

**2018 Piedmont Friends Yearly Meeting Epistle**  
From the Third Annual Sessions Third Month, Thirty-First Day 2018

Twenty-second day of sixth month 2018

Greetings to Friends Everywhere,

Piedmont Friends Fellowship and Piedmont Friends Yearly Meeting gathered March 30 - April 1, 2018, for the spring retreat and annual sessions at Carolina Friends School in Durham, NC. Piedmont Friends Yearly Meeting annual sessions were held on Saturday afternoon March 31, 2018, in the Meeting House of Carolina Friends School.

This gathering brought together Friends from member monthly meetings and worship groups in North Carolina, South Carolina and Virginia. Visitors were welcomed and traveling minutes were received from Friends General Conference, Baltimore Yearly Meeting, and Five Rivers Friends Monthly Meeting in South Carolina. Piedmont Friends welcomed the long tradition of traveling minutes and traveling Friends to the weekend gathering.

Other visitors included representatives from William Penn House and Quaker House, and Friends recently from New York Yearly Meeting. The retreat registration totaled one hundred adult and youth participants.

This year's gathering felt deeper and larger -- our yearly meeting had grown both in spirit and in numbers. In the light pouring through the windows of the Carolina Friends School meeting house, we rejoiced in our inward light, sharing in loving fellowship the joys and concerns brought together across the hundreds of miles' breadth of our yearly meeting.

The Yearly Meeting expressed gratitude toward its continuing development as a new yearly meeting of Friends and began the annual sessions with the Yearly Meeting's Vision Statement:

*As a yearly meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, we seek to foster a loving community of affiliated monthly meetings and worship groups by increasing and strengthening connections among members, attenders, and seekers and with other Friends' organizations. Our primary goals are to nurture monthly meetings and worship groups by supporting spiritual growth and to witness to our collective truth in the wider world.*

Friends of the Yearly Meeting expressed deep appreciation for the leadership of presiding clerk Marian Beane, assisting clerk Gary Hornsby, and recording clerk Julie Stafford through the inaugural years of the yearly meeting. Friends are additionally grateful to Gary Hornsby as he assumed the presiding clerk position at the rise of annual sessions.

Friends accepted representative reports from Quaker House, Friends General Conference, Friends Committee on National Legislation, and American Friends Service Committee. Internal reports included a summary of the member meeting spiritual condition reports, with a theme that Friends find deep worship grounding for their lives in the world.

Charlotte Friends Meeting had presented a Minute on Climate Change to member meetings for consideration by the Yearly Meeting. Through collective discernment and thoughtful consideration, the annual session approved a PFYM Minute on Climate Change (appended to this epistle). Reflective of the considerations, the Minute expresses not only urgency in concern for the environment, but also concern for the consciousness that has created the issues of climate change.

Friends relished the Saturday lunch provided by Second Helping, a catering venture of Urban Ministries of Durham and the Coalition for a Nonviolent Durham to provide work opportunities for returning citizens finding their way after prison.

During the retreat, Friends learned about the work of Alternatives to Violence Program, transforming minds and life among inmates and staff of prisons. The transformative power of the Light was also demonstrated in the young Friends who shared their journey of discernment and letters declaring themselves as Conscientious Objectors to war and violence.

Reflecting on the strength of Quaker witness and the courage of young Friends, gathered Friends resounded optimism for the future of the Religious Society of Friends. Heartened in the spiritual connections nurtured among Friends, Piedmont Friends Yearly Meeting extends its warmest regards to Friends everywhere.

In Love, Light, and Hope,

Marian Beane, past Presiding Clerk  
Piedmont Friends Yearly Meeting

Gary Hornsby, Presiding Clerk  
Piedmont Friends Yearly Meeting

Attached here: Piedmont Friends Yearly Meeting Minute on Climate Change 3-31-2018  
Photograph of Attendees, PFYM Third Annual Sessions 3-31-2018

## Piedmont Friends Yearly Meeting Minute on Climate Change

We acknowledge the grave and worsening crisis of all the interacting variables included in the phrase “climate change.” Another part of our concern is awareness of the consciousness that has created the problem. We recognize the urgency of a response from our Friends’ community.

We come to this moment grounded in the testimonies of the Religious Society of Friends. The testimonies of community, equality, stewardship and integrity call us forward in our work. We recognize that, both globally and locally, peace is increasingly linked to climate justice.

With deep concern for Earth and all the life it supports, we are motivated by our love of our children, recognizing that their futures are in our hands. We affirm the Native American advice: “In all our deliberations, let us consider to the seventh generation.”

We know that there is much about these times that can cause us to feel fearful, angry and helpless. We will be gentle with ourselves and take time for our feelings as we continue the work, knowing that we are a part of the rising tide of thousands around the world, who, in the words of the Friends Committee on National Legislation, “seek an earth restored.”

We, the Friends of Piedmont Friends Yearly Meeting, commit to the following:

1. We continue to seek the Light through worship and prayerful consideration. We shall be led by the Spirit in the face of climate change.
2. We seek to understand the role we play as humans, and the dangers unfolding through climate change. We continue to educate ourselves rigorously on these matters.
3. We commit to act on our responsibility, both in personal use of resources and in the management of our meetinghouse resources. We ask: How can we have greater integrity in these matters?
4. We commit to learning about and engaging in collective action and advocacy at the local, state, national and global levels.
5. We seek to be examples and patterns, carrying this message forward to other Friends communities and to others who carry a concern and love for Earth.

We are grateful for the many in this yearly meeting who carry our concern forward.  
Thank you, Friends.

*--Approved 31 March 2018 in Annual Sessions*



**Attendees of Piedmont Friends Yearly Meeting Third Annual Sessions 31 March 2018  
photo by John A. Shuford**