

## Sierra-Cascades Yearly Meeting of Friends

July 24-26, 2017  
Newberg, Oregon  
Minutes

### Monday, July 24, 2017

Friends gathered in Lemmons 8 on the campus of George Fox University for the purpose of considering the possibility of creating a new yearly meeting or association of churches given the removal of 4 churches from Northwest Yearly Meeting (NWYM), and the subsequent decision of 2 additional churches to leave NWYM. These Friends were joined by many others who are considering way forward for their local church or who have felt displaced from a local church or the yearly meeting. While all churches remain members of NWYM until the date of restructuring on or before June 30, 2018, those leaving NWYM met in separate sessions Monday afternoon, Tuesday, and Wednesday.

2:00 pm – As Friends assembled, it was apparent that the first order of business was to get acquainted and build community among those gathering around this “New Thing.” To that end Faith Marsalli introduced small listening groups in which no decisions are made, but time is given to listening deeply to one another. Friends counted off and went to various locations nearby. Queries considered by the groups were: *What meeting do you currently attend? Share what your connection has been to NWYM and for how long. How have you and your meeting been impacted by the split within NWYM? What do you think will be our challenges as we listen together for how God is leading us toward the formation of something new? What do you feel hopeful about as we begin this process? Why did you choose to come to the annual sessions this week?*

### Tuesday, July 25, 2017

8:15 am – Joann and Matt Boswell led us in a time of worship, which began by singing “Oh Let Me Be” by Christopher Grundy, “Called as Partners in Christ’s Service” by Jane Parker Huber, and “For Everyone Born, A Place at the Table” by Shirley Erena Murray. Joann introduced waiting worship with the query, *What is God calling us to create?*

Rachel Hampton, clerk of the Nominating Committee announced the need for nominations for Clerk, Assistant Clerk, and Recording Clerk. In addition, people were encouraged to self-nominate for participation in the Financial Committee, Spiritual Care Committee, Interim Committee, Prayer Team, Bylaws and Faith & Practice Work Group, People Work Group, and Quarterly Gatherings Work Group. Nominations are to be given to Helen May.

Marie Matsen introduced a second small listening group around the queries: *What is God calling us to create? What are the words that would describe God’s heart for the New Thing?*

10:30 am – LGBTQ+ panel moderated by Matt Boswell. Friends introduced themselves and responded to these queries: *Did you attend church or any community growing up? What is one thing you want us to know about your spiritual experience? How did coming out affect your sense of God or how did God’s presence affect your coming out? How did community affect you? What would a safe and welcoming space feel like to you?* Friends shared deeply from their own experience without questions from those gathered to listen. Ultimately, the panel asked Friends: *Can I be a member? Can I bring my partner? Can I preach? Can I grieve without being told how good you are? Can you be a place that acknowledges pain*

and anger without labels? Can you refrain from asking me to give grace when no progress is being made?

1:00 pm – Mike Huber led us in a reflection on the morning’s LGBTQ+ panel with the queries: *What did you learn? How were you challenged by the panel? What are the commitments we will make now?*

At the conclusion of considerable discussion, the following minute was approved: **We are led by the Spirit to commit ourselves to recognizing the full participation of LGBTQ+ people in all aspects of the life of “Our New Thing” organization we develop.**

3:00 pm – Working in small groups, pairs, or individually, participants were invited to consider queries on who we want to be, where we want to go, and what we want to do in our new yearly meeting. At the same time those on the Nominating Committee met while the Bylaws and Faith & Practice Committee met with Rich Brown, Attorney.

4:30 pm – People regathered as a full group and centered with silence.

Jan Wood reminded us that our first Meeting for business took place in Eugene. Our only decision at that meeting was to create the Interim Committee with 2 persons named by each of the churches leaving NWYM. Jan is clerk of that Interim Committee, as well as clerk of this year’s annual session. The Interim Committee functions through Wednesday at 5 pm, when other committees and groups will assume responsibility going forward.

The intent of this time was to see how Spirit is moving in us and where we have come to. Wednesday we will begin to create structure. **Are we agreed that we do want some kind of container that can hold us as we move forward together? Agreed.**

Rachel Hampton presented a preliminary nominating report for consideration. Because it is a weighty decision we will give it time to season, coming back to this report for a decision on Wednesday.

