

Great Plains Yearly Meeting

of the Religious Society of Friends

**Minutes of the
One Hundred Eighth Annual Assembly
Fifth-day, Sixth Month, Fourth
2015**

**held at
Hominy Friends Meeting
Hominy, Oklahoma**

**Yearly Meeting Handbook
Revised October 2014**

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**Great Plains Yearly Meeting
of the Religious Society of Friends
One Hundred Eighth Annual Assembly
Fifth-day, Sixth Month, Fourth, 2015
hosted by Hominy Friends Meeting**

**"There is a River": Growing Communities of Deep Hope
Thursday, June 4**

GPYM15-01 Friends Gather in Hominy, Oklahoma

Registration began at 1:00 with the new Home Ministry Committee meeting shortly thereafter. Ministry and Counsel met at 2:00, followed by Finance and Nominating Committees at 3:30. Members of Ministry and Counsel and the standing committees were joined by other Friends for dinner served by our hosts and hostesses at 5:00.

GPYM15-02 Opening Session

The 108th Annual Sessions of Great Plains Yearly Meeting (formerly Nebraska Yearly Meeting) began at 6:00 with meeting for worship with attention to business, and programs for children and youth. Presiding Clerk LaVonna Loesch was joined at the clerk's table by Cheryl Mallonee, Assistant Clerk, and Dorlan Bales, Recording Clerk.

After a time of waiting on the Lord, LaVonna welcomed those present. Host pastor David Nagle introduced Hominy Friends Presiding Clerk Carole Revard, who welcomed Friends. LaVonna encouraged those present to get to know one another, then read the 2014 GPYM epistle to help Friends remember last year's gathering, a powerful time together which set in motion an opening for healing and new life in Rocky Mountain and GPYM Yearly Meetings. Friends now have a more vivid appreciation of a traumatic time more than fifty years ago when many churches withdrew from Nebraska YM. The result was a long and spiritually oppressive separation which began to be healed last year during GPYM sessions. LaVonna expressed gratitude for a new relationship between Great Plains and Rocky Mountain Yearly Meetings, and for the other seeds of hope taking root among us. Friends entered a time of reflection and quite worship.

Representatives appointed by GPYM monthly meetings were recognized. From Central City, Steve and Lisa McConnell; from Heartland Friends, Connie Adams, Dorlan Bales, Aaron Fowler, and Jim Perkins; from Hominy, Angela (Jake) Brown, David Nagle and Beth Green-Nagle, and Carole Revard; from University, Cheryl and Paul Mallonee, Cliff and LaVonna Loesch, and Laura Dungan. David Nagle hoped that LaHunta Thompson and Frankie Sue Johnson would attend from Council House.

Friends not members of Great Plains Meetings were also acknowledged: Maria Bradley and Linda Coates from Baltimore YM; Eric Moon from Friends General Conference, Pacific YM, and Berkeley Friends Monthly Meeting; John Craig AFSC staff from Iowa Conservative YM; Dale Graves, FUM staff in Belize; Sylvia Graves, staff for Right Sharing of World Resources; Don Satterthwaite Green Country Friends South Central YM; Lubbock, Texas Monthly Meeting members Sarah Scribner, Sonja and Brent Collins, and Jock Cameron.

Clerk LaVonna Loesch read a travelling minute from Little Britain Monthly Meeting, Nottingham, PA for Linda Coates who is the clerk of Eastland Preparative Meeting. Linda is a member of the Baltimore Yearly Meeting Inter-visitation Working Group, which encourages and prepares those who visit Friends inside and outside BYM. LaVonna also read a letter from Friends General Conference commending Eric Moon to our care, and a minute of release for ministry for Noah Baker Merrill from Putney MM, New England YM, who looks to his monthly meeting to ground his ministry through service and oversight. LaVonna introduced Noah and encouraged Friends to listen to whatever God would bring to us through him during the weekend ahead.

LaVonna explained the work of the Extracts Committee, which records mostly humorous and occasionally profound things spoken by Friends during the sessions. She asked who might be led to serve in this way. There being no one drawn to this, an envelope was created where everyone was invited to submit their extracts for inclusion in the minutes.

The clerk asked individuals to consider if they are called this year to write an epistle describing the GPYM sessions, to be signed and sent by the presiding clerk to other yearly meetings and included in the minutes. After some quiet waiting, Sara Scribner rose and asked to be considered. Connie Adams then asked to join Sara in this work. This Epistle Committee was **approved**.

GPYM15-03 State of Society Reports by Monthly Meetings

Steve McConnell read Central City's report, including the emergence of a closer relationship with Lincoln Friends Meeting which organized a Nebraska regional meeting with a speaker from the American Friends Service Committee. Laura Dungan, GPYM Released Friend, facilitated a planning meeting in November with Central City, Lincoln, and Omaha Friends. After years of working to repeal Nebraska's death penalty, Central City's persistence was rewarded when it was overturned by the legislature despite the governor's veto. It was indeed a great moment and reason for thanksgiving!

Assistant Clerk Cheryl Mallonee read a report from Council House, which is still hoping to find pastoral leadership. The meeting was saddened by the death of Doris Spicer, 95, a long time active member. They appreciate the practical help given by Hominy and Wyandotte Friends in preparing Quivering Arrow Camp for use this year. The two women who uphold Council House ask for prayers and support.

Angela (Jake) Brown read Hominy's report, including its delight in hosting the All-Oklahoma Friends gathering on behalf of GPYM with the assistance of Laura Dungan and LaVonna Loesch. Members of the First Indian Baptist Church in Pawhuska came for an Osage hymn sing in May, an event that is likely to be repeated in Pawhuska. Hominy's newly remodeled kitchen area is an expanded, attractive, and enjoyable workspace.

Heartland's report was read by Aaron Fowler. A consultant led four half-day workshops. They focused on each individual's role in the meeting's history, conflict resolution, and creating a low maintenance building and grounds plan. Heartland hosted its first wedding, offering love and support to Lisa Brightup and Natalie Tos Byington, and welcomed new members Susie Ternes and Michael Schmidt. Families continue to appreciate the Godly Play/Faith & Play Quaker education offered to their children.

Cheryl Mallonee read University's report, which described its Friendly Evenings with a meal and age group classes/activities. Retreats on "Tending the Light" and walking a labyrinth were held, and a pie auction for Christian Peacemaker Teams was punctuated by entertaining skits and raised \$4,000. The youth group has been active with outings, a lock-in, movie nights, and baking cookies to welcome students at Friends University. Molly Loesch helped organize a coffee house with En Power & Light performing.

Please see the appendix to these minutes for each meeting's full state of society report.

GPYM15-04 Keynote Message from Noah Baker Merrill

Noah, echoing the prophet Habakkuk (1:5), noted that something new and unbelievable is underway! Everywhere we look systems that used to work are breaking down and new life is breaking through, sometimes in spite of us, inviting us to new forms. Quakerism is no exception to this transformation, which he saw clearly at the Friends World Gathering in Kenya, in 2012. Relatively few faces looked like his own.

The questions with which GPYM grapples are not unique, but rather shared with Friends and other communities of faith everywhere! The unimposing size of GPYM should not be discouraging. Pointing to a tapestry of Leonardo da Vinci's Last Supper, Noah reminded hearers that Christianity started with a small group in an unlikely place, and that the Society of Friends began with a group smaller than ours gathered in Hominy this weekend.

Turning to the situation of his own New England Yearly Meeting, Noah observed that it is busy every weekend but struggling with declining membership, budget shortfalls, and loss of young people. He's asking how God is calling NEYM and other parts of the Society of Friends to live in new and fresh ways. GPYM has incredible diversity and connections, and is important partly because other Friends are watching how we deal with the current transformation that affects everyone.

There is a river (Psalm 48:6) that is growing new communities, a deep hope that is waiting for us. To illustrate his understanding of deep hope, Noah related an experience of interviewing in Syria an Iraqi Christian who had been kidnapped by masked militiamen inadvertently armed by the U.S. military. They tortured him because he was a Christian and left him to die, crucified, on the wall. He had a vision of Jesus climbing up on the cross with him before he passed out. He woke up in a dumpster and was able get out of the country. Upon hearing the story, Noah was shaking with anger, despair, and grief. But the Iraqi Christian responded by saying, "Did you hear the story that Jesus came and I am alive?" That's the story, the hope the world needs, not the shallow hope that everything will be all right. The Holy Spirit is with us as our world seems to be falling apart, filling us with hope and the love for peace the world needs so much. As the Psalmist said, "We will not fear, though the earth should change, though the earth should change . . . God is in the midst of the city; it shall not be moved . . . The God of Jacob is our refuge." (48:2-7).

Noah then related a childhood memory from the time he lived in the Flint Hills near Manhattan, Kansas where his father worked for the Kansa Prairie Preserve. Noah got to help his father ignite sections of the prairie and learned how the ecosystem depends upon fire for rejuvenation. Burning old growth creates space and nutrients so that new life can emerge from the earth. Those years were difficult for his family because his mother was sick. One day he got lost and ended up in a space where fire was coming. It was terrifying, but after the fire came and went, he was still alive! Struggling with the aftermath of that experience, Noah's family attended a sunrise service. They sang "Morning Has Broken" about their deep hope, and he saw the bright green grass that had emerged from the ashes. For the first time he understood Easter.

We need each other to find that hope, Noah continued, the new green growth on the other side of what has been burned, the river from which we may have wandered. How can people come more deeply together to share that hope? He reminded us that there is a cloud of witnesses to the power of Christ (Romans 12:1), faithful people who have gone before, including George Fox who spoke of Christ come and coming. Noah concluded his message by singing "Cause Us to Come to Thy River, O Lord. Cause us to drink, cause us to live."

Friday, June 5

GPYM15-05 Morning Meditation and Meeting for Worship

After breakfast provided by Hominy Friends, Presiding Clerk LaVonna Loesch shared a meditation encouraging Friends to live every moment alive to its possibilities. Friends then settled in to a time of waiting worship.

ATTENTION TO BUSINESS--SESSION II

GPYM 15-06 Friends United Meeting Report

Clerk LaVonna Loesch spoke out of the silence, sharing a message by Henri Nouwen that "the inner fire of God must be tended and kept alive". Cliff Loesch, Presiding Clerk of Friends United Meeting, lifted up portions of his own written report to GPYM and that of FUM General Secretary Colin Saxton.

FUM has ten times more Kenyan members than North American Friends! It seeks to energize, equip and connect Friends by programs and projects

around the world. FUM is becoming less reliant on North American financial resources and more dependent on the initiative and board representation of African Friends. African initiatives include a Friends Church Peace Initiative, a Kenyan Friends Women Orphans Care Centre and emerging new conference center, and Friends Theological College. Important work is also going forward in Ramallah Friends School, Belize, and Cuba. See the appendix for complete reports.

The Triennial world FUM gathering in July 2017 will be in Wichita, on the Friends University campus! FUM staff will do most of the planning and work necessary to make the conference a success, with Cliff Loesch, Ervin Stanley, and other GPYM Friends assisting with the hosting of Friends from around the globe. GPYM Friends expressed gratitude for the opportunity to attend the gathering easily and to be of service to FUM.

GPYM15-07 Clerk's Report on 2014-15 Continuing Committee

After a short break, Mitch Stutsman introduced himself as part of the Everence staff which is serving many GPYM members in the integration of their faith and finances. He invited Friends to visit with him about their financial management needs.

Clerk LaVonna Loesch presented a report on behalf of the Continuing Committee which serves GPYM between annual sessions. It met in October and March, reviewing the handbook, evaluating 2014 sessions, receiving year-to-date budget reports, and staying up to date on the yearly meeting's renewal and leadership building work. See the appendix for minutes of these meetings. The committee has been faithful in keeping GPYM's work active through the year. LaVonna asked that Friends keep the Continuing Committee in prayer.

GPYM15-08 Report by Home Missions Committee

A report on the last ten months of the Revitalization and Leadership Development Initiative of the Home Missions Committee was presented by released Friend Laura Dungan. She has found a widespread desire to cross Quaker boundaries in search of fellowship and inspiration. In Nebraska, a well-attended gathering October 3 of Central City and Lincoln Friends explored spiritual energy and longings. The group also decided to plan an all-Nebraska fall gathering October 10, 2015 in Lincoln, with Don Reeves as keynote speaker. On October 17 Lincoln Friends Meeting hosted a fall gathering attended by Central City and other Nebraska Friends which

focused on the AFSC's work and support of a bill that later repealed the death penalty.

A powerful all-Oklahoma gathering was held at Hominy Friends October 18, facilitated by Laura Dungan and David Nagle with musical and elder support from LaVonna Loesch. There were attendees from Hominy, Norman, Tulsa, Oklahoma City, and Wichita. Laura is facilitating follow up for all-Oklahoma and all-Nebraska meetings in October 2015. Those gatherings will focus on that which is distinctive about our local meetings and what they have in common.

At University Friends, one-to-one meetings with young adult Friends built relationships and surveyed interest in possible activities. Molly Loesch organized a coffee house March 29 which attracted more than 50 people, most of whom were young including many persons of color. An all clerks gathering at LaVonna and Cliff Loesch's home March 22 drew eleven clerks from University, Heartland, GPYM, and FUM. In April, Laura attended Topeka Friends Meeting, attended a Spiritual Deepening Consultation, and visited with the Quaker Voluntary Service Unit in Atlanta, GA.

Future plans include continued work with local meetings in building vibrant regional Friends groups, using queries for discovery such as "What distinguishes us as Quakers in GPYM, and what do we have in common?", and being invitational to unaffiliated meetings. GPYM's challenges include geographical distance and lack of clarity about the meaning of diversity. See the appendix for the full report.

Laura then asked Friends to share in twos or threes, remembering a time when God felt especially close. Then everyone formed a circle and summarized their story in a phrase, a "headline" all at once, several times with each shout-out louder than the last. Laura read from Acts 2, The Message translation, about the followers of Jesus being all together in one place, being filled with the Holy Spirit, and speaking to all sorts of people in their own languages about God's mighty works. Then Peter spoke with bold urgency, asking the crowd that had gathered to turn to God. "Get out of this sick and stupid culture!" he told them. 2,000 people responded and joined the community. Friends were then asked to share what words in the story stood out to them.

GPYM15-09 Reports: Ministry and Counsel, Nominating Committee

Clerk Cliff Loesch reported that the Ministry and Counsel wants to study the topic of eldering, spiritual encouragement and support. He and Dorlan Bales

will work on queries to distribute to Ministry and Counsel members and to GPYM leaders.

Presiding Clerk LaVonna Loesch reminded Friends that the Nominating Committee is us! Angela (Jake) Brown, Betty Jake, and Beth Green-Nagle would like help identifying who should represent GPYM to agencies and inform GPYM members about the good work done by Quaker agencies. Friends were asked to look at the 2014 GPYM minutes, page 51-2, and suggest people to serve in this way

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GPYM15-10 Reports: Treasurer, Statistician, & Finance Committee

Treasurer Connie Adams reviewed her printed report of spending and income during the past fiscal year, May 2014 through April 2015 (see appendix). Money is available in GPYM's Student Loan Account. \$1,028 has been allocated from the Webb Fund to Heartland for creation of Godly Play and Faith & Play story materials for Wichita Friends School, leaving a balance of about \$9,000 "to provide educational experiences for children and young persons based on fundamental Quaker beliefs, traditions and principles, including instruction in Quaker history and values" (quote from the Weston and June Webb bequest). Currently there is \$16,383 in designated funds on hand for GPYM's Initiatives and \$9,520 in pledges to be paid in 2015. The report was received with appreciation.

