

Great Plains Yearly Meeting

of the Religious Society of Friends

**Minutes of the
One Hundred Ninth Annual Assembly
Fifth-day, Sixth Month, Second
2016**

**held at
University Friends Meeting
Wichita, Kansas**

**Yearly Meeting Handbook
Revised October 2014**

Table of Contents

Thursday, June 2, 2016	1
GPYM 16-01 -- Friends Gather in Wichita, Kansas	1
GPYM 16-02 – Opening Business Sessions	1
GPYM 16-03 – State of Society Reports	2
GPYM 16-04 – Traveling Minute	3
GPYM 16-05 – Logistics.....	3
GPYM 16-06 – Keynote Message from Mary Lord	3
 Friday, June 3, 2016	 5
GPYM 16-07- Breakfast, Bible Study and Worship.....	5
ATTENTION TO BUSINESS – SESSION I	5
GPYM 16-08 – Friends United Meeting Report.....	5
GPYM 16-09 – Continuing Committee Report	5
GPYM 16-10 -- Home Missions Committee Report	6
GPYM 16-11-- Introductions of New Arrivals	7
GPYM 16-12 – Ministry and Counsel Report.....	7
GPYM 16-13 -- Reports: Nominating, Treasurer, Statistics and Finance	7
GPYM 16-14 – Friends Committee on National Legislation – Ruth Flower	8
GPYM 16-15 – Friends World Committee Section of the Americas Report	8
ATTENTION TO BUSINESS SESSION II.....	9
GPYM 16-16 – Introduction of New Arrivals	9
GPYM 16-17 – American Friends Service Committee – John Krieg.....	9

GPYM 16-18 – Reports: Ministry & Counsel and Standing Committees	10
Ministry & Counsel	10
Home Missions Committee	10
Finance Committee	10
Budget Proposal	11
Nominating Committee	11
GPYM 16-19 -Evening Session with Mary Lord.....	11
GPYM 16-20 – En Power and Light Evening Concert.....	13
 Saturday, June 4, 2016	13
GPYM 16-21 – Breakfast, Worship, Memorial Service	13
ATTENTION TO BUSINESS – SESSION III	14
GPYM 16-22 – Home Missions Committee Report	14
GPYM 16-23 – Wichita Friends School Report	14
GPYM 16-24 – Nominating Committee Report	15
GPYM 16-25 – Statistics Minute of Gratitude.....	15
GPYM 16-26 – Greetings to Friends not in Attendance	15
GPYM 16-27 – Letter of Introduction.....	15
GPYM 16-28 – 2017 Sessions.....	15
GPYM 16-29 -- Afternoon Workshops	15
GPYM 16-30 -- Epistle From this Year's Sessions	16
GPYM 16-31 -- In Memory of Randy Reeves	16
GPYM 16-32 -- Final Thoughts and Thanks.....	16
GPYM 16-33 – Afternoon Workshops.....	17

“Stories to Songs: Wisdom of the Elders”	17
“Friends in Africa” – John Muhanji	19
Deep Listening – Enhancing our Community & Worship Experience.....	20
GPYM 16-34 - Dinner and Farewells.....	21
APPENDIX, including written reports	21
Epistle.....	21
Youth Epistle	24
State of Society Reports from GPYM’s Five Member Meetings	24
Central City Meeting - State of Society Report	24
Council House Meeting - State of Society Report	25
Hominy Friends Meeting - State of Society Report.....	26
Heartland Friends Meeting - State of Society Report	28
University Friends Meeting - State of Society Report	31
Treasurer’s Report and Budget Proposal.....	32
Report from FUM – Colin Saxton.....	38
Report from World Plenary Meeting – Beth Green-Nagle	41
Minute from FWCC World Plenary on Earth’s Sustainability	44
Report from AFSC Annual Meeting – Laura Dungan	48
Report from Wichita Friends School.....	50
Minute from Topeka Friends	51
Letter from Lubbock Friends of Christ Quaker Meeting	52
GPYM Continuing Committee Minutes, 9-15-15	54
GPYM Continuing Committee Minutes, 4-2-16	58

Great Plains Yearly Meeting Response to Violence	60
GPYM Statistics.....	62
Nominating Committee Report.....	64
Friends Remembered at GPYM Memorial Service 2016	66
Extracts.....	67
 Great Plains Yearly Meeting Handbook	 68
Directory of GPYM Monthly Meetings	76

**Great Plains Yearly Meeting
of the Religious Society of Friends
One Hundred Ninth Annual Assembly
Fifth-day, Sixth Month, Second, 2016
hosted by University Friends Meeting**

“Life from the Roots – Fruit Bearing Faithfulness”

Thursday, June 2, 2016

GPYM 16-01 -- Friends Gather in Wichita, Kansas

Registration began at 12:30 with a meeting for worship starting at 1:30. Committee meetings followed at 2:00 for Finance and Home Missions and 3:00 for Ministry & Counsel and Nominating, with dinner following at 5:00.

GPYM 16-02 – Opening Business Sessions

The 109th Annual Sessions of Great Plains 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 Dorlan Bales, Assistant Clerk and Cheryl Mallonee, Recording Clerk.

LaVonna opened the session by reading and reflecting on the epistle from last year's sessions. Seeds of hope are here as we grow. Things are new for us and it is very exciting as we gather. Try to live in a place of fearlessness this weekend. We are here for God's purpose and it is important as we move forward together. There are a lot of new things happening this year and it is exciting. LaVonna asked us to share things that we have noticed are new this year: Nice signage! (referring to the signs on rooms we will use for meetings) New faces in committees! Home Missions and Finance will meet together. Sitting in business meeting (expressed by one of the youth)! New people! Use of technology! Presiding Clerk of Rocky Mountain Yearly Meeting is here! Yoga in the meeting room! We had a meeting for worship and sang together *before* we moved in to committee meetings this afternoon.

Monthly meeting roll call: Central City – Steve & Lisa McConnell; Heartland – Dorlan Bales, Jim Perkins, Connie Adams, Laura Dungan, Kathryn Damiano;

Hominy – David Nagle, Beth Green-Nagle, Joseph Nagle, Angela Brown, Isaac Jake; University – Linda Mallonee, Don Mallonee, Liz Wine, Molly Loesch, Dave Suttle, Randy Cook, Rhonda Newby, Greg Newby, LaVonna Loesch, Cliff Loesch, Cheryl Mallonee and Paul Mallonee.

Visitors to our sessions – From Topeka Friends Meeting – John Wine, Sue Wine, Marjorie Van Buren, Lynn Van Buren, Jane Batterman, Keith Batterman, Bob Knecht, Margaret Knecht, David Ozaki; Loring Henderson – Oread Monthly Meeting; Sara Scribner – Lubbock Friends of Christ; John Muhanji – Kenya Yearly Meeting; John Kreig – AFSC, Des Moines; Mary Heathman – Presiding Clerk of Rocky Mountain Yearly Meeting; Mary Lord – Midcoast Friends Meeting, Darmiscotta, Maine; Georgia Fuller – Baltimore Yearly Meeting, elder traveling with Mary Lord. A minute of travel for Mary Lord was received.

LaVonna explained our tradition of collecting extracts spoken during the sessions. These are tidbits of humor or extemporaneous knowledge gathered during meetings. Friends are encouraged to record extracts and put them in the marked envelope on the piano.

The epistle committee is created every year during the opening business session when Friends are asked to volunteer for this service. Sara Scribner and Connie Adams volunteered serve be on this committee, and Angela Brown would like to shadow and learn the process.

GPYM 16-03 – State of Society Reports

State of Society Reports were shared and the reports appear in their entirety in the appendix. LaVonna asked for responses to each report expressing something they didn't know about that meeting that we can rejoice about. Friends acknowledged Central City's activism against the death penalty and the gathering they had last fall in Lincoln, NE. David Nagle read the report for Council House. Friends responded to the 300% increase in attendance and the community of hope they are building. Dorlan Bales read the report for Heartland. Friends responded to their reaching out to understand Islam, their new Peace Pole and thoughtfulness to the languages chosen (English, Spanish, Osage and Swahili) and the great cohesiveness for a small group. Angela Brown read the report for Hominy. Friends responded to their desire for Wednesday evening prayer services, the \$1000.00 Challenge Grant from Chief

Standing Bear, and their Wild Onion Dinner. Rhonda Newby read the report for University Friends. Friends responded to the youth group visit to the mosque and delivering cookies, their participation in Family Promise and Popsicles in the Park.

LaVonna reminded Friends that there is a GPYM Facebook page where all are welcome to share events that happen at their meetings. This is another way for us to feel more connected.

GPYM 16-04 – Traveling Minute

LaVonna shared the traveling minute of Mary Lord. Midcoast Friends Meeting of Darmiscotta, Maine commends Mary to our care and sends their blessings for our yearly meeting sessions.

GPYM 16-05 – Logistics

LaVonna went over logistics and housekeeping items: where to find restrooms, registration, sign the big book and asked everyone to wear a name tag. Michelle Barrett has been working hard on meals and most of the items are grown locally and organic and most of the items are gluten free. Her attention to this is very much appreciated.

GPYM 16-06 – Keynote Message from Mary Lord

The evening session was opened with LaVonna leading the hymn, “Spirit of God, Descend Upon my Heart.” Then Faith Lugalina shared “His Name”, a song she wrote a few years ago for a Young Adult Friends Gathering.

Mary Lord spoke to our theme of “Life from the Roots, Fruit Bearing Faithfulness” following a period of open worship. She shared that she enjoyed being back in this building after being here a few years ago for a Young Friends gathering.

She shared an exploration of an experience she had with an American Beech tree at Pendle Hill in Pennsylvania. This is the champion, oldest beech tree in Pennsylvania at roughly 350 years old. She finds this a great place to meditate where the Spirit of God can speak to you and pays her respects whenever she is there. A few years ago she was serving on the board of FUM and they were at a very low point of almost falling apart. She was very worried about the future of the Society of Friends, so she went to the tree to meditate. She felt the tree speak to her: “This is the tree of life which trees honor. The life is in the roots

and the trunk. Don't worry about the branches, they come and go." She found that branches and roots are the same as our bodies and that living things, such as trees, can speak to us.

Roots are our spiritual life. The trunk equals faithful practice and the branches equal committees, structures and organizations. Some branches serve for a short time and go away and some branches last a long time. The fruit of the tree equals our Quaker testimonies and are a witness to our faith and practice. If the roots and trunk aren't healthy, the fruit won't be healthy.

What are the roots of our Quaker faith? Friends' faith is a lived experience. George Fox said, "Christ has come to teach His people himself". This is what Fox went out to teach. When he encountered Margaret Fell she had many questions which Fox answered, "What can you say? Is it from God? Are you a child of the Light?" Margaret answered, "We are all thieves. We have taken the Scriptures in words and know nothing of them in ourselves." Mary led us through an exercise that asked us to list other names that we have for the divine presence that we feel. The list is: Guide, Holy Spirit, Redeemer, The One, Father, Jesus, The All, Lover, Abba, The Light, The Messiah, God, Creator, The Source, The Comforter, The I Am, The Breath, Wahnkanta (Osage), Yahweh, Sustainer, Holy Wisdom (the Sophia), Shepherd, Immanuel, Jesus as the Christ, Mary (the mother of Jesus), The Holy, All Goodness, The Alpha & Omega, The Still Small Voice, Counselor and Oh Heart.

She then asked us to think about if we had ever had an experience of the divine presence. Once we had thought about that for a bit, she asked that we share our stories with our neighbors. Friends pondered then visited with each other about their experiences. How did this exercise make us feel? Some thought it was easy and encouraging, while some thought it was revealing and made them feel vulnerable. Someone received some positive, unexpected feedback. Another person shared that they knew they had something to share, but were waiting for the right time to share. Mary asked how do we nurture the personal sharing of our experience of the Divine in our meetings/churches and Yearly Meetings? Is this something we need to strengthen? Have you felt nurtured by your meeting? There is need to have an opening for this in our lives. People are more willing to share in a small group rather than a large gathering. Society today makes it more challenging since everything is happening at such a fast

pace and we often fail to slow down and share with one another. It takes time to listen and space is needed to share our stories.

The daring to share our own truth takes many forms and changes. We honor this by daring to speak it, write it and share it. Mary encouraged us to share our stories. That is how God changes us and makes us grow.

Friday, June 3, 2016

GPYM 16-07- Breakfast, Bible Study and Worship

Breakfast was provided by University Friends followed by Friendly Bible Study of John 15: 11-15, 17 led by Dorlan Bales. Friends then settled in to a time of waiting worship.

ATTENTION TO BUSINESS – SESSION I

LaVonna opened the morning business session reminding us that God is with us and the Presence is around us. We then moved on to reports from Friends agencies.

GPYM 16-08 – Friends United Meeting Report

Cliff Loesch shared the report for Friends United Meeting (FUM). A written report is included in the appendix. Liberals vs. Conservatives. This is present throughout Quakerism and it's hard to keep everyone under the same umbrella. FUM is trying to get different kinds of monthly meetings involved in the variety of work to be done, including the work of Friends Church Peace Teams in Kenya, and work done by a school in Belize. There are two boards, one that meets in the US and another in Kenya. FUM clerk, Cliff Loesch, and Colin Saxton, General Secretary, go to Kenya once a year for the board meetings there. There is a larger population of Quakers in Kenya so they are focusing on getting their own board running more efficiently. Half of the FUM Executive Board was able to meet in Africa this February. There is a new presiding clerk of one of the yearly meetings in Kenya who is the first female presiding clerk ever.

GPYM 16-09 – Continuing Committee Report

LaVonna reported on the Continuing Committee of GPYM, which met twice. These meetings help keep the work of the yearly meeting moving forward. A

mid-year meeting in January is being discussed for members of the working committees. Some decisions are made for the yearly meeting during these meetings and the minutes appear in the Appendix.

GPYM 16-10 -- Home Missions Committee Report

Dorlan Bales and Laura Dungan brought a report from the Home Missions Committee. Dorlan is the new clerk of the committee. This new committee will be focusing on our ministry outside of the yearly meeting, leadership development, and reaching out to other Friends who may want to be a part of GPYM. Income from the farm land in Central City, NE is used for Home Missions work. Generous donors have made it possible for Laura Dungan to do work on behalf of this committee as a released Friend. There are new appointments of members from the monthly meetings to the committee and new energy is emerging to be able to move this initiative forward.

Laura shared that the report is part of the branches and fruit of the root of our yearly meeting. She shared from John 4 – the story of the woman at the well. Words are powerful and words are limiting. To go to the Spirit and move with each other in love is what will sustain us. Laura had Friends read through her written report and ask questions or make observations. There were a few spelling corrections and clarification that Max Carter was able to be the presenter at the Oklahoma gathering, made possible by the Webb Fund. Plans are in the works to have the committee meet all together. Friends are working on a good way to keep in communication with each other, i.e. private Facebook page. Jim Perkins shared that he is very excited about the work being done and focusing on outreach and growth. The need to move forward as spiritual groups rather than social action groups is important. Sara Scribner expressed that GPYM has very rare gifts, one being relationship building. She would encourage us to discern how the yearly meeting can use those rare gifts. Angela Brown applauds the yearly meeting's efforts to have more gatherings and that young friends that are wanting to be involved. Beth Green-Nagle is encouraged that Friends from Lubbock and Topeka are here and engaged in the yearly meeting. A Friend asked, "What is the difference between Ministry & Counsel and Home Missions?" Dorlan explained that there is some overlap, but Ministry & Counsel is more of a sustaining body whereas Home Missions is an outreach committee. Jock Cameron expressed hope that these outreach activities will be published so people outside of GPYM can see this exciting

work. There are discussions being had on what the best way to communicate will be. The pros and cons of Facebook, email and web pages for communication were discussed. The GPYM website can be updated more frequently with information, but it would be good to have one person dedicated to that task. Laura closed the report with a song, “Sacred Space”, about how to live in our challenging world.