Co-clerks—Cherice Bock and Eric Muhr

Assistant Clerk—Jon Kershner

Recording Clerk—Matt Staples

Other committees and names will be presented on Wednesday. They are self-nominated and are being accepted by the committee. However, if someone nominated themselves to multiple committees and working groups, the Nominating Committee selected one place for them to function.

Jan shared her pleasure in this gathered group of people that are doing really good work, even though it is messy. Jan closed with prayer.

### **Wednesday, July 26, 2017**

8:15 am – Joann and Matt Boswell led us in a time of worship. We sang “Simple Gifts” by Joseph Brackett, “Come and Find the Quiet Center” by Shirley Erena Murray, and “For Everyone Born, A Place at the Table” by Shirley Erena Murray, followed by waiting worship and prayer by Bruce Murphy.

Jan Wood led us experientially in finding unity. Matt Boswell sang a single note and everyone joined, but it was a varied tone. We repeated it while listening to each other, trying to find the single note. When asked what we noticed, someone said they had to quit singing. Everyone recognized that we all leaned in a bit and were more focused on each other.

Jan spoke to how well we've been working together. At every point we needed something, we only had to say "this is what we need. Do you have the time, expertise, and calling to do that?" The first chance for that was in Eugene. We uniformly lamented that we needed communication. So Jan asked those who had interest in working on communication to form a working group, which was done on the spot. Rachel Hampton compiled the master list of everyone who wanted our newsletter, and within 48 hours Connor Magee and Eric Muhr created a website. The Interim Committee says "can we have this out?" and it's out by day end. That has happened at every point—people have stepped up to meet our needs. Chris Durost joined the Interim Committee and brought her expertise as an event planner. Lorraine Watson as recording clerk and Jan Wood as presiding clerk, both stepped forward out of their willingness to serve. *Thankful applause and thankful barking from Buster Hwa, (Cassie and Marty's dog).*

Language confusion often points us in the wrong direction. Jan made two suggestions:

Let's call these "annual sessions" so we don't confuse them with NWYM's Yearly Meeting.

The word "representatives" gets us in trouble. As Quakers we don't send representatives.

Rather we send people to discern together and be part of a Gathered Meeting that Listens to the Spirit. They aren't there to represent you or me, or to carry a message from our home meetings to another group. They are there to sit fresh like we do in each Meeting and say "God what do you have to say now?" Part of the horror we have been through is because people think if you are a representative, you are *representative*. What is a better word? **Discerners? Delegates? Approved to drop representative because we want to be fully Quaker. We will decide what later what language to use in its place.**

Jan suggested we experiment with our process. We are familiar with a pause between speakers. But when we are creating together, it is also a collaborative process. We want to put all pieces on the table so that we can all look at them together. Then we will do silence to consider the whole. We can test it out and see if it settles. Today, everything is tentative and just what is needed to get started. It doesn't have to be perfect—it just has to be good enough and functional enough to get us started.

Keith Barton is with us as a traveling Friend from Berkeley Friends Church and the Western Association of the Religious Society of Friends in California (WARSF). Lorraine read his traveling minute from Berkeley Friends Church, which was endorsed by WARSF.

Epistle Committee—The Interim Committee accepted Julie Peyton and Tom Stave who volunteered to write the epistle. They added James Hibbs and will present the epistle later this afternoon.

Jan shared the "lay of the land" so everyone is aware of this information.

- Friends from the Western Association of the Religious Society of Friends (WARSF) met with Jan at the recent Friends United Meeting (FUM) Triennial because they are exploring the possibility of joining with us. Whittier Friends Church, Berkeley Friends Church, and Bakersfield Worship Group left Southwest Yearly Meeting after it left FUM and became the WARSF so they could maintain membership in FUM. Keith Barton is here to see if we are a match for them. Also their youth leader said they want to begin participation with our youth right away. Contact information will be shared with Cherice Bock and Eric Muhr so that interchanges can happen.
- The Bylaws and Faith & Practice Committee and other interested persons met with Rich Brown, Attorney who gave us unofficial legal counsel. Roger Watson, NWYM Director of Finance and Development is available to us and will work on our behalf so he joined our meeting. There are some next steps that we need to take in order to create this container so that we can go forward.

