuted appreciation and support for the committee's work.

April

- Invitations to consider affiliation with Piedmont Friends Yearly Meeting were sent to the clerks of all affiliated PFF Monthly Meetings and the two worship groups under the care of Charlotte Friends
- Several clerks responded with thanks for the invitation and indicated intention for their meeting to take the invitation under consideration. The sense is that the invitation has been well-received by meetings, with expressions of gratitude for the offer.

Friends described where their own meetings are in process of consideration. Unfortunately, we learned that Fancy Gap Meeting was not sent an invitation; Marian apologized for the oversight and will send the invitation. Question arose about Boomer Worship Group, understood to be under that care of Raleigh Friends, and Raleigh representatives will check on whether this worship group should also receive an invitation. Committee members were encouraged to support the discernment process in our meetings.

Further adjustments to the Core Values document

John Hunter, not able to attend today, sent a message which included in part suggested edits for the Inclusiveness and Quaker Practice sections of the Core Values document, and the committee considered these edits.

1. The first sentence of the inclusiveness section reads, "Rather than prescribing creed, the Yearly Meeting encourages individuals to become part of the corporate experience of Quaker faith and practice." After deliberation, the committee changed the first phrase to read, "Rather than prescribing any creed"
2. The next sentence of that section reads, "The authenticity of the experience is based on inclusiveness, which in the 21st century, welcome individuals and families with a wide range of religious traditions and practices and is affirming of diverse genders, ethnicities, racial identification, sexual orientations, ages and beliefs." The committee, in agreement with John's suggestion, changed the wording to read, ". . . welcome individuals and families from a wide range of religious traditions and practices"
3. John raised a concern that the description of the business process in the Quaker Practice section include mention of the sense of the meeting being minuted. Friends agreed that, as written, the section appears to leave out the end point the process. There was, however, some unease expressed around using the term "sense of the meeting". We drafted the following amended last sentence to this section as a first consideration, and intend to return to this matter in a future meeting: "Our decision-making practice is characterized by discernment through listening, waiting for way to open, openness to multiple solutions, and fearless attention to truth as revealed in the present in order to arrive at a sense of the meeting."

Elements of our work in providing guidance for the new yearly meeting

John Hunter also provided a list of topics which might be addressed in the next months. Friends considered the list item by item and suggested whether the topic represented Yearly Meeting Formation Committee (Committee) work or new yearly meeting representative body work (Representative Body), and, for some items, the level of priority. We agreed that some of the work would be considered jointly by the Formation Committee and the Representative body.

Committee work

1. Draft descriptions of yearly meeting roles of Clerk, Recording Clerk, Treasurer, and Epistle Committee

2. Develop a draft agenda for the first Representative Body meeting in September
3. Recommend guidance for the formation of yearly meeting committees (suggested core committees and their charges)

Representative Body work

1. Consulting with probable member meetings as to their needs and expectations of the yearly meeting (Committee would help answer questions from the monthly meetings)
2. Process for monthly meeting membership in the yearly meeting, including consideration of the relationship of worship groups to yearly meeting (**high priority**)
3. Planning for the first yearly meeting sessions in March
4. Consideration of a beginning budget
5. Consideration of a Faith & Practice / Discipline document and/or a Handbook document
6. Discussion/Confirming relationship as proposed with PFF and FGC (**important**)
7. Consideration of relationships with the state and federal governments
8. Specific assumptions about membership in the yearly meeting by meeting or for individuals (What are membership assumptions currently in the monthly meetings? Does this matter?)
9. Consideration of yearly meeting queries (**low priority**)
10. Guidance for new worship groups or monthly meetings under formation (**low priority**)
11. Suggestions for traditional Quaker weddings and memorials (**low priority**)
12. Consideration of regular reports from monthly meetings to yearly meeting, such as statistical reports and spiritual condition reports (**important**)
13. Drafting historical or theological context for the specific policies and procedures of the new yearly meeting
14. Re-stating the traditional Quaker Testimonies in the context of this yearly meeting

Tasks in preparation for our next meeting

- **Our next meeting will be on July 20 at 1:00 pm at New Garden Meeting.** Dorothy Stafford Mason will confirm room availability for this meeting.
- We will all consider what additions might be made to a list of items we would suggest for action by the yearly meeting in March 2015.

- Christina and Carol will do some research on descriptions of yearly meeting roles, and Martin will provide a draft description of the Epistle role.
- Julie will do research on which core committees are usual in FGC yearly meetings.
- Our main task at the next meeting will be drafting an agenda for the September representative body meeting.

Meeting closed with a period of silent worship.