

North Carolina Yearly Meeting (Conservative)  
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Dear Friends Everywhere,

While gathered on the campus of the University of North Carolina at Wilmington on Seventh Month 11-14, 2019, for our 322<sup>nd</sup> Annual Sessions, we send warm greetings of love to our distant Friends.

Our theme this year was “Retire to the quietness; let the light shine,” which brings together two thoughts of Robert Barclay. These words indeed describe how our shared time together gave us a quiet space to retire and reflect -- so that we may better let our light shine. This year finds Friends on both a monthly and yearly meeting level wrestling with questions of how to best let that light shine – how to live out our faith in a divided nation and a world characterized by systemic racism, inequality and militarism -- and what practically needs to be in place to support those efforts.

We have struggled over what should be our relationship to the Poor People’s Campaign, in which many of our monthly meetings are active participants. However, at these sessions, we came to clarity with a statement of endorsement for the Campaign that we will publicize (attached). We approved the creation of both a budget line-item and a committee for the purpose of supporting those in monthly meetings working with the Campaign.

Our Book of Discipline revision is in its sixth year. The committee has been faithful in its work and we are grateful for all it has done. At this session, provisional approval was given to the section on the Queries. A central activity of our yearly meeting is the reading of the monthly meetings’ answers to the Queries, and their State of the Meeting reports, to the gathered body. In those exercises this year, Friends shared moving accounts of their meetings’ struggles, joys, sorrows and growth that helped us better understand our shared opportunities and challenges.

On Fifth Day evening, Toby Berla (Durham Meeting) led us in “Reflecting on the Images of the Cross.” He shared with us the history of what the cross has meant to different religious communities. He asked us to think of the cross as a place where *chronos* and *kairos* – the temporal and eternal, the human and divine -- meet. He then led those present in a wide-ranging discussion of what the cross means to us today.

On Sixth Day evening, Visiting Friend Johan Maurer (Sierra Cascades Yearly Meeting, Moscow Monthly Meeting) was inspired by a text from Robert Barclay’s *Apology*, “For, when I came into the silent assemblies of God’s people, I felt a secret power among them” to explore both how we encounter the “secret power” of the Divine and how we share such truth. He then illustrated how these processes informed his experience in Russia as a Friend who wanted to share his faith, but could not always do so directly. He stressed the positive, loving relationships that can be established between Russians and Americans.

During our time together, we heard from several representatives of Quaker organizations and ministries.

- Nikki Holland asked for our prayers and financial support for FUM's Belize Friends Ministries.
- Emma Condori of Holiness Friends Yearly Meeting in Boliva told us about the climate change work of the Quaker Youth Action Project, which has also made connections with youth in the United States.
- Riley Robinson of Friends Committee on National Legislation spoke of FCNL's mission and accomplishments.
- Nancy Haines (Durham Meeting) reported for the Friends Committee on North Carolina Legislation, newly created to help bring the values of Friends to the state political process. While FCNCL is under the spiritual care of Piedmont Friends Yearly Meeting, they are a group that is independent of any yearly meeting, and welcome all to participate in their work.
- Mary Jo Klinge of Quaker Earthcare Witness announced that Lauri Langham (Durham Meeting) will be visiting the monthly meetings, and that Earthcare Witness will be meeting in Durham in April 2020.
- Director Kindra Bradley reported that Quaker House is on the eve of their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration. At a Seventh Day evening program, she shared the work of Quaker House through a series of new videos, followed by a panel discussion featuring past directors Bob Gosney and Chuck Fager, as well as current counselors Lenore Yarger and Steve Wollford.

We were blessed with many families with young children. A devoted team of volunteers offered a robust children's and youth program that included games, activities and a trip to Kure Beach. Visiting Friend Chuck Jones (Chattanooga Meeting) offered a daily "Kites, Wind and Spirit" program. The children and youth also spent time helping at the Good Shepherd Shelter.