- At the moment, NWYM Administrative Council has well-formed ideas about what we have to be in order to be a trustworthy partner in the sharing of fiduciary funds. The NWYM Transition Committee is working on a proposal to be approved by the NWYM Administrative Council, in which we would receive a portion of the interest each year, which is anticipated to be about \$10,000 per year.
  - It has been approved that all churches currently part of NWYM will have access to certain benefits in the future. Employed pastors and staff (current & future) will continue to have access to the 401(k) pension plan and be able to contribute new funds. Churches will have access to loans with the Friends Church Extension Fund.
  - Property, assets, and debts stay with the churches during this restructuring period.
  - The NWYM Administrative Council has decided that we have to be a full Yearly Meeting in order to share assets. NWYM is unwilling to share assets with an Association of Churches. They want to deal YM to YM where churches are not free to come and go at will. The YM must be incorporated with a 501(c)(3) designation and bylaws.
  - There are decisions about Faith & Practice that have yet to be made. The rush to create a Yearly Meeting now is a top down command. Therefore, would we feel led to release those funds so that the rest of the day we can make decisions based on what we are led to do, not what they ask? Time is short as we have to do this by July 1, 2018.
  - Are we releasing all interest in the fiduciary funds? Or are we setting aside the question to follow our leading and let the chips fall where they may?
  - This decision does not impact the decision to join the Western Association of Friends.
  - The difference between an Association and a Yearly Meeting has to do with the necessity of having a Faith & Practice, although it doesn't have to be complete at the beginning of our incorporation. An Association is a group of autonomous churches in a covenantal relationship. A Yearly Meeting has churches as members.
  - Can we minute that the process for creating a YM will take a long time and we are working on it? Could we just have affirmations in the meantime and we are working on it? Yes, we can do that, but we don't know the consequences.
  - Can we have a descriptive Faith & Practice? Yes. The NWYM Administrative Council is only telling us what we have to do in order to share funds.

After a period of silence, we considered the following Minute: **We sense under our questions that we are committed to being faithful no matter where that leads and we are willing to bear the consequences, whatever they may be. Approved.**

Tuesday afternoon we approved a minute, which is repeated here as we are in our formal Meeting for Business. **We are led by the Spirit to commit ourselves to recognizing the full participation of LGBTQ+ people in all aspects of the life of the "Our New Thing" organization we develop. Approved.**

Being a Yearly Meeting is an advantageous thing as it provides a clear and strong cultural identity, not that is prescriptive or law, but that it stands for something. This will draw people and keep us together. Likened to giving animals a watering hole, rather than putting a fence around them. Clarification around the following words was made:

- Prescriptive says you have to do, think, believe this.
- Proscriptive says you cannot do... upon pain of excommunication.
- Descriptive says who we are as a description.
- Procedural is how we will organize committees and structures.
- Aspirational looks toward what we want to be.

We commit to a document that leads us to wholeness as a community and guides us towards safety to live out love together and tells us procedures for dealing with conflict well, tending us towards reconciliation. We don't want it to be a document that is used against us, although we want to be able to say no to bigotry. We have freedom to make it look like we want it to be.

**Advice: Our collective direction to the Bylaws and Faith & Practice Committee is that we would like to be a Yearly Meeting with a Faith & Practice as a living document which is descriptive, aspirational, and procedural, leading us towards wholeness and reconciliation. Approved.**

We will hold the question of whether the larger group holds the 501(c)(3) for the local churches to later when we have begun to get feedback from the Bylaws and Faith & Practice Committee. They are hearing these concerns and will hold them gently. People will have opportunity to respond before they are approved. We anticipate that they will bring a report back to us at our gathering in the fall.

10:30 am – We began after the break by uniting with a single tone.

Promise Welkin Partner of Way of the Spirit sent a message through Chris Hall and read by Diane Beebe.

*Today, Avery Welkin and I head to the Annual Session of North Pacific Yearly Meeting, the annual gathering of liberal unprogrammed Quakers in the Northwest. We have a specific leading to uphold Our New Thing. These Friends are responding in Spirit-led discernment to the split mandated by Northwest Yearly Meeting, the regional group of evangelical Friends. The New Thing (name in discernment as we speak!) is an emerging Quaker body that is Christ-centered and fully affirming of LGBTQ+ folks. Avery and I pray for them in their grief and their hope; we join them in the place of holy imagination.*

*To me, as a Christian Quaker from the unprogrammed tradition, the New Thing is renewal and revival! It bridges parts of my identity that have had few spaces to be fully liberated. I see that it is a group where I might be fully me, where I might be in community with others who are both Christian and Quaker, where these two are not in tension but integrated — those who love and seek Christ, who value without idolizing Scripture, who sing, pray, and testify vocally and through silence, who speak from their personal experience of the Divine, who believe in continuing revelation, who practice group discernment, who work for the social gospel, who accept all...*

