

Epistle of the 78th Session of the Jamaica Yearly Meeting (JYM) of Friends - Quakers
Held at Swift Purcell Friends Multi-purpose Centre - Highgate, St. Mary
August 9-11, 2019

Greetings to Friends everywhere.

A small group of Jamaican Friends of varying ages gathered at Swift Purcell Multi-Purpose Centre in Highgate, St. Mary, Jamaica for the 78th session of the Jamaica Yearly Meeting of Friends (Quakers) from August 9 to 11, 2019, under the theme “Fully Committed to Christ.” The two key Bible verses for the session were Psalm 37:5 ***“Commit your way to the Lord, trust also in Him and He will establish your plans”*** and Proverbs 16:3 ***“Commit to the Lord whatever you do and He will bring it to pass”***

After registration on the morning of Friday, August 9, the Friends in attendance, including Eden Grace, Director of Global Ministries at Friends United Meeting (FUM), were welcomed to the gathering. A roll call during the course of the day recorded 31 Friends present, a number that would gradually increase over time. After reports from the Board of Trustees, the Friends Educational Council, and the Nominating Committee, Friend Eden Grace gave the first of her many presentations, focusing on the gifts of the Spirit during which she challenged us to try to identify the Spiritual Gifts we had.

In the evening, the Eugene Wofley Memorial lecture entitled **“The Future is now”** was presented by Trevor Faloon, whose school chaplain at Happy Grove School had been Eugene Wolfley in the early 1960’s, and in which he raised questions regarding the effect of technology on life, and specifically on the church.

The following day, after school reports for Happy Grove (High) School and Seaside Primary School, and a report on FUM’s structure, and operations by Eden Grace, there was a panel presentation under the topic “The Covenant and Commitment of Friends Membership”.

During the luncheon that followed, put on by the Jamaican Chapter of the USFWI, Eden again spoke, this time about her experiences in Kenya, during which she mentioned, among other things, the ongoing practice of female genital mutilation and current efforts to stop it. Afterwards comments could be heard expressing how fortunate we were here in Jamaica. This was followed by a “Concert of Prayer” led by guest presenter Donovan Thomas, during which groups of four were formed, in which the group members prayed as they were led.

A report on the Quaker Life Camp, held earlier in July, followed. About 130 campers had attended this Camp, which is sponsored primarily by North Carolina Yearly Meeting, and which had its 2nd staging this year. Anthony Moodie, camp coordinator, and about 12 camp counselors, demonstrated some of the activities and crafted items from the Camp which, from all reports, had been enjoyable, invigorating, and uplifting.

At the service on the final day, Eden Grace, who gave the message, firstly exhorted the young persons to be steadfast in their Christian development and the older Friends to support them fully, as this young group could invigorate and revitalize the entire Yearly Meeting. She then spoke about watermelons that were grown in square boxes, and which conformed to that shape, and urged us not to be squeezed out of shape from our natural character, but to be our best selves in living and working, and to be bold in our Christian Ministry.

The overall session went reasonably smoothly, in spite of a few hitches and concerns. One definite opportunity for improvement is to incorporate more programs focusing on the younger population.

With blessings, on behalf of Jamaica Yearly Meeting
David Abrikian – Presiding Clerk