Ruby Braye led a daily intergenerational Bible study on the Gospel of John (4:24, 16:13, 6:63), the First Letter of John (4:4) and Galatians (6:16). We also had several interest group meetings, a book room, shared activities and shared meals. On Seventh Day evening, Friends enjoyed an intergenerational talent show. Friends had many opportunities for spiritual growth and fellowship in our time together, whether during evening snack time or walking across campus together. The weather was hot and humid, but the lovely campus landscaping featured many shade trees, and we appreciated the hawks and other birds who live there.

We hold you in our hearts and pray that you know the love that we have for you, and 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 323<sup>rd</sup> session in Greensboro, NC, Seventh Month 9-12, 2020, if in accordance with Divine Will.

On behalf of North Carolina Yearly Meeting (Conservative),

Gwen Gosney Erickson, Clerk

*North Carolina Yearly Meeting (Conservative) of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) endorses the Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival. The work of this nonviolent campaign is consonant with long held Quaker values and testimonies of equality, peace, justice, honoring that of God in everyone, and concern for our environment. Our yearly meeting is committed to providing spiritual and financial support to our monthly meetings and individual members in their activities on behalf of the Poor People's Campaign.*

--Approved 7th Month 14, 2019 by NCYM(C)

## North Carolina Yearly Meeting (Conservative) Young Friends Epistle to Friends Everywhere, 2019

On a hot Wednesday in July, the yearly meeting youth gathered at the University of North Carolina Wilmington. They enjoyed a night of bowling, snacks, games, and laughter. The next morning, the 11<sup>th</sup> of June, the kids ate their first breakfast at the dining hall on campus. Everything from eggs, bacon, potatoes, and muffins, everyone filled their stomachs to prepare for the day. Soon after, they made their way to Wrightsville beach, and had so much fun in the water, that they hardly made it to lunch on time. Afterwards, they sat in on an interesting and informative Bible Study, taught by Rubye Braye in McNeil Auditorium. They then gathered at the pool building to make colorful kites and learn of wind and spirit with Chuck Jones leading the way. The adults then gave the children an approximate hour to enjoy free time around campus. Many spent it with friends or family in the dorms, and other taking much needed naps, playing games, and chatting with friends in the Dorm #2 common room. Five thirty came, and, in groups and individually, made their way to the dining hall once again to eat dinner. Very hungry, many stuffed themselves with Asian chicken, rice and beans, fruit and fries. Then, while half the kids spent time at the pool building, discussing the day and playing games, some of the older children learned to knit. Taught by Mary, Melidy, Judy, and Liz, the older girls of the group were instructed step by step, how to start, fill in, and complete wonderful knitting projects. Many really enjoyed it, and continued to work throughout the trip. Then, around eight forty five, the remaining youth and adults gathered in the Dorm #2 for many, kindly provided snacks, puzzles, and much more knitting. After spending the second night in the dorms, many reported a much needed, slightly delayed, sleep with cozy rooms, and creaky beds.

Friday morning, waking up bright and early, the kids of the meeting devoured another delicious breakfast in the dining hall, and quickly headed to the Good Shepard Homeless Shelter. While there, the kids got a detailed tour of the shelter, and an in depth lesson on how the shelter runs, and the services they provide for families and individuals in need. Splitting into different groups, the younger kids stayed outside to help weed the outside of the shelter, while the rest stayed in the cafeteria to assemble over one hundred and fifty sandwiches for people who couldn't otherwise eat. To conclude the trip, they were asked to empty, refill, and rearrange the flowers to brighten up the cafeteria. Hungry, from a hard morning of work, all of the kids came back and went straight to the dining hall for a filling lunch. From the dining hall to the McNeil Auditorium, they made their way to another bible study with Rubye. This study discusses how we are called to trust God and that God tells us that we will be safe in times of stress. Then, going from McNeil to the pool building once again, they enjoyed another session with Chuck for kites, crafts and more games. The kids were then given over two hours to either relax, play more, or socialize in the apartment common room. After dinner, the youth, accompanied by few adults, came together in the pool building to hear all about the "Bolivian Water Crisis". Emma Condori, who experienced the crisis first hand, gave us a wonderful, detailed presentation on how the crisis began (climate change melting the snow caps), and how the Quaker community in La Paz dealt with this extremity. She told the kids how people in the La Paz community, and even Quaker groups from other countries, came together to save money and spread awareness in order to afford "Biosand Filters". Biosand filters are a system that the community saved up for, and eventually bought that filter the river, well, and mountain water to make it healthy for drinking. Leaving with fulfilled hearts, the kids thanked Emma, and came back to the apartments for final evening snacks, and goodbyes for the night.