*The Friends of the New Thing have been hurt and excluded. There is brokenness and grief in the letting go. It takes great faith and courage to create something new, to step into a place that holds paradox and uncertainty. I thank these Friends for their committed work in Love. We uphold you.*

Friends from Wilmington, Western, and North Carolina Yearly Meetings are also upholding us in prayer and ask for us to reciprocate as they face similar questions. All of these Yearly Meetings are meeting in the near future. FWCC Section of the Americas is holding us in the Light. We are not alone as we are surrounded by their support.

As the gathered group rested in that support, we shifted into considering the requirements for incorporation. They can all be changed, but this will get us started. A statement of purpose and a list of officers is necessary for our bylaws.

**Purpose: The \_\_\_\_\_ is a voluntary association of Meetings, Churches, and individuals that supports worship, ministry, and service through the cultivation of Christian faith in the Quaker**

**tradition. We are led by the Spirit to commit ourselves to recognizing the full participation of LGBTQ+ people in all aspects of the life of \_\_\_\_\_ . Approved with our new name filling the blanks.**

Jan noted that this purpose makes clear that we will welcome both churches and individuals as full members of the new organization. There are individuals that want to be members, but are from churches that won't be joining us. Others do not currently identify with a home church. Being Quaker is central to our existence. Note that this is a legal statement—for the state to define who they think we are.

**Officers for the organization as required for Bylaws were approved:**

**Clerk (President)**

**Assistant Clerk (Vice President or Director)**

**Recording Clerk (Secretary)**

**Treasurer**

**Are we willing to authorize the Bylaws and Faith & Practice Committee to create a draft document for our next gathering, likely in September? Approved.**

What is our name? As a place holder, we have used “Our New Thing” as our name until a new name could be chosen. Suggestions were submitted to Carol Whorton prior to our gathering. Additional names have been added during our gathering. All names submitted are as follows.

Affirming Friends of the Northwest (AFN)  
Andreas-Cascadia Yearly Meeting/Association of Friends  
Cascade Gathering of Friends (CGOF)  
Cascade Quakers  
Cascade Yearly Meeting  
Cascadia Yearly Meeting  
Celebration Yearly Meeting  
Columbia Yearly Meeting  
Convergent Friends  
Evergreen Yearly Meeting of Friends  
Light Within Yearly Meeting  
Mixed Nuts and Fruits Yearly Meeting  
Mixed Nuts Yearly Meeting  
Pacific Association of Friends  
Pacific Fellowship of Friends  
Pacific Northwest Yearly Meeting  
Sierra-Cascade Yearly Meeting  
Sierra-Cascades Yearly Meeting  
The Yearly Meeting of the Friends of Jesus  
Welcoming Ways Yearly Meeting of Friends  
West Coast Yearly Meeting  
West Coast Yearly Meeting/Association  
West Coast Yearly Meeting/Association of Friends  
Western Mountain Yearly Meeting

Various endings of our name were suggested, including the following.

... Association of Friends

... Gathering of Friends  
... of the Religious Society of Friends  
... Yearly Meeting of Friends

Discussion was held around various names, with no decision made at this time. The following notations were made regarding names.

- While we haven't decided to join with our Friends in California, choosing a name that does not exclude them is a good idea.
- To avoid confusion with Pacific Yearly Meeting or North Pacific Yearly Meeting, we declined to use a name with Pacific.
- To avoid confusion with NWYM, we declined to use a name with Northwest.
- A geographical name ties us together, which is important.
- It is important to have Friends in the name.
- To avoid confusion with the existing Friends of Jesus Fellowship, we declined to use Friends of Jesus in our name.
- An ideological name could be seen as prescriptive.
- Existing groups outside of Friends use the name Cascadia. One is trying to secede from the US and another group is a white supremacist group. We declined to use Cascadia in our name so there is no confusion with these groups.

Names that seem to be rising include Sierra-Cascades, Evergreen, and West Coast. Eric Muhr will check the web domain names to see what is available and have that information when we reconvene.