GPYM 16-11-- Introductions of New Arrivals

Ruth Flower representing FCNL and Mitch Stutzman representing Everence introduced themselves.

GPYM 16-12 – Ministry and Counsel Report

Cliff Loesch shared for Ministry & Counsel. A letter from Lubbock Friends of Christ was received requesting Preparatory Affiliate Status with GPYM. The yearly meeting has no formal process, but is excited about this development. This was approved by Ministry & Counsel. A minute was received from Topeka Friends Meeting about their interest of exploring potential membership with GPYM. We have welcomed this and they have formed a committee for the exploration process. Now Ministry & Counsel is exploring what our intentionality is to both of these monthly meetings. Friends approved these two recommendations brought forth by Ministry & Counsel.

GPYM 16-13 – Reports: Nominating, Treasurer, Statistics and Finance

Angela Brown, Clerk of the Nominating Committee, asked for help making appointments to agencies. If you have a leading to serve on any committee or as a representative to a Friends agency, please let anyone on the committee know. Beth Green-Nagle, Molly Loesch, Greg Newby and Lisa McConnell are also on the committee.

Connie Adams gave the treasurer’s report and we are doing well, financially. A complete report appears in the appendix. All five monthly meetings were able to contribute to the operating fund this year. The \$5000 gift for the Home Missions Initiative has been matched by other donors. Gifts and pledges to support GPYM work in 2017 will be received with gratitude. Connie also encouraged GPYM students to use the Student Loan Fund, which maintains low rates of 1.5% simple interest until a year after graduation, then 3% following that. The report was approved.

The GPYM statistical report appears in the appendix.

Steve McConnell reported for the finance committee. The committee is recommending moving from a fiscal year of May 1 – April 30 to a calendar year as of January 1, 2017. This was approved. The Finance Committee met in conjunction with the Home Missions committee to discuss their various roles. Should Home Missions work as their own group under the care of Finance, working independently for fund raising? Or work cooperatively to keep the funds flowing. It is a work in progress that they will be discussing further. The question was raised regarding tax status. Donations are tax exempt and statements will be sent out in January regarding those donations for tax purposes.

GPYM 16-14 – Friends Committee on National Legislation – Ruth Flower

Ruth Flower reported for FCNL – “Where are Friends led to do advocacy work?” is a question FCNL asks Friends groups every other year. The policy committee will meet soon for a weekend to examine responses before the annual national conference in November. Examining what we are hearing from the monthly and yearly meetings will be a spiritual exercise of discernment about direction and focus for FCNL’s activity. Kenya Quaker Getry Agiza has travelled to Washington D.C. to report on the election processes in Kenya and to address any rumors. The character of FCNL is that they lobby as Quakers. Climate change, an issue both important and difficult, has been addressed for over three years by careful listening. The result is 10 people in congress were able to speak to this. The organization is blossoming with youth leadership and new ways to reach out to younger people and members of the community. Advocacy teams are being set up to go out and train people about who we are and our values. Several young adult programs are active on social media. There are funds available from generous donors for young adults to come and visit FCNL that will cover their travel. Ruth is retiring and will be working on her passion of Indian affairs for the next few years.

GPYM 16-15 – Friends World Committee Section of the Americas Report

Beth Green-Nagle reported for FWCC Section of the Americas. Her written report is included in the appendix. She attended the World Plenary meeting in Peru in January. Approximately 400 people were in attendance, one third of whom were native Spanish speakers. Beth was there as an interpreter and a representative of GPYM. Great linguistic diversity was represented at the

meetings. She is on the naming committee which names the people to the nominating committee. After translation to Spanish, Godly Play children's curriculum has been enthusiastically embraced by Cuban Friends. They had training sessions at the plenary session. The next section meeting will be Pittsburgh PA in March 2017. FWCC is encouraging that those young and representing diversity be named as representatives. Since the FWCC world office is struggling financially, international meetings will be convened less often, every 6-8 or 12 years. Section of the Americas is also struggling financially, so staff has been cut. Currently, GPYM is not making any contributions to the Section of the Americas. Traveling Ministry Corps is a new program that is organizing a small volunteer groups of Friends to send as traveling ministers throughout the Section, crossing Yearly Meeting lines and other divisions among Friends. Friends can volunteer to be a member of the Corps and local meetings can request a visitor. FWCC sends their greetings and appreciation to GPYM for our support.

ATTENTION TO BUSINESS SESSION II

GPYM 16-16 – Introduction of New Arrivals

Lynn Zeleski and George McConnell from Central City Friends, and Carole Revard from Hominy Friends have joined us. Logistics for tonight were discussed. Please be on time for Mary Lord's message this evening, then stay and enjoy the concert by En Power & Light.

GPYM 16-17 – American Friends Service Committee – John Krieg

John Krieg from AFSC, Des Moines IA is here as resource. He works for the Midwest Region. Please visit the AFSC display, which features its 100-year anniversary next year. Quaker Social Change ministry was started last year with a pilot program at 5 meetings. The main goal of this program is to connect AFSC with churches for spiritual growth and social change. Laura Dungan then shared about her representation to AFSC. She also shared about the emphasis on Quaker Social Change Ministry. They focus on spiritual practice and spiritual grounding at monthly meetings. Ministry out in the world could be done upon discerning what your gifts to the community are. Engaging with a variety of people from different backgrounds is a way to grow and build community. She asked that we lift up Rev. William Barber as a

primary leader in the Moral Monday Movement in North Carolina. He spoke of the importance of inclusion for Muslims, Christians, Republicans, Democrats, LGBTQ, Straight, labor union members and immigrants.

GPYM 16-18 – Reports: Ministry & Counsel and Standing Committees

Ministry & Counsel

Cliff Loesch reported for Ministry & Counsel. Plans have been made for the memorial service in the morning. Ministry & Counsel discussed our relationships with Lubbock and Topeka Friends. We want to keep communication open and schedule at least one visitation per year. They would like to have us available for dialog about any questions that arise. David Nagle, Cliff Loesch and Laura Dungan will help keep this nurturing process organized and moving forward.

Queries on eldering were discussed and revisited. There is value in encouraging eldering and we want to enhance the more positive elements. Spiritual nurturing is a term that may better reflect the need. A workshop or seminar may take place in the future regarding spiritual nurturing, perhaps including clearness committees and how they work. This is still in the discussion phase.

Home Missions Committee

Dorlan shared for Home Missions Committee. Its members are excited to move forward and encourage others to join as we expand our boundaries. Fund raising was discussed and an appeal will be made in the morning for 2017 financial support.

Finance Committee

Steve McConnell reported for the Finance committee. A Friendly audit was discussed and the protocol is being reviewed by Connie and Steve so an audit can be done this year. Travel reimbursement rates were discussed and it will be 50 % of the IRS rate of 54 cents per mile, so 27 cents per mile is the rate that is being proposed for reimbursement. Fundraising processes were discussed with the Home Missions committee to make sure there is financial stability and good coordination. The travel reimbursement rate was approved.

Budget Proposal

Connie Adams brought the budget proposal which reflects a shift to using the calendar year as our fiscal year in January. The full report is in the appendix. Clarification was needed on the travel assistance reimbursements. There are 5 agencies that the travel fund will support. William Penn House was not included in those agencies (AFSC, FUM General Board, FWCC Section of the Americas, FCNL and QEW are the agencies that the travel fund supports). The Webb Fund can be used for Young Friends ministry programs. It was proposed to change the wording on the budget line item 30 so the FWCC donation goes to the Section of the Americas, then a percentage (25%) would go on to the World office. This was approved.

The Home Missions transitional budget for May – December 2016 was also presented. The GPYM 2017 budget proposal assumes continuing the 2016 monthly meeting level of financial commitment. Some details of the Home Missions 2017 budgets are pending because monthly meetings are in planning processes for activities and needs. The May-December budget proposals for both GPYM and Home missions were approved. Jim Perkins expressed his appreciation to Connie Adams and the committee for all their hard work on the budget.

Nominating Committee

Angela Brown shared on behalf of the nominating committee that FCNL, FWCC, FUM have needs for representation and if anyone is feeling led to serve on behalf of GPYM please let someone on the nominating committee know of your interest.

LaVonna reminded us that GYPM is hosting the FUM Triennial next summer, July 12 – 16th, 2017. FUM staff members have been doing a lot of the organizing so far, but we will need to be ready to help more as the time nears. Approximately 400 friends from all over the world will be here and we will have a lot of work to do as hostesses and hosts.

GPYM 16-19 – Evening Session with Mary Lord

Friends gathered in the meeting room to hear some jazz shared by Cliff Loesch on string bass and Joseph Nagle on saxophone. They then led us in “Amazing Grace” before those present settled in to waiting worship.

Mary Lord shared with us, reviewing what we had discussed last evening. The life of the tree is in the roots and the trunk. Don't worry about the branches, they will come and go. She also reminded us that it's hard to predict the future, what comes next. What life presents to us always requires a step into the unknown.

She posed the question: "How do we nurture the personal spiritual lives of our yearly meeting?" The trunk of our life as Quakers started when early Friends broke from the rigid forms of the Anglican Church and revived a 1st-century Christian practice. This included waiting worship; ministry of all believers regardless of age or gender; and eventually a system of monthly, quarterly and yearly meetings; and the development of our testimonies – Simplicity, Peace, Integrity, Community, Equality, Stewardship. There is concern that these testimonies are turning into a creed for Quakers. We want remember that our testimonies evolve continually.

She then posed the questions: "What are the regular practices of individuals and family spiritual life that sustain you? What connects and grounds you?" The group responded and the list included: meditation, yoga, reading & journaling, praying in the shower, reading the Bible/prayer/journaling, praying over dinner, praying while swimming laps, Native American dances, looking for the daily miracle and reflecting on gratitude, praying while running, praying during the commute to work, Chi gong, praying while gardening or cooking, focusing on a name of someone while drawing, walking and observing the wonder of nature and bedtime prayers. Doing something regularly and faithfully helps us get deeper into our practice, but sometimes a change in our routine is necessary to keep us from getting 'dusty'.

How do we strengthen our corporate practice? Some people are parts of small groups for prayer support and Bible study. The sharing of our family histories with other members of our meetings can help us understand one another better and possibly find some genealogical connections. Eldering and companionship is being practiced in a different way than has been thought of in the past. Elders can provide guidance and support for someone in their daily lives or a special event. Georgia Fuller is traveling with Mary this weekend as an elder of support.

How does GPYM deepen the spiritual and corporate practice of the yearly meeting? In the past few years we have hosted workshops exploring the topics

of clerking and forgiveness. These have brought Friends of many different backgrounds together to learn corporately and have been wonderful for relationship building. The yearly meeting needs to find the form of practice that works best for us and move to a deeper place to sustain the relationships. The worshipping community, whatever the form, is the heart of the meeting. She then asked us to think about what makes a meeting/church grounded in the Spirit. Friends were invited to think on this then share with a neighbor. Sustaining the grounded space in our meetings is important. Practice makes us better.

Mary closed by sharing from Revelations 22:1-2 “And he showed me a river of water of life, bright as a crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb, in the midst of the street thereof. And on either side of the river is the tree of life, bearing twelve manner of fruits, yielding its fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.” May we be encouraged to share with one another and be given the opportunities to share our stories and remarkable journeys.

GPYM 16-20 – En Power and Light Evening Concert

Friends were then released to enjoy a concert in Fellowship Hall by En Power and Light: Scott Fowler, Paul Fowler and Lezlee Hurst. They shared some very moving original songs along with some familiar tunes and also shared of their travels on their tours and journeys together. It was a beautiful night of amazing harmonies and praise.

Saturday, June 4, 2016

GPYM 16-21 – Breakfast, Worship, Memorial Service

Following breakfast prepared by University Friends, Dorlan Bales led us in Friendly Bible Study of James 2: 21-24. We then transitioned into our memorial service, led by Cliff and LaVonna, remembering with fondness friends who had passed away this past year.

ATTENTION TO BUSINESS – SESSION III

GPYM 16-22 – Home Missions Committee Report

Dorlan and Laura reported for Home Missions. The Committee did some visioning during the sessions including thinking about a list of cities and current Friends where GPYM might grow in the Central Plains, and considering the variety of people with whom we have connection and interaction: Native Americans, youth, college students, African Americans, and seniors. Looking to the future some exciting possibilities include a spiritual development center and a Quaker Voluntary Service Unit within the yearly meeting for people of college age. The enthusiasm and potential within our yearly meeting may express itself as social justice in action, in increasing numbers, and in diversity. This vitality will have a positive impact on both the yearly meeting and our monthly meetings.

The committee approved a budget for the rest of this year and noted that funds are looking good for the rest of 2016. In keeping with our theme of Life from the Roots, the financial piece would be the leaves on the branches. We made a short field trip outside to visit a bush with 25 ‘fruits’ (slips of paper) hanging on it. There were three - \$2500.00 gift pledges, four - \$1000.00 gift pledges, four – \$500.00 gift pledges, three – \$250.00 gift pledges, five – \$100.00 gift pledges, four – \$50.00 gift pledges, two - \$25.00 gift pledges, and a few “wild apples” that were blank. We were invited to choose a pledge amount in silence. We then came back in and filled out cards with our pledge amount so that the committee can have a record of pledges.

GPYM 16-23 – Wichita Friends School Report

Brian Clyne from WFS came and shared. A new multi-million-dollar addition to the school was opened and dedicated this past year. He expressed a special thank you to Jim Perkins, Connie Adams, Don and Linda Mallonee, Stan and Eloise Brown, Aaron Fowler and Laura Dungan, Leroy and Eva Brightup, for all their support. Five hundred people visited the school at their pony round up. A new kindergarten/first grade class and teacher have been added for next year. A written report appears in the appendix.

Jim Perkins wanted to make friends aware that if they want tour the new Wichita Friends School facility, to let him know. He also wanted to recognize Connie Adams’ work sharing new Godly Play sets with the children. This was

made possible with the \$1000 grant money she applied for and received from the yearly meeting.

GPYM 16-24 – Nominating Committee Report

Angela Brown gave the final nominating committee report which was approved. See appendix. Nominating Committee proposed that continuing committee ask monthly meetings to recommend representatives to the FUM triennial world gathering at Friends University July 12-16, 2017. This was approved. Angela also encouraged a representative from each monthly meeting to serve on the committee.

GPYM 16-25 – Statistics Minute of Gratitude

A minute of gratitude was expressed to Linda Mallonee for her work as statistician over the past several years and her faithfulness to the task.