Statistician Linda Mallonee expressed gratitude for meetings' diligence in getting their reports to her in time for her to compile them. Total average attendance for the five meetings was 141 and active adult membership 170. Doris Spicer's death leaves only two member at Council House, Clerk Frankie Sue Johnson, and Treasurer LaHunta Thompson. See the full report in the appendix to these minutes.

Finance Committee Clerk Steve McConnell shared an interim report, thanking Connie Adams for her good work as GPYM Treasurer. Aaron Fowler is working on a redraft of the application for Webb Fund grants to provide for Quaker education of children and youth, including strengthening meetings' religious education programs.

GPYM15-11 Reports: Friends General Conference, Friends World Committee for Consultation

Eric Moon, visitor representing FGC, spoke of its New Meetings Project and asked how FGC can be helpful to GPYM. He urged us to let others know about GPYM, to tell our story to the wider Friends family and beyond.

Beth Green-Nagle, GPYM's representative to FWCC, shared from her extensive report of the Section of the Americas 2015 meeting in Mexico City. In January 2016 there will be a meeting of international representatives in Peru. FWCC would like two GPYM Friends to attend, but there is currently just one representative.

There have been recent changes in FWCC necessitated by reduced income. More responsibility is being given to volunteers. Beth said that GPYM is a microcosm of FWCC because of our diversity. Godly Play has become more popular among Latin American Friends, and there is more equality between Spanish and English speakers. Travelling ministry is receiving greater emphasis, and new approaches are being explored for youth development. Beth will continue to serve as an interpreter/translator, and as part of the Naming Committee. See Beth's full report in the appendix to these minutes.

The business session concluded with a time of worship before Friends enjoyed a bountiful lunch.

ATTENTION TO BUSINESS--SESSION III

GPYM15-12 Reports: Ministry & Counsel, Finance Committee

Cliff Loesch reported that he will serve as Ministry and Counsel Clerk for the coming year. The meaning of eldering was discussed during these sessions, a conversation that will be used as a guide in the writing of queries to help study this traditional Quaker practice. A Ministry and Counsel conference call before GPYM sessions next year will move this concern forward.

Finance Committee Clerk Steve McConnell reported that applications for money from GPYM's Webb Fund will follow a procedure that has been established by the Finance Committee. The committee also discussed building an endowment fund through estate planning.

Don Reeves has asked that he no longer be responsible for management of the farm that GPYM owns in Central City, so the committee honored his request and asked Steve McConnell to assume that role. Thanks was

expressed for Don Reeves' management of the farm property over the years. A card of thanks will be prepared, signed, and sent to him.

Treasurer Connie Adams presented a budget proposal for GPYM approval, including use of Webb Fund money for youth and children's programming next year. See appendix. The budget was approved. LaVonna voiced her appreciation for the Finance Committee's work. A minute of appreciation for Connie Adams' service as GPYM Treasurer was **approved**.

GPYM15-13 Nominating Committee, 2016 GPYM Sessions, Absent Friends

The Nominating Committee was not ready to report but will do so tomorrow morning.

University Friends Meeting invited GPYM to its meetinghouse June 2-4 for 2016 GPYM sessions, and Friends accepted that invitation with joy. Who will be in charge of the program for children and youth at next year's sessions? Aaron Fowler spoke to the need for a long term strategy, not just year to year solutions. The Continuing Committee will work with the University Friends Host Committee on this planning.

Friends suggested names of those unable to attend this year in order to let them know they were missed: Neil and Grayce Mesner; Jean Eden and Lorene Ludy; Stan and Eloise Brown; Ervin and Allison Stanley; Gail and John Fletcher; Selma Mesner; Cliff Mesner; Ken and Allison Jack; Molly Loesch; Kalika Jaeckel; Micah Bales and Faith Kelley, LaHunta Thompson; Frankie Sue Johnson; Liz Wine; and Adrian Halverstadt. Steve McConnell asked that we remember Don and Barbara Reeves as they visit their son Randy who is incarcerated and suffering with cancer. LaVonna led Friends in prayer for the family, followed by unprogrammed worship.

GPYM15-14 Communication with Rocky Mountain Yearly Meeting

Clerk LaVonna Loesch shared her communications with Rocky Mountain Yearly Meeting since last year's sessions when Jan Wood pointed out that neither RMYM nor Nebraska/GPYM have flourished since the separation 57 years ago. LaVonna read our minute sent to RMYM last year (see GPYM 2014 minutes, page 47) and the response received in November, including a minute written during the August RMYM sessions and signed by Presiding Clerk Mary Heathman. RMYM accepted our apology and offered their own. See the letter containing the minute in the appendix.

Cliff Loesch reported that RMYM had planned to send visitors to be with us this year, but communication problems prevented that. Adrian Halverstadt, RMYM's Superintendent, had planned to come but is in the hospital with a nail wound in his foot. Jim Perkins reported that Adrian worshipped with Heartland Friends three times since last year and also worshipped with University Friends.

GPYM15-15 Evening Message, Keynote Speaker Noah Baker Merrill

Joseph Nagle played a saxophone solo, "Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee" accompanied by Cliff Loesch. Friends were invited to sing the first verse as a conclusion.

Keynote speaker Noah Baker Merrill brought a second message Friday evening that focused on deep life-giving hope and the unbinding of ourselves and others during times of uncertainty and change. This kind of hope and unbinding is prominent in scripture, including the deliverance from Egypt, Jesus' raising and unbinding Lazarus, and the deliverance of Peter, then Paul and Silas from prison. 17th-century Quakers in England and New England were set free by one another and jailed for their faith, were injured by the rulers and Church of England and were healed by the power of God. Friends formed a movement of the Holy Spirit for faithful living, an ecology of hope based on the presence of the Living Christ. Noah asked, "What would that look like in the context of our time?"

What is our context? It's about the breakdown of old systems: monetary collapse, climate change, scarce resources, refugee crises, polarization, and increasing chaos, suffering, and death. The religious landscape has been changing too. In the seven years from 2007 to 2014, according to a Pew poll, the number of Americans with no religious affiliation climbed from 36 million to 57 million, including 35% of those under 30. Institutional churches are collapsing as people under 35 associate Christians with the words judgmental, hypocritical, and irrelevant, even as more than 70% say they are hungry for a connection with something greater than themselves. A new generation is not focused on heaven or getting out of the world, but on seeking communities of hope, churches that set people free.

When we look at our Quaker beginnings in the 1650s, we see a powerful, hopeful period followed by a period described as maintaining a hedge around Quaker communities to shield them from the world's ways. Today Quakers need to come out from behind the various protective hedges that have kept us too separate from the needy world, to be small communities of hope, like

buffalo grass that sends out rhizomes to reproduce itself. One contemporary example of this vitality is a new ministry, Quaker Voluntary Service, which offers opportunities for young adults to give a year of service and be steeped in Quaker faith and practice. Already there are QVW houses in Atlanta, Philadelphia, Portland, and Boston.

Rather than being busy reviewing our structures, Friends would be better served by reaching out to others and setting each other free in a fresh movement of the Spirit. Noah noted that GPYM is focusing on Heartland region relationships in ways that enrich us and the wider Society of Friends, building trust rather than arguing over money and turf. Institutions are not ends but means needed to serve movements. Another example is Friends World Committee for Consultation's translation of Faith & Play children's education materials for use by Cuban Friends and other Spanish speakers. It is important that the teens in our meetings have a relationship with an older member of the community who is not a family member, someone willing to be a mentor and friend.

Noah is hopeful. Though many of the ways churches function build barriers rather than spiritual relationships that set one another free, our Quaker movement DNA urges us to rediscover Jesus' Holy Spirit that formed the early church, and testify to a God of love and justice at work in the world today. We are sitting in a prison with open doors, like Paul and Silas. We need to come out and invite others to come to the deep river of hope. This is not just about us, but about the whole world! May we be prisoners of nothing but hope and go out with joy together.

GPYM15-16 Song Circle

After Noah Baker Merrill's message, many of those present adjourned to the fellowship room for a song circle led by Aaron Fowler and Laura Dungan, with help from our children who kept things lively by playing with percussion instruments they had made. Friends requested their favorite songs from the Rise Up Singing songbook and sang with enthusiasm.

Saturday, June 6

GPYM15-17 Morning Meditation & Worship/Memorial Service

LaVonna Loesch shared from the Book of Acts of the Apostles about the connection of wisdom and being filled with the Spirit. Friends settled into worship and remembered seventeen members of GPYM meetings who had died since June 2014 (see appendix). Several spoke with appreciation of the impact these departed Friends had on their lives and their meetings.

Closing Business Session

GPYM15-18 Concern for Inter-visitation

Clerk LaVonna Loesch shared a concern for visitation, beginning with a letter from Baltimore YM as a model of the effectiveness to which GPYM can aspire. The letter invites GPYM members to join them at their sessions, with one or two welcome at no charge. BYM's Inter-visitation Working Group has been diligent since 2005 seeking to nurture the beloved community of Friends inside and outside BYM by means of a simple ministry of presence as a way of getting to know one another in that which is eternal. Friends present were invited to respond to this invitation and attend August 3-9. Laura Dungan shared her experience of being a visitor, including appreciation of the workshops that were offered.

GPYM15-19 Relationship with Rocky Mountain Yearly Meeting

Cliff Loesch was able to attend RMYM last year. Jim Perkins, Laura Dungan, and LaVonna Loesch are willing to attend August 14-15, 2015. Minutes of travel in the ministry will be written for these Friends, and others are invited to join as able. Those who attend will bring back a report of their experience in Colorado.

GPYM15-20 Reading of Extracts

Reading the extracts provided a few moments of mirth and wisdom with sayings like:

Don't share anything that's private! (LaVonna Loesch, explaining the purpose of extracts)

The whole thing started with a pretty small meeting! (Noah Baker Merrill, pointing to the Last Supper tapestry behind him)

Tick tock!, tick tock!, tick tock! (quoting the forthright clock in the meeting room)

We can change the process! (Jim Perkins' response to Sara Scribner's question about the propriety of a long time visitor volunteering to help write GPYM's epistle)

I'm not kidding--three minutes! (Clerk LaVonna exhorting Friends to take a short break)

And I came back! (Jock Cameron, introducing himself as a second-time visitor to GPYM)

Ministry and Counsel is moving from the upper room to the lower room. (David Nagle announcing a change of venue)

We don't offer simple doctrines. We offer an invitation to discipleship. (Noah Baker Merrill)

Yes, contraption is a technical term. (Clerk LaVonna)

This is not the So-So Plains Yearly Meeting. It's the Great Plains Yearly Meeting! (Eric Moon's observation as a first time visitor)

What is so GREAT about the Great Plains Yearly Meeting? The Great does not mean large, apparently, so there is something else that is GREAT! (Eric Moon, as heard by another extracts recorder)

You came from a big yearly meeting on the east coast to the middle of nowhere! (A Friend's observation possibly Jock Cameron, spoken to Noah Baker Merrill)

GPYM15-21 Clerk Expresses Thanks; GPYM Epistle is Read

Clerk LaVonna Loesch thanked Friends for sending reports to her in advance of the sessions, which has promoted careful thought. The state of society reports were excellent. Statistician Linda Mallonee appreciated having statistical reports from all meetings, especially thankful for David Nagle's efforts in collecting statistics from Council House.

John and Gail Fletcher from Norman, Oklahoma, were welcomed.

Connie Adams read this year's GPYM Epistle written in partnership with Sara Scribner. See appendix. Friends accepted the letter with thanks to Sara and Connie for the careful, beautiful writing which captures well the spirit of our time together this week.

Friends were invited to sign cards for absent Friends which were arrayed on the clerks' table during a short break.

GPYM15-22 Nominating Committee Report

Beth Green-Nagle presented a report from the Nominating Committee, which was **approved**. See appendix.

GPYM15-23 Children & Youth Program Report

The children's program was led by Lisa McConnell, beginning with Godly Play stories each morning by Connie Adams. They also learned about Belize from FUM staff member Dale Graves, and made dream catchers, wind socks, and rain sticks. Thanks to Justin who helped and to Eric and teens from the Assembly of God Church. Three children helped give the report: Anika Nagle, Ariana Jake, and Allison Mammedaty. Louisa McConnell, Tanner Mallonee, and William McConnell were also part of the program.

The youth program was led by Beth Green-Nagle. Jocelyn Mallonee, Isaac Jake, and Joseph Nagle learned about Quaker Testimonies, studied the Apostle Paul's Letter to the Romans, played basketball, and went swimming. Joseph played the saxophone, Jocelyn played with Aaron Fowler's dog Bella, and Isaac enjoyed playing basketball.

Clerk LaVonna Loesch expressed GPYM's appreciation for the important ministry to our children and youth by Lisa McConnell, Beth Green-Nagle, Connie Adams, Dale Graves, and others who helped make our young ones' yearly meeting sessions experience memorable.

GPYM15-24 Closing the Business Sessions with Reflection & Anticipation

Clerk LaVonna Loesch shared that the Continuing Committee will be working on inter visitation, the process by which decisions are made for use of the Webb Fund, a new name for the Website Ad Hoc Committee, and a variety of other things.

As the 108th Annual Sessions came to a close, LaVonna expressed GPYM's gratitude for Hominy Friends' generous hospitality, and encouraged Friends to keep creating, in love, a shared identity. She noted that members of GPYM are connecting with one another more and more, responding to the Spirit's invitation to serve. In that process more love is being created. LaVonna hopes that we will unbind and release each other to do what God is calling us to do as individuals and as a faith community, affirming the movement of the Spirit in each other. Let's be open to a kind of Pentecost that is not bound by tradition in unhealthy ways, relying on the Holy Spirit,

the ultimate helper, to remind us how we have been helped and teach us how to be helpers to others.

LaVonna asked that Friends share, in the spirit of worship, a word or phrase that they learned this weekend. Those words and phrases shared include: joy in being together; vision; fellowship; progress; encouragement from travelling Friends; lovingly embraced; creativity in progress. Friends then entered a time of unprogrammed worship.

Noah Baker Merrill shared that "nowhere" becomes Now Here if space for God's loving Presence is created among us. All that matters is the embrace of the One who is with us, referring to Martha's words to Mary in John 11:28: "The Teacher is here and is calling for you." Noah then sang *I Am Here With You Now*.

Also speaking out of the silence, Laura Dungan encouraged each person present to name his or her fears and lay them down in this place of healing, and to ask the Spirit how we can come alongside someone we are drawn to. Laura then prayed that the Spirit of God fill us with fire as we open our arms and receive the power of God's love, that we will experience courage and the assurance that the Master has called us friends.

Out of the silence came the song Peace is Flowing Like a River, sung softly by those gathered as witness to our collective experience this weekend.

GPYM15-25 Afternoon Workshops

Friends United Meeting staff member Dale Graves led an informative and inspirational workshop about the Friends School in Belize City, population 60,000, which has ocean on three sides and is not the country's capital city. The school is in a low income part of town, and has an enrollment of 20 at-risk students ages 11-15 who are unlikely to succeed in government primary schools. They enter high school or a trade school when they graduate from Friends School.

There are many needs and opportunities. The school owns land and needs a larger building. A worshipping body of Friends, a primary school for adults, and an Alternatives to Violence Program would strengthen Friends work in this English-speaking country of 360,000. Friends can keep in touch by going to Dale's blog, fuminbelize.org.