The next item brought forward was a gift from Good News Associates, a non-institutional organization of ministers of which Jan Wood is the Executive Director. Each year 2% of income is set aside for emerging ministries. They are giving a grant to Our New Thing, with this text, *"Every year Good News Associates shares a part of our financial blessings with others. This year God has led us to regard the group of Friends meetings currently known as the 'New Thing,' and say with this gift that God sees and loves you, and that we want to join in blessing this new opportunity with our resources and affection."* The amount is a little over \$900 and will be a seed to raise additional funds.

Funds can be donated to our organization prior to incorporation by giving through NWYM as they will be held in a restricted fund for our sole use. Checks should be made out to NWYM with Our New Thing (or our new name) in the memo line. Jan suggests that we work towards raising \$10,000 prior to the end of 2017 so that we can follow leadings as a gathered community. It will also cover legal fees and other expenses.

Good News Associates has an interesting financial model and does not create budgets. They follow Leadings and provide funds as they are available. If more is needed, they raise more. Jan wondered if this might be a useful model for this first year.

Many churches give a regular tithe to the NWYM. North Seattle will shift their giving to Our New Thing effective January 1, 2018 so that they continue the commitment as pledged to NWYM since those funds support staff. Other churches are encouraged to do the same.

While some churches have withdrawn their pledged giving from NWYM during this turmoil, no church represented in this room has done that. This is something to be proud of!

1:00 pm – As we gathered back, we again leaned in to singing a single note as experiential unity.

Pat Matthews read a prayer by her partner, Carol Bosworth.

*From my hermitage, to Friends at Newberg in the New Yearly Meeting—*

*“Lord, listen to your children praying,  
Lord, send your Spirit to this place,  
Lord, Listen to your people praying,  
Send us love, send us grace, send us peace....”*

*LORD: Facing into this time of Not Knowing:*

*—not knowing who we are, out here together,  
—not knowing how we hope to be, together,  
—not knowing how to love and heal each other, together,  
—not sure what you need us to do now, together,*

*Help us learn what each of us hopes for, what we each need, what we can “give up for the Common Good and still have all we need”, and how to listen to each other beyond our words, our journeys, our pain, our gifts...*

*Help us work through this time of change, and help us be willing to be transformed into the people you are calling us to be.*

*Friends: Though I serve my community as a hermit, praying and seeking, I am with you in this place of Not Knowing, of transformation, of moving our hearts into a new way of being people together. May it be so—Peace, Carol Bosworth*

Rachel Hampton presented nominations for the new organization, with all terms lasting 1 year. Presence on a committee does not commit your church to being a part of Our New Thing. People can self-nominate for positions as we go through this report. It is intended that once we have completed today’s work, our committees and working groups will be set so that they can begin their work without constantly regrouping to add new people.

Nominating Committee – These Friends were named to the Nominating Committee by their local churches at the request of the Interim Committee. Klamath Falls and Newberg Emerging were not represented on the committee, but are free to fill those open spots when they are ready. It is the intention that this committee will serve for the following year so that they can take care of needs as they emerge. West Hills will check their minute regarding the duration of their nominee on this committee.

Rachel Hampton	West Hills	Clerk
Carolyn Myers	Camas	
Lynne Lakin	Eugene	
Tom Stave, alt	Eugene	
	Klamath Falls	
	Newberg Emerging	
Patty Federighi	North Seattle	

Officers

Co-Clerks	Cherice Bock	North Valley
	Eric Muhr	Unaffiliated
Assistant Clerk	Jon Kershner	North Seattle
Recording Clerk	Matt Staples	Newberg Emerging



Treasurer Roger Watson Tigard and NWYM Director of Finance and Development  
**The officers were approved.**

All committees and work groups (listed below) are self-nominating. We do not have to approve them, but are accepting the reports as presented. No quota was placed on the groups. For the most part, each group will select their own clerk.

A concern was raised that groups are given responsibilities without clear guidelines about what they are to do, which creates problems later on when expectations are not met. Realizing that we are creating this as we go, we do not have those guidelines in place. Groups will identify this as a first step in their work. This information can be brought forward at the next gathering.

A caution was noted about self-nomination because it is hard for minorities and oppressed people to take this risk. In the future, it would be good for us to be willing to notice gifts in people and invite them to participate in various responsibilities.

Even though there are not persons from every church on committees, people desire that we inclusive in holding gatherings at those locations.

It is possible to have unofficial affinity groups that organize around a concern or need. The risk of folding a concern into another group or committee is that it may not get the attention that concern deserves.