GPYM 16-26 – Greetings to Friends not in Attendance

The clerk gathered names of Friends to send greetings to who were unable to be here this year: Neil and Grayce Mesner, Kalika Ayin, Don Reeves, Selma Mesner, Maria Bradley, Linda Coates, Dale & Sylvia Graves, Micah & Faith & George Bales, John & Gail Fletcher, Marian Davis, Jean Eden & Lorene Ludy, Kim Sanchez, Dorothy Manzer, Brent & Senja Collins, Cliff Mesner, Betty Jake, Eric Jones, Colin Saxton, Ervin & Alison Stanley.

GPYM 16-27 – Letter of Introduction

LaVonna shared a letter of introduction of Ruth Flower representing FCNL.

GPYM 16-28 – 2017 Sessions

2017 sessions will meet June 1-3 at Heartland Friends Meetinghouse. Keynote speaker will be Wess Daniels, Director of Friends Center at Guilford College. Dorlan expressed a concern that our yearly meeting sessions may be too short. He asked that the Continuing Committee put this concern on its agenda to see if there is a way to schedule more time together in the future.

GPYM 16-29 -- Afternoon Workshops

LaVonna gave a brief overview of the workshops that are happening this afternoon. The Young Friends are doing the first one about Wisdom of the Elder, with Carole Revard as their interview subject. The second workshop is from John Muhanji, discussing Friends in Africa. The third workshop is Laura

Dungan sharing about Deep Listening – Enhancing our Community & Worship Experience.

GPYM 16-30 -- Epistle from this Year's Sessions

Sara Scribner read the Epistle to other yearly meetings (see appendix). She thanked Connie Adams and Angela Brown who shared efforts in writing. Friends gratefully approved the epistle with minor corrections.

GPYM 16-31 -- In Memory of Randy Reeves

George McConnell shared about his memory of Randy Reeves who passed away in prison last month in Nebraska. GPYM has always shown a great compassion and support for Randy and his family over the years. We have been supportive of Central City's commitment to Nebraskans Against the Death Penalty and recently celebrated the abolition of the death penalty in Nebraska. Randy has been released to God's care and we are saddened by his passing.

LaVonna will send notes to Don & Barbara Reeves and Kurt Mesner on behalf of the yearly meeting regarding their loss. She will also send a note Angela Young, Clerk of Heartland Meeting, who just lost her mother quite suddenly this past week.

GPYM 16-32 -- Final Thoughts and Thanks

LaVonna shared a few of the extracts Friends wrote this week. See the complete list in the appendix to these minutes.

She also shared that she is glad we have been here together knowing there are other places each of us could be. We are here by the Spirit's call in our hearts. We are here for a reason, a purpose and for this time by the invitation of the Spirit. We need to lean upon the leadership of the Spirit in everything we do. When someone is not here, they are missed. She asked that we pray for GPYM like never before, as we live our daily lives, as we gather yearly and as monthly meetings. LaVonna encouraged us to pray for others in our yearly meeting as they gather and expand the way we pray for others, including praying for the growth that we are exploring with new meetings that are considering joining GPYM.

LaVonna reminded us there are evaluation forms and that our feedback is very much appreciated and needed. Friends can leave the form on the clerks' table or mail/email it to LaVonna.

David Ozaki, on behalf of Topeka Friends, expressed thanks for hosting them this week.

Beth Green-Nagle expressed appreciation for the folks working with the children and youth: Andrea Suttle, Kristen Hogg, Aaron Fowler, Dean Young and Monica Warnken.

GPYM 16-33 – Afternoon Workshops

“Stories to Songs: Wisdom of the Elders”

Isaac Jake, Jocelyn Mallonee and Joseph Nagle shared their time together with Friends, acknowledging Carole Revard as their guest Elder for these sessions. The workshop opened with a violin solo by Anika Nagle. Then Aaron explained that Stories to Songs is part of his non-profit organization, *Sing it Out*. It is an exercise of storytelling by community elders and recognizing the wisdom of being an elder. The youth spent their time during yearly meeting interviewing Carole and composing a song, “The Soulful One”, about what they learned. Their musical presentation include Joseph on saxophone, Jocelyn on flute, Isaac on drum and Aaron on guitar. “The Soulful One” was warmly received by Friends, and Carole expressed her deep appreciation to the youth group for creating the song.

Aaron shared a few stories and songs from *Stories to Songs* workshops he has done at various Kansas schools, then asked us, “Who are some of the elders in our lives we wished we knew more about?” He asked us to think about the important people in our lives and how they have inspired and influenced us to be who we are. He encouraged us to share our stories with each other.

The youth then shared the epistle they prepared. It was approved and is included in the appendix.

The Soulful One
Inspired by Carole Revard, Hominy Friends Meeting, Hominy OK
Aaron Fowler and GPYM High School Youth
© June 4, 2016, Roomdad Productions, BMI

1. As a child Carole was shy, went to church each week
When she went to school she got by, science is where she peeked
Osage blood, it runs deep from her father to her mom
Elvis really made her weep, his pictures hanging on her wall
She's the Soulful One.

Chorus: A steady hand, her love runs deep
 A solid faith, her heart never sleeps
 She's the Soulful one

2. She worked hard all her life, managing mineral rights
Working tirelessly for her tribe, always reaching for new heights
When folks came in feeling down, she lifted them with her smile
Turned their darkness into light, lifting up their troubled sights
She's the Soulful One.
3. Loves her kids oh so much, each one so unique
Brings her joy, heartache, pain, likes to see them every week
Four grandkids that she adores, creating Osage clothes
Shirts and mocs made with love, kinship is what she sewed.
She's the Soulful One.
4. Faith is active in her life, Started at an early age
Visiting the little white church, In the land of the Osage
It felt like home each time she went, Praising God in song
She stayed in this loving place, the place where she belongs
She's the Soulful One.

“Friends in Africa” – John Muhanji

John Muhanji, FUM Director of African Ministries shared his journey to Friends and how listening to Christ is a simple faith that can transform lives. John joined FUM in 2005 after spending 20 years in the banking industry. He felt a call from God to make this change and it was hard for his co-workers and family to understand this call, as he would be making half the salary of what he made at the bank. If you can rejoice in everything that comes your way and live a fluid life, it will be easier to move along with changes that come your way.

He described his baptism of the dry bones following the genocide in Rwanda. There was a Catholic church where hundreds took refuge at in Kigali. They were locked in by the priests and everyone was killed. No one entered that church for 10 years. When John went there after the 10 years had passed, he almost passed out, trying to enter the church, but he managed to go back in and walked across the dry, white bones that covered the entire floor. It was like walking on crackling leaves. This was a turning point for John and he has not been the same person since.

Africa has 53 countries and a large concentration of Quakers in Kenya. When John came to FUM, people thought he was jumping onto a sinking ship. He felt the need to energize and equip Friends, which is a part of FUM’s mission statement. He started with Eden Grace, a mission statement and nothing else. FUM has four priorities for missions: Evangelism & Outreach, Leadership Development & Mentorship, Communication, and Global Partnership.

Evangelism and outreach has been brought forth in different styles: Direct, Intellectual, Testimonial, Interpersonal, Intervisitational and Serving. There is a water filter ministry in Elgon which is form of outreach through water provision. Leadership development is taking place in Tanzania Yearly Meeting and churches are growing rapidly. There has been outreach in Congo, providing moral presence and support as they have been through much torture in their lives. There are Quaker school ministries serving over 200,000 children. Friends Theological College in Kaimosi has a new principal, Dr. Warfula. Ministers graduate ready for work in the mission fields. When God

calls us, he calls us for a purpose. He challenged us to speak to the faces of children, anxiously awaiting the word of peace.

Deep Listening – Enhancing our Community & Worship Experience

Laura Dungan led a workshop about a sacred trust of deep listening which is an act of love. This kind of listening should be at the heart of meetings for clearness. The listeners need to focus on what the person is saying and allow that person to say what they need to. This will allow a person's soul to show up. The soul is like a wild animal. You need to wait patiently to see the wild animal. You cannot barge in. A trust circle is a safe space where a person can share. There is no fixing, no advising and no straightening anybody out. What is shared in the trust circle will never be repeated to others. Only the focus person (person sharing) is allowed to bring up the subject for further conversation with the listening group after this process is completed.

Laura had us form groups of three to practice this listening exercise. The focus person was to identify a watershed story, a moment or period where there was a turning point. This could be a moment of courage, fear, loss, failure or shame, mystery, passion or ecstasy. The listeners in the groups were to remain neutral while the focus person was sharing and try not to let emotions show. The groups would focus on the person sharing, then the listeners would be allowed to ask open questions, such as "What did that experience teach you?" Then there would be a period of affirmation and celebration, followed by talk within the group. This process would be repeated until all three in the group had opportunity to share.

Following this exercise, we joined in a large circle to share how we felt about the experience. Some felt a feeling of panic about sharing a hard story. The deep listening was appreciated by some and some thought it was a lovely experience, even though they felt caught off guard. Some thought remaining neutral while listening was hard as they felt a neutral face would seem like a negative response. Others felt the lack of eye contact and neutrality made it easier to share.

At the end of the session, a poem entitled "How to Tell the Truth" by Paul Williams from the book "Nation of Lawyers" was shared. Laura suggested that this practice would be good for clearness committees.

GPYM 16-34 - Dinner and Farewells

After the workshops supper was provided by University Friends to either enjoy together while fellowship continued, or Friends could take their meal on the road with them if they needed to travel right away. Friends enjoyed the work and fellowship of the past few days and look forward to gathering during the coming year. We will meet again for annual sessions, June 1-3, at Heartland Friends Meeting, Wichita, Kansas.

APPENDIX, including written reports

Epistle

Great Plains Yearly Meeting of Friends

Life From the Roots – Fruit Bearing Faithfulness

June 4, 2016

Dear Friends everywhere:

We send you greetings from the 109th Annual Sessions of Great Plains Yearly Meeting of Friends.

Friends gathered at University Friends Church in Wichita, Kansas June 2-4, 2016 to do the work of God centered on our theme “Life From the Roots – Fruit Bearing Faithfulness.” We joyfully welcomed visitors from Texas, Kansas, Maryland, Virginia, Iowa, Maine, Colorado and Kenya. We have felt God’s desire for us to be together since Nebraska Yearly Meeting was incorporated in 1908. After more than 100 years, we continue to discover our growing knowledge and experience of Divine Presence and Desire.

The Presiding Clerk opened our sessions by reading last year’s epistle to remind us of where we have been. She then acknowledged that God is moving us in new ways, and that “new is good.” We rejoiced with one another at the Life that was apparent during the reading of each meeting’s State of Society report.

Thursday and Friday evening our keynote speaker, Mary Lord of Baltimore and New England Yearly Meetings, shared an experience of Divine Presence she had while meditating under the Mother Beech at Pendle Hill, feeling Spirit speak through the tree. Life is in the roots and the trunk ... our Faith and our Practice, which will produce healthy fruit – our Quaker Testimonies. The branches -- structures, committees, organizations -- come and go. As Quakers we are rooted in Faith and Practice; in deep, personal experience of the Divine; and we dare to share our growing knowledge and experience of God. We were encouraged to share, together, our names of Divine Presence and to relate a time we experienced the Divine. Mary encouraged us to create space in our meetings to share with one another our deep truths and our stumbling questions.

Our faithfulness to our experience of Spirit is bearing fruit. Our work at nurturing relationships among Friends in the Great Plains Region has led two meetings to express interest in joining us. During our Friday morning Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business, Lubbock [Texas] Friends of Christ Quaker Meeting was joyfully granted ‘preparatory affiliate status’ and Topeka Friends’ interest in further exploring membership in Great Plains Yearly Meeting was welcomed with open hearts.

After rejoicing in the expanding Revitalization and Leadership Development Initiative last year, this year we welcomed Dorlan Bales as our first clerk of a new standing committee, the Home Missions Committee. We experienced a new relational and organizational paradigm as the Home Missions Committee and the Finance Committee, which share concerns, held two ‘working together’ times during our sessions.

For the first time, we used the Friendly Bible Study method as we gathered together for worship on Friday and Saturday mornings. This method, originally developed by Larry and Joanne Spears, emphasizes engaging Scripture with our hearts, rather than our heads. On Friday we experienced John 15: 11-15, 17, and on Saturday James 2: 21-24.

Through God’s Grace a process of healing in the relationship between Great Plains Yearly Meeting and Rocky Mountain Yearly Meeting begun in 2014 continues with intentional acts of forgiveness and inter-visitation. We are blessed by the presence of the presiding clerk of Rocky Mountain Yearly

Meeting at our sessions this year and we are strengthened by our desire to be together in the shared Love of God.

We are encouraged by the energetic sight and sound of children and teens during our yearly meeting sessions. We have dedicated planning and resources to building a robust Young Friend yearly meeting program for both children and teen age groups. We are feeling a calling, as a yearly meeting, to provide our younger generation with deep, life-enhancing encounters with Spirit and Quakerism each year.

We grew in knowledge and compassion as we received reports from Friends who attended American Friends Service Committee, Friends World Committee for Consultation, Friends United Meeting and Friends Committee on National Legislation. We look forward to hosting the FUM Triennial at Friends University in Wichita in July 2017. Our spirits were deepened by workshops presented by our Young Friends as a culmination of their “Stories to Song” experience; by John Muhanji, FUM Director of African Ministries; and by Laura Dungan on “Deep Listening.” We enjoyed the musical gifts of En Power and Light on Friday evening.

We find great joy in being together in the presence of God. We are scattered over Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, and Nebraska. We are pastoral and unprogrammed. We are liberal and conservative. We are Native American and 1st to 12th generation immigrants. We are blessed by a diversity that strengthens our spirits, teaches us Great Love, draws us closer to Spirit and liberates us to do God’s work.

May we continue to be faithful in attending to our roots so that God may bear fruit through us.

In the Light of Christ,

LaVonna Loesch, Presiding Clerk
Great Plains Yearly Meeting of Friends

Youth Epistle

June 4, 2016

Greetings to Friends everywhere from the Youth of Great Plains Yearly Meeting, 109th annual session June 2nd-4th, at University Friends Meeting, Wichita, KS. Three youth gathered: from Wichita, KS, Jocelyn Mallonee; from Hominy, OK, Isaac Jake, and Joseph Nagle. We discussed the recurring theme of “Where do we belong as Friends and as young people in a Friends community?” Adults who joined in the discussion were Dean Young, Heartland Friends; Monica Warnken, Northridge Friends; Laura Dungan, Heartland Friends; and, Aaron Fowler, Heartland Friends.

We wrote music, talked about deep questions, drew a spiral of roots, and thought about irrational numbers as a part of Divinity. We started our own journal as a tool to connect with God.

We would like to thank the Great Plains Yearly Meeting for giving us a way for us to find out who we are as young people in the Friends community.

In Unity to share in the Light of all people,

Youth Yearly Meeting 2016

Great Plains Yearly Meeting

State of Society Reports from GPYM’s Five Member Meetings

Central City Meeting - State of Society Report

Central City Monthly Meeting is alive and active in central Nebraska. We are meeting on the third 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 for our worship service, followed by attention to business and/or events happening by social justice causes in the area.

Central City Friends were involved with the planning and leading of the Nebraska Quaker Fall Gathering. Don Reeves led a discussion on poverty and inequality. Rich Maciejewski helped lead singing, along with Laura Dungan and Aaron Fowler from GPYM in Wichita. Approximately 30 people attended. Planning is underway for this fall’s gathering.