An encouraging update on the work of the American Friends Service Committee was presented by **Jon Krieg**, a member of the **Des Moines office staff**, and **Eric Moon**, a Friends General Conference visiting Friend and member of Berkeley Friends Meeting, CA. The new mid-west director is Brand Rosen, who calls himself a Quaker Rabbi and is an advocate for justice in Palestine/Israel. His presence on staff is helpful in answering those who call the AFSC anti-Semitic. Iowa has extraordinary access to presidential candidates, which AFSC will use to promote its concerns including undue corporate influence in politics and the current legal requirement that a quota of 34,000 immigrants must be detained in private prisons. Candidate Hillary Clinton was unaware of the quota, but has recently taken a position against it.

Freedom Schools, including one in Ferguson MO established before the shooting there, fight the school-to-prison pipeline and structural racism. The schools also promote community gardens, healthy food, and working together with other community members to solve problems. Other initiatives include Eyes Wide Open: The Human Cost of War, a study curriculum called Small Group Social Justice for Friends, an Introduction to Quaker Testimonies booklet to educate AFSC staff and others, and a Liberal Arts in Prison program.

The educational afternoon concluded with a workshop presentation on the Osage Hymn Project by Hominy Friends pastor David Nagle. Talee Red Corn came to Hominy for the Wild Onion Dinner and shared with David his interest in the Osage language, including the Osage hymns sung by Hominy Friends. David invited Talee, who is the song leader at Osage Indian Baptist Church and has been teaching their young people several Osage hymns, to come to Hominy. Talee accepted the invitation and the congregation came to Hominy 5/17 for supper and a hymn sing.

Songs were shared back and forth between the two congregations. David showed us a video clip of Talee singing two Osage songs to give us a feeling for the language and the musical style, both different from our own. David explained that Christians have taken four approaches to creating hymns in Native American languages: translating traditional Christian hymns into Osage; taking traditional Osage music and writing new words in Osage; translating one tribe's hymn (a Ponca hymn, for instance), into Osage;

writing an original song with new music and words in the Osage language. Current efforts include Talee taking some scripture translations done by Jesuits in the 1830s when the Osage Nation was still in Missouri, and setting them to music.

David invited those present to learn three songs often sung as part of Hominy Friends' worship: Happy Birthday; Kumbaya; Blest Be the Tie That Binds Our Hearts in Christian Love. Friends did their best to learn this bit of Osage language with the help of skilled teaching by David Nagle, and enjoyed having a new connection with Osage sisters and brothers.

GPYM15-26 Dinner and Farewells

After the workshops there was time for fellowship and farewells before and during yet another delicious meal provided by Hominy Friends, who seemed to enjoy working in their newly renovated meetinghouse kitchen! After three meaningful days together, Friends said goodbye to one another, looking forward to being in touch with one another during the coming year and meeting June 2-4, 2016 at University Friends Meeting House, Wichita, Kansas.

APPENDIX

State of Society Reports from GPYM's Five Member Meetings

Central City Meeting's State of Society Report

Central City Monthly Meeting continues to be active in central Nebraska. We are meeting on the first Sunday of each month, typically at the Meeting House in Central City. We share the leadership of meetings with a message or discussion topic, music and silence, followed with meeting for worship with attention to business.

We traveled to Lincoln in September 2014 to worship with the Lincoln Friends Meeting. We had a very enjoyable meeting and fellowship and have since cooperated in other activities. In October Lincoln Friends organized a statewide get-together with a representative from AFSC in Des Moines that was enlightening in regard to regional activities including the Ferguson, Missouri area. Plans are underway for another statewide gathering this coming October with a planning committee from the Lincoln, Omaha and Central City meetings, and the aid of Laura Dungan.

We had a planning meeting in November with Laura Dungan from GPYM, Jean Eden, Lorene Ludy and Don Reeves to continue with future plans.

We continue to work with other local groups in support of the LGBT community, the peace movement and work to repeal the death penalty in Nebraska. Members are also active in the broader community of Friends in Great Plains Yearly Meeting and as steering committee members of American Friends Service Committee.

We are pleased that Selma Mesner is back home and going strong after a stay in the hospital late in 2014.

We are pleased to have the occasional new attender, and to welcome back distant Friends.

Breaking news from the Nebraska Legislature is that the death penalty has been repealed! This occurred over the veto of the governor, with a coalition of more liberal and more conservative legislators. Members of our meeting, past and present, have worked toward this for many years. No doubt there will be more work to be done but this is a big moment.

We have limited numbers and limited resources but continue to try to make an impact in our local community and the wider world.

Council House Meeting's State of Society Report

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures. He leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul. He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk in the valley of the shadow of death I shall fear no evil, for thou art with me.

We were deeply saddened to lose Doris Spicer this year at the age of 95. Doris was born in Pawhuska, OK, but lived her adult life in our community. She was an active member in our meeting until declining health interfered. Friends continued to visit her and to take care of her, providing meals and comfort until the end. She leaves a big hole.

Since last yearly meeting we enjoyed several visitors. David Nagle and his son Joseph came to check on the church basement and ended up leaving us a new hot water heater donated by Hominy Friends. South Central Yearly Meeting Friends came for a Saturday workday with several then spending the night so as to finish up incomplete projects. They fixed up the picnic tables at the pavilion and some of the playground equipment, leaving all with bright new coats of paint. Brad, Christine, and Joseph Wood were joined by David Nagle in getting the facilities ready for Quivering Arrow Camp. We also appreciated the assistance of some Wyandotte Friends folk in various efforts. Quivering Arrow Camp saw the place bursting with life. Several members of the community enjoyed a picnic supper under the pavilion on Wednesday evening. A local gospel group shared special music as well. Horseback rides made possible by a neighbor were a big hit.

We have been holding on as best we can. Two of us meet each Sunday morning and the Conservative Mennonites continue to lead worship the first Sunday of each month. We are still hopeful that God will call someone to serve here at Council House. Our parsonage is presently rented to Stan Johnson for a hired hand of his whose presence we appreciate.

Two of us are hopeful we can attend one day of Yearly Meeting in Hominy. We ask for your prayers and support knowing that we cannot hold the reins much longer.

Hominy Meeting's State of Society Report

I lift up mine eyes unto the hills. From whence cometh my strength? My strength cometh from the Lord.

As we have increasingly recognized that our strength comes from the Lord, we have felt encouraged and strengthened in our efforts to serve God in the southern part of the Osage Nation.

We have maintained what we consider to be an active program for a small group. Attendance at meeting for worship is up even if it is not as regular as we might hope. We feel blessed to have a fair number of children and especially that they attend as families.

We participate in the Hominy Ministerial Alliance and its programs, including the food pantry, Christ's Cupboard.

We donated a new hot water heater and sent a group of campers to Quivering Arrow Camp at Council House Friends last summer. We also held our own mini-VBS which was enjoyed by kids and leaders alike. Our last day we toured the Osage Nation Museum where we also enjoyed a picnic lunch, the Osage County Museum, and the Constantine Theater.

We sent invitations to every Quaker group in Oklahoma and hosted an All-Oklahoma Friends gathering in Tenth Month. While no Evangelical congregations responded to our invitation, we still had a precious time together with all agreeing that we should try it again. We thank God for the assistance rendered by Laura Dungan and LaVonna Loesch.

We enjoyed working together on our annual Wild Onion Dinner. We raised the most money we ever have and the food drew many compliments.

We again enjoyed a cookout on Mothers' Day, despite dim weather prospects. Our new grill-masters did a fine job.

First Indian Baptist Church in Pawhuska responded to our invitation and a busload joined us for an Osage hymn sing the evening of 5/17. They were grateful for the food we served them and they and we shared our hymns in the Osage language. Again, there was strong sentiment for this to be repeated and we were told to expect an invitation to Pawhuska.

In addition to our activities, AA uses our fellowship hall twice a week and substance abuse counseling is available on yet another day.

We have had to replace our kitchen stove due to a gas leak and enjoy the new cabinets and quartz counter top which have transformed our kitchen into a roomier and more enjoyable workspace. We received an insurance

settlement for hail damage to our building and hope to have repairs and improvements effected in the very near future. One of Jack Core's brothers has talked about replacing the entry doors in Jack's memory. We are also trying to find a contractor to install beams to rectify the sag in the 24' span between the worship room and the fellowship hall. Interior painting, though long planned has also not yet happened. We had hoped to have all of these accomplished prior to hosting GPYM, but are glad that we can still move forward as way opens.

We have been saddened by several deaths, such as those of Charles Pratt and Hazel Moore. More recently the weddings of Kim Revard to Hermes Sanchez and Mary St. John to Robert Lee have led us to rejoice.

We continue to feel blessed by God as our times of worship and fellowship reflect an increased vitality and deeper commitment to sharing God's love in this needful world.

Heartland Meeting's State of Society Report

Thirteen years have passed since we held our building dedication event. The hard work of building our meeting house was completed. Now building a faith community is the work we are most called to do at Heartland. We gather each Sunday in prayerful expectation that we will discover individually and corporately what God is calling us to do. Worship time is an opportunity to recharge ourselves and once again recognize the Light in ourselves and in others. We deeply appreciate our beautiful facility. One member shared, "the Meeting room is my favorite of the building, as it calls the soul to peaceful silent meditation in simple lines and uncluttered surroundings." We are a small group of seekers who have been blessed with financial gifts that enable us to sustain our meeting house today and for many years to come. However, we are often physically and emotionally challenged to work maintaining our facility.

This past year we had four four-hour sessions with Leslie Frye. The sessions were arranged by Aaron Fowler, who served as our clerk for six years. One session had us focus and share our individual timeline with the meeting. The purpose was to help us build a common understanding of the history of Heartland and the roles individuals have had through time. Other sessions focused on conflict resolution and brainstorming activities. The purpose was

to help us heal and to help us verbalize solutions and strategies for developing a low maintenance building and grounds plan. We are a small group in number, but we have a multitude of opinions. These sessions were often difficult and at times painful. However, we have taken steps to have all voices heard concerning our building and grounds. Members shared that the sessions were meaningful and personally aided in their healing process. Some shared that it was the best thing that happened this past year. We have made progress repairing broken hearts and relationships. Our work is not complete.

With music and song-circle singing, Heartland hosted our first wedding, our largest event ever. Together with many friends and relatives from different faith traditions we offered love and support to Lisa Brightup and Natalie Tos Byington. In January we hosted two memorial services. One for Ralph Hershey, a non-resident member of the meeting, and another for Earl Daniels, the father of Angela Young. We also welcomed two new members this year, Susie Ternes and Michael Schmidt. We have a tradition of giving a copy of Britain Yearly Meeting's *Quaker Faith and Practice* signed by the members of Heartland to all new meeting members. We needed to restock our supply for our newest member, Michael, so feeling optimistic we ordered five copies. We also have a tradition of hosting a new member welcome "Party." What a joy it would be to have five events in 2015-2016.

We continue to encourage family attendance. Each month on the first and third Sunday we offer Godly Play for children during our worship hour. Connie Adams heads up the three person team who were trained in using the curriculum. At the close of worship on those days, Jim Perkins, provides a soup and sandwich meal for all to enjoy. Susie shared, "The Godly Play program has nourished our children's spiritual development and our family feels very supported by the Meeting." Other members shared about the joy they receive by watching Luke, Riley and Sophie walk into the meeting room and sit in the big chairs and share what they have learned or what is on their minds.

We celebrated Christmas with a candlelight service on Christmas Eve. The telling of the Nativity story was based on a Godly Play story and it included children as the voices of the prophets, angels, shepherds and the Magi. It was a beautiful service that concluded with Patrice Stephenson signing *Silent*

Night accompanied by our collective voices. Members and visitors alike shared how it was one of the highlights of the year.

Money and Faith: the Search for Enough, edited and compiled by Michael Schut was thought provoking and provided good discussion opportunities during adult education hour. In addition the group participated in “Friendly Bible Studies.” Each week the group was lead deeply into a short passage of scripture and members expressed that it was a wonderful way to study scripture.

We share our building on a weekly basis with the Wichita Friends School providing the children with a place to worship. Heartland supports Quaker education at WFS financially and with the volunteer activities of several individuals. We have members who serve on the WFS board, teach Godly Play, read stories and provide music enrichment. One member has served as the construction liaison on the nearly completed school construction project. It has been amazing to see the weekly changes on the school facility.

We are a small group with many blessings both personally and corporately. With God, the help of each other and the vitality that new members bring we look forward to the future.

Angela Young, Presiding Clerk

University Friends' State of Society Report

University Friends Meeting has had a very blessed year. We strive to provide a place for friends of all ages to worship, fellowship and build loving relationships with each other. A recent change we've implemented is the use of nametags on Sunday mornings in hopes of better building those relationships.

Our Youth and Children's Ministry programs have been busy this year. The children and families of UFM were invited to spend a day each at All-Star Sports East, Central Riverside Park, the Great Plains Nature Center in Wichita, Rock River Rapids in Derby, and the Sedgwick County Fair in

Cheney. UFM also hosted a family-style Vacation Bible School in July 2014. Other family ministry events were hosted throughout the year as well. These include the annual Christmas party and impromptu pageant.

The Youth group has been busy with a lock-in, swim parties, movie nights, bowling and baking cookies to help welcome back the students at Friends University. From September-April a fellowship event called Friendly Evenings was held at UFM twice each month. The evenings consist of a shared pot-luck-style meal followed by a time of musical worship before attendees are separated into age groups for lessons. The children rotate through games, crafts, and a Bible lesson while the youth are led through various activities and Bible lessons. The adults participate in group discussions that center around various spiritual practices or Bible passages. A new Young Adult Sunday School class has started up this spring and there is another adult class on Sunday mornings as well. Our meetinghouse also is home to All Nations Fellowship and Cornerstone, the Christian fellowship group from Friends University.

We hosted an All Church Retreat in November with Sister Mary Kevin Rooney facilitating “Tending the Light”. A workshop was hosted by Carol Mullikin to learn more about worship through walking a labyrinth. UFM also hosted an event in conjunction with People of Faith for Peace in February called “Peace, Pies & Prophets”. It was an acting troupe and pie auction used to raise money for Christian Peacemaker Teams and Food-4-Kids. Members of our meeting and several of the Wichita Mennonite churches and First Church of the Brethren, helped provide the pies for the auction. Over \$4,000.00 was raised and a great time was had by all.

There’s a variety of opportunities for fellowship throughout the year. We host an Ice Cream Social following VBS, the Impromptu Christmas Pageant and soup supper, the Singing Quakers share with us in October followed by a cookout, an Easter Brunch, Game nights and Movie nights. Molly Loesch helped organize a Coffee House in March with musical acts En Power & Light with Billy Bloomquist performing.

We continue to explore ways to build our community, not just within the walls of our building but outside in our neighborhoods and farther out into the world. We are excited to move forward and see what God has in store for the future of our meeting.

Written Reports from Friends United Meeting

Report by FUM Presiding Clerk Cliff Loesch

We are soon to finish the first year of a new Triennium for Friends United Meeting. I was reappointed presiding clerk for a second three-year term at the Triennial sessions last summer in Indiana. Here are some noteworthy movements in this new Triennium:

1. GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP. FUM restructured the board so there will be more East Africans serving on the Executive Board. We currently have five East Africans on the Executive Board (two officers and three at-large members). Our goal is to have six meetings per year by phone or video. We are just getting started toward that goal. We had a very successful meeting by telephone in April. Colin Saxton will be in Africa for the month of August. We hope to experiment with video-conferencing while he is there. FUM is committed to growth in global partnership, and the structural changes made to the organization helps move us in that direction.

