

July 15, 2018

To Friends Everywhere:

Western Yearly Meeting gathered in Plainfield, Indiana from July 12-15, 2018 for our 161st annual session. "Living Like We're Loved" was the theme for this year's gathering and used as the foundation 1 John 4:18-19: "There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love. We love because he first loved us." An original hymn by Elizabeth A. Carter, "Live Like You're Loved," provided a unifying influence throughout the four days of meeting and worship.

Members of Western Yearly Meeting continue to recognize the need to provide a living witness to our changing society. Toward that end, this year's meeting explored, through worship, reports, lectures, and workshops, some of the many ways that each member can participate and support their Quaker beliefs in real and effective ways.

Quaker Lecture speaker, Drew Smith, drew from his years of service in Quaker education to encourage us as we continue to learn new and sometimes different, methods to accomplish the work God has set forth for each of us individually and corporately. Worship leader, Jeff Blackburn, used his experiences as a pastor and from working with the Disaster Leadership Team to move us forward in worshipful attendance in God's Light.

Western Yearly Meeting continues to face the same problem that many faith groups face: outside forces competing for the time of members, fewer active adults due to aging and its effects; and fewer new members. Some individual meetings are seeing growth, others are struggling and a few have, with sadness, been laid down. We recognize that growth in numbers and internal strength of the meetings is the direct result of meeting the needs of those around us and we are working to improve in that area.

The annual Memorial Service conducted by Wayne Bogue provided an opportunity to remember the 48 individuals from Western Yearly Meeting who were welcomed into heaven during this past year. We rejoiced in the legacy of service that they provided, and remembered their encouragement during our own growth. Recognizing the responsibility to continue their efforts into the future was one important result of this service and worship time.

Each year's annual meeting provides an opportunity to program the annual meeting differently. The committee in charge of the program continues to recognize a need to adapt yearly schedules and content to meet the needs of those attending and encourage new attenders. Meetings for Business were conducted efficiently, with written reports often being provided instead of oral reports. This provided additional time for engaging workshops and informative interest group sessions. Practical workshops included: "How to Love the Ill, Dying and Grieving" presented by Katherine Murray and Paul Riley; "How to Love the Traumatized," coordinated by Hugh Hanlin and James Lyon; and "How to Love our Children and Youth," a panel discussion coordinated by Hugh Hanlin and Jeff Newton. The oral reports included glowing updates on youth involvement in mission and service programs, particularly in the school in Belize, and how these young

people have been encouraged to grow through their opportunities. Quaker Haven Camp representatives emphasized the importance and value of providing a quality experience to our young people during their school-age years. Time was provided to recognize Andrew Heald for his involvement as Christian Education Director and his encouragement of youth and interns and to wish him well as he continues into pastoral leadership roles.

Additional interest group sessions (“100 years of Voting for Women in America,” “Quaker Murder Mystery,” “Engaging Quaker Citizens,” “12-step Program for Hurts, Hang-ups and Habits,” “What if Our Church Had an Intruder?” “Re-engaging Your Community,” and “What’s Happening in Mesquakie Indian Territory?”) encouraged us to learn about the historic and current influence of Quakers on their society. The workshops provided tools for encouraging active current involvement in caring for those around us, safety in the realities of today’s world, and ways to change our society through involvement in legislative action to be sure Quaker values are considered in future laws that will affect us and those around us. Intergenerational activities were well attended. Evening activities such as a Festival of Fun and a free public evening concert provided added opportunities to join together as a faith community.

Saturday morning started with a Pancake Breakfast sponsored by the Quaker Men. After the business session, workshops, and interest groups, the mission emphasis continued. Quaker Men and the USFW met for a combined session led by Friends United Meeting’s Global Ministries Director, Eden Grace. This was followed by Quaker Men and USFW meals and business, with a capstone to the evening being the public, intergenerational Krista Detor concert.

Sunday was a day of rejoicing. Starting with a play, “Two Sons Have I Not” presented prior to the Sunday morning closing worship service, and concluding with the official recognition of newly recorded minister, John Connell, every person was again reminded that “Living Like We’re Loved” includes and requires intentional service and active involvement.

Your continued prayers of support and encouragement are appreciated as those in Western Yearly Meeting go out into our communities to reach others by “Living Like We’re Loved.”

In Christian Love,

Sarah Lookabill, Presiding Clerk

William Brandt, Recording Clerk

Kay Carter, Assistant to the Clerk

2 attachments: “Live Like You’re Loved” hymn
Summary of Outgoing Epistle

Live Like You're Loved

Elizabeth A. Carter

Elizabeth A. Carter

$\text{♩} = 72$
Intro.

1. Live like you're loved, _____ and spread God's
2. Live like you're loved, _____ walk in Christ's

3

grace. _____ Give it to all you meet, let it light your
way. _____ Bind up life's in - ju - ries, ev - en when a -

5

face. _____ Ex - tend for - give - ness, count not the
fraid. _____ Seek ways of peaceful ness a - mid un -

7

blame. _____ Pro claim the Sav - ior's love, men - of His name!
rest. _____ Re - flect up - on His joy, even 'mid the test.

3. Live like you're loved, share of Christ's power.

Tell others He is near, through every hour.

Teach how to trust Him, throughout each day.

Follow His Spirit to guide the way.

Summary of highlights: For use in Translations and/or digests

Western Yearly Meeting met in Plainfield, Indiana from July 12-15, 2018.

The theme was “Living Like We’re Loved” based on 1 John 4:18-19. Worship, lectures, workshops, and interest groups used this theme as they encouraged us to learn about the historic and current influence of Quakers on their society. These opportunities also provided tools for encouraging active, current, involvement as we recognize and meet the needs of those around us, consider safety in the realities of today’s world, and find ways to change our society peacefully through involvement in legislative action to be sure Quaker values are considered in future laws that will affect us and our communities.

Recording of Gifts for Ministry was completed for one individual, John Connell.

Mission work, and camping experiences continue to be an emphasis, with younger adults encouraged by grants and recognition by Western Yearly Meeting. USFW and Quaker Men continue to be motivating influences.

As along with other Meetings, we are facing the issue of dwindling numbers and involvement. We recognize that growth in numbers, increased involvement, and internal strength of individual meetings is the direct result of meeting the needs of those around us. Please be with us in prayer as those in Western Yearly Meeting go out into our communities to meet the needs of others by “Living Like We are Loved.”