We are currently sending a letter to our local and distant members to learn more about our connections to Central City Friends, how we are led by the Light and what brings us joy. We hope that this communication will help us feel more connected to one another.

We met with members of the Unity Church in Grand Island in November and have continued to worship together occasionally. We had a work day at the Meeting House in April to help clean and maintain the premises which are now under the ownership of the Merrick County Historical Society.

We continue to work with other local groups in support of the LGBT community, the peace movement and work to maintain the repeal of 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 and Friends Committee on National Legislation.

With the financial backing of Nebraska's governor there were enough petition signatures gathered to have a ballot referendum to overturn the repeal of the death penalty. It will be on the ballot in November. Friends are involved in efforts to maintain the repeal.

We are saddened by the death of Randy Reeves in prison, and are holding his family in the light.

We are always pleased to welcome visitors and distant Friends.

We have limited numbers and limited resources but continue to try to make an impact in our local community and the wider world. We continue to search for ways to increase our numbers and presence here in Nebraska.

Council House Meeting - State of Society Report

“If anyone speaks, he should speak as one conveying the words of God. If anyone serves, he should serve with the strength God supplies, so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory and the power forever and ever. Amen.” (1 Peter 4:11)

Despite our small numbers we seek to be faithful friends and servants of Jesus. When only two or three of us have been able to meet, we have sometimes felt discouraged. Yet we have persevered as a witness to our faith in Christ.

We rejoice that others seem to be noticing our faithfulness. In Eleventh Month Ancil Simmons began coming to lead our meetings for worship. We have been delighted to welcome Ancil, his wife Venita, John Johnson, Carrie and Logan Kneeland, Wyatt Burleson, and Wynema and John Harris Sunday mornings. Some attend regularly, while others attend as they are able. Thus our average attendance has increased 300%.

A desire for more knowledge about Friends history and beliefs led to an invitation to David Nagle to share with us in six Wednesday evening gatherings. Opening with prayer and the singing of hymns, David then shared with us as he was led. Our final gathering was a time of worship and praise. We much appreciate David's dedication and pray God's continued blessing upon him, his family, and others who helped make it possible for him to meet with us.

Christ promised that where two or three gather in His name, He will be there in the midst. We are comforted by this as we continue to meet together. The signs of new life are re-kindling our hope that we can maintain a viable witness to Christ here in our community. We covet your prayers and support as we move forward.

“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might.” (Ephesians 6:10)

On behalf of Council House Friends,
Frankie Sue Johnson, Clerk

Hominy Friends Meeting - State of Society Report

Hominy Friends are blessed by the young families who are part of our fellowship. We have also been encouraged as former associate members and long-time attenders have become full members. Our average attendance is up and we are always blessed by the visitors who find their way to us. We seek to be a welcoming fellowship to all. We know we can do better at welcoming those who come through our doors and especially at inviting others to worship with us. However, we remain confident that as we gather in the name of Christ each week that anyone who might join us will encounter the Living Christ. The needful world around us sometimes leaves us feeling overwhelmed and at a loss as to how best to respond. Yet as we nurture one another spiritually, we

find that way opens for greater witness to and sharing with all needs, especially spiritual and material.

We continue to participate in the Hominy Ministerial Alliance which now entails a \$500 annual commitment. HMA sponsors several community worship opportunities and a food pantry. During “Holy Week” a different church serves lunch each day. We had plenty of willing help as we served on our day and our minister gave the devotional message. We also helped serve refreshments at the Christmas program held in the Community Center (old high school building).

Our building has been a major focus of money and effort this past year. We had an 18” glu-lam beam installed over the 24 foot span separating our worship room from the fellowship hall. This allows the partition doors to fan-fold much easier to create one larger space for weddings and funerals. The same contractor also effected some external repairs to siding, soffit and fascia. Hermes Sanchez spent a lot of time repairing and prepping the worship room walls and ceiling before painting them and the fellowship hall and kitchen. Some commented that they had never seen the worship room look so good. While additional smaller projects remain to be tackled, we derive some satisfaction from being good stewards of the facilities entrusted to us. The financial burden has been great and so we were much encouraged by a \$1000 challenge grant from the Office of Osage Chief Standing Bear.

Our cookbook has sold out and we are working on a new expanded edition. Another fundraising effort, our Wild Onion Dinner, was enjoyed by patrons and workers alike. Both also constitute outreach to the local community and beyond in addition to helping financially. Other local outreach and service includes our VBS, our Christmas Eve program, Quivering Arrow Camp, articles and ads in the local newspaper, and making our fellowship hall available for substance abuse counseling and to AA for two meetings a week.

We have also reached out to other Friends. In October we hosted the 2nd annual Oklahoma All-Friends gathering. Max Carter shared about Quaker history and beliefs. This year, in addition to SCYM folk we had van loads from Wyandotte and Kickapoo, both of EFC-MAYM, and the Johnsons from Council House. Recently a couple from Kiamchi Worship Group (who had been here last fall) surprised us with a visit the on the same day as another SCYM family from Stillwater. Beth Green-Nagle flew to Peru in January to

represent us and GPYM and to serve on the translation and interpretation team at the FWCC Plenary.

We were saddened by the death of Ida Bevenue and will miss her cheerful smile and valiant perseverance despite severe health issues. We are reminded that every day is a wonderful opportunity to express love to family, friends and others around us and that none of us has a guarantee of tomorrow. We can, however, trust in God's providence and love to carry us forward.

We continue to receive expressions of interest in resuming our Wednesday evening prayer meetings. We see this as an effective way to enhance the spiritual health of our fellowship and are hopeful that way will open.

Acts 1:8 "But ye shall receive power, after the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." 1

Corinthians 4:20 "For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power."

1 Corinthians 15:58 "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord."

Heartland Friends Meeting - State of Society Report

Heartland Friends find themselves in a cohesive, relaxed and focused fellowship after several years of transitions and deep discernment. The loss of eldership as members passed on and our maturing from the energy of building construction to the needs of maintenance management have been challenging. We are thankful, with full hearts, for God's presence among us and for the sacred Listening we do together as we discover what God is calling us to do and to be. We have added some intentionality to our listening with 4th week Pancake House breakfasts prior to worship, small group lunches that specifically invite non-member attenders into deeper fellowship, and 1st and 3rd week soup-salad-sandwich lunches following adult worship and children's Godly Play/Faith & Play worship.

Members and attenders find deep fulfillment and peace in our unprogrammed worship and vocal ministry from the silence. The simplicity of our worship time together speaks to our individual and corporate souls. In our (more vocal) First-day adult education time we have been led to topics that explore and challenge our faith connection with the wider world. We worked together in a

2½ month self-directed study of Islam, concluding with a visit from a member of our local Wichita mosque. Several members have continued some attendance at local Muslim events and are pursuing additional study. FGC's *Let Your Life Speak* card series stimulated thoughtful discussion and conversation with two guest speakers who shared their personal stories of our immigration and prison systems. Immediately following the *Let Your Life Speak* series we devoted several Sundays to rich discussion of FCNL's legislative priorities and forwarded our discerned priorities to them. We feel deep gratitude for FCNL's work to keep integrity and faith values connected with our national governance and legislation. These two discussion series, *Let Your Life Speak* and the FCNL priorities, have led us into an examination process to discover how our Meeting's corporate life is speaking and how we might be more vocal and publically active as a Meeting.

“For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” (Matthew 6:21) Jesus' words have challenged us for several years in budget discussions as we allocate limited financial resources to meetinghouse maintenance and concerns of Peace and Justice. After several years of discerning our way forward about the cost of maintaining our grounds, we are moving toward sustainable landscaping in our garden areas and have developed hardscaping plans for the west façade of our building. While we hire people to mow our grass, we are enjoying the friendship and bonding of working together as we trim trees, pull weeds and do interior housekeeping on “work days.”

We are working to be more intentional about a ministry of welcome and coming together by making our physical space available to others. Friends from other regions have used Heartland for personal retreat in the past, and during 2016 Carol Mullikin and Joanna Pinkerton are using Heartland to offer “Feed My Shepherds”, a retreat series for spiritual care-givers. In March Heartland hosted a wide gathering of old Friends and new acquaintances for a deeply moving labyrinth walk, presented by Carol Mullikin. Throughout the year we welcome the energetic love of Wichita Friends School children as they use our space and gardens.

Energy and resources came forth this year to complete two physical additions to our property. To protect the Wichita Friends School playground area from inappropriate traffic on our gravel connecting path, Dean Young designed, created (welded) and installed metal gates that blend artistically with the

architecture of both buildings. We added a Peace Pole to our front garden area with “May Peace Prevail on Earth” in four languages – English, Spanish, Osage and Swahili. English reflects our Heartland membership, Spanish is the next-most-common language in Wichita, Osage speaks of our love and appreciation of our Friends in Hominy, Oklahoma and Swahili honors Kenya Friends who are increasing numbers in the Religious Society of Friends with so much enthusiasm.

Our average number present for worship has increased due to regular attenders and long-term visitors to the Wichita area. We are grateful to have been given a ministry of welcome to those who, for one reason or another, do not wish membership but who enjoy our faith family. Last summer we extended hospitality to a visiting Friend from Australia who was in Wichita for Lyme disease health treatment. Last fall, Heartland Friends joyfully welcomed Aaron Beach as a new member to both Heartland and the Religious Society of Friends, presenting him with a copy of Britain Yearly Meeting’s *Quaker Faith and Practice* signed by all our members. In 2015 we were blessed with Myrliss Hershey’s presence and elder wisdom until she moved to Topeka to be near family in October.

Christmas Eve fellowship is a cherished time for us as we welcome visitors and extended family members to a candlelight service that includes singing, the Christmas story and unprogrammed worship, followed by fellowship with food. For our Christmas story this year, the Ternes family shared a reader’s theatre presentation of a children’s book, *The Angel’s First Christmas*. Susie was Mary, Grant was Joseph, and Luke, Riley and Sophie were the little angels tagging along behind Gabriel. At the close of quiet worship, we were led in song by Patrice Stephenson’s energetic signing of *Go Tell It on the Mountain*.

Heartland Friends celebrated joyously with Wichita Friends School families and supporters at their new building dedication in August. Heartland’s involvement with the school has many forms: board and committee membership, grass mowing, food ministry at special events, leading Monday morning worship, library management, teaching a weekly music class and leading Godly Play/Faith & Play time once a week.

We are a small group of Friends with many blessings. We give thanks for the love we share with each other, for the challenges we present to each other and

for the deepening of our individual and corporate experiences of God's presence.

Angela Young, Presiding Clerk

University Friends Meeting - State of Society Report

Members of University Friends Meeting have enjoyed connecting with one another, reaching out to the community and world, and enriching each other spiritually in 2016.

In society with one another, we enjoyed activities such as monthly ladies lunches, yoga classes, movie nights and board game nights. We came together in friendship for special occasions, holding a family Christmas party, a Thanksgiving meal, a Consecration Sunday celebration, and an Easter breakfast. At "Friendly Evenings" once or twice a month, we shared meals, sang songs and discussed themes such as the Quaker testimonies. We participated in work days, helping to maintain the meetinghouse. The choir and bell choir helped us worship through music throughout the year.

Our youth and children's ministry program continues to serve the younger members of the community. We welcomed a new children's ministry director, Andrea Suttle, who leads children's worship as well as Vacation Bible School and other programs such as Popsicles in the Park. Our youth cooked dozens of cookies and delivered them to the Islamic Society of Wichita, meeting youth from the Islamic community and sharing a Quaker message of peace and equality.

Sunday school programs this year included Bible studies on the books of Psalms and Hebrews and a series discussing *A Different Kind of Christmas*, by *Roots* author Alex Haley. The young adult class offered fellowship and discussion. The youth Sunday school class participated in a series of lessons based on William Bennett's *Book of Virtues*.

Outreach and service has been a focus this year. Most notably, University Friends Meeting agreed to be a founding host congregation for Family Promise of Greater Wichita. UFM will be one of 13 congregations in the Wichita area that will host homeless families four times a year. Our meeting participated in "Beyond Tolerance," organized by the Greater Wichita Ministerial League. In connection with "Beyond Tolerance," pastor Cliff Loesch traded pulpits with Titus James, pastor of the predominantly African-American North Heights

Christian Church. Members of both churches participated in a community-wide worship service. We were pleased to welcome the Friends University Singing Quakers again this year. The group practiced at the meetinghouse, shared music during worship and shared a picnic meal. Our meetinghouse is also home to a Boy Scout troop, All Nations Fellowship, and Cornerstone, Friends University's Christian fellowship group.

Looking forward, we have begun a discernment process focusing on our meeting's wants, needs and goals. We look forward to the fruits this process will bear in the coming year.

Treasurer's Report and Budget Proposal

Treasurer's Report, June 2016

We are in good financial shape. We have blessings and challenges, and we're moving forward in both areas.

Our 2015 Yearly Meeting Sessions "broke even" with using \$247 from our Webb Fund equity account to supplement our children's programming costs. Because of increased Young Friends programming we will probably need more from the Webb Fund this year. Our challenge – looking beyond the Webb Fund – it is finite – to sustain a deep and grounding Quaker experience for children and teens at our annual yearly meeting sessions.

Operating Income:

- All 5 of our member monthly provided support to our operating needs – wonderful!
- We "saved" \$2,500 in our agency travel because Cliff's and Beth's expenses were cared for by FUM and FWCC.
- We are able, this year, to "save" funds to our world gathering and triennial travel assistance funds -- \$700 total.
- We had unanticipated software expense for QuickBooks to keep it compatible with Windows when I upgraded to Windows 10.
- We are looking into using WordPress for our homepage to save \$300+ costs.
- Our 2015-16 fiscal year closed with a \$1,683.27 surplus in general operations monies.

Revitalization Initiative

From May 2015 through April 2016 our Revitalization Initiative has been supported with gifts of \$5,415 from individuals, 1 member monthly meeting and 1 visitor monthly meeting, and \$8,500 from our matching challenge donor. This month we received pledges that complete our calendar year 2016 \$5,000 challenge. We have three ongoing pledges from individuals.

Our charitable gifts from GPYM during the 2015-16 fiscal year include checks sent to FUM, FWCC, QEW, and RSWR from our Operating Fund and checks to Kickapoo Friends (MAYM), Quivering Arrow Camp, and Wichita Friends School from our Home Missions fund. We can all feel good to know that GPYM is 'out there' helping the work of these Quaker groups.