2. COMPREHENSIVE CAMPAIGN. FUM launched a three-million dollar comprehensive campaign in 2015. Almost a third of that goal has already been given or pledged. FUM listed numerous priorities for the campaign. Some of the gifts themselves will help determine the direction FUM takes in ministry. FUM hopes for broad participation in the Comprehensive Campaign. Gifts and pledges however large or however small are welcome.

3. NORTH AMERICAN MINISTRIES. A priority for FUM (in response to many requests) is to serve as a resource to strengthen yearly meetings and local meetings. Over the past few years, FUM has offered workshops on clerking, finances, and other things in various locations in the U.S. The seminars have been very well-received. The latest conference (“Stoking the Fire”) was held in Cincinnati in May with Noah Baker Merrill serving as the keynote speaker.

4. 2017 TRIENNIAL IN WICHITA. The 2017 FUM Triennial will be held within the borders of Great Plains Yearly Meeting! Friends University has

given a verbal “yes” to having the sessions on campus. We hope to have a contract signed sometime soon.

Submitted by Cliff Loesch

Report by FUM General Secretary Colin Saxton

The Friends United Meeting staff and General Board members are grateful for the partnership we share with this community. The financial support, volunteer work and participation in FUM programs and events help bring life and vitality to the global fellowship of Friends. Thank you for each way you share in the common work and witness of FUM!

Some people think of FUM as an umbrella organization linking our 34 yearly meetings and associations for the purpose of preserving historic ties. Others see FUM as a North American mission organization focused on sending people and resources to do ministry in other parts of the world. While these ideas about FUM may have been practically true at different points in our history, we believe God is calling us to be much more now and into the future. Instead, FUM is a beloved community — joining Friends in a mutually-supported, global fellowship. Together, we seek to energize, equip and connect Friends in their local meetings/churches, through their yearly meetings/associations and by the programs and projects partner in all around the world.

This work happens in many different ways. Here are some examples we wish to highlight:

Communications

- Hopefully you are becoming familiar with the new ***Connections*** insert that is available in hardcopy or digital format. Each month, we highlight a different part of our community or shared work in a way that offers avenues for further exploration and growth.
- ***Quaker Life*** magazine continues to be available in print and digital formats offering news, inspiration and challenge. In an effort to expand our reach within the community, we will be creating a *Quaker Life* blog in the coming year. This will feature another set of writers in a more inter-active format and will focus on the practicalities and peculiarities of living as Friends in the world.

- An ongoing concern we hear is the need for creative and engaging educational curricula and spiritual formation resources. Over the next several months, we are actively working on best ways to meet this need through a revitalized and refocused **Friends United Press**.
- If you are reading this report during your annual gathering, you will find a wonderful and colorful **FUM booklet** on our display table. It highlights, primarily in picture form, some of the wonderful programs, projects and people across FUM. Please pick one up or find it on the website.
- We expect to hire a new **Communication Director** for our Richmond (US) office later this year. We are looking for a creative, gifted and passionate person to lead our communication team and vision into the future. A job posting is available on our website at www.fum.org.
- Many **digital resources** are available to Friends by signing up to receive them. These include e-newsletters, weekly devotions and prayer concerns, inserts and *Quaker Life*. You can sign up for any or all of these by contacting our office at info@fum.org or checking the website.

Global Ministries

- We have just launched a renewed initiative aimed at facilitating cross-cultural service and strengthening connections across our community. The **Living Letters program** facilitates a wide variety of travel in the ministry: for service, for prayer, for learning, for solidarity, for teaching, for discernment, for encouragement, for witness and more. Organized opportunities will be on the FUM website. Our current focus is on finding Friends to be part of our regular work teams to Cuba and to serve as three to nine month Friends in Residence in Ramallah.
- Ramallah Friends School has hired **Nancy Sanderson Swartz** to serve as **Academic Dean**. Nancy brings years of experience in International Baccalaureate education and will focus on training and developing the 100+ teachers who serve at the school.
- Within the **Caribbean region** of FUM, our primary focus is on re-visioning our work in **Belize**. A discernment team has been working over the last year to consider possible next steps for an expanded ministry. A new outreach through adult education is ready to begin and exploration into starting a Friends worshipping community continues.

- **North American Ministries** recently held a **Stoking the Fire** retreat in Cincinnati, Ohio. Quakers from all over the country came together for worship and sharing. This is one of many efforts aimed at kindling renewal among Friends and equipping local meetings and churches to be healthy and vibrant.
- **Africa Ministries** continue to flourish and expand through the work of our Kisumu office staff, project partners and in collaboration with yearly meetings. At **Friends Theological College**, Robert Wafula and the staff are actively working to expand the size of the student body as they also work through the next steps toward accreditation. FUM is currently seeking to fill two important ministry staff positions in Africa. We are currently looking for a **Business Manager** to split time between FTC and the African Ministries Office. This Kenyan Friend will oversee the financial and business operations of both offices. We also continue to search for a **Communications Officer**, a North American Friend who will enhance our story-telling and information sharing in Africa and cross-culturally. Both job descriptions are on the FUM website.

Energize, Equip, Connect: The FUM Campaign

- Last summer, FUM quietly launched a three-year, \$3,000,000 campaign to deepen the connections within our community and raise funds to launch new initiatives and build a more sustainable support base. Through outright and planned gifts, we hope to exceed this goal before the 2017 Triennial. To-date we have around \$1,000,000 raised or pledged.
- We are so grateful to the generous Friends who have contributed so far. Each gift, whether large or small, is making a huge impact on our capacity to do ministry. Over the coming year, there will be a series of small group gatherings in which Friends will be invited to come and hear more about FUM and the Campaign. Please consider attending one in your area.

2017 and 2020 Triennials

- Great Plains Yearly Meeting has agreed to host the 2017 FUM Triennial in Wichita, KS. The dates for this gathering of Quakers from

around the world will be July 12-16. We will meet on the campus of Friends University.

- Over the last year, FUM has been in discussion with the United Society of Friends Women International and Quaker Men International about the possibility of aligning our Triennial schedules. An agreement was reached to begin doing this in 2020. A joint planning team will work together to coordinate a shared place and time so that the gatherings can be held back-to-back. This will reduce some of the cost for international travelers and encourage a deeper partnership between the three groups. At this point, we are anticipating hold these gatherings, with an overlapping day for joint fellowship, in Kenya.

GPYM Continuing Committee Minutes 2014-2015

GPYM Continuing Committee Minutes October 25, 2014 at University Friends Meetinghouse

Members present: LaVonna Loesch, Dorlan Bales, Connie Adams, Cheryl Mallonee, Cliff Loesch, Linda Mallonee, Steve McConnell, Lisa McConnell, Aaron Fowler, and David Nagle. Laura Dungan, staff person for the Leadership and Revitalization Initiative, was also present.

Meeting opened at 10:00 with a time of worship led by Presiding Clerk LaVonna Loesch, who offered queries from her mother's copy of Kansas Yearly Meeting's 1883 Discipline.

LaVonna reflected on this year's GPYM sessions, including Jan Wood's encouragement to be yes-and people. LaVonna offered examples from scripture, and invited those present to name yes-and Quakers past and present. Gratitude was voiced for the lives of Elizabeth Fry, John Woolman, and Colin Saxton. LaVonna asked those Friends to reflect on how we can be yes-and disciples of Jesus.

Approval of GPYM Minutes/Handbook

After looking at several details, including clarification that the statistical year is the calendar year, the Continuing Committee APPROVED the minutes and handbook. The recording clerk will make the corrections and send them to Cliff Loesch for publication and distribution.

Evaluation of the 2014 GPYM Sessions

Friends expressed their gratitude for visitors who attended the 2014 sessions, new attendees from Hominy, and the decision to make attention to revitalization a permanent part of GPYM's structure. Those present were also grateful for new energy that is flowing from healing work done during the sessions, 57 years after the 1957 schism in this region that divided Friends with ties to what is now Friends United Meeting and those who became associated with Evangelical Friends Alliance.

It worked well to have only one workshop at a time on Saturday afternoon. It was helpful to have a close relationship between what happened in business meetings and in evening sessions. The tempo of the sessions was good thanks to good clerking--efficient but not rushed.

A few aspects of the sessions need attention as next year's gathering is planned. "Night owls" found it difficult to get to Bible study first thing in the morning. The size of the meetinghouse presented some challenges in accommodating a children's program, a place to eat, display space, and rooms for various meetings. There are needs for a teen program, a set of questions for dialog between YM leaders and host meeting, and a book table. How do we communicate the value of YM sessions to those not there this year so they will consider attending next time? How do we do a better job of publicizing our YM to our local meetings' attendees and to Friends in this region not formally affiliated with GPYM?

Plans for the GPYM Sessions in Hominy, Oklahoma June 4-6, 2015

Noah Baker Merrill, Superintendent of New England Yearly Meeting, has agreed to join us next year as a visiting minister. LaVonna will talk with Noah about what themes he might address, including the question of what GPYM might be called to do now, exploring the imagery that emerged during this year's sessions of welcoming banquet table, open arms, and conga line dancing.

The Continuing Committee talked with pastor David Nagle about hosting, including housing and leadership/space for programs for children and young adults. Is there a way to integrate children/youth program with the adult schedule?

Interim Finance Report

Treasurer Connie Adams reported on expenditures and income since GPYM sessions (attached).

Leadership and Revitalization Initiative Report

Laura Dungan, released by Friends to facilitate this initiative, asked us to share in pairs our experiences at YM related to the 1957 split and what still lingers with us. Then those present entered into an exercise designed as the beginning of telling the larger story of Nebraska/GPYM.

Laura reported on a fruitful three-hour meeting October 5 in Central City with nine Central City and Lincoln Friends, who began creating a team to plan cooperative activities for Nebraska Quakers in 2015. The group asked Laura to arrange a Wyoming Monthly Meeting conference call with Nebraska and Oklahoma people invited to take part, and to contact Brent Bill for an update on Friends General Conference's New Meetings Initiative.

An all-Oklahoma Friends five-hour gathering was held in Hominy October 18 with more than 24 people attending from Hominy, Norman, Green Country, Oklahoma City, and University Friends Meetings and Kiamichi Worship Group. Laura led a Sharing Our Stories workshop and David Nagle presented "An Historical People's Encounter with the Divine." There is desire to plan another interaction across Quaker traditions.

The Continuing Committee talked about the initiative's focus, which included young adults and possible connection with Quaker Voluntary Service. Laura then proposed a budget of \$48,100 for 2015 that included special gatherings to encourage growth in Nebraska, Oklahoma and nurture of young adults at University Friends, leadership training via a visiting Friend and a regional fall gathering, and create a plan to connect Quakers in the Great Plains (attached). The budget will be reviewed at the next CC meeting.

A new permanent Home Missions Committee was approved during GPYM sessions (GPYM14-18) in order to guide the yearly meeting in spending income from GPYM farm property in a way consistent with the donor's wishes. GPYM14-18 also contains Laura's suggestions for members to serve on this committee and a request that the Continuing Committee consider these names at its first meeting.

LaVonna Loesch, Connie Adams, Dorlan Bales, Timber White, and Lynn Zeleski were APPROVED by the Continuing Committee. If Lynn is unable to serve, Steve McConnell is approved to serve in her place.

Closing

Presiding Clerk LaVonna Loesch reported that there is a process under way at Rocky Mountain Yearly Meeting as a result of GPYM's letter, which was considered by RMYM at their sessions this summer. Great Plains Yearly Meeting will hear from RMYM Superintendent Adrian Halverstadt when that process is completed.

A prayer of benediction and thanksgiving was voiced on behalf of all present by Assistant Presiding Clerk Cheryl Mallonee at 3:45.

Dorlan Bales, Recording Clerk

GPYM Continuing Committee Minutes March 21, 2015 at University Friends Meetinghouse

Present: LaVonna Loesch, Cliff Loesch, Connie Adams, Linda Mallonee, Cheryl Mallonee, Aaron Fowler, Dorlan Bales. Present by conference call: Steve McConnell and David Nagle. Lisa McConnell was unable to join the call.

Friends gathered at 2:00. A query to lead us into a time of worship, "What does love require?", was offered by Presiding Clerk LaVonna Loesch.

The C.C. approved **2014 Minutes/Handbook** has been sent by email to Cliff Loesch, LaVonna, and Cheryl Mallonee. There has been a lack of clarity about who would see that the minutes are printed. Connie Adams volunteered to do this. Cliff will send the digital file to individuals and Quaker institutions who have not yet received it.

Plans for the 2015 YM sessions at Hominy, OK were considered next. LaVonna read a communication from invited minister Noah Baker Merrill, including a theme, "There is a River: Growing Communities of Deep Hope" inspired by Psalm 46:4. The time frame for the sessions was discussed, especially the best time to conclude the gathering. YM budget for the 2015 sessions was considered. Friends talked about program needs, especially nursery care and program for elementary age children and middle school youth. Dorlan Bales agreed to ask Shelly Kadel and Elizabeth Wine if they would be available to lead these programs, with expenses and honorarium paid, with assistants recruited by Hominy Friends as needed. It was estimated that eight children and four youth will be present at this year's sessions. Dorlan will email Continuing Committee about the results of those calls. A target date was set for registration to be on line mid-April.

FUM Triennial hosting possibility July 2017. Friends United Meeting General Secretary Colin Saxton is not pressuring GPYM, but would like FUM's triennial sessions to be hosted by GPYM in Wichita. Cliff, who is currently FUM's Presiding Clerk, said he would be the point person for local arrangements, that six or eight Wichita people will need to help at that time, and that FUM staff will plan the program. GPYM's hosting of this international event in 2017 was **approved**.

Clerk's request for written reports before June GPYM sessions.

LaVonna needs reports from meetings and clerks by May 21 in order to prepare for yearly meeting. These reports include finance, each meeting's state of society, memorials, and statistical information, Home Missions/Revitalization & Leadership Initiative, and reports from all Friends agency representatives.

Current Finance Report. A budget report as of March 17 had been sent to all present by Treasurer Connie Adams. Heartland Friends asked for \$2,000 from the Webb Fund for materials to build children's teaching materials for Quaker, New Testament, and Original Testament stories for Wichita Friends School and others. This request has been approved by GPYM's Finance Committee. **Approved** by the Continuing Committee.

Home Missions/Revitalization Initiative report. LaVonna lifted up plans for an October 3 Nebraska gathering and an Oklahoma all Friends gathering this fall. Wichita's fall plans are in process. There has been work on communication among our meetings, five one to one meetings with young adult Friends and a coffee house concert at University Friends 3/19, an all clerks gathering in Wichita including reports from LaVonna and Cheryl Mallonee about their November experience at a conference for clerks, a visit in Atlanta, GA with the Quaker Volunteer Service founder, and a visit to the first pilot QVS unit. The meeting concluded with thanksgiving and worship at 4:00.

Dorlan Bales, Recording Clerk

Revitalization & Leadership Development Initiative Report

September 2014 – May 2015 (Laura was on leave July and August)

Laura Dungan, Released Friend

Report by State:

Nebraska – Central City & Lincoln Meeting

- October 3, 2014 – Afternoon Gathering with Central City Friends and visiting Friends from Lincoln Meeting. Those in attendance: Steve McConnell (Central City Meeting, Lincoln resident); Lisa McConnell (Central City Meeting – Lincoln resident); Selma Mesner (Central City Meeting – Central City resident); Rich Maciejewski (Central City Meeting – Grand Island resident); George McConnell (Central City Meeting); Don Reeves (Central City Meeting, Ohio resident); Lynn Zeleski (Central City Meeting – Hastings resident); Jean Eden (Lincoln Meeting – Lincoln resident), Lorene Ludy (Lincoln Meeting – Lincoln resident), and Laura Dungan (Great Plains Yearly Meeting – Revitalization and Leadership Development Initiative).