Saturday the 13<sup>th</sup> came, and everyone woke up eager to eat quick in order to head right to the beach. A delightful, half hour car ride took everyone to Kure beach for a morning of saltwater and sun, and with the help of Goldie, six dozen Britt's donuts. At the beach, many kids spotted pink and blue jellyfish, baby sharks, and flew kites, thanks to Chuck. Making it back just in time, if not late, for lunch,

everyone filled their empty stomachs with everything from pizza to seasoned grits. Then, while the parents enjoyed some quiet free time, the kids went to the pool house to build the last of the kites and reflect on the weekend so far. Soon after, they headed back for their own free time, incidentally, ending the parents quiet time. While many played Apples to Apples in the common room, other prepared intensely for their talent show performance. Five thirty once again came, and the dining hall called everyone in to fill their empty stomachs with their last dinner. Leaving the dining hall, kids *and* adults nervously walked to the McNeil auditorium for the long anticipated talent show. Seeing everything from skits and songs to guitar performances and juggling, many impressive talents were shown by very brave people that night. Finally, everyone left the auditorium by golf cart, foot, and even scooter, to make their way to the Dorm #2 for the last late night snacks, and concluded with cake, celebrating 50 years of the Quaker House. After a long, tiring day, we retired to our rooms, took much needed showers and crashed into a much delayed sleep.

As the last morning rose, everyone enjoyed their last breakfast at the dining hall, and experienced their last Bible Study with Rubye. To end on a sweet note, this Bible study focused on 1<sup>st</sup> John 4:1 and Galatians 5:16. The first scripture taught us that sometimes we cannot trust everyone, so it is importance to know who you can trust and that you can always trust God. The latter discussed how if you follow and stick by God, you will be able to resist negative temptation. We learned that these are very important lessons, and that they were a great way to conclude our weekend. Everyone was then give an hour or so to pack up and gather their things to ensure nothing was left behind. Before final worship, many hung out in the common room to color, talk, snack, and clean up. To conclude the morning, the kids all stayed in the apartment to have a closing worship led by Goldie and others to sum up the weekend and give thanks for our opportunities we were given. Eleven o'clock came and we walked and reflected for final worship with everyone. Ending with the closing minute we silently pray and thanks everyone for an amazing weekend and an experience no one will forget.

We'd like to officially conclude with a few minutes to thanks all the wonderful people who made this weekend possible. Starting with Chuck Jones, we thank you for your generous and very appreciated time spent teaching the kids and even adults to make the precious kites that everyone has really enjoyed. Next we thank Emma Condori for sharing your wonderful and inspiring story of the Bolivian Water Crisis and showing us how important community strength is. Thank you to Jacquie Alford for always being there for the little ones when the parents needed a day off. Thank you to Melidy, Judy, Mary, and Liz for so graciously taking time to teach the girls how to knit. We are so excited about our newfound hobby and we thank you for introducing us to it. Special thanks to Andrew Wright for organizing and planning such a wonderful weekend for us kids and adults, and always answering our many questions. Another thank you to Goldie for being everyone's second grandma, and organizing a wonderful beach day with delicious donuts. Also, a big thank you to Genevieve Wilgen for getting us where we need to go, on time, and keeping track of us crazy kids. And there being 23 of us this year, we know it was certainly not easy. Finally thanks to the University of North Carolina Wilmington for hosting us and all the wonderful staff for providing us with food, shelter, and space. It truly has been an amazing weekend and we are so grateful for everyone who made it as special as it was.

*Young Friends of North Carolina Yearly Meeting (Conservative)  
7th Month 14th, 2019*