

Peace and Social Concerns Working Group report to PFYM 2016 Annual Sessions

Twelfth day, Third month, 2016

The charge of the Peace and Social Concerns Working Group has been to examine how Piedmont Friends Yearly Meeting and Piedmont Friends Fellowship might best serve our witness around Peace and Social Concerns.

As a group we drew from the strong traditions in our constituent meetings and the body of Quakers at-large to see how we could build support for social actions and peace-building initiatives in the digital age.

Beginning at the inaugural PFYM 2015 Annual Sessions a working group came together out of a breakout session of concerned Friends. The diversity of Friends in this breakout, from all over the region and from both PFF and PFYM, emphasized the heartfelt desire to collaborate and coordinate together better than we have done so in the past. The following Interim Meeting (Fifth month, 2015) charge the nascent working group with formulating a strategy which would allow us to address concerns as diverse as the Friends within both PFYM and PFF. To this end the objectives of the group grew to be as follows:

- To foster a framework which is inclusive of the concerns of Meetings & Individuals affiliated with PFYM and with all PFF meetings where there is interest and desire to participate.
- To encourage social witness in line with PFYM's Vision Statement and Core Clements as a community:
 - Which allows Friends to test leadings and to witness to the wider world
 - That strengthens monthly meetings and worship groups in local, regional, national, and international recognition both within and outside the Quaker community
 - Provides individuals opportunity for service and for witness through strengthened engagement with issues of concern

We also established key concepts such as Concerns, Concerned Friends and Concerned Meetings. In the autumnal sessions of PFF and PFYM Interim Meeting these objectives and concepts were approved by all representatives as a solid foundation on which to build. Our work since then has been to bring more PFF and PFYM Friends into the Working Group (currently consisting of Katherine Metzko, John Shuford and Naveed Moeed). It is our aim in the breakout session (held together with AFSC, whose warm support lifts up our initiative) to explain further the concept behind this new structure and garner further support from Friends of all walks.