❖ ***Query presented: Where do you personally have the most spiritual energy and what do you long for?***

Items named:

- Community
 - Caring for earth and a society that works for all
 - Extended Worship
 - Call to compassion
 - Depth of Emotion in spiritual experience
 - Vulnerability in relationships
 - Deeper meditation practice
 - Joining mind, body, spirit experience
- Outcome of Afternoon: It was decided to form a planning group with representatives from Omaha Meeting, Lincoln Meeting and Central City Meeting to begin planning a Fall 2015 Gathering of Nebraska Friends.
 - Progress: 2 Planning calls held and date selected for Gathering:
Saturday, October 10, 2015 Pioneers Park Nature Center, Lincoln NE. Don Reeves is the keynote speaker for the event.

➤ Other Notes:

- Lincoln Friends Meeting hosted a Fall Gathering that Nebraska Friends attended (including Central City), October 18, 2014. Jon

Kreig from the Des Moines office of American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), spoke about the various AFSC programs.

- Central City had Kurt and Karen Mesner report on activities that raised awareness about the Death Penalty and the bill that was introduced in the legislature to repeal it.

Oklahoma – Hominy Meeting

- October 18, 2014 – All-Quaker Oklahoma Gathering. The following Friends gathered in Hominy and shared with each other their spiritual experiences: Carole Revard (Hominy MM), Angela Brown (Hominy MM), Dave Nagle & Beth Green-Nagle (Hominy MM), John & Gail Fletcher (Norman MM), Scott & Tracy Carmack (Norman MM), Don Satterthwaite (Green Country Friends MM) Dorothy Manzer (Hominy MM) Elizabeth Barb (Norman MM) Sam Price (Norman MM), Tom Bush (Hominy MM), Orion Bush (Hominy MM), Phil Newberry (OKC MM), Eddie & Janice Huckaby (Kiamichi Worship Group), Ruth & Les Brelsford (Kiamichi Worship Group), Phyllis Byerly (OKC MM), Nancy & Doug Pyle (Kiamichi Worship Group), LaVonna Loesch (University Friends MM), Laura Dungan (University Friends MM)
- Laura and David served as facilitators and LaVonna provided musical accompaniment as well as Elder support.
- Other Notes: March - Wild Onion Dinner

May 16 - Osage Hymn Sing

Kansas – University Friends and Heartland Meeting

- **One-to-One meetings** with Adult Young Friends of University Friends Meeting to build relationship and get some sense of interest.
- **Coffee House** organized by Molly Loesch, hosted by GPYM and University Friends. Held Sunday, March 29, 2015. This gathering attracted over 50 people. Predominantly young and many young persons of color.
- **All-Clerk Gathering**, Sunday, March 22, 2015. Clerks present: Cheryl Mallonee (GPYM Recording Clerk), BJ Mills (Presiding Clerk, UFM), David Newman (Clerk Ministry and Counsel, UFM), Holly Newman (David's guest), Angela Young (Presiding Clerk, Heartland), Aaron Fowler (Building and Grounds Clerk, Heartland), Connie Adams (Heartland Meeting), Cliff Loesch (GPYM Clerk of Ministry and Counsel/FUM Presiding Clerk), LaVonna Loesch (GPYM Presiding

Clerk), Laura Dungan (Revitalization & Leadership Development, Released Friend).

Unaffiliated Meetings/Scattered Friends/Conferences –

- Attended Topeka Friends meeting for worship - April 2015
- Attended Spiritual Deepening Consultation – April 2015
- Visited with Quaker Voluntary Service Unit in Atlanta, GA

Outcomes for previous 10-months:

- Increased interconnection and relationship building in the three states.
- More definition of geographical support.

Next Steps for 12-months:

- Continue to work with local meetings in building vibrant regional pockets of Friends.
- Have as guiding question for Discovery: What are our distinctions as Quakers in GPYM? What do we have in common?
- Be intentionally invitational to unaffiliated meetings.

Primary Challenge: Geographical distance.

- Current answer to this challenge is to continue to work with local meetings to develop regional Quaker support.
- Exploration: Use of technology. Specifically social media

Upcoming Gatherings:

- **Missouri Valley Friends Gathering** – Will attend Fall Gathering, October 2-4, 2015. Speaker & Author: Eileen Flanagan, *Renewable: One Woman's Search for Simplicity, Faithfulness, and Hope*
 - Aaron Fowler and Laura Dungan will provide musical leadership on Saturday evening.
- **Nebraska Gathering of Friends** – Saturday, October 10, 2015 Pioneers Park Nature Center, Lincoln NE. Don Reeves is the keynote speaker for the event along with other workshops.
- **All-Friends Oklahoma Gathering** - TBA – Invitation has been extended to Max Carter to be keynote.

Treasurer's Report: Great Plains Yearly Meeting, Fiscal Year 2014-15

Balance Sheet: Our balance sheet shows how our cash on hand is allocated.

- An “Initiative Pledges” category has been added as an asset to keep track of Home Missions Initiative pledges that will be paid by 12-31-15.
- Because we will be spending from the Home Mission Retained Earnings account, some funds have been moved to a new Farm Repair account to be sure we keep money available for that purpose.
- We have money available in our Student Loan account. We currently have one student loan that will be paid in full this coming December, and we have two loans out to another member for the completion of her degree. Our current interest rate is 1.5% simple interest for the first year after graduation; then it increases to 3% simple interest.
- In the Webb Fund category, \$1,028 has been allocated to Heartland for creation of Godly Play and Faith & Play stories. That amount will be spent this summer. So we have about \$9,000 still available. The specified purpose for this fund is: “to provide educational experiences for children and young persons based on fundamental Quaker beliefs, traditions and principles, including instruction in Quaker history and values.”

Fiscal Year Budget Spreadsheet:

For this past fiscal year from May 1, 2014 through April 30, 2015 we came out okay with our planned budget by making some adjustments in our general expenses. Unfortunately we were short on income and long on expense.

To help us see our finances clearly and plan more accurately for yearly meeting, the yearly meeting line items are separated from other general budget lines. Our Yearly Meeting expense was greater than anticipated because we added payment for children’s programming to our budget. But, our YM bottom line was saved by the gifts we received from individuals. The “Donor Designated” amounts were sums given by individuals to augment Jan’s honorarium and to give Becky a financial gift for her ministry to us. This gracious generosity on the part of a few of our Friends is very appreciated.

General Fund lines:

On the income side, we had \$510 less in Monthly Meeting contributions than expected this year. Those expectations are being adjusted in next year's budget.

On the expense side:

- We received a 2-year bill for our home page that was more than I expected. Both the domain name and home page bills have increased substantially in the last year. Cliff and I are looking into other options – to see if we can maintain a quality web page for less cost.
- The printing and postage mailing cost for our YM Minutes increased.
- Because we were short of funds at the end of the fiscal year, we were not able to transfer the planned \$300 to our FUM Triennial equity account.
- Please note that the travel to the clerk's consultation was funded from an equity account, so that did not affect our planned budget.

Home Missions Fiscal Year Funds:

- FYI - Property taxes went up again, as did our land valuation. Don Reeves is verifying the valuation increase to be sure it is correct.
- The phase-out of agency contributions that do not fall within the Home Missions guidelines specified in the bequest is now complete.
- We finished the year with \$3,117 in retained income from the farm. Because corn prices are down, Don has advised us to lessen 2016 income expectations. We've reduced the figure by \$1,200.
- Many thanks to Don Reeves, Steve McConnell and other Nebraska Friends who manage our farm business so well.

Home Missions Initiative: The Revitalization Initiative doesn't fit into fiscal year or calendar year parameters well, so we have a 4-year display of Initiative financial activity. We currently have \$16,383 in gifts designated for the Initiative and \$9,520 in pledges that will be paid this calendar year.

Budget Report, 2014-15

	A	B	C	D	E
1	Great Plains Yearly Meeting of Friends				
2	Budget Report: 1-May-2014 through 30-April 2015				
3	Fiscal Year Accounts: Yearly Meeting, General & Home Missions				
4					
5				Inc/Exp	Budget
6	Annual Yearly Meeting Income				
7			Gifts - Donor Designated	650.00	
8			Gifts from Individuals at YM	603.50	
9			YM Books Sales	175.00	
10			YM Meals	1,063.50	2,400.00
11			YM Registrations	1,065.00	
12	Total Annual Yearly Meeting Income			3,557.00	2,400.00
13	Annual Yearly Meeting Expense				
14			Donor Deisgnated	650.00	
15			YM Meal Cost	1,036.76	2,400.00
16			YM Sessions	1,211.00	
17			YM/CC Child care/ program	597.00	900.00
18	Total Annual Yearly Meeting Expense			3,494.76	3,300.00
19					
20	General Income				
21			Gifts from Monthly Meetings	4,290.00	4,800.00
22			Transfer - equity to general	1,263.46	636.26
23	Total General Income			5,553.46	5,436.26
24	General Expense				
25	Gifts from GPYM General Acct				
26			Friends United Meeting	560.00	560.00
27			FWCC World Office	100.00	100.00
28			Quaker Earthcare Witness	50.00	50.00
29			Right Sharing of WorldResources	100.00	100.00
30	Total Gifts from GPYM General Acct			810.00	810.00
31	Travel to Meetings				
32			AFSC	722.20	900.00
33			Consultation-YM Clerks (equity)	627.20	0.00
34			FUM General Board	1,194.29	1,500.00
35			FWCC Section of the Americas	924.00	900.00
36			FUM Triennial	105.70	300.00
37			FWCC World Gathering	300.00	300.00
38			FWCC World Gathering Asst Fund	100.00	100.00
39	Total Travel to Meetings			3,973.39	4,000.00
40	Childcare: Continuing Committee meetings				
41	Minutes Copying/Printing/Mailing			416.61	350.00
42	Web Home Page Fees			415.70	115.50
43	Total General Expense			5,199.09	4,925.50
44	Net - General & Yearly Meeting:			(0.00)	(739.24)

	A	B	C	D	E
1	Great Plains Yearly Meeting of Friends				
2	Budget Report: 1-May-2014 through 30-April 2015				
3	Fiscal Year Accounts: Yearly Meeting, General & Home Missions				
4					
5				Inc/Exp	Budget
45					
46	Home Missions Fiscal Year Income				
47		Farm Income		10,200.00	10,200.00
48		Gifts to Home Missions		476.65	400.00
49		Total HM Fiscal Year Income		10,676.65	10,600.00
50	Home Missions Fiscal Year Expense				
51	Annual Gifts to Agencies (* = discontinued)				
52		AFSC (domestic programs)*		250.00	250.00
53		FCNL (Native Am concerns)*		250.00	250.00
54		Friends United Meeting*		500.00	500.00
55		FWCC (Sec of the Americas)*		100.00	100.00
56		Kickapoo Friends (MAYM)		900.00	900.00
57		Mesquakie Friends Ctr (IAYM)*		250.00	250.00
58		Quivering Arrow Camp		300.00	300.00
59		Wichita Friends School		2,100.00	2,100.00
60		Total HM Annual Gifts to Agencies		4,650.00	4,650.00
61		Farm Property Taxes		2,886.46	2,410.00
62		Farm Management Expense		23.00	0.00
63		Total HM Fiscal Year Expense		7,559.46	7,060.00
64	Net - Home Missions Fiscal Year			3,117.19	3,540.00

Balance Sheet

	A	B	C	D	E	F
1	Great Plains Yearly Meeting of Friends					
2	Balance Sheet as of 5-26-2015					
3						
4	ASSETS					
5			Checking/Savings			
6				Everence Checking		53,887.79
7				Everence Savings		5.00
8			Total Checking/Savings			53,892.79
9			Other Assets			
10				Initiative Pledges		3,970.00
11			Total Other Assets			3,970.00
12	TOTAL ASSETS					57,862.79
13						
14	LIABILITIES & EQUITY					
15		Liabilities				
16				Initiative Contributions Encumbered		16,383.77
17			Total Liabilities			16,383.77
18		Equity				
19				FUM Triennial Travel Fund		705.70
20				FWCC WorldGathAsst Travel Fund		300.00
21				FWCC WorldGathReps Travel Fund		1,950.00
22				Home Missions Retained Earnings		13,643.24
23				Meeting Travel - ASFC		200.00
24				Meeting Travel - FUM		200.00
25				Meeting Travel - FWCC		200.00
26				Student Loan Fund		6,109.85
27				Webb Fund		13,000.00
28				Net Income (includes Initiative pledges)		5,170.23
29			Total Equity			41,479.02
30	TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY					57,862.79

Home Missions Budget Overview, 2012-2015

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
1		Great Plains Yearly Meeting of Friends						
2		Home Missions Initiative Overview: 1-May-2012 through 30-April-2015						
3		Home Missions & Initiative Income/Expense	FY 12-13	FY 13-14	FY 14-15	FY 15-16	Total	Due by 12-31-15
4		Income by Fiscal Year						
5		25k Challenge Grant 2013	8,000	17,075			25,075	
6		20k Challenge Grant: 2014		8,400	13,700		22,100	
7		10k Challenge Grant 2015			3,650	800	4,450	5,550
8		5k Challenge Grant 2016						
9		Match Gifts 2013	17,000	7,784			24,784	
10		Match Gifts 2014	3,380	12,900	5,891		22,171	
11		Match Gifts 2015		500	5,475	340	6,315	3,720
12		Match Gifts 2016				250		
13		Workshop Registrations		375			375	
14			28,380	47,034	28,716	1,390	105,270	9,270
15								
16		Expenses by Fiscal Year	13,770	40,744	31,500	2,988	89,002	
17								
18		Initiative Gifts Balance:	16,268					
19		Initiative Pledges to be paid:	9,270					
20			25,538					

Budget Proposal, 2015-16

	A	B	C	D	E
1			Great Plains Yearly Meeting of Friends		
2			Budget Proposal: 2015-16 (Approved)		
3					
4			Annual Yearly Meeting Income		
5			Gifts from Individuals at YM	400.00	
6			YM Registrations and Meals	2,000.00	
7			Children/Youth Programing: Webb Fund	700.00	
8			Total Annual Yearly Meeting Income		3,100.00
9			Annual Yearly Meeting Expense		
10			YM Meal Cost	1,100.00	
11			YM Sessions	1,300.00	
12			Children/Youth Programing: Webb Fund	700.00	
13			Total Annual Yearly Meeting Expense		3,100.00
14			Net Annual Yearly Meeting Inc/Exp		0.00
15					
16			Annual Ministry/General Income		
17			Gifts from Monthly Meetings	4,350.00	
18			Transfer - equity to General	0.00	
19			Total Annual Ministry/General Income		4,350.00
20			Annual Ministry/General Expense		
21			Gifts to Quaker Ministry		
22			Friends United Meeting	560.00	
23			FWCC World Office	100.00	
24			Quaker Earthcare Witness	50.00	
25			Right Sharing of WorldResources	100.00	
26			Total Gifts to Quaker Ministry		810.00
27			Annual General Expense		
28			Bank Account Costs	25.00	
29			Childcare: Continuing Committee meetings	180.00	
30			YM Minutes Copying/Printing/Mailing	400.00	
31			Web Home Page Fees	60.00	
32			Total Annual General Expense		665.00
33			Travelling in Ministry		
34			AFSC	775.00	
35			FUM General Board	1,200.00	
36			FWCC Section of the Americas	900.00	
37			FUM Triennial	0.00	
38			FWCC World Gathering	0.00	
39			FWCC World Gathering Asst Fund	0.00	
40			Total Traveling in Ministry		2,875.00
41			Total Annual Ministry/General Expense		4,350.00
42			Net - General Income/Expense		0.00

