

To Friends Everywhere,

Friends gathered at Silver Bay in New York on Lake George for a week of worship, business, discernment, and fun, our 323rd Summer Sessions as a yearly meeting, on the seventh month, from the 22nd day through the 28th day. 436 Friends were in attendance, including 95 youth. We began each day with community worship for Friends of all ages. The life of our yearly meeting is vitally informed by all kinds of presences—worshipful and playful. Our healing center helped us to find peace and nurture.

We reflected together on the theme of abundance. Our plenary speaker, Jacqueline Stillwell, from the Right Sharing of World Resources, spoke to us of “the power of enough:” when we recognize the sufficiency of the gifts we have received, we are enabled joyfully and without fear to fulfill God’s call. Awed by the blessing of the divine presence among us, we are led to be more welcoming and inclusive and giving, and to respond with love to the threat of hatred and violence that arises in a world convulsed by fear, scarcity, and injustice. Shelley Tanenbaum of Quaker Earthcare Witness warned us that climate scientists are terrified. We must address climate change now in order to arrive at dramatic policy change in the next ten years if earth is to remain habitable. The Peace Working Group created a listserv to help Friends throughout the yearly meeting to come together for social justice concerns.

Friends found our Meetings for Discernment, still for us an evolving exploratory experiment, to be newly rich as an experience of worship and of insight into our community. Friends are challenged to create the beloved community in which everyone is cared for. We continue to reflect on how the gifts of our Meetings for Discernment can shape our work.

Without a committee or dedicated staff, young adult Friends showed us how spirit can rise organically, manifesting as new wisdom in our meetings for business, discernment, and committee work. Whisper Buddies helped newly engaged young people understand and contribute to the meeting’s business. Older Friends are called upon to hear fully and welcome the voices of young people among us and to recognize their ministry and leadings as having a vital role in the work of the yearly meeting.

Sharon J. Lane-Getaz joined us from Cannon Valley Meeting in Northern Yearly Meeting to introduce the Friends General Conference Institutional Assessment on Racism Survey, which asked us to confront systemic racism within our yearly meeting as a constituent part of FGC. In our committees, interest groups, and working groups, Friends struggled with concerns around environmental degradation, mass incarceration, militarism, and right relation with native peoples, and how to strengthen our yearly meeting to meet these concerns. Friends wrestled with the pull of many calls.

We send our greetings to all Friends as we together work to bring God’s peace and justice everywhere.