In general committees will be closed at the end of this process. However, youth will be able to add themselves to these groups. In addition, those churches without representation on a committee may add persons.

#### Financial Committee

Ked Dejmaj	Eugene
Beth Oppenlander	North Seattle
Karla Rice	Eugene
Martin Arrigotti	Community of In-Betweeners
Treasurer, ex officio	Roger Watson, Tigard and NWYM Director of Finance and Development

Spiritual Care Committee – A primary task is to work on healing. This would include healing for individuals wanting to affiliate with Our New Thing.

Ruba Byrd	West Hills
Judy Maurer	Eugene
Becky Wood	North Seattle
Sue Scott	Eugene
Jim Miller	Camas
Martha Wood	Reedwood
Sarah Lawson	North Valley/Hillsboro
Lynn Holt	North Valley
Anna Scott-Hinkle	Eugene
Pat Matthews	West Hills
Starr Reardon	Southeast Idaho Friends

Coordinating Committee – This group is named a Coordinating Committee since they will be coordinating things for Our New Thing. This name was chosen to differentiate from the current Interim Committee, although they will do similar work for the coming year. The name does not have the baggage of Steering Committee. Overlap from the Interim Committee includes Cecilie Hudson, Joann Boswell, and Helen May. The Interim Committee originally proposed that there be one slot for each church to name a person, plus possibility of 5 additional persons.

Helen May	Camas
Chuck Fairchild	Eugene Klamath Falls Newberg Emerging
Cecilie Hudson	North Seattle
Dorothy Day	West Hills
Joann Boswell	Camas
Terri Beardsley	West Hills
John Price	Eugene
Cassie Hwa	Eugene/Community of In-Betweeners

Prayer Team – This group is on the level of a committee as it is so important to have prayer undergirding Our New Thing.

Carol Whorton	Klamath Falls
Patty Federighi	North Seattle
Carol Twichel	North Seattle
Faith Marsalli	Klamath Falls
Johan Maurer	Eugene
Judy Maurer	Eugene
Kendra Purcell	Camas
Meg Feicht	Silverton
Carol Bosworth	West Hills
Tiffany Graham	Newberg Emerging

Bylaws and Faith & Practice – It was recommended that Marie Matsen clerk this working group. She has been working with Rich Brown, Attorney and has significant experience with organizations.

Marie Matsen	Eugene	Clerk
Jedidiah Carosaari	North Seattle	
Judy Maurer	Eugene	
Courtney Bither	Unaffiliated	
Elizabeth Price	Eugene	
Amelia 'Mia' Culp	Community of In-Betweeners	
Julie Peyton	West Hills	
Helen May	Camas	
Krissi Carson	Hillsboro	
Ron Myers	Camas	
Anna Baker	North Valley	
Heather Tricola	Camas	
Sarah Katreen Hoggatt	Unaffiliated	
Jade Souza	Reedwood	
Bernie Bosnjak	Hillsboro	
Nick Beardsley	West Hills	

People Work – This group will gather people that are not in a church which is leaving NWYM. This can be unaffiliated people or people who are in a church which is not affiliated with Our New Thing.

Sue Scott	Eugene
Norma Silliman	Camas
Mary Mahoney	Camas
Zach Maurer	Newberg Emerging
Diane Beebe	West Hills

Quarterly Gatherings

Norma Silliman	Camas
Chris Durost	West Hills
Rachel Hampton	West Hills
Terri Beardsley	West Hills
Vicki Stave	Eugene
Erika Craig	North Seattle

Equity and Inclusion – This committee was added from the floor for insight into inclusion of people.

A.J. Mendoza	West Hills
Dove John	North Seattle
Kendall Townsend	North Valley
Chris Durost	West Hills
Erika Craig	North Seattle
Courtney Bither	Unaffiliated
Carrie Hutchinson	Reedwood
Cassie Hwa	Eugene/Community of In-Betweeners

Youth – Learning that the youth decided not to split from NWYM, there is concern that we form a space to come around them. This group should include youth, not just adults who care about youth. Clyde Parker from Eugene continues to hold his spot on the NWYM Youth and Young Adult board so that working across the divide continues. The following names will work with the youth and our co-clerks to define this process going forward.