	A	B	C	D	E
1			Great Plains Yearly Meeting of Friends		
2			Budget Proposal: 2015-16 (Approved)		
44			Home Missions Fiscal Year Income		
45			HM Farm Income	9,600.00	
46			HM Gift Income	400.00	
47			Total HM Fiscal Year Income		10,000.00
48			Home Missions Fiscal Year Expense		
49			Gifts to HM Quaker Ministry		
50			Kickapoo Friends (MAYM)	900.00	
51			Quivering Arrow Camp	300.00	
52			Wichita Friends School	2,100.00	
53			Total Gifts to HM Quaker Ministry		3,300.00
54			Farm Property Taxes	3,300.00	
55			Farm Managaement Expense	23.00	
56			Total Home Mission Fiscal Year Expense		6,623.00
57			Net - Home Missions FY Income/Expense		3,377.00
58					
59			Home Missions Budget Addendum		
60			Home Missions Financial Resources		
61			Initiative Gifts Balance:	16,193.00	
62			Initiative Pledges to be paid by Dec 2015	9,270.00	
63			Initiative Challenge Grant, Jan-Apr 2016	1,666.67	
64			Initiative gifts to meet the Jan-Dec 2016 Challenge	1,666.67	
65			Retained Farm Income	13,643.24	
66			Projected Farm Income (fiscal year 2015-16)	3,377.00	
67				45,816.57	
68			Home Missions Financial Vision		
69			Released Ministry, Jun-Dec 2015	21,000.00	
70			Released Ministry, Jan-Apr 2016	6,000.00	
71			Travelling Ministry/Regional Gatherings (Fall 2015/Spring 2016)	4,000.00	
72			Gifts to Home Missions Quaker Ministry (specified above)	3,300.00	
73			Yearly Meeting Child/Youth Programming		
74				34,300.00	

2014 Attendance and Membership Statistics

	Central City	Council House	Heartland	Hominy	University	Total
Avg. Attendance	6	2	14	22	97	141
Membership Gains and Losses						
Births				1	0	1
Requests			1	2	8	11
Deaths		1	1	1	11	
Requests to drop					4	4
Active Members	6	3	14	24	123	170
Inactive Members		2	10	18	176	206
Associate Members	4	0	7	16	100	127
Fellowship Members					7	7
Member of other MM	6		1		10	17
Total Membership		5	31	58	406	533

Compiled by Statistician Linda
Mallonee

Nominating Committee Report

GPYM clerks and others willing to serve from the end of these sessions to the close of the 2016 sessions are as follows:

LaVonna Loesch, Presiding Clerk

Dorlan Bales, Assistant Clerk

Cheryl Mallonee, Recording Clerk

Connie Adams, Treasurer

Linda Mallonee, Statistician

Steve McConnell, Resident Agent required by Nebraska for its corporations

Others who have agreed to serve on the Continuing Committee through 2016 sessions are:

Cliff Loesch, Clerk of Ministry and Counsel

Steve McConnell, Clerk of the Finance Committee

Angela (Jake) Brown, Clerk of the Nominating Committee

Laura Dungan, Clerk of the Home Missions Committee until early 2016

David Nagle, at large member

Friends **approved** these nominees.

Trustees

Steve McConnell and Jim Perkins' terms expire 2016

Cheryl Mallonee, Angela Brown, terms expire 2017

Cliff Loesch, David Nagle, 2018

Web Site/Communications Ad Hoc Committee

Cliff Loesch

Paul Mallonee

David Nagle

Joseph Nagle

Jocelyn Mallonee

2015 Minutes Publication Committee

Editor--Dorlan Bales, outgoing Recording Clerk

Proof readers--Connie Adams, LaVonna Loesch, David Nagle

Printing/ Distribution--Connie Adams and Cliff Loesch

Friends **approved** these nominees.

Representatives to the American Friends Service Committee

Don Reeves, term expires 2017

Laura Dungan, term expires 2018

Representatives to the Friends Committee on National Legislation

Don Reeves, term expires 2016

Cliff Mesner and Carole Revard, terms expire 2017

**Representatives to the Friends World Committee for Consultation
International Meeting in Peru 2016**

Beth Green-Nagle. A second person may be named by Continuing Committee if able to serve.

Representative to Friends United Meeting

Ervin Stanley, term expires 2017

Representative to Quaker Earthcare Witness

Beth McDonald, term expires 2017

Friends **approved** these nominees.

Ministry and Counsel and Standing Committees

Each monthly meeting is encouraged to appoint two people each to Ministry and Counsel and GPYM's three standing committees in January. Those who are appointed serve from February to January the following year. Those currently serving are as follows:

Ministry and Counsel

*Cliff Loesch, Clerk

Cheryl Mallonee

*Dorlan Bales

Dorothy Manzer

Betty Jake

*David Nagle

Lisa McConnell

Carole Revard

Steve McConnell

Timber White

*Recorded ministers. See appendix list of GPYM Monthly Meetings for listings of other recorded ministers who are welcome but not currently active in GPYM.

Finance Committee

Steve McConnell, Clerk

Connie Adams, Treasurer (ex-officio member)

Stan Brown

Aaron Fowler

Paul Mallonee

David Nagle

Timber White

Nominating Committee

Angela Jake Brown, Clerk

Betty Jake

Home Missions Committee (New committee, members approved by GPYM's Continuing Committee 10/25/14)

Laura Dungan, Acting Clerk

Connie Adams

Dorlan Bales

LaVonna Loesch

Timber White

FWCC, Section of the Americas Report
Friends World Committee for Consultation
Section of the Americas, 2015 Section Meeting
Great Plains Yearly Meeting Representative Report from Beth Green-Nagle

FWCC Mission: Answering God's call to universal love, the Friends World Committee for Consultation brings Friends of varying traditions and cultural experiences together in worship, communications and consultation, to express our common heritage and our Quaker message to the world.

The FWCC Section of the Americas meeting was held March 9-15 at a retreat center in the town of Atizapán de Zaragoza in the State of Mexico, just northwest of Mexico City. Representatives from 31 yearly meetings and five branches of Quakerism participated in worship, in small, diverse home groups, workshops, and business sessions with reports on FWCC work from the last two years. The representatives approved comprehensive programmatic changes during business to prepare FWCC for the years ahead, in accordance with the new strategic plan for 2015-2020.

The next FWCC World Plenary Meeting (formerly called Triennials) will be held in Pisac, Peru from January 19-27, 2016. Yearly Meetings are currently being asked to name their representatives for this Meeting. Open places are also available by application.

Highlights

Reduced finances continue to be a serious concern for the Section. The staff has been reduced to the bare minimum, and more responsibilities are being placed on representatives and volunteers. Giving from yearly meetings, monthly meetings, and individuals is needed in order to continue the ministry of FWCC.

Latin American Friends came to the Section Meeting for training in “Jugar llenos de fe,” the Spanish-language version of “Faith & Play.” Caryl Menkhous Creswell, a bilingual Godly Play trainer from Northwest YM, presented a 5-hour workshop on “Jugar llenos de fe” and provided follow-up Interest Groups for Latin American Friends. Enthusiastic interest in the curriculum had developed among Cuban Friends with support from New England YM and spread to other Latin American Friends. Caryl has also been invited to travel in this ministry to Guatemala, Honduras, and El

Salvador in the fall of 2015 and attend the World Plenary in Peru in January 2016.

Friends approved the request of the New Association of Friends to affiliate with FWCC.

Benigno Sanchez-Eppler was approved as the new Clerk of the Section of the Americas during the sessions. He also gave the keynote address on the theme, "*Friends Woven Together in God's Love*." Benigno is well-traveled in the ministry among Friends throughout the Americas, has served as an interpreter and translator for FWCC, served as Co-Clerk of the Quaker Youth Pilgrimage for the last three years, and is a founding co-editor and translator for the website raicescuaqueras.org.

Thanks to the efforts of the Executive Secretary, the Executive Committee, the Bilingual Resources Group, and others, FWCC continues to make progress in establishing greater equity between English and Spanish-speakers during the Section meeting, on committees, and in the resources provided. There were more people with some bilingual skills at this Section Meeting. Business was conducted with more respect for the Latin American representatives' participation, and Spanish translation for each previous day's minutes was provided. In the future, we hope to have immediate translation of the minutes as they are being written. There is also greater representation on the Executive Committee of Spanish-speakers and Latin American Friends.

Program Changes

During the Section Meeting, Friends approved a new strategic plan, "Weaving the Tapestry 2015-2020," presented by the Executive Committee. It refocuses the Section's work on three areas—Visitation, Connections, and Funding Innovation—in order to better serve the needs of current Friends and to deal with funding difficulties. There were also changes in FWCC's programs and governance structure. Friends approved all these changes at the Section Meeting.

Traveling Ministry Corps: "The Section will organize a corps of Spanish- and English-speaking (though not necessarily bilingual) Friends to travel throughout the Section, across Yearly Meeting lines and other divisions among Friends. These Friends will share their spiritual experiences, their

sense of the unity that is possible across the branches of Friends, and encourage Friends to learn from one another through prayer, pastoral counseling and encouragement, religious education, or peace, justice and environmental concerns. We recognize the ministry gifts and callings of all Friends as ministers, regardless of age, gender, education, occupation or status as “recorded ministers.” Yearly Meetings will be asked to suggest Friends who might have gifts to share.”

Wider Quaker Fellowship: One of the most poignant results of the strategic plan is the laying down of the Wider Quaker Fellowship. Approval came after much discussion. Many who had previously and currently worked with Wider Quaker Fellowship supported this change. From the minutes: *"As we realign our work to make the wisest use of the gifts God has given us, we lay down the name of the Wider Quaker Fellowship. We honor the long history of the Wider Quaker Fellowship and the many Friends who have been connected with this work. The members of the Wider Quaker Fellowship Program Group will work with the Executive Committee and staff of the Section to communicate this transition to current subscribers and other interested Friends between now and the end of 2015. Much of the work of the Wider Quaker Fellowship will be continued by the Communications and Correspondence Program Groups."*

Young Friends: Within the Visitation program, there will be a strengthened and broader focus on the “Spiritual Leadership Development and Experiences for Young Friends.” The program will no longer be exclusively organized around the Quaker Youth Pilgrimage. Although there may be future pilgrimages, there will not be one for 2016 in part because the European and Middle East Section is unable to host a pilgrimage and because of the complex logistics and legal issues of traveling with youth

Regional Coordinators: Regional Coordinators have been asked to build engagement among representatives, to be liaisons between FWCC, representatives, and yearly meetings in their regions, and to identify Friends gifted in various areas. The regional coordinator for the South High Plains is Lidney Molnari from Live Oak Friends Meeting.

Personal Reflection and Duties

I continue to serve on the Bilingual Resources Group. I have also agreed to serve on the Naming Committee for this following year. The Naming Committee identifies those willing to serve on the Nominating Committee.

On Thursday, March 12th, I enjoyed the fellowship of old Friends and new from around the Americas at the opening day of the Section Meeting. In worship I was reminded of our shared human challenges and the grace and love with which God surrounds us. I was honored to interpret into English Raúl Pérez's prayer inviting us all to the Lord's banquet table. On Friday, March 13th, I served at the interpreter's table for business sessions. Benigno Sanchez-Eppler gave a powerful plenary message involving all of the interpreters and translators. I spent the Friday evening and Saturday morning translating minutes from Friday's business sessions with Sara Palmer and Benigno. The evening's entertaining presentation was led by Friends from Mexico City, and I did some interpreting for the presentation.

Brief Descriptions of the New Programs:

Visitation: A Quaker Circulatory System: "FWCC has found that we need to take the experience of the broader Society of Friends directly to Monthly Meetings and local churches, rather than depend solely on periodic large gatherings. Friends hunger for spiritual nurture and education, to meet Quakers who can share their experience of living under the guidance of the Spirit. By bringing people together to learn about and from one another, by responding to the need to introduce Friends at the local level to the riches of our full tradition, we believe we can make an important contribution to the growth and vitality of Quakers. There are three major components in this program. One is facilitation of traveling ministry across yearly meeting lines. Another is the organizing of gatherings that bring together a variety of Friends. The third is the organization of spiritual leadership programs and experiences across the rich variety of Friends, especially for younger Friends."

Connections Among Friends: "The Section of the Americas will communicate and transmit the inspiring power of our work in order to involve more Friends in FWCC's ministry - transforming lives and faith communities through cross-branch understanding. This work will include : responding to inquiries from Friends and seekers about Quakers around the world; orienting of new Representatives to be better bridges among Friends;

maintaining the Voices of Friends website, our Facebook page, the directory of Quaker meetings and churches; promoting World Quaker Day activities, assisting yearly meetings in developing sister yearly meeting relationships; translating Quaker writings, and other connecting activities that may not involve long distance travel.”

Social Enterprise and Other Funding Innovations: “The Friends World Committee for Consultation Section of the Americas (FWCC SoA) intends to find new sources of funding to sustain the staffing and programs necessary to advance our mission, in alignment with the 2015-2020 Strategic Plan (Goal 3). We are inspired by other faith-based organizations that have sponsored social enterprise projects as a means to increase their visibility, build important relationships within and between constituent groups, and generate revenue by offering goods or services to their membership and to the larger community. The term “social enterprise” refers to a commercial venture that generates income while equitably and ethically advancing other social, environmental, or cultural objectives.”

Content sources and hyperlinks

Section Meeting 2015:

http://fwccamericas.org/events/2015_SectionMeeting/

FWCC, SoA, Strategic Plan: "Weaving the Tapestry 2015-2020"

Visitation document: Visitation

Connections document: Connections

Funding Innovations document: Funding Innovation

Wichita Friends School Report



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www.wichitafriendschool.org

May 28, 2015

Dear Great Plains Yearly Meeting Friends.

I am increasingly aware of the deep connection Great Plains Yearly Meeting and Heartland Friends Meeting shares with Wichita Friends School. The foundation of seeking Christ in others and ourselves continues to lay the groundwork for all we do together. As the school year has progressed weekly Worship has deepened as the children learn to listen in the silence and share from their hearts.

Wichita Friends School was deeply blessed with a financial gift and increased with our Capital Campaign that resulted in a sizeable addition to our school. This week the children will be able to enter a new welcoming east entrance that opens into an atrium and large multi-purpose room that allows for our community of children to work and play together. In designing the new building the architects had before them our SPICES (simplicity, peace, integrity, community, equality and stewardship) and incorporated these values into the design of the building. We welcome each of you to stop by for a personal tour.

Heartfelt gratitude is expressed for the volunteers from GPYM that have enriched the lives of our children. Aaron Fowler weekly met with the construction managers as he problem solved a myriad of details between WFS, the architect, city inspectors and construction crew. His depth of patience and sense of humor continues to be a Light to all he touched. Connie Adams blesses WFS with her sweet spirit throughout the week as she brings a spiritual depth to the children with both Godly Play and music class. Jim Perkins is seen frequently kneeling down to talk with the children at WFS, delighting in the children's responses. He continues to wear many hats from mowing the lawn to bringing his professional expertise to both Finance and Development committees. Connie, Jim, and Aaron also serve on the WFS Board of Trustees, giving of their time and talents in leading WFS.

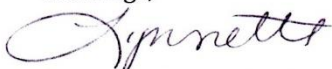
Shelli Kadel resigned as Head of School last summer, leaving a deep and rich legacy of leadership and a commitment to Quaker Education that continues to be a cornerstone of WFS. This past school year WFS continued with leadership from the

Wichita Friends School: Engaging Minds, Embracing Values

Board of Directors and interim Head of School Lin Sangals and Jane Oliver. Academically our elementary children have mastered math skills and are reading at and beyond their grade level. We welcome Brian Clyne as our new Head of School beginning July 1, 2015. He brings a wealth of private school experience to lead us into the future.

While I have expressed public gratitude for local Great Plains friends, I would like to personally thank each of you for your prayerful and financial continued support to Wichita Friends School. As I write this the lively voices of children are heard interacting with each other as we start our Summer Fun! Program. We continue to be grateful stewards of all we have been given and our building rings out with the noises of learning and play both during the school year and throughout the summer months. Thank you for being an integral part of our school and ministry.

Blessings,



Lynnette Krieger-Zook
Clerk, Wichita Friends School

Vision: Children discovering their world academically, socially, and spiritually rooted in a community that fosters self-directed life-long learning.

Mission: Wichita Friends School seeks to provide a high quality academic experience within a supportive learning environment that reflects the Quaker/Christian values of simplicity, peace, integrity, community, equality, and stewardship.

Wichita Friends School: Engaging Minds, Embracing Values

American Friends Service Committee Report

Dear Friends:

This year as Friends began their journey for the AFSC Corporation meeting, we met with a surprising challenge. A snowstorm, which grounded planes and trains to and from Philadelphia. I was fortunate in only having two plane cancellations and the need to drive far to the only airfield with a possible flight. Many Friends were not as fortunate. Attendance was reduced and Thursday night's program was cancelled, but joy and the Spirit enveloped those of us who were able to gather over the next two days.

We had a smooth transition to a new clerk this year as we welcomed the guidance of Phil Lord. AFSC has been working to improve its communication with yearly and monthly meetings. Through liaison conference calls and blogs over this past year, we were able to become acquainted with Phil. Additionally our Midwest Region has a new director, Rabbi Brant Rosen, whom we were able to meet when regional representatives gathered together for lunch. Our region is represented by well-seasoned and experienced activist Friends.

A consistent message from AFSC is that staff cannot do all the work needed in this world. It is only through the labor of many Friends in this country that we can increase the Light's presence and bring social justice to others. AFSC continues its work focusing on four areas and encourage all Quakers to contact them as a resource for help in our meetings' work. These areas are Organizing for Justice in Israel-Palestine, Global Shared Security and Changing International Policy at Home, Healing Justice/Mass Incarceration and Working for Immigrant Justice.

Friday evening we met with 67 Sueños (67 Dreams) an immigrant youth-led program near San Francisco, CA. They raised my awareness that the Dream Act and other legislation proposed to help undocumented children only addressed a select few. The majority of undocumented children are unaffected by legislation and are in danger of deportation and separation

from their families. The Dream Act benefits students who attend college and maintain high grades (10% of undocumented youth), however, for the vast majority of undocumented youth, this requirement is unattainable and not always desired. Youth come to the 67 Sueños program through performance art at area schools or by participating in public events, such as painting murals. They are invited to participate in group conversations led by trained older youth. Telling their own their stories and encouraging others to share their experiences through art, poetry and song give youth avenues to vent their frustrations and share their stories. The relationships between the members and the AFSC staff person are loving and healing. Additionally an AFSC staff member developed relationships with some border guards, which proved helpful in negotiating the release of parents who were taken back across the border to Mexico, leaving their underage children in the U.S. She was able to keep secret the identity of those undocumented family members caring for the children, thus preventing their deportation. Apparently it is not uncommon for authorities to pick up undocumented people and dump them across the border without official deportation hearings or charges.

The two workshops I attended were Healing Justice/Mass Incarceration and Global Shared Security and Changing International Policy at Home. Healing Justice pointed out the racial inequality of people being imprisoned in overcrowded conditions in the U.S. We are first in the world for the percentage of our own citizens we imprison. Prison privatization will increase those numbers and manufacture a need to find more inmates. By networking our meetings through AFSC to work on this issue, we can end this cycle so destructive to family life. Having Hominy and Council House Friends as members of our yearly meeting heightened my attention to the mass incarceration of native people to the Indian Territory during the 19th century. Thousands died on their journey and more died under the abject conditions of their imprisonment. Today the poverty of many reservations still imprison our Native American siblings.

Global Shared Security and Changing International Policy at Home is based on changing the conversation about global security from a militarization approach to one of working together to meet needs. FCNL and QUNO were instrumental in creating this document. The two-fold approach AFSC staff

provide to communities is learning how to set policy and public education/advocacy. There is staff in Latin America, Africa, Asia and the Middle East. The program brings people from different regions who have similar needs together. The goal is to lift their voices to address international communities that directly address the local needs, thus building peaceful relationships. The number one goal of this program is to eliminate extreme poverty. As Gandhi said, “The world has enough for everyone’s need, but not everyone’s greed.” By gathering people together, building communication bridges and creating a scene to allow something transformative to occur, we hope to open up the narrative and allow the world to see that of God in everyone.

Thank you for allowing me to represent Great Plains Yearly Meeting as an AFSC Corporation member. AFSC encourages yearly meetings to actively search its members for young and diverse representatives to send to AFSC. I’m sure anyone attending AFSC will be energized by the Spirit and be resolved to work toward Gospel Order. I look forward to continuing my contact with AFSC and encourage others to become liaisons for their monthly meetings.

Respectfully submitted,

Lynn Zeleski

Please find below the Corporation’s Epistle.

**Epistle from American Friends Service Committee 2015 Corporation
Meeting**

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

5-7 March 2015

To Friends Everywhere:

Friends from around the world traveled through a blizzard to gather for the annual meeting of the American Friends Service Committee Corporation, a governing body of the AFSC, at Friends Center in Philadelphia. Blizzard conditions forced the cancelation of the scheduled opening session, though

groups of Friends gathered informally to share experiences, concerns, and hopes for the work of AFSC.

Orientation for new members of the Corporation over breakfast included a description by Friends Relations Clerk Doug Bennett of the origins of the Corporation, with representatives appointed by Yearly Meetings, as a vehicle to ground the service work of AFSC in the faith and practice of Friends and to keep Friends connected with the work and communities served by AFSC's programs.

General Secretary Shan Cretin noted that while AFSC was formed to provide alternatives to military service, AFSC has never been a substitute for individual witness. She described two themes identified in recent strategic plans: engaging youth in spiritually grounded work for social change in their communities; and changing the narrative about war and violence.

Clerk Phil Lord opened our Meeting for Business with worship, reminding us of that all our work is carried out as worship, seeking guidance of Spirit. Shan Cretin, General Secretary, noted that the theme of each year's Corporation Meeting is intended to highlight and lift up an aspect of AFSC's work. This year's theme was "Radical Hospitality: Working for Immigrant Justice." The General Secretary acknowledged that not all Friends are clear that Friends are called to this work and reminded us with powerful illustrations that speaking truth to power is most effective when the truth is spoken kindly.

Friends Relation Committee Clerk Doug Bennett described volunteer opportunities for Friends within and partnering with AFSC, including service on governance committees, volunteer work for AFSC programs, and the emerging Quaker activist/partner role. This new model of engagement works toward beloved community through accompanying and partnering with others. An AFSC "track" at the 2014 FGC Gathering included 5 workshops, afternoon activities, and the closing plenary, leading to a network of Friends working to end mass incarceration.

Afternoon workshops with AFSC staff showcased some of AFSC's programs including "Shared Security," "Mass Incarceration," and "Immigrant Justice." The workshop "Palestinian Fragmentation and Movers" brought three young Palestinian women to describe the pervasive corrosive effects of fragmenting and isolating populations of Palestinians. Even members of a single family may be assigned to different areas making it technically illegal for them to meet as a family. Travel between or out of tightly controlled areas is at best

difficult and often impossible. Friends were urged to support Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) as a means of promoting meaningful change and human rights. One of the Palestinian youth, who is from Gaza, described AFSC's work as unique in the region. She told us that while other organizations provide specific kinds of humanitarian assistance, she was happily surprised that AFSC is willing to talk about those things that matter most to her and other Palestinians. AFSC is the "one organization that cares for my dreams and aspirations and supports communication with my history and my land."

Speakers at the evening plenary session "this moment in the immigrant rights movement" described the current work of AFSC as continuous with a decades-long struggle for immigrant rights. Staff from the San Diego and Denver offices of AFSC are working with immigrants to challenge arbitrary and inhumane treatment and assert the rights of immigrants. Staff and young people in the program "67 Sueños" brought some of the energy and passion of their work to the gathering. Immigrant youth brilliantly expressed their experiences in poetry using bilingual spoken word and visual art including large murals. We heard their stories of struggle against poverty, family separations, violence, and indifferent or hostile officials. We heard the importance of listening to their authentic voices to change the narrative and change the culture.



Honoring the value of the work of these young people, AFSC Corporation members were spontaneously moved to raise funds to purchase artwork from the 67 Sueños program that will remain at the AFSC offices in Friends Center.

David Jaimes, Pastor of Student Ministries at Friendswood Friends Church near Houston, Texas led opening worship Saturday morning. He feels called to the ministry of reconciliation and reminded us of the Biblical injunction to care for "the least of these" and provide hospitality.

The second session of the Meeting for Business featured a description of Courageous Acts, AFSC's capital campaign to fund the next century of AFSC's work. Among other things, this campaign will increase endowment to allow funding of internships and fellowships for the next generation of activists.

As we near our 100th anniversary in 2017, American Friends Service Committee invites your voice and partnership in our work for beloved community.

Phil Lord
Clerk, the Board of AFSC

**Clerk's Letter in Support of William Penn House to Washington D.C.
Council Members**

Feb 25, 2015

Dear Washington DC 6th Ward and At-large council members,

I am writing this letter on behalf of the Great Plains Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends. We have become aware of a possible tax ruling that would make William Penn House liable for property taxes of \$18,000 per year after having had an exemption since the 1960s. We are concerned that this action will cause this special and important ministry to be challenged in moving forward. The burden of a property tax on the William Penn House identifying it as a hotel, would be heavy and detrimental to vital ministries that flow out of its mission. A ministry that involves so much more than hospitality.

We would like to add our voice to others and ask that the DC Council review and reverse the direction of this action and restore it to its original exemption.

Sincerely,

LaVonna Loesch, Presiding Clerk, Great Plains Yearly Meeting
1833 N. Lisa Lane, Wichita, KS 67203
316-267-6991

Rocky Mountain Yearly Meeting Letter



Building the Kingdom of God through obedience to Christ

Rocky Mountain Yearly Meeting of the Friends Church

4575-B Eliot Street, Denver, CO 80211 • (720) 855-8727 phone / fax

November 4, 2014

Great Plains Yearly Meeting
1840 W. University Way
Wichita, KS 67213

Dear LaVonna and friends of Great Plains Yearly Meeting,

I received your letter and shared it at the annual gathering of Rocky Mountain Yearly Meeting of Friends. We, too, felt the Spirit move as we received your words and have written a response based on how we felt God moving in our own hearts to respond.

I appreciate your willingness to take the first step in what I hope can be healing in the relationship between our two meetings. I would welcome an opportunity to meet with you for worship together and mutual blessing of one another's ministries.

A minute to Great Plains Yearly Meeting follows:

August 15, 2014

Rocky Mountain Yearly Meeting met for our annual session at Quaker Ridge Camp in Woodland Park, Colorado on August 14-17, 2014. Your minute and letter of June 23, 2014 was read.

The sense of the meeting following the reading included expressions of gratitude and humbled hearts. We also have few among us who remember specific issues, but we, too, have been tendered by the Holy Spirit and extend forgiveness with glad hearts. If there was anything that we did that was hurtful, we ask forgiveness as well.

We think of you with gratitude and in the love of our Lord, Jesus Christ, for our common roots and life in Him.

Blessings to you in the name of our Lord.

Mary Heathman /ldh

Mary Heathman
Presiding Clerk

Rocky Mountain Yearly Meeting
58th General Assembly 2014

Friends Remembered at
Great Plains Yearly Meeting Memorial Service 2015
June 5, 2014 to June 6, 2015

Council House Monthly Meeting

Doris Spicer	11/13/2014	Council House Cemetery, OK
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Heartland Monthly Meeting

Ralph Hershey	12/03/2014	Cremains
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Hominy Monthly Meeting

Nancy Faye Arnold	12/29/2014	Adamson Cemetery, Adamson, OK
Josephine Jake	4/25/2014	North Indian Cemetery, Pawnee, OK
Brent Andrew Maker	7/03/2014	AJ Powell Cemetery, Hominy, OK
Hazel Anette (Pratt) Moore	3/13/2015	AJ Powell Cemetery, Hominy, OK
Charles Arthur Pratt, Jr.	3/08/2015	AJ Powell Cemetery, Hominy, OK

University Monthly Meeting

Kenneth Adams	2/27/2015	Cremains
Regina Barrington	12/17/2014	
Lou Boyer	11/22/2014	Wichita Park Cemetery, Wichita, KS
Bonnie Mendenhall Carter	10/09/2014	Old Mission Cemetery, Wichita, KS
Harper Cole	5/17/2015	
Caryl Cox	12/11/2014	Friends Cemetery, Rose Hill, KS
Marilyn Dieffenbacher	12/27/2014	Cremains
Eloyse Frazee	2/06/2015	White Chapel Memorial Gardens, Wichita, KS
Don Guilliams	3/26/2015	
Emily Jackson	2/28/2015	Cremains
Raymond Nelson	10/24/2014	

Epistle

Great Plains Yearly Meeting of Friends

There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,
the holy place where the Most High dwells. Psalm 46:4

June 6, 2015

Dear Friends everywhere:

We send you greetings from the 108th Annual Sessions of Great Plains Yearly Meeting of Friends.

We gathered in the Village of Hominy on the Osage Reservation in northeastern Oklahoma June 4-6, 2015. Friends joined together across boundaries of culture, geography, and theology to do the work of God, centered on our theme derived from Psalm 46:4, “There is a River: Building Communities of Great Hope.”

We joyfully welcomed visitors from Texas, Maryland, Pennsylvania, California, Indiana, Iowa, Oklahoma and Belize. We are grateful for those Friends who, unable to join us, held us in prayer.

As a yearly meeting, we are small in size with five member Meetings spread over the Nebraska-Kansas-Oklahoma region. Thursday evening, our speaker Noah Baker Merrill gestured to a tapestry of *The Last Supper* and reminded us that the entire Christian movement began with a small meeting of friends. Noah encouraged our meetings and churches to become communities that carry a message of a great Hope that lies beyond the despair we see in the world around us. He reminded us that prairie fires, so familiar to us in this region, have historically been set to burn the old into nourishment for the emergence of new life from the ground.

Among Friends in the Great Plains new life is indeed emerging. We rejoice that our Revitalization and Leadership Development Initiative, begun as a 2-year project in January 2013 is now an expanding Initiative. New energies are rising among us. GPYM Friends have been instrumental in organizing gatherings that widen our circle of fellowship to include Friends from other yearly meetings and from unaffiliated bodies. We find ourselves hungry for fellowship and for opportunities to share our stories with one another. During our Friday Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business, a query asking us to reflect on a time in our individual lives when we felt special strength of God's Presence led to deep sharing in small groups and among the larger gathering.

We are heartened by the presence of children and youth in our Yearly Meeting. Looking to the future, we have intentionally committed more energy and resources to provide our young Friends with spiritually nurturing experiences during their formative years. We are grateful to Beth Green-Nagle and Lisa McConnell for developing and implementing a program for children and youth during our sessions this year. On Friday evening young and not-so-very-young Friends enjoyed a traditional Osage meal provided by Hominy Friends and then joined voices together in a song circle.

With great joy, we celebrated Nebraska's repeal of the death penalty, which Friends in our Yearly Meeting have worked toward for many years. We enjoyed and appreciated workshops on the work of the American Friends Service Committee, Friends in Belize who have a school in the impoverished area of Belize City, and the Osage Hymn Project. With David Nagle's instruction, singing several songs in Osage was particularly moving.

Our hearts were warmed by God's Love at work among us as we read a letter from Rocky Mountain Yearly Meeting that continues a conversation of reconciliation begun in 2014. We welcome the Light of knowing that Friends who were divided hurtfully over 50 years ago need not remain estranged, but can rejoice in the shared Love of God. To share that joy in person, three GPYM Friends will travel to Rocky Mountain Yearly Meeting in August.

Above all, we find joy in simply being with one another in the Presence of God. Our worship together has given us precious and sustaining moments: Ministry given to us in song from the silence encouraged us to “lift up our wings and fly!”, and Noah Baker Merrill reminded us that we don’t have all the answers, but we have beautiful spiritual practices that bring us into God’s presence and liberate us to do God’s work.

As we discern together the leadings of Spirit, we feel great joy and great challenge. There is much work to do as we build communities of great Hope. We look forward to assisting with the FUM Triennial to be held in Wichita, Kansas in 2017, and we rejoice in all the work God gives us! Thanks be to God!

In the Light of Christ,

LaVonna Loesch, Presiding Clerk
Great Plains Yearly Meeting of Friends

Great Plains Yearly Meeting Handbook:

How We Work Together

First Edition 2009, Revised 2012, 2014

Overview

Great Plains Yearly Meeting is made up of five monthly meetings: Hominy Friends and Council House Friends in northeastern Oklahoma, Heartland Friends and University Friends in Wichita, Kansas, and Central City Friends in south central Nebraska.

Great Plains Yearly Meeting has a rich history, having celebrated its centennial in 2008. Known as Nebraska Yearly Meeting until 2001, GPYM is part of Friends United Meeting (FUM). GPYM is theologically diverse, as demonstrated by each congregation's relationships with other Friends *networks*. Heartland and Central City are directly affiliated with Friends General Conference. University Friends belongs to Evangelical Friends Church Mid-America, as did Council House Friends for many years. Hominy Friends are in regular communication with Ohio Yearly Meeting (Conservative) and Kickapoo Friends Center. Some Friends from Heartland and University Friends attend gatherings of the Missouri Valley Friends Conference.

University Friends Church has graciously agreed to be a consistent point of contact with GPYM for individuals and groups outside the yearly meeting.

Committees

Continuing Committee

This committee is the official and legal voice of GPYM between annual sessions, making decisions that cannot wait to be considered by the entire body during the first weekend in June. GPYM's presiding and recording clerks, the treasurer, and the clerks of Ministry and Counsel, Nominating Committee, Home Missions Committee and Finance Committee are ex-officio members. One or two other members may be recommended by the Nominating Committee to create better gender and geographic balance. Typically the presiding clerk asks the Continuing Committee to meet during the fall at the site of the next yearly meeting sessions to settle on a theme, *an invited speaker*, and leaders for children's and youth programs for those sessions. *One or more additional meetings are also held by conference call.*

Ministry and Counsel

Ministry and Counsel is concerned with worship, outreach, visitation among monthly meetings, pastoral care, and general spiritual health of the monthly meetings and GPYM as a whole. The group meets before the opening yearly meeting session and at least once during the sessions, presenting a report of its work and recommendations to the entire body. Ministry and Counsel helps identify the theme for GPYM sessions, provides leadership for the annual GPYM memorial meeting for worship, and may prepare queries for monthly meetings to use as they write their annual State of Society reports. It is the responsibility of Ministry and Counsel to nurture those of all ages who are tender in the Spirit, recognize gifts in public ministry, and recommend that members exhibiting these gifts be recorded by GPYM as recommendations are brought forward by local meetings. Ministry and Counsel considers requests by local meetings to join GPYM and offers counsel if laying down an existing meeting is contemplated.

Each local meeting appoints two members by January 31 each year for two 12-month terms of service beginning February 1 and sends those names to the Presiding Clerk. Terms of the two appointees are staggered to promote continuity. Recorded ministers and the GPYM Presiding Clerk are ex-officio members. Ministry and Counsel names its own clerk during yearly meeting sessions to serve from the end of that session to the end of next year's annual gathering.

Nominating Committee

This committee is charged with prayerfully discerning gifts within the body and asking individuals who are members of GPYM meetings if they are willing to serve for one year as presiding and assistant presiding clerks, recording clerk(s), treasurer and assistant treasurer, minutes publisher, statistician, resident agent/custodian, and trustees.

It recommends representatives to other Quaker bodies for 3-year terms: American Friends Service Committee Corporation (4), Friends Committee on National Legislation (5), Friends United Meeting General Board (2 + alternate), Friends World Committee for Consultation (4) Quaker Earthcare Witness (1 + alternate) Wichita Friends School Board (2), and William Penn House (1).

Each local meeting appoints two members by January 31 each year for two 12-month terms of service beginning February 1 and sends those names to the Presiding Clerk. Terms of the two appointees are staggered to promote continuity. Local meetings are asked to name people who are not members of the Finance Committee or Home Missions Committee and to consider service opportunities for younger Friends. The Nominating Committee names its own clerk during yearly meeting sessions to serve from the end of that session to the end of next year's annual gathering, and meets before the opening yearly meeting session to begin its work.

Finance Committee

Members work with the treasurer to prepare an annual budget and present it for approval to GPYM. The Finance Committee considers requests for unbudgeted expenditures, usually by distance communication, and makes recommendations to the Continuing Committee. It also provides for an annual review of GPYM's financial accounting.

Each local meeting appoints two members by January 31 each year for two 12-month terms of service beginning February 1 and sends those names to the Presiding Clerk. Terms of the two appointees are staggered to promote continuity. Local meetings are asked to name people who are not members of the Nominating Committee or Home Missions Committee and to consider service opportunities for younger Friends. The Finance Committee names its own clerk during yearly meeting sessions to serve from the end of that session to the end of next year's annual gathering, and meets before the opening yearly meeting session each year to begin its work.

Home Missions Committee

During the 2014 GPYM sessions, the existing Anchor Committee created in 2012 was laid down in favor of a more permanent committee that will give energy to the new Leadership and Revitalization Initiative, using funds generated from the GPYM farm property and additional gifts from meetings and individuals. The Continuing Committee initially named the Home Missions Committee's members, acting on behalf of GPYM.

Each local meeting appoints two members by January 31 each year for two 12-month terms of service beginning February 1 and sends those names to the Presiding Clerk. Terms of the two appointees are staggered to promote continuity. Local meetings are asked to name people who are not members of the Nominating Committee or Finance Committee and to consider service

opportunities for younger Friends. The Home Missions Committee names its own clerk during yearly meeting sessions to serve from the end of that session to the end of next year's annual gathering, and meets before the opening yearly meeting session each year to begin its work.

Trustees

Trustees are stewards of GPYM's physical assets and have legal responsibility for them. The six trustees are proposed by the GPYM Nominating Committee and serve three year terms. Trustees work closely with a manager to see that GPYM's farm property is rented and yields a fair income each year.

Business and Program Committee

The local meeting scheduled to host the next annual gathering of GPYM appoints three to five people who work with Continuing Committee to prepare an agenda for the sessions, arrange for resource people, and oversee local arrangements. Names are presented before the close of GPYM sessions.

Extracts and Epistle

During the opening session the presiding clerk asks Friends assembled who would serve GPYM by writing a general epistle (letter) to other Friends yearly meetings around the world, a message God would have our yearly meeting share. Two or three people are appointed to write the epistle, which is read and approved before the close of the sessions.

Two other Friends are asked to collect extracts, singular sayings both edifying and humorous, spoken during the course of the sessions. These sayings are included as part of the published minutes.

Website/communications working group

Great Plains Yearly Meeting has created a website to improve internal and external communications. An ad-hoc working group has been overseeing this project.

Yearly Meeting Leadership

Presiding Clerk and Assistant Presiding Clerk

During GPYM sessions the presiding clerk creates the agenda for business sessions, introduces each item, and listens as various Friends speak to it. When the clerk senses that there is unity, he or she voices the “sense of the meeting” for the body’s consideration. If there is unity, the decision is written by the recording clerk for inclusion in the official minutes. If there is not unity and those who are not satisfied with the proposed minute do not feel able to “stand aside,” there is further consideration of the matter. Sometimes the clerk may call for a time of worship before inviting further comment and/or carry the item of business over to be considered at a later meeting.

During the months between sessions, the presiding clerk prepares an agenda for Continuing Committee meetings and receives items of concern from the yearly meeting’s leaders, from Friends agencies, and from others, referring items to others as appropriate. The clerk manifests a deep concern for the yearly meeting’s faithfulness and health, and communicates with GPYM leaders to encourage them in their Christian service, seeking to understand their joys and struggles.

The assistant presiding clerk assists the clerk during the sessions and between sessions, and presides in the absence of the clerk.

Recording Clerk(s)

The recording clerk creates a written record of all decisions and other pertinent information during sessions and Continuing Committee meetings, and works with the GPYM minutes publisher to see that minutes of annual sessions are distributed.

Minutes Publisher

Working closely with the recording clerk(s), the minutes publisher will see that a final version of the minutes, with reports, epistle, and contact information for local meetings and session attendees is made available electronically and in print to GPYM members and Friends organizations who request a copy.

Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer

The treasurer receives funds and disburses them in accordance with the GPYM budget, consulting with the clerk of the Finance Committee, the presiding clerk, and the Continuing Committee as appropriate. The treasurer will keep accurate records and prepare an annual report that reflects the status of each budget category and the overall assets and liabilities of GPYM. The treasurer, consulting with the clerk of the Finance Committee, will invest income greater than budgeted spending with Friends fiduciary agencies or other socially responsible managers. The treasurer will also work with the person who reviews GPYM's financial records as directed by the Finance Committee.

Statistician

The statistician shall collect calendar year statistics from local meetings, including a report of additions and losses to the rolls of members and attendees, the average number of people who gather for worship, names of those deceased since the GPYM sessions, recorded ministers, and number of copies of the annual minutes requested.

Resident Agent and Custodian

GPYM's incorporation as a nonprofit group is with the State of Nebraska. All official communication from Nebraska officials and some other legal correspondence is received by the resident agent and custodian, who responds after consulting with the appropriate GPYM leadership.

Location of Yearly Meeting Sessions

The ordinary rotation of annual sessions is, Hominy Friends (2015), University Friends (2016), and Heartland Friends (2017). Friends United Meeting Triennial Sessions will be held at Friends University, Wichita Kansas, in 2017.

Monthly Meeting Responsibilities

- Appoint two members to serve on the Nominating, Home Missions, and Finance Committees and Ministry and Counsel by January 31 each year for two 12-month terms of service beginning February 1 and send those

names to the GPYM Presiding Clerk. Ideally, terms of each pair of appointees are staggered to promote continuity.

- Bring a State of Society report reflecting the meeting's spiritual condition to be shared with the rest of GPYM at the beginning of each annual assembly.
- Submit a calendar year statistical report, including names of Friends departed since last sessions to be remembered during the memorial service. A memorial minute is encouraged for those who attended yearly meeting sessions or played key roles in the life of the local meeting.
- Include Great Plains Yearly Meeting in the monthly meeting budget.
- Host yearly meeting sessions periodically, if able.
- Recommend members for recording as ministers of the Gospel.

Budget and Special Funds

Great Plains Yearly Meeting has three separate financial accounts: an operating account, a home missions account, and a student loan fund.

Operating Account

Income for this account comes from contributions from local meetings and individuals, plus registration for yearly meeting sessions. Expenses include yearly meeting sessions/printing minutes, travel funds that help send GPYM representatives to meetings of Friends agencies, and an enabling fund.

Home Missions Account

GPYM was given farmland by the Stevens family from 1922-32, with the stipulation that income from the property be used for mission work "within the limits of the Yearly Meeting," with "special attention given to gathering the scattered membership and to the establishment of meetings". Most income to the home missions account comes from renting the land, with additional money coming from local meetings, individuals, and the GPYM operating account.

Since 2013, most of the expenditures of farm income have been dedicated to a new Leadership and Revitalization Project/Initiative focused within GPYM and facilitated by a released Friend. It was initially overseen by a temporary Anchor Committee. In 2014 GPYM created a new standing Home Missions Committee in its place to continue the initiative.

In the past, GPYM has used farm income to make financial contributions to Quaker agencies to support their work within the central plains states.

Recently, despite the personal support of many GPYM Friends for those agencies, GPYM made a decision to reduce or eliminate those gifts in order to invest in the encouragement of new life and growth in GPYM's local meetings, including our young adult leaders. These funds have also been used to invite unaffiliated meetings and worship groups to join GPYM, all with the intention of revitalizing GPYM and honoring the wishes of the Stevens family.

Student Loan Fund

This revolving loan account established by designated contributions offers low interest loans to Friends pursuing higher education. Loans are approved by an ad hoc committee that includes the treasurer(s), clerk of the finance committee, and the presiding clerk. Loans paid back to the fund, with interest, become available to new borrowers.

Recording of Ministers

Great Plains Yearly Meeting has not recorded many ministers in recent years. When it has, the procedure has varied. More discussion is needed by GPYM Ministry and Counsel to clarify the process. Until there is more clarity, local meetings that recognize a member who has experienced a call by God to public ministry and demonstrated ministry gifts that build up the congregation are asked to talk with the Clerk of GPYM Ministry and Counsel.

GPYM MONTHLY MEETINGS

Central City Monthly Meeting

403B Ave., Central City NE 68826

Mail to: 2715 25th Ave., Central City NE 68826

Business Meeting at the call of the Clerk, Selma Mesner

Assistant Clerk Eric Jones. Ministers Delano Cunningham and Philip Mesner

Council House Monthly Meeting

22601 S. 680 Rd, Wyandotte, OK 74370

Mail c/o Frankie Sue Johnson, Clerk

<http://www.councilhousefriends.org/>

Business meeting at the call of the clerk

Treasurer LaHunta Thompson

Heartland Friends Monthly Meeting

14505 W. Sandwedge Circle, Wichita, KS 67235

Just north of Hwy 54 and Wichita Friends School

<http://heartland.quaker.org>

Business Meeting second Sunday each month

Clerk Angela Young, Minister Dorlan Bales

Hominy Monthly Meeting

510 Friends Road, Hominy, OK 74035

<http://www.hominyfriends.org>

Business Meeting first Sunday each month

Clerk Carole Revard, Minister David Nagle

University Friends Meeting

1840 W. University Ave., Wichita, KS 67213

316-262-0471 <http://universityfriends.quaker.org>

Business Meeting second Sunday each month

Clerk B. J. Mills, Ministers Donna Bales, Arthur Binford, Shelli Kadel, Dave Kingrey, B.J. Mills, Carol Mullikin, J.M. Pitts, David Wolfe