GPYM Balance Sheet as of May 18, 2016

	A	B	C	D	E
1	Great Plains Yearly Meeting of Friends				
2	Balance Sheet, 5-18-16				
3					May 18, 2016
4	CURRENT ASSETS				
5			Checking/Savings		
6			Everence Fed Cr U 43226		\$41,531.88
7			Everence Savings		\$5.00
8			Total Checking/Savings		\$41,536.88
9		Total Current Assets			\$41,536.88
10					
11	LIABILITIES & EQUITY				
12		Liabilities			
13			Current Liabilities		
14			Initiative Gifts Encumbered		\$1,196.20
15		Total Liabilities			\$1,196.20
16		Equity			
17			FUM Triennial Travel Fund		\$1,005.70
18			FWCC WorldGathAsst Travel Fund		\$400.00
19			FWCC WorldGathReps Travel Fund		\$2,250.00
20			Home Missions Retained Earnings		\$13,283.50
21			Student Loan Fund		\$5,624.87
22			Webb Fund		\$11,406.65
23			Net Income		\$6,369.96
24		Total Equity			\$40,340.68
25	TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY			\$41,536.88	
26					
27	LONG-TERM ASSETS				
28		FARM PROPERTY			
29			53.330 acres, valuation 2016		\$277,315.00

Budget Report, fiscal year 2015-16

	A	B	C	D	E	F
1	Great Plains Yearly Meeting of Friends					
2	Budget Report: 1-May-2015 through 30-April 2016					
3					2015-16 FY Budget	2015-16 FY Inc/Exp
4	Yearly Meeting Income/Expense					
5				Annual Yearly Meeting Income		
6				Gifts from Individuals at YM	400.00	347.00
7				Meals	1,000.00	1,132.50
8				Registrations	1,000.00	1,000.00
9				Webb Fund transfer from equity	700.00	242.55
10				Total Annual Yearly Meeting Income	3,100.00	2,722.05
11				Annual Yearly Meeting Expense		
12				Meal Cost	(1,100.00)	(945.60)
13				YM Sessions-Speaker/Elder	(1,300.00)	(1,000.00)
14				Young Friend Ministry/ChildCare	(700.00)	(776.45)
15				Total Annual Yearly Meeting Expense	(3,100.00)	(2,722.05)
16				Net: Yearly Meeting, June 2015	-	-
17	General Operating Income/Expense					
18				General Operating Income		
19				Gifts from Individuals		-
20				Gifts from Monthly Meetings	4,350.00	4,324.00
21					4,350.00	4,324.00
22				General Operating Expenses		
23				Bank & Accounting Costs	(25.00)	(259.90)
24				Minutes Copying/Printing	(400.00)	(436.05)
25				Web Home Page Fees	(60.00)	(39.90)
26				Young Friend Care - CC Meetings	(180.00)	-
27				Total General Operating Expenses	(665.00)	(735.85)
28				Gifts to Quaker Agencies		
29				Friends United Meeting	(560.00)	(560.00)
30				FWCC World Office	(100.00)	(100.00)
31				Quaker Earthcare Witness	(50.00)	(50.00)
32				Right Sharing of WorldResources	(100.00)	(100.00)
33				Total Gifts to Quaker Agencies	(810.00)	(810.00)
34				Traveling in Ministry-Agencies		
35				AFSC	(775.00)	(394.88)
36				FUM General Board	(1,200.00)	-
37				FWCC Section of the Americas	(900.00)	-
38				FUM Triennial Travel Fund		(300.00)
39				FWCC WorldGath Assistance Travel Fund		(100.00)
40				FWCC WorldGath Reps Travel Fund		(300.00)
41				Total Traveling in Ministry-Agencies	(2,875.00)	(1,094.88)
42				Total General Operating Expense	(4,350.00)	(2,640.73)
43				Net General Operating	-	1,683.27

	A	B	C	D	E	F
1	Great Plains Yearly Meeting of Friends					
2	Budget Report: 1-May-2015 through 30-April 2016					
3					2015-16 FY Budget	2015-16 FY Inc/Exp
44	Home Missions/Initiative					
45	Income					
46			Farm Income		9,600.00	10,200.00
47			Initiative Gifts Encumbered 4-30-2015			18,336.00
48			Anonymous Donor Challenge Grant			8,050.00
49			Gifts to Match Challenge			5,515.00
50			Gifts to Home Missions (UFM)		400.00	539.70
51	Total Income				10,000.00	42,640.70
52	Expense					
53	Annual Gifts to Agencies					
54			Kickapoo Friends (MAYM)		(900.00)	(900.00)
55			Quivering Arrow Camp		(300.00)	(300.00)
56			Wichita Friends School		(2,100.00)	(2,100.00)
57	Total Annual Gifts to Agencies				(3,300.00)	(3,300.00)
58	Farm Expense					
59			Non-profit registration fee		(23.00)	-
60			Property taxes		(3,300.00)	(3,380.78)
61	Total Farm Expense				(3,323.00)	(3,380.78)
62	Revitalization Initiative Expense					
63			Office/Equipment/Phone			(431.36)
64			Quarterly News			(338.72)
65			Released Ministry - Basic		(27,000.00)	(23,520.80)
66			Released Ministry - Health Ins			(3,296.48)
67			Released Ministry - SelfEmpTax			(1,799.32)
68			Released Ministry - Pension			(940.80)
69			Travelling Ministry/Regional Gatherings		(4,000.00)	(269.28)
70	Total Revitalization Initiative Expense				(31,000.00)	(30,596.76)
71	Net Home Missions/Initiative					5,363.16

Budget Proposal – column E = completing the current fiscal year, column F = calendar year 2017 (moving to align our fiscal year with the calendar year)

	A	B	C	D	E	F
1	Great Plains Yearly Meeting of Friends: Budget Proposal					
2					May-Dec 2016	Jan-Dec 2017
3	Yearly Meeting					
4				Annual Yearly Meeting Income		
5				Gifts from Individuals at YM	500.00	700.00
6				Meals	1,000.00	1,300.00
7				Registrations	1,000.00	1,200.00
8				Webb Fund transfer from equity	825.00	tbd
9				Total Annual Yearly Meeting Income	3,325.00	3,200.00
10				Annual Yearly Meeting Expense		
11				Meal Cost	(1,200.00)	(1,300.00)
12				YM Sessions Supplies	(60.00)	(20.00)
13				YM Sessions-Speaker/Elder	(1,244.92)	(1,500.00)
14				Young Friend Ministry/ChildCare	(1,170.00)	(1,550.00)
15				Total Annual Yearly Meeting Expense	(3,674.92)	(4,370.00)
16				Net: Yearly Meeting, June 2015	(349.92)	(1,170.00)
17	General Operating					
18				General Operating Income		
19				Gifts from Monthly Meetings		4,350.00
20				Total General Operating Income	-	4,350.00
21				General Operating Expenses		
22				Non-Profit Registration Fee	-	(23.00)
23				Minutes Copying/Printing	(450.00)	(450.00)
24				Web Home Page Fees	(20.00)	(60.00)
25				Young Friend Care - CC Meetings	(90.00)	(90.00)
26				Sub-total	(560.00)	(623.00)
27				Gifts to Quaker Agencies		
28				Friends United Meeting	-	(560.00)
29				FWCC World Office	-	(100.00)
30				Quaker Earthcare Witness	-	(50.00)
31				Right Sharing of WorldResources	-	(100.00)
32				Total Gifts to Quaker Agencies	-	(810.00)
33				Traveling in Ministry-Agencies		
34				AFSC	-	(2,400.00)
35				FUM General Board	-	
36				FWCC Section of the Americas	-	
37				FUM Triennial Travel Fund		(300.00)
38				FWCC WorldGath Assistance Travel Fund		(100.00)
39				FWCC WorldGath Reps Travel Fund	-	(300.00)
40				Total Traveling in Ministry-Agencies	-	(3,100.00)
41				Total General Operating Expense	(560.00)	(4,533.00)
42				Net General Operating Income/Expense	(560.00)	(183.00)

	A	B	C	D	E	F
1	Great Plains Yearly Meeting of Friends: Budget Proposal					
2					May-Dec 2016	Jan-Dec 2017
43	Home Missions/Initiative				(details pending)	
44	Income					
45			Farm Income		5,100.00	10,200.00
46			Farm & Initiative Income retained from 2014		5,363.16	
47			Anonymous Donor Challenge Grant payments		3,300.00	
48			Challenge Matching Pledges due during 2016		5,000.00	
49			2016 Initiative Pledges		600.00	
50			Gifts to Home Missions Initiative 2017			
51			Gifts to Home Missions (UFM)		200.00	
52	Home Missions/Initiative Income Total				19,563.16	
53	Expense					
54	Annual Gifts to Agencies					
55			Kickapoo Friends (MAYM)			
56			Quivering Arrow Camp			
57			Wichita Friends School			
58	Total Annual Gifts to Agencies					
59	Farm Expense					
60			Property taxes		paid	3,800.00
61	Total Farm Expense					
62	Initiative Expense					
63			Office/Equipment/Phone/Stamps		(25.00)	
64			Quarterly News		(300.00)	
65			Released Ministry - Basic		(9,408.00)	
66			Released Ministry - Health Ins		(1,600.00)	
67			Released Ministry - SelfEmpTax		(720.00)	
68			Released Ministry - Pension		(376.00)	
69			Released Travelling Ministry (gas/food/hotel)		(450.00)	
70			Regional Gatherings & Ministry		(1,500.00)	
71	Total Initiative Expense				(14,379.00)	
72	Home Missions/Initiative Expense Total				(14,379.00)	
73	Net Home Missions/Initiative				5,184.16	

2016 Friends United Meeting Annual Report

Peace and joy to you from the Friends United Meeting staff and board. We trust your 2016 gathering will be blessed and joy-filled!

FUM is a growing, vibrant collection of Quakers from 34 Yearly Meetings and Associations. Though we are spread far and wide around the world, we are joined together in the living Power and Presence of Christ and through a variety of shared ministries and activities. We are enriched by your partnership in this community and we are grateful for all you do to make our work and witness possible.

Below are reports from FUM's two department directors, Dan Kasztelan (Communications) and Eden Grace (Global Ministries). These are followed by a brief update on the FUM Campaign and plans for the 2017 Triennial.

Communication Department—Dan Kasztelan

Since I began in my role as Communications Director in January 2016, the Communications Department has undertaken several new initiatives, some of which we are progressing toward more quickly than others.

Perhaps the most obvious work we are doing is a re-creation of Quaker Life. The new version of Quaker Life will be a quarterly, debuting in July 2016. The content will be experiential, oriented toward storytelling, with a wide variety of expressive modes. We are designing a periodical for long life, in the form of a small book that can be placed on a shelf for future reference. We are also introducing new subscription rates and new ad prices; we're confident that when people see the new format they will feel they are holding a quality publication which is worth its price.

Also in publishing, we've made ambitious plans for Friends United Press and the Quaker Hill Bookstore. First, we intend to publish a Bookstore catalog this year containing both Press publications and books from a variety of other publishers. We intend to carry around 200 titles that we believe can be useful resources for FUM Meetings and Churches. Many of these books we can sell through our book supplier without having to store inventory at Quaker Hill. Our aim is to become a one-stop supplier for Children's and Adult Sunday School/First-day School planners, for various committees in their work, and for individuals looking for ideas and instruction in how to deepen their own spiritual life.

To this end, we also have plans for updating and re-publishing some of our older curriculum, as well as plans to develop new curriculum—we tentatively hope to publish two curriculum pieces per year. We are also

planning to update our two most popular pamphlets, and to develop one or two new pamphlets for Meetings/Churches to use as introductory material. In one to two years, we hope to initiate a new series of introductory pamphlets.

We've also made an internal commitment to digitize, in the future, all publications that originate with us—beginning this summer with Colin Saxton's Study Guide for the *Eternal Promise*. By late this year, we intend to digitize our Howard Thurman books and any FUP books among our top ten sellers, in order to make all of these titles available for download from Amazon and other e-book sellers.

We are also stepping up our publishing plans, and our search for manuscripts and authors. We want to begin publishing three to four titles a year, and already have four books in various stages of consideration for publication this year. Because we are able to publish on demand, publishing is not nearly as expensive for us as it used to be, so we're optimistic about publishing more without dragging down the bottom line.

On a parallel, slower track to our publishing activity are fundamental changes to our web site and internet presence. The static, unchanging segment of our web site is still rudimentary after the major crash in October, but the site plan continues to evolve. Most of my web work since January has been aimed at the dynamic, changing portion of our web site. Two areas include:

- friendsunitedmeeting.org/news, which hosts reports on events throughout the FUM world of interest to other Friends—from gaining possession of the Wilmington Colegio building in Cuba, to the FUM Campaign whistle-stop tour in North America, to the Palestinian Model United Nations event in Ramallah. When the new version of Quaker Life debuts, /news will become FUM's primary news vehicle, although some other avenues will remain: In addition to the Ramallah Friends School newsletter which is published semi-annually, plans are afoot for publishing a semi-annual Friends Theological College newsletter. In addition, news is distributed through the monthly Connections bulletin insert, and through a weekly subscription email newsletter, which we encourage Friends to print for those in their Meetings who are not connected to the internet.
- friendsunitedmeeting.org/dailyjournal, has started slowly, but will soon be hosting stories, poems, reflections, essays, and images by Friends about the intersection of faith and life in their own part of the world.

Global Ministries Director—Eden Grace

Here are a few of many highlights from the Global Ministries Department!

- In October, the FUM General Board approved a 4-point ministry plan for Belize, focusing on expanding the school, planting a church, launching community-based ministries, and identifying a suitable new facility to house these diverse activities. Dale Graves will complete his work as Interim Director at the end of June, and the search continues for both a Pastoral Minister and a new Director.
- This year's Summer Mission Project – "Power for Pastors" – aims to raise \$20,000 toward an estimated \$70,000 total cost of installing solar power for all the main buildings at the Friends Theological College campus. Jim and Donna Hoeksema of College Ave Friends in Oskaloosa Iowa spent six months in Kaimosi lending their professional expertise to this exciting project.
- We were able to create a new staff position in Kenya: a Business Manager who is shared between Friends Theological College and the Africa Ministries Office. Having a well-qualified professional overseeing FUM's financial operations in East Africa has allowed us to correct some problems and put strong new systems into place.
- We continue to search for a North American to work alongside our African staff in the Kisumu office. The position combines project management and communications; Friends are asked to encourage any potential candidates to contact Eden Grace.
- The Chairman of Friends Church Peace Team, Joseph Mamai Makokha, passed away in December 2015. The FCPT Board has been reorganized with Chrispinus Sifuna as the new Chairman. A grant from AFSC has allowed for expansion of the peace work in secondary schools, and the launch of a peace program in Samburu. FCPT is organizing now for the next cycle of general elections in Kenya (currently scheduled for August 2017); already there are signs of an increase in ethnic and political violence.
- Stoking the Fire 2016 took place May 13-15, 2016 in Sophia, North Carolina. There were 47 participants, including about 8 young adult Friends. This program for spiritual deepening and renewal among North American Friends continues to be very well received. Next year's gathering will take place as a pre-Triennial event in Kansas.
- In Ramallah, we are preparing to search for a Quakerism Coordinator for the Friends School. In addition, we anticipate some other significant changes that will be announced later this summer.
- Since last year's report, Terri Johns left the FUM staff and Lisa Scarpelli was hired as Global Ministries Program Assistant.

Energize, Equip and Connect—The FUM Campaign

By mid-summer 2016, we will be moving into the final year of our three-year Campaign. This is FUM's first major effort like this in nearly 30 years and we are so pleased at the way it is unfolding. We are on track to exceed our financial goal of \$3,000,000 in gifts and pledges. More important, the series of small groups and personal visits is helping to strengthen our community and enable us to better listen to the needs of our various local meetings, churches and regional groups. A great highlight so far in the Campaign has been the amazing and generous response from East African Friends who are giving directly to support FUM's world-wide efforts. As several African Friends have communicated, "it is our time to join in supporting our church!" They are doing so in sacrificial ways!

2017 Triennial

Planning continues for the 2017 Friends United Meeting Triennial. It will be held in Wichita, Kansas on the campus of Friends University. The dates are July 12-16. We will be gathering under the theme "A Living Flame" which is taken from a passage in Thomas Kelly's *The Eternal Promise*. Registration information will be available soon!

Thank you:

Friends, the global community of FUM is grateful for your presence, prayers and partnership. Together, as we act in the Power and Presence of Christ, we are enabled to do some pretty amazing things. Thank you for all you do to help make this possible. Colin Saxton, FUM general secretary

Report from World Plenary Meeting – Beth Green-Nagle

Representative Report to Great Plains Yearly Meeting

2016 Friends World Committee for Consultation, Section of the Americas
by Beth Green-Nagle, Hominy Friends Meeting

The World Plenary Meeting (International Representatives Meeting) of FWCC was held January 19 – 27, 2016 in Pisac, Peru. There were 320 Friends plus an additional 60 Friends from Peru and Bolivia who joined us for the weekend. Friends came from 37 countries, and 77 yearly meetings, 8 independent monthly meetings, and 2 worship groups. Ninety Friends were Young Adult Friends (under the age of 35). Approximately a third were native Spanish speakers, therefore all participants used headsets for simultaneous interpretation during business and worship sessions. Business meeting was clerked in Spanish, and minutes were read back in English. We worshiped and sang in Kiswahili, Aymara, Spanish, English, and more!

During the past year, I served as a representative from GPYM to FWCC Section of the Americas, a member of the World Plenary language services team, and a member of the Section of the Americas Bilingual Communications Resources Group and a new member of the Naming Committee. Although I experienced altitude sickness and another illness, I spent much of my time interpreting consecutively for smaller groups or simultaneously from the booth for worship or business sessions. Since I served as a staff member, my travel, lodging, and registration fees to attend the World Plenary were covered by the FWCC World Office. I did not require reimbursement from GPYM this year.

UPCOMING EVENTS

The next Section Meeting will be March 23-26, 2017 in Pittsburgh, PA. The theme will be Vivir La Paz - Living Peace (John 16:33)

October 2, 2016 is World Quaker Day. The theme for 2016 will be "Inspired by Faith - witnessing together in the world." I encourage GPYM and monthly meetings to plan an activity or event to celebrate. Consult the World Quaker Day webpage for ideas and to see the photos and reports from Friends around the world. <http://www.worldquakerday.org/>

MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION

FWCC encourages the Nominating Committee to include a young adult Friend and to represent the diversity of the YM as you appoint representatives.

Finances:

Like many service organizations, FWCC is struggling financially at the World and Section levels. At the World Office level, there is concern that funds from the US are will likely decline and that the Europe and Middle East Section contributes half the funds (some of which come from investments) for the World Office. Both offices have adjusted staffing which places more strain on existing staff. During the World Plenary, the representatives approved changes to the constitution first reducing the frequency of the plenary gathering to every ten years minimum (hopefully between six and eight years) and secondly about how to govern the organization given shrinking resources of time, money and staff. More responsibilities are being shifted to Section Executive Committees and representatives.

Personal comment: The open, and sometimes insensitive, discussion of finances and the idea that the Europe and Middle East and Americas sections carry the financial burden for those Friends in the Global South and East caused pain and feelings of shame among Friends, particularly from the Africa Section. I wept openly during that business session feeling the grief of an African speaker had been poured directly into me. Many Friends spoke to affirm and value the important contributions of Friends from around the world.

I was grateful to Benigno Sánchez-Eppler, Clerk of the Section of the Americas, and others for their leadership at that moment.

Traveling Ministry Corps:

Beginning this year, the Section of the Americas is organizing a small volunteer corps of Friends to send as traveling ministers throughout the Section, crossing Yearly Meeting lines and other divisions among Friends. Friends may apply to become a member of the Corps, and local Friends Churches, Monthly and Yearly Meetings in the Americas can request a visitor. The applications to volunteer are due by September 30, 2016.

Consultations at the World Plenary: I invite you to read the reports from Friends who participated in these consultations which are at the FWCC display.

1. Ministry and Leadership: This consultation focused on developing the leaders we need, encouraging living ministry, generating new ideas for a pilgrimage for Quaker youth that spans across all Sections and involves larger numbers of Friends. This consultation discussed improving communication among young Friends worldwide, a restructuring of the Quaker Youth Pilgrimage for those 18 and over, and the possibility of a World Gathering of Young Friends which was not solidified but is still being discussed by young adult Friends in attendance.

2. Living Ministry Communities: This consultation explored the conditions for creating Quaker communities that are active, vital and energizing, and that encourage membership and spiritual growth for Young Friends and seekers. The consultation was co-facilitated by Rachel Guaraldi (North America) and Janet Velázquez Hernandez (Cuba). I served as the interpreter for this consultation. Many valuable ideas for vital communities were shared by the participants. As Gayle Matson states in her report: "Traveling ministry, inter-visitation, Quaker leadership development, and cross-branch encounters all have the potential to energize and revitalize our Friends communities, ultimately leading to a stronger and more resilient Religious Society of Friends."

3. Sustaining Life on Earth: Inspired by the Kabarak Call for Peace and Ecojustice, this consultation focused on developing worldwide Quaker collaboration for environmental, economic, and spiritual changes. They brought a minute to the plenary body for approval. I have attached the approved minute to this report.

Personal comment: While completely united with and respectful of the spirit and deep concern for the Earth expressed in this minute, I vocalized concerns about it mainly because of some of the wording and the possible lack of understanding of how Quakers function in overlapping, non-hierarchical

bodies. The portion of the minute that I find most problematic is its request to yearly meetings to “Initiate at least two concrete actions on sustainability within the next 12 months” and that “We ask that meetings minute the progress and results, so as to share them with FWCC and Quaker meetings.” Those speaking for the consultation seemed to expect accountability from yearly meetings to the World Office, and that is not in line with the autonomy of yearly and monthly meetings and the non-hierarchical structure of the Religious Society of Friends.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

The work of FWCC as a world body and in our own section strengthens individuals in their faith by providing leadership, visitation, materials, and interactions with other Friends which would not occur otherwise. It strengthens local Friends churches, monthly meetings, and yearly meetings. It is the work of FWCC that maintains the ties of the global Religious Society of Friends. God both blesses us and challenges us to continue living out the testimony of equality in each interaction we have with our brothers and sisters in Christ, our Friends. For we are one in the Spirit.

In closing, I bring you greetings from Friends from all over the world. FWCC expresses its gratitude for gifts of the Spirit, for the engagement and connections between one another, for the financial gifts both to the World Office and to each of the Sections, for prayers to strengthen us as a peaceful presence, for our vision of a better world, and for caring about the health and growth of the Religious Society of Friends in all corners of the world.

Minute from FWCC World Plenary on Earth’s Sustainability

Living Sustainably and Sustaining Life on Earth

The Minute from the Plenary, 20 February 2016

IRM 16-20. Sustainability. The Consultation on Sustainability, facilitated by Jonathan Woolley (Mexico City MM/Pacific YM; Staff, QUNO-Geneva), Rachel Madenyika (Staff, QUNO-NY), and Charlotte Gordon (Aotearoa/New Zealand YM) have presented a minute for our consideration:

Living Sustainably and Sustaining Life on Earth

The Light of Christ has inspired Quakers throughout the generations. As we gather together in Pisac, Peru in 2016, we feel this light stronger than ever in our calling to care for the Earth on which we live. It is calling us from all traditions: programmed, unprogrammed, liberal, and evangelical. It calls us to preserve this Earth for our children, our grandchildren and all future

generations to come, working as though life were to continue for 10,000 years to come. *Be ready for action with your robes hitched up and your lamps alight. (Luke 12:35, Revised English Bible)*

Our faith as Quakers is inseparable from our care for the health of our planet Earth. We see that our misuse of the Earth's resources creates inequality, destroys community, affects health and well-being, leads to war and erodes our integrity. We are all responsible for stewardship of our natural world. We love this world as God's gift to us all. Our hearts are crying for our beloved mother Earth, who is sick and in need of our care.

We are at a historical turning point. Internationally, the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals oblige governments to take action. Faith groups and other civil society are playing a major role. As Quakers, we are part of this movement. The FWCC World Conference approved the Kabarak Call for Peace and Ecojustice in April 2012, while the FWCC World Office was a signatory to the Quaker statement on climate change in 2014 and divested from fossil fuels in June 2015.

We recognize that the environmental crisis is a symptom of a wider crisis in our political and economic systems. Our loving and well informed environmental actions as Friends, consistent with our spiritual values, must therefore work to transform these systems.

Many of us all over the Quaker world are taking practical actions as individuals and communities. At this Plenary, a consultation of more than sixty Friends from all over the world worked to build on these leadings with further practical action. The Annex attached to these minutes shows examples of what Friends are doing already or propose to do.

We must redouble our efforts right now. We must move beyond our individual and collective comfort zones and involve the worldwide Quaker community and others of like mind. Just as Jesus showed us, real change requires us to challenge ourselves to be effective instruments of change. We can do more.

On recommendation of this Consultation, and after some discussion, we adopt the following minute:

In this effort for sustainability, and mindful of the urgency of this work, this Plenary asks the FWCC World Office and Central Executive Committee to:

1. **Invest FWCC World funds ethically.**
2. **Share Quaker experiences with other faith groups** to inspire them to action, especially through the World Council of Churches.
3. **Seek ways of connecting Friends worldwide that are sustainable.**
4. **Facilitate dissemination of training materials on sustainability issues** for Quaker leaders, pastors and teachers.

This FWCC Plenary Meeting also asks all Yearly Meetings to:

1. **Initiate at least two concrete actions** on sustainability within the next 12 months. These may build on existing projects of individuals or monthly meetings or they may be new initiatives. We ask that they encourage Young Friends to play key roles. We ask that meetings minute the progress and results, so as to share them with FWCC and Quaker meetings.
2. **Support individuals and groups in their meetings** who feel called to take action on sustainability.
3. **Support the work done by Quaker organizations** such as the Quaker United Nations Office and the Quaker Council for European Affairs to ensure that international agreements and their implementation support sustainability.

This FWCC Plenary Meeting asks individual Friends and groups (such as Monthly Meetings, Worship Groups and ad hoc groups within Meetings) to **Share inspiring experiences of living sustainably** on the new “sustainability webpage” of the Quakers in the World Website (<http://www.quakersintheworld.org/>). This webpage can be used as a source of ideas, inspiration and action.

Annex to the Minute: Possibilities for practical sustainability action from the Pisac consultation

Individuals can:

1. Dedicate personal time to nature.
2. Reduce consumption and use your consumer buying power to create change.

3. Cut down on meat consumption, be aware of energy costs in production and transport of all foods and methane from ruminant animals, support sustainable agriculture.
4. Travel – cycle, walk, use public transport or alternatives to private cars, keep air travel to a minimum.
5. Grow your own food and plant trees.
6. Be politically active in promoting sustainability concerns.
7. Share environmental concerns through books, publications, conversations, electronic media
8. Reduce energy use.
9. Use less water and harvest water.
10. Make time for spiritual connection with God.

Monthly Meetings, Worship Groups and small groups within Meetings can:

1. Live in a community, share housing, participate in a transition town movement.
2. Educate yourself and others.
3. Share transport and equipment.
4. Develop urban agriculture, community gardens, community supported agriculture, tree planting.
5. Love nature and encourage others to do so: we protect the things we love; get children out in nature; take care of nature around your meeting house (e.g., picking up trash/litter).
6. Invest ethically and divest from fossil fuels.
7. Ensure meeting houses are carbon neutral.
8. Build alliances, seek visibility, approach legislators.
9. Share sustainability skills.

Yearly Meetings can:

1. Support the sustainability actions of Monthly Meetings.
2. Build solidarity with local people.
3. Support Quakers in politics and international work.
4. Form support networks and alliances to make more impact – we can only do so much on our own.
5. Invest ethically, including on sustainability issues.
6. Practice what we preach.
7. Discern and move concerns to action.
8. Set targets for increased sustainability.

9. Connect and share with other YMs, direct or via FWCC Sections and World Office

We recognize that different actions are relevant to different Quaker meetings in different parts of the world.

Report from AFSC Annual Meeting – Laura Dungan

American Friends Service Committee Report
Submitted by Laura Dungan,
GPYM Representative to Corporation
Report June 2016

It was a pleasure to attend the Corporation meeting for the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) this April 2016 in Philadelphia at the Friends Center. I remember well in our 2010 annual sessions that the AFSC report included much pain of the cutting of programs and staff due to financial difficulties. When I attended last month, it demonstrated how they have rallied and not only regained financial ground, but the work and ministry is relevant and connected to what we see happening in our world today. Truly a manifestation of Contemporary expressions of the Quaker testimonies: Simplicity, Peace, Integrity, Community, Equality, and Stewardship.

AFSC has been doing a tremendous job beginning to bridge the gap between Quakers and the important work that while having Quakers involved, is not necessarily involving Quakers directly, though the work demonstrates Quaker values.

The two avenues that have reached us in Kansas for this Quaker connection is the **Let Your Life Speak** series. Norman Monthly Meeting with our very own John and Gail Fletcher were highlighted in their discernment work on the issue of Mass Incarceration. This series has simple cards with information, links to the web for more information, and a beautiful picture of people engaged in various kinds of work such as: Islamic Understanding, Israel and Palestine issues, Broken Immigration System, Black Lives Matter. These cards are great for a Sunday School/Education Hour discussion. Discussion questions are included.

Another great connection between the work of AFSC and local Quaker Meetings is a select group of videos through **Quaker Speak**, created by Friends Journal and a talented videographer, John Watts. These can be also used in a Sunday School/Education Hour discussion. Short and informative with a host of presenters, **Quaker Speak** videos come with questions to spur discussion and probe Friends toward action.

Besides approving the many appointments to the carefully considered AFSC committees that span the US out of a Quaker Meeting for Worship with attention to Business, there were energizing and inspirational spaces with practical tools to take away. Those included:

- Quaker Social Change Ministry – Greg Elliott, AFSC staff, is giving leadership to initiating this regular 2-hour small group time of focus. The first hour is spent in the practice of a spiritual discipline that the group itself determines (worship, meditation, prayer, Bible Study, journaling, etc.) and an hour focused on a common action in the world. I will be sharing highlights from this model in the Saturday afternoon workshop space of this yearly meeting session.
- Rev. William Barber – A primary leader in the Moral Monday Movement in North Carolina, facilitated a workshop and then spoke in the evening. The challenge to us that “Everybody’s In and Nobody’s Out” was a theme woven throughout his presentation and preaching. As an African-American male, he brings alive the importance of inclusion, from Muslim to Christian, Republican to Democrat, LGBTQ to Straight, Labor to Immigrant. That the strident and hateful environment we are living in must be challenged through our demonstration to Love and that our Laws must reflect and support Love in society. A quote from Martin Luther King, Jr. encapsulates the focus of Rev. Barber’s speech and work: “...we’ve got to get this thing right. What is needed is a realization that power without love is reckless and abusive, and love without power is sentimental and anemic. Power at its best is love implementing the demands of Justice, and justice at its best is power correcting everything that stands against love...”

Finally, I was honored to be asked to share music alongside Pam & Ron Ferguson, pastors at Winchester Friends Meeting, who were invited by Lucy Duncan to come and lead a worship experience that included a small sermon, personal sharing, music and silence. It was well received and greatly appreciated.

Report from Wichita Friends School

May 30, 2016

Dear Great Plains Yearly Meeting Friends,

It is with joy that I write the Wichita Friends School report to be shared with the many Friends at Great Plains Yearly Meeting. Aaron Fowler, Assistant Clerk of WFS will personally introduce our new Head of School, Brian Clyne. Brian came to us via Florida where he was Assistant Head of School at Saint Paul's School and previously Dean of Students at Park Maitland School. Brian's depth of educational experience includes; Bishop Seabury High School in Lawrence KS, Auburn KS, and Hotevilla-Bacavi Community School, Hopi Reservation. Through Brian's leadership and vision WFS has seen over 500 children and family members walk through our doors through various school, community and public events this past school year.

Wichita Friends Schools is committed to providing a high quality academic experience within a supportive learning environment. WFS received confirmation that our AdvancED/NCA five year review report was approved. The AdvancED team conducted a rigorous, on-site external review in May 2016. The initial report gave WFS strong affirmation in the areas of leadership and teaching. AdvancED accredits 10,000 schools on an international scale.

The foundation of Wichita Friends School was built by the faithfulness of Friends from Great Plains Yearly Meeting and continues to be the bedrock of Friends Education in Wichita. In August 2015 over 200 gathered for the "Celebration!" of the new addition and outdoor discovery center. WFS publicly recognized the years of humble giving and service by naming the multi-purpose room in honor of Stan and Eloise Brown for their lifetime dedication to Quaker Education. From early in the morning until closing in the evening, the sounds of children learning, playing and sharing meals can be heard in throughout this new space.

Shelli Kadel, recorded minister through GPYM, was honored as serving as Head of School from 1993-2014. The WFS Board of Trustees bestowed the title of Head of School Emerita for Shelli's commitment to education and the children and families of Wichita Friends School. A plaque in the new atrium recognizing the many gifts Shelli has given to WFS for over 21 years is a humble tribute for her faithful ministry.

Jim Perkins was also publicly honored for his leadership and commitment along with the financial support of the Perkins Family Foundation since 1990. Jim continues to serve on the Board of Trustees and can be seen kneeling down to chat with a child and greet any and all that walk through the doors of WFS.

Through weekly worship and Godly Play stories, Connie Adams directly teaches the Biblical Stories and Wonder of God. The children learn to listen in the silence and ponder questions that deepen the walk of both children and adults. In the classroom these truths continued to be infused in the supportive learning environment under the guidance of our amazing certified staff.

Brian Clyne, HOS, shared the following in his initial interview and I share his vision of WFS community:

The value of good leadership cannot be understated. Leadership in Independent schools is very collaborative by nature. As I do, they recognize the necessity that the voices of the entire community be heard. Good leadership must involve the entire community in the process of educating their children.

Friends from GPYM are an integral part of the Wichita Friends School community. Your continued faithfulness and support of the children and families is deeply appreciated. We welcome each of you attending GPYM to head west on HWY 54 and visit our school in action.

Blessings,

Lynnette Krieger-Zook, Clerk, WFS Board of Trustees

Minute from Topeka Friends **To Great Plains Yearly Meeting**

Topeka Friends Meeting wishes to acknowledge the invitation to join and to convey to Great Plains Yearly Meeting an expression of interest in and further exploration of a formal affiliation with Great Plains Yearly Meeting.

We are considering a somewhat fluid time period of up to a year, enabling us to visit committee meetings and attend the annual sessions of Great Plains Yearly Meeting in June, 2016.

It is our desire to establish our own committee of intent to consider this alliance.

Letter from Lubbock Friends of Christ Quaker Meeting

Lubbock Friends of Christ Quaker Meeting

April 17, 2016

Dear LaVonna and Friends:

Lubbock Friends of Christ Quaker Meeting (“LFC”) is grateful for the many blessings we have received as a result of our associations with Great Plains Yearly Meeting of Friends (“GPYM”) over the past few years. We believe the time is right to move forward in our relationship with GPYM. Accordingly, we write to request that GPYM take LFC under its care as a Preparatory Affiliate.

We recognize that requesting Preparatory Affiliate status is a bit unusual. Such a relationship, we believe, would honor the spiritual affinity that LFC has found with GPYM, and would necessarily entail an intention on the part of both the monthly meeting and the yearly meeting to move forward together toward eventual full affiliation. At the same time, though, it would recognize that LFC may not yet be sufficiently experienced and equipped to accept all of the responsibilities expected of a fully-affiliated monthly meeting within GPYM. The relationship would be analogous, in some ways, to the relationship between a local Preparative Meeting and the Monthly Meeting which has taken it under its care. This letter sets out the current state of Lubbock Friends of Christ and our vision for what a Preparatory Affiliate relationship might look like.

Lubbock Friends of Christ of Christ began in 1987 as a small unprogrammed Quaker worship group. In 1990, the group became a preparative meeting, and in 1992, it was granted full monthly meeting status under the care of South Central Yearly Meeting (“SCYM”). During the years since, there has been a complete turnover of regular participants in the monthly meeting. In other words, no one who participated in the meeting in 1992 is still participating currently. In 2015, the meeting became clear to adopt an explicitly Christian Quaker identify, and we began calling ourselves Lubbock Friends of Christ. We remain nominally affiliated with SCYM, and we await further leadings regarding our relationship with that body.

With just four regular participants, our meeting is smaller than it has been in years past; however, it is also healthier than it has been in quite some time. We hope to continue to grow both in spiritual strength and in numbers, and we have found spiritual nourishment among GPYM Friends.

Besides being quite small, we are also quite inexperienced in the ways of a yearly meeting. Although each of us has participated in the local meeting for

at least 10 years, none of us has any experience of active participation in a yearly meeting body, of serving on yearly meeting committees, or of representing a yearly meeting to outside agencies. Indeed, most of us have relatively little experience of Friends outside our own meeting. Our sense is that we need more experience among a yearly meeting bod before we can make the commitments expected of a fully-affiliated meeting, and we would like GPM's support in doing so.

We believe a Preparatory Affiliate relationship might look like the following:

- Lubbock Friends of Christ would have “observer status” at GPYM’s committee meetings and annual sessions. “Observer status” will provide an opportunity for LFC Friends to gain experience with the inner workings of a yearly meeting; to learn from more experienced Friends; and to build stronger relationships within GPYM.
- “Observer status” would permit LFC Friends to share our insights and experiences as appropriate, but decision-making authority and responsibility would remain with Friends from fully-affiliated meetings.
- As long as LFC remains a preparatory affiliate, its participants would be ineligible to serve as general officers of the yearly meeting or to represent the yearly meeting to other bodies.
- LFC will commit to contribute financially to GPYM in accordance with our resources.
- GPYM will commit to serve as an “extended spiritual family” for LFC for fellowship, learning and spiritual growth. If needed, LFC may call upon GPYM Friends for counsel.
- GPYM Friends will assist LFC in discerning when we might become ready to seek full-affiliate status.

We request that this letter be referred to Ministry & Counsel or the appropriate yearly meeting committee for seasoning. We are open to further conversation and discernment around this matter and will make ourselves available as needed. Please contact Lubbock Friends of Christ through Sara Scribner at sarabsribner@aol.com or at 806-831-5168.

May we all be faithful in discerning the Lord’s will and following it.

In the Peace of Christ,

Sara Scribner, acting clerk
For Lubbock Friends of Christ

GPYM Continuing Committee Minutes, 9-15-15

Great Plains Yearly Meeting – Continuing Committee, September 26, 2015

M1 -Roll call of members present: LaVonna Loesch, Cheryl Mallonee, Linda Mallonee, David Nagle, Angela Brown, Steve McConnell, Connie Adams, Laura Dungan and Cliff Loesch.

M2 -Presiding Clerk, LaVonna Loesch, opened the meeting with some readings and posed the query: How have you known and trusted God's faithfulness? We settled into a time of open worship to think on this query. God can work with any group.

M3 – We started with an evaluation of the 2015 session. Noah Baker Merrill was a good speaker who helped us feel we were in the presence of the spirit. We were infused by all the visiting Friends and wonder if part of GPYM's purpose is to give visitors a place. We enjoyed wonderful hospitality from Hominy Friends and LaVonna made everyone feel at ease. The workshops were in a community setting and we felt touched by the spirit throughout the sessions. Friends liked having all the written reports available ahead of time. There is some concern for the youth and children's programming going forward, but we are appreciative of Beth Green-Nagle and Lisa McConnell's work in these areas during these sessions. An evaluation form for next year was discussed and sample was passed around to consider for future use. We also discussed how to attract more of our own monthly meeting members to attend yearly meeting sessions.

The distribution of the 2015 epistle was discussed and how to distribute them to other yearly meetings and Friends' organizations.

M4 – LaVonna gave a clerks report. She first shared reflections of the trip to Rocky Mountain Yearly Meeting. She, Laura Dungan and Jim Perkins attended their sessions in August. They were the only visitors other than Matt Macy with EFC-MAYM. Three or four Rocky Mountain members may visit Great Plains next year.

Visions for the future of Great Plains Yearly Meeting include the exploration of eldering through Ministry & Counsel's guidance. Also, learning about the value of released ministry and visitation to our monthly meetings plus exploring relationships with Lubbock Monthly Meeting, Topeka Friends

Meeting, and Rocky Mountain Yearly Meeting. When visiting Friends, a minute of travel should go with the traveler as this is valuable to help everyone feel more connected.

LaVonna presented a chart outlining a “year in the life” of GPYM that showed a timeline of the year and when meetings and gatherings take place.

Discussion followed concerning when nominations to yearly meeting committees (Finance, Nominating and Ministry & Counsel) should be submitted. Maybe May or September? Currently they are due at the end of January. We also discussed the possibility of a mid-year yearly meeting to have all of the committee members, rather than just the clerks, meet to go over any business that may arise over the year. This would be a way to grow more spiritually and develop relationships. What would a mid-year meeting look like? A pre-yearly meeting gathering was also discussed to possibly help us feel more grounded after spending time in prayerful preparation.

LaVonna asked that we write Minutes of Gratitude to several organizations to document our relationships with them over the years. We divided the task and wrote minutes to: Central City Monthly Meeting, Iowa Yearly Meeting Conservative, Friends General Conference, Ohio Yearly Meeting, Paula Palmer, South Central Yearly Meeting and Brad & Christine Wood at Kickapoo.

- To Central City Monthly Meeting: It is with a spirit of gratitude that Great Plains Yearly Meeting acknowledges your years of hard work coming to fruition with Nebraskan’s for Alternatives against the Death Penalty and the overturning of death penalty by the state of Nebraska. Many people worked for decades from all walks of life to make this happen, so we celebrate this with you and pray support as the work continues.
- To Iowa Yearly Meeting (Conservative): Great Plains Yearly Meeting of Friends sends this Minute of Gratitude to Iowa Yearly Meeting (Conservative) and the Lincoln and Omaha (Nebraska) Monthly Meetings for your continuing spiritual and practical support of Central City Monthly Meeting over many years and more recently in organizing a Fall Gathering of Quakers. Together we are working to keep Friends vital in Nebraska.
- To Friends General Conference: It is with gratitude Great Plains Yearly Meeting acknowledges the important and vital support Friends General Conference has given to many of GPYM's monthly meetings and individual

members. Your support and spiritual nurture has been substantial, whether through retreats, training support for QuakerQuest, Clerk's Consultations, website resources, or seasoned ministers' presentations, we feel loved and cared for by the larger body of Friends. We publicly rejoice in this relationship with Friends General Conference.

- To Ohio Yearly Meeting of Friends: Dear Friends -- We of Great Plains Yearly Meeting send our greetings in the Love of Christ. We wish to acknowledge and express our appreciation for the past efforts of ministers and others in support of Hominy Friends Meeting. Working with young people at Hominy various summers has inspired Hominy Friends to continue offering their own VBS-like experience for children of the Hominy, Oklahoma area. We also appreciate the continuing financial donations to Hominy from your Peace and Human Relations Committee.
- To North American Friends: Paula Palmer of Boulder, Colorado, M.M. has had a long-standing concern for Native American justice and Friends relationships with Native Americans. In recent years she has been holding workshops to raise the awareness of Friends of the challenges in Indian Country and how we might be part of a healing process. An outgrowth of her concern has been to initiate a period of learning about Friends day and boarding schools for Native Americans. This led her to visits in Oklahoma and other states in route to Pennsylvania where she spent the fall at Pendle Hill engaged in research.
- Great Plains Yearly Meeting of Friends unites with Paula's concern. We thank God that Hominy Friends were able to assist Paula with her Oklahoma itinerary and that she and Guthrie Miller were able to worship with Hominy Friends. We are glad to join Boulder Monthly Meeting and Intermountain Yearly Meeting in endorsing Paula's service among Friends. We urge all Friends to become acquainted with her efforts and outcomes as she is led forward by the Holy Spirit.
- To South Central Yearly Meeting: Dear Friends of South Central Yearly Meeting -- Great Plains Yearly Meeting of Friends extends warm greetings and prayers of gratitude to you for your work with Hominy Friends at Quivering Arrow Camp. We rejoice in our shared love and ministry that enriches the lives of Oklahoma young people. We share your Arkansas-Oklahoma Quarterly Meeting's ongoing concern to provide work-camp experiences for young and old.

- To Brad and Christine Wood: Dear Friends -- We would like to extend our appreciation and acknowledge your dedication to our children and youth through your preparations for and putting on Quivering Arrow Camp at Council House. Your enthusiasm for spreading the word of God and Love for others has inspired us all. Thank you for your time and hard work. You have helped our children become better followers of Christ.

M5- Minutes from 2015 were approved with some corrections. Some discussion followed regarding the length of terms of appointees to yearly meeting committees. When appointments are made in January, it needs to be made clear.

M6 – Potential speakers for the 2016 sessions were discussed. We really need to be thinking 3 years ahead to line up speakers as some people are already scheduled 1 or 2 years out. Following some discussion of names, we agreed that LaVonna would reach out to Mary Lord to see if she would be available for 2016. We also need to be finding people now to head up the children and youth programs. The names of Liz Wine for the children and Lisa Tos-Brightup for the youth were brought forward and LaVonna and Laura Dungan will inquire of them whether they might be willing and able.

M5 – Connie Adams presented the current balance sheet and budget report. Discussion of a friendly audit was discussed.

M6 – Cliff Loesch reported for Ministry & Counsel. He and Dorlan Bales visited and Cliff presented a rough draft of 4 queries he compiled regarding the subject of eldering.

M7 – Laura Dungan reported for the Home Missions committee. She shared a song of images of the sea and shared a report of the visitation she has done since June and upcoming opportunities in October. There are gatherings planned in October in Lincoln, Nebraska, on October 10, and in Hominy, Oklahoma, on October 24. She reminded us that representatives from the monthly meetings will need to be appointed to the 2016 yearly meeting sessions.

M8 – There being no further business, we will adjourn until our next meeting in March or April of 2016.

Respectfully submitted, Cheryl Mallonee, Recording Clerk

GPYM Continuing Committee Minutes, 4-2-16

Great Plains Yearly Meeting – Continuing Committee – April 2, 2016

M1 – Roll call of members present: LaVonna Loesch, Cheryl Mallonee, Liz Wine, Cliff Loesch, Steve McConnell, David Nagle, Linda Mallonee, Laura Dungan, Connie Adams and visitors from Topeka Friends: Marjorie Van Buren and Sue Wine.

M2 – Presiding Clerk, LaVonna Loesch, opened the meeting by sharing from Psalm 27. She shared a query before settling into worship. When we're holding the tension in the darkness as you wait for the lights' leading, what are your challenges and your joys?

M3 – The minutes from the September 26, 2015, were reviewed. Corrections were made and the minutes were approved.

M4 – The committee appointments were presented and we celebrated the fact that so many new names are on the list and the process went so smoothly with contributions from all the monthly meetings. The clerk will double check the term limits and expiration dates.

Keynote speakers for the next 3 sessions of yearly meetings were discussed. Mary Lord is our keynote speaker for 2016 at University Friends Meeting, C. Wess Daniels, Director of Friends Studies at Guilford College, will be our speaker in 2017 at Heartland Friends Meeting and Eden Grace, Global Ministries Director for Friends United Meeting will be our speaker in 2018 at Hominy Friends Meeting.

M5 – LaVonna shared about her ministry travels of the past few months: There was a clerk's gathering on eldering in October 2015, LaVonna, Dorlan Bales, Cheryl Mallonee and Laura Dungan travelled to visit Topeka Friends in November 2015, LaVonna and Laura travelled to Lubbock Friends in January 2016, and Heartland Friends hosted a Sacred Labyrinth Walk in March 2016.

M6 – Plans for the upcoming 2016 yearly meeting sessions were discussed. We would like to have an evaluation form for people to provide feedback about the sessions. Connie Adams, Steve McConnell and David Nagle will work on getting a form ready. The theme of the sessions was discussed and it was decided to use "Life from the Roots" and use John 15 as a scripture reference. An agenda is being created and meeting times for the standing committees and Ministry & Counsel and we need to try and not overlap the times of those meetings for people who may be on more than one committee.

Registration forms are being finalized and need to be available on line ASAP. The host committee will discuss meal prices. There was significant discussion on registration fees and possible young adult rate, donation baskets

to cover traveling elders, children and youth programs and En Power & Light. We would like to encourage friends to donate to cover items outside our budget and feel that if they know exactly what the donations are for, they may be more likely to give. This information will be worked into the registration form.

Liz Wine shared what she has planned for the children's programming (grade school age) during yearly meeting sessions. There are plans for the children to help get fellowship hall ready for mealtimes: making placemats, setting tables, etc. Funshops involving Bible time journal, Godly, cooperative games are being planned. There may be some outings to go swimming or to the Great Plains Nature Center and she'd like to incorporate the children into the last 5 minutes of meeting for worship if possible. She will be sending out some information to parents via email so she can plan for who's going to come.

We are still searching for leadership for the Young Friends (middle and high school age). The names of Ken Jack, Aaron Fowler and Wes Miller were discussed as possibilities Laura Dungan offered to help coordinate leadership for this ministry.

Other events taking place during yearly meeting sessions will be Friendly Bible study in the mornings, Yoga with Kim Edgington also in the mornings, En Power and Light will have a concert Friday evening and workshops will be held Saturday afternoon.

M7 – Cliff Loesch brought forth 4 queries prepared on behalf of Ministry & Counsel that he and Dorlan Bales worked on. These will be forwarded on to the monthly meetings, asking them to consider them and bring back their responses to the yearly meeting sessions.

M8 – Laura Dungan gave a report for Home Missions. We first participated in an exercise regarding the challenges of technology and communication. Likes and dislikes of technology were discussed and we went over proper email etiquette and how to handle group discussions via email.

Laura then went over the visits she has made around the Yearly Meeting. In November, a visit was made to Topeka Friends along with LaVonna Loesch, Dorlan Bales and Cheryl Mallonee. In January, she and LaVonna had a very good visit to Lubbock Friends. They are considering membership in Great Plains Yearly Meeting, possibly being in dual membership with us and South Central Yearly Meeting with which they are already affiliated. Laura also visited Lawrence/Oread Monthly Meeting, and had a planning call with Nebraska Friends about their Fall gathering to take place this September or October.

Laura is Acting Clerk of the Home Missions committee and works about 10 hours a week. She and Dorlan are working on donations for the initiative

and hope to have a ‘get acquainted’ meeting to develop a budget. Council House has had some more attendance lately with a retired Pentecostal minister serving them. David Nagle is going there on Wednesday evenings to teach Quaker history and beliefs.

M9 – LaVonna shared a ‘Year in the Life’ chart that outlines an idea for continual fellowship throughout the year. No changes are being asked for at this time, but she would like to encourage further discussion among Friends about how our yearly meeting may evolve down the road. How do we make ourselves feel less isolated as Quakers in this part of the country? How do we continue to build community?

There are potentially five visitors from Rocky Mountain Yearly Meeting that may attend our sessions this year. John Muhanji from FUM – Kenya will also be visiting and sharing during meeting for worship at University Friends the Sunday after sessions are done. Friends from Lubbock will be in attendance and John Krieg from AFSC is planning on being here.

M10 – There being no further business, we will adjourn until Yearly Meeting sessions, opening June 2, 2016, at University Friends Meeting.

Respectfully submitted, Cheryl Mallonee, Recording Clerk

Great Plains Yearly Meeting Response to Violence

Great Plains Yearly Meeting

A Statement in Response to Violence ~ June 30, 2016

We at Great Plains Yearly Meeting are living out a call of reconciliation and healing from wounds experienced decades ago through division. We know the beauty of God’s healing presence and are deeply grateful.

Because Great Plains Yearly Meeting comes from this sacred space, we acknowledge the pain and suffering we see in our world and are challenged to respond. Believing God is present in all of life, we cling to this as our reality. We find comfort and motivation to move in this world with intentionality and confidence, empowered by the Living Christ within.

We offer a response to violence in our world and especially in our United States of America. Hoping to be a people, as it says in Psalm 34:14 who “*Turn from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it.*”

In view of history and current events, we hold in the light those who suffer...thinking of the 49 friends killed at Pulse Club in Orlando... the 9

friends killed one year ago at Mother Emanuel AME Church in Charleston SC...27 friends killed only 4 years ago at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown CT...

- To those who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, intersex, asexual and queer...
- To those who are African American...
- To those who are children...
- To ALL who have found their places of safety targeted and attacked, we stand with you in love.
- To ALL who have been judged “not one of us”, we stand with you in love.
- To ALL who are innocent and abused, we stand with you in love.
- To ALL who live a faith different than we, we stand with you in love.
- To ALL who live within the goodness of a different culture & nationality, we stand with you in love.
- To ALL who are put down & bullied, we stand with you in love.

We desire to be filled with a holy confidence, enabling us to move forward into hateful situations with love... a love powerful enough to overcome evil and heal our relationships, our communities and this land we live in. May God find us willing to stand with, beside, behind and in front of all who are oppressed, threatened and wounded. We will then show the world an alternative witness to a life of wisdom, mercy & kindness available through the indwelling Spirit.

Serving a Living Christ,

LaVonna Loesch, Presiding Clerk
1840 W. University ~ Wichita, KS ~ 67213

Statistics of Great Plains Yearly Meeting of Friends						
Year of 2015						
	Central City	Council House	Heartland	Hominy	University	Total
Average Weekly Attendance/month	6	6	16	22	86	136
Membership Gains						
Births	0	0	0	2	2	4
Requests			5	0	0	5
Active Members	5	2	16	24	121	168
Inactive Members	35	3	8	18	173	237
Associate Members	7	0	7	16	102	132
Fellowship Members	NA	NA	NA	NA	7	
Member of another Monthly Meeting	4	NA	1	NA	10	15
Membership Losses						
Deaths	1	0	0	2	5	8
Requests		0	0	0		
Total Membership	47	5	31	58	403	544
Worship Groups Attendance	n/a	n/a	NA	NA	NA	
Central City MM reported by Lynn Zeleski						
Council House reported by David Nagle						
Hominy reported by David Nagle						
Heartland reported by Angela Young						
University reported by Cliff Loesch						

Great Plains Yearly Meeting Of Friends					
Year 2015					
	Central City	Council House	Heartland	Hominy	University
Monthly Meetings Held this Year	10	NA	NA	NA	12
Schedule for Monthly Meetings	3rd First Day, Monthly	call of Clerk	2nd First Day, monthly, after rise of Worship	1st Sunday, monthly, after rise of Worship	3rd Sunday, monthly
Clerk	Selma Messner	Frankie Sue Johnson	Angela Young	Carol Revard	B.J. Mills
Recorded Ministers	Philip Mesner, Delano Cunningham		Dorlan Bales	David Nagle	Shelli Kadel, David Kingrey, Cliff Loesch, B. J. Mills, Carol Mullikin, J. M. Pitts, David Wolfe
Number of Minutes requested	0	5	20	20	15

Nominating Committee Report

Great Plains Yearly Meeting 2016-17 Members & New Appointments for Ministry & Counsel and Standing Committees

Ministry & Counsel

*Cliff Loesch, clerk, UFM – crloesch@sbcglobal.net

*Dorlan Bales, HFMM – dorlan@cox.net

<Patriz Holding, HMM (2018)

Betty Jake, HMM (2016) – 410 Russell Rd, Indian Village, Hominy, OK 74035

Cheryl Mallonee, UFM (2016) – cemallonee@gmail.com

Dorothy Manzer (2016), HMM – 803 N. Brady, Hominy, OK 74035

Lisa McConnell, CCMM (2016) – lpeach_2001@yahoo.com

<Joseph Nagle, HMM (2017) – 536 Summit Ave, Tahlequah, OK 74464-2634

*David Nagle, HMM – davnagle@juno.com

<Rhonda Newby, UFM (2018) – rhondajeannewby@cox.net

<James Perkins, HFMM (2017) – jrperkins@sktc.net

Carole Revard, HMM (2016) – carolerevard@aol.com

<Lynn Zeleski, CCMM (2017) – auntlynnz@gmail.com

**Recorded Ministers*

Finance Committee

Steve McConnell, clerk, CCMM (2017) – veggieduderanch@yahoo.com

Connie Adams, Treasurer (ex-officio), HFMM – adamsr@appstate.edu

Stan Brown, UFM (2016) – stanleybrown@sbcglobal.net

<Randy Cook, UFM (2018) – bamankufan@cox.net

Aaron Fowler, HFMM (2016) – aaron@aaronfowler.org

Paul Mallonee, UFM (2017) – pizzaguy@sprintmail.com

David Nagle, HMM (2016) – davnagle@juno.com

<Carole Revard, HMM (2017) – carolerevard@aol.com

Nominating Committee

Angela Jake Brown, clerk, HMM (2017) – aajake277@gmail.com

Beth Green-Nagle, HMM (2016) – nagle@nsuok.edu

<Molly Loesch, UFM (2017) – mollybloesch@gmail.com

<Steve McConnell, CCMM (2018) – veggieduderanch@yahoo.com

<Lisa McConnell, CCMM (2016) – l_peach_2001@yahoo.com

<Greg Newby, UFM (2018) – gregnewby@cox.net

Home Missions Committee

Dorlan Bales, clerk, HFMM (2017) – dorlan@cox.net

Connie Adams, HFMM (2016) – adamsr@appstate.edu

<Michelle Barrett, UFM (2018) – mab010888@gmail.com

<Amelia Jake, HMM (2017) 410 Russel Rd, Hominy OK 74035

<Kim Sanchez, HMM (2016) PO Box 885, Pawhuska OK 74056

<Patty Savely, UFM (2017) – pattysavely@gmail.com

Laura Dungan, UFM (ex-officio, Initiative Released Friend) –
creativechangeconsulting@gmail.com

LaVonna Loesch, UFM (ex-officio, Presiding Clerk) –
lavonna.loesch@gmail.com

Key for Monthly Meeting Representation

CCMM – *Central City Monthly Meeting*

CHMM – *Council House Monthly Meeting*

HFMM – *Heartland Friends Monthly Meeting*

HMM – *Hominy Monthly Meeting*

UFM – *University Friends Meeting*

“<” denotes a new appointment

All Recorded Ministers are welcome and encouraged to join Ministry & Counsel when they meet.

Friends Remembered at GPYM Memorial Service 2016

June 5, 2014 to June 6, 2015

Hominy Monthly Meeting

Charles Arthur Pratt, Jr.	03-08-2015
Hazel Annette (Pratt) Moore	03-13-2015
Ida Marie Bevenue	04-11-2016

Monteverde Friends Meeting

Wilford “Wolf” Guindon (Father of Eco-Tourism)

University Friends Meeting

Doris Francis	04-15-2013
Jo Eagle Anderson	09-20-2015
Bruce Bales	10-14-2015
Gilbert Cheshur Jackson	12-15-2015
James C. Newman	12-21-2015
Veronica “Ronnie” Anderson	01-22-2016
Art Snyder	02-11-2016
Susie Cole	03-06-2016
Bill Bowles	03-23-2016

Extracts

In a joint committee meeting: “Clerk, please? or *Clerks*, please?”

Jock Cameron: “A lot of silent Quakers are struck dumb!”

Mary Lord: “In the East, meetings are older but that doesn’t mean they have their act together.”

Ruth Flower, re: FCNL young adult involvement: “There are 500 followers on Instagram and I don’t even know what that is.”

“God is at work in all of life, even in Washington D.C.” (referring to FCNL)

In Finance Committee: Connie: “The treasurer volunteers to serve on this sub-committee because she has an interest in the outcome.” Paul: “Was that an intentional pun?”

“I get that? Well, you’re the treasurer!”

David: “I want Jim to know I lost no money at that casino, but I brought back a \$1,000 grant.”

“No applause?”

LaVonna: “Someday I will be saying ... Yip! ... Yip!” (like an auctioneer)

“In the absence of others having appropriate leadings, feel free to return to me.” -- Sara Scribner, after being asked to help with this year’s epistle.

LaVonna: “If you’re on a level and don’t know where you are, just go up or down.”

LaVonna: “I want to take a minute here ... and it will honestly take five.”

Nominating Committee report: “Beth would like to expire in 2018.” (referring to serving as GPYM representative to FWCC Section of the Americas)

Angela, in the Nominating Committee report: “I don’t know why I am talking about myself in third person.”

LaVonna: “Let’s take a twelve minute break.” David – “One minute for each apostle.”

David: “At the risk of some people thinking the Yearly Meeting has gone to the dogs, I would like to express appreciation for Bella’s vocal ministry.”

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.

Directory of GPYM Monthly Meetings

Central City Monthly Meeting
403B Ave., Central City NE 68826
Mail to: 2715 25th Ave., Central City NE 68826
Clerk: Selma Mesner
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/>
Clerk: Frankie Sue Johnson

Heartland Friends Monthly Meeting
14505 W. Sandwedge Circle, Wichita, KS 67235
(just north of Hwy 54 and Wichita Friends School)
<http://heartland.quaker.org>
Clerk: Angela Young
Minister Dorlan Bales

Hominy Monthly Meeting
510 Friends Road, Hominy, OK 74035
<http://www.hominyfriends.org>
Clerk: Carole Revard
Minister David Nagle

University Friends Meeting
1840 W. University Ave., Wichita, KS 67213
316-262-0471 <http://universityfriends.quaker.org>
Clerk: B. J. Mills
Ministers: Shelli Kadel, Dave Kingrey, Cliff Loesch, B.J. Mills, Carol Mullikin, J.M. Pitts, David Wolfe