Jennifer Hanziel	North Valley, currently living in Gig Harbor, WA
Tracy Wilson	Silverton
Forest Cammack	Tigard
Lisby Curtis Gemeroy	Newberg Emerging
Vicki Stave	Eugene

Carrie Hutchinson read the youth epistle, which was presented to NWYM in their session earlier today.  
July 25, 2017

Greetings Friends,

Peace to you from the youth of what has historically been known as the Northwest Yearly Meeting.

In light of recent events, we would like to share with you our reactions, our hopes, and our visions for moving forward. The youth have a strong calling to re-center and focus our eyes,

hearts, and minds on God. This week a theme in our discussions and discernment is that we want to continuously ignite a passion for Christ, especially during this difficult time. Throughout the years the youth have become a unified group, and we desire to stay together through this restructuring process. As we have done business together this week, we have felt that God is not finished working through us and hope to continue to be faithful to God's call to us as a community. Needless to say, these past several years have been difficult. Youth from all perspectives are hurting. Even as we give ourselves the time to grieve, through seeking God we have found peace and hope in communion together this week.

We would like to express our gratitude for the invitations from both the New Thing and the NWYM to join their business meetings during this week's sessions. We also want to express deep appreciation for the opportunity to be involved in the creation of the New Thing, including the invitation to be part of its boards.

Due to the restructure occurring, we have temporarily suspended the usual nomination of officers and discerningly created a new council of youth to support us during this time of transition. Four individuals were approved by the body: Alandra Thomas (Newberg Emerging Friends), Conard Harrison (Entiat Friends), Katia Reid (Sherwood Friends), and Maranda Paz (Meridian Friends). This council is designed with the hope of working with the Board of Youth and Young Adults and the youth coordinators in organizing youth events across the NWYM and the New Thing.

During our business sessions this week, we discussed that a possible way to continue Quaker business and discernment training could be through an annual meeting of youth at a time different than the annual sessions of the New Thing and the NWYM. This will allow the youth to participate in the business of the broader organizations without losing the unified community we have become. We also discussed that various camps and Quaker events have been incredibly important for both our spiritual lives and growing as a unified body. Events we appreciate include: YCEW, summer camps and leadership programs, Bible Quizzing, Samuel School, Youth Volleyball, and Midwinter, etc. We want and are prepared to be involved in the planning of these events so that they remain a part of both organizations so every youth has a chance to participate.

Once again, we express our sincere gratitude to the larger Yearly Meeting for allowing us the opportunity to share with you.

Blessings to you all.

Gwen Thomas, Assistant Clerk, and the youth of NWYM 2017.

In response to the youth epistle, Friends united around a response which was **approved** and sent to the youth while they are still gathered in meetings this week.

We received your epistle with joy and gratitude, while also sharing in your grief caused by the division of the NWYM. Hearing Christ speak through your call and leadership, we are humbled that you have done what we could not do. We commit to following your lead in making this a reality for the youth to stay connected. We recognize that many of you were not able to attend our meetings as much as you would have liked this week. As a meeting, we would like to make it clear that all of our committees will hold openings for youth until our next quarterly meeting.

We have created a group of individuals who are committed to walking with you and who are available for you to coordinate with. You are free to contact any of these members at any time:

Jennifer Hanziel, North Valley, currently living in Gig Harbor, WA – [j.hanziel20@gmail.com](mailto:j.hanziel20@gmail.com)

Tracy Wilson, Silverton – [tracy.virginia.wilson@gmail.com](mailto:tracy.virginia.wilson@gmail.com)

Forest Cammack, Tigard – [forrest.commack@gmail.com](mailto:forrest.commack@gmail.com)

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Vicki Stave, Eugene – [vstave@hotmail.com](mailto:vstave@hotmail.com)

Sincerely,

Sierra-Cascades Yearly Meeting of Friends

Lemmons 8, George Fox University Campus, Newberg, OR

Wednesday, July 26, 2017

People broke out into committee groups to begin organizing their groups and defining the next steps in their process.

4:00 pm – As we gathered back, we began reconsidering the name for Our New Thing. **Sierra-Cascades Yearly Meeting of Friends rose as the preferred name and was approved.**

It was noted that we have done more than pick a name. We picked a statement: We are here and ready to do business. Chuck Fairchild noted that the watershed for the Sierra-Cascades is far reaching, even including Idaho and Nevada in addition to Washington, Oregon, and California.

SCYM already exists as South Central Yearly Meeting so it will be important to add the F to our acronym, making us SCYMF.

