

Dear Friends Everywhere –

We gathered at Guilford College in Greensboro, N.C. on Seventh Month 14-17, 2016 for our 319th annual Sessions. As we gather we remember our distant Friends with great fondness and love. This year we are gathered under the theme “I Love to Feel Where Words Come From,” a translated quote from Papunehang, a member of the Delaware tribe in response to John Woolman’s ministry on Sixth Month 18, 1763.

We have been so excited this year as participation in yearly meeting has increased and our Young Friends number over twenty. Our Young Friends have participated in annual sessions as Reading Clerk and by reading State of Society Reports for a monthly meeting. They have also helped illustrate stories during our morning Bible study and showed the Adult Friends how to dance. It has truly been a joy to be with and participate side by side with our Young Friends.

We were also blessed to have a young adult Friend, Elizabeth Rolfe, represent us in Peru at the Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC) World Plenary. Her report to the meeting of the event included queries that made us think about our role as citizens of Earth and how we plan to live out our Quaker testimonies of peace and equality in relation to young adult Friends in our meetings. She is now the clerk of the Young Adult Friends Committee for FWCC and has started traveling internationally to build connections all over the world among young adult Friends.

For the past four years we have been supporting a Bolivian young Friend who has recently graduated with a degree in engineering. We have decided as a yearly meeting to continue our support for Bolivian young Friends and commit ourselves to supporting another student for the next four years. We were also given the opportunity to support a Cuban young adult Friend who hopes to attend Guilford College.

The Journal Committee completed our yearly meeting’s seventh Journal this year entitled, “Keeping the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace.” There were 250 copies printed and they are almost gone! The Journal will be available on our website in the near future. By reading Yearly Meeting’s Journals some Friends were convinced that this was their spiritual home. The Journal Committee is now working on the theme for the next issue.

The Book of Discipline revision is in its third year. The committee has been faithful in its work and the Body is grateful for all it has done. The revision process is giving us opportunity to share and discuss everything from important concepts to historical events to word choices. Even though this work can be slow and tiring, we are learning from each other and learning more about ourselves as a body. We are richly blessed to have undertaken this work and to have people who are gifted by God to do this work.

On our final evening together we had a grand time with a sing-a-long led by talented musicians on guitars and piano along with percussion instruments for all who wanted them. Young and old sang their hearts out and laughed out loud.

We hold you in our hearts and pray that you are able to feel the Love that we have for you. May you experience the Love of God with which we have been so richly blessed. Please know that it would warm our hearts if you were able to visit with us next year. We will meet for our 320th session in Wilmington, N.C., Seventh Month 12-16, 2017 if in accordance with Divine Will.

On behalf of North Carolina Yearly Meeting (Conservative),

Nancy Craft, clerk