

Isaiah 43:19a: I'm about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?

To All Friends Everywhere:

Earlier this year the leadership of Northwest Yearly Meeting decided that the best way forward was to split off a new yearly meeting for those local meetings who could not align with the current Northwest Yearly Meeting Faith & Practice statement on human sexuality. Local meetings who had written minutes or statements affirming same-sex relationships were given no option; any other local meeting could choose to join with those first four (West Hills Friends, Camas Friends, Eugene Friends, Klamath Falls Friends) or could go independent. The legal separation deadline, set by the Administrative Council, is June 30, 2018.

During this, our last annual sessions as an entire meeting, the departing local meetings and several interested individuals met in parallel business sessions to begin our work. Did we feel led to form a new yearly meeting or association? How will we begin? How will we know if we want to be a part if we don't know what it is?

It has been difficult. We need to make clear our desire to be radically inclusive, as Jesus was, without falling into the same exclusionary trap that caught Northwest Yearly Meeting.

We used small worship sharing groups to get to know one another. We listened deeply to a panel of four LGBTQ+ Friends who spoke movingly of their experiences in faith communities through their lives. We began to form committees to help us with our work, determined to make any new structure or work open and inviting to marginalized people, especially from sexual minorities, but also aware of racial, economic, and cultural minorities.

In an earlier informal meeting last spring, the gathered Friends stated their intent to be inclusive, acknowledging that Northwest Yearly Meeting had not been so in the past. This week we approved the following statement:

“We are led by the Spirit to commit ourselves to recognizing the full participation of LGBTQ+ people in all aspects of the life of the new yearly meeting.”

We also were clear that we did want to move forward as a Quaker, Christ-centered yearly meeting. To that end we have approved the following Friends to serve:

Co-presiding Clerks: Cherice Bock and Eric Muhr

Assistant Clerk: Jon Kershner

Recording Clerk: Matthew Staples

Contact us at: clerks@scymf.org.

Website under construction: scymfriends.org.

And we found our name: we are the Sierra-Cascades Yearly Meeting of Friends.

We covet your prayers, your support, and your visits if you feel so led.

In the name of the One who makes all things new, and on behalf of those Friends gathered today (both in body and in spirit),

Jan Wood

Acting Clerk

Epistle Committee: James Hibbs, Julie Peyton, Tom Stave