The Quarterly Gathering group announced the next date for a Quarterly Gathering on October 7 at Eugene Friends, meeting from 10 am through dinner. In addition to fellowship and business items, it would be good to include some educational information, play, and worship. **Approved.**

The Epistle Committee presented our first epistle from the Sierra-Cascades Yearly Meeting of Friends. The Epistle Committee and Clerks were given permission to do the final edits, with the intention that this be made public on Thursday. The final epistle which was sent out, reads as follows. **Approved.**

26 July 2017

Isaiah 43:19a: I'm about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?

To All Friends Everywhere:

Earlier this year the leadership of Northwest Yearly Meeting decided that the best way forward was to split off a new Yearly Meeting for those local meetings who could not align with the current Northwest Yearly Meeting Faith & Practice statement on human sexuality. Local meetings who had written minutes or statements affirming same-sex relationships were given no option; any other local meeting could choose to join with those first four (West Hills Friends, Camas Friends, Eugene Friends, Klamath Falls Friends) or could go independent. The legal separation deadline, set by the Administrative Council, is June 30, 2018.

During this, our last annual sessions as an entire meeting, the departing local meetings and several interested individuals met in parallel business sessions to begin our work. Did we feel led to form a new yearly meeting or association? How will we begin? How will we know if we want to be a part if we don't know what it is?

It has been difficult. We need to make clear our desire to be radically inclusive, as Jesus was, without falling into the same exclusionary trap that caught Northwest Yearly Meeting.

We used small worship sharing groups to get to know one another. We listened deeply to a panel of four LGBTQ+ Friends who spoke movingly of their experiences in faith communities through their lives. We began to form committees to help us with our work, determined to make any new structure or work open and inviting to marginalized people, especially from sexual minorities, but also aware of racial, economic, and cultural minorities.

In an earlier informal meeting last spring, the gathered Friends stated their intent to be inclusive, acknowledging that Northwest Yearly Meeting had not been so in the past. This week we approved the following statement:

“We are led by the Spirit to commit ourselves to recognizing the full participation of LGBTQ+ people in all aspects of the life of the new yearly meeting.”

We also were clear that we did want to move forward as a Quaker, Christ-centered yearly meeting. To that end we have approved the following Friends to serve:

Co-presiding Clerks: Cherice Bock and Eric Muhr  
Assistant Clerk: Jon Kershner  
Recording Clerk: Matthew Staples  
Contact us at: [clerks@scymf.org](mailto:clerks@scymf.org)  
Website under construction: [scymfriends.org](http://scymfriends.org)

And we found our name: we are the Sierra-Cascades Yearly Meeting of Friends.

We covet your prayers, your support, and your visits if you feel so led.

In the name of the One who makes all things new, and on behalf of those Friends gathered today (both in body and in spirit),

Jan Wood  
Acting Clerk

Epistle Committee: James Hibbs, Julie Peyton, Tom Stave

A request was made that people submit suggestions for a logo design.

Julie Peyton is traveling with Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC) Traveling Ministry Corps, going to Jamaica Yearly Meeting in August. We will send Julie with a traveling minute, which will be written by our clerks. **Approved.**

As we prepared to celebrate with closing worship, it was suggested that we take an offering for Sierra-Cascades Yearly Meeting of Friends. Someone found a hat, which was placed at the front of the room. Friends brought their offering forward “Burundi-style” and placed it in the hat. Ked Dejmaj announced that our **offering was \$1,032.25!**

Joann and Matt Boswell led closing worship. We sang “Beautiful Things” by Lisa and Michael Gungor and “O Love of God How Strong and True” by Horatius Bonar.

Cherice Bock brought closing remarks, exclaiming that we have done good work together for which we are all grateful. She likened the work to child birth in which there is labor and a need for healing. But when one meets the new baby, one sees new life and hopefully it has all been worth it. For Sierra-Cascades Yearly Meeting of Friends, this is where we are—looking into the face of this new creation! There is hard work coming with lots of people work to do. We have birthed a new thing. It is a sacramental moment. The future will be stretching and painful. Separation is part of our work. Are we ready to be uncomfortable, make mistakes, and apologize a lot? Today we commit to those things.

**Sierra-Cascades Yearly Meeting of Friends closed this annual session in a prayer of gratitude, planning to meet again for a Quarterly Gathering on October 7, 2017 in Eugene, Oregon.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Lorraine Watson  
Recording Clerk