

Greetings to Friends worldwide from Northwest Yearly Meeting of Friends.

Northwest Yearly Meeting met for its 128<sup>th</sup> annual session July 19-21, 2020, meeting for the first time in virtual online format, due to the constraints of the Oregon guidelines regarding the Covid-19 pandemic. Business sessions, board meetings, workshops and worship times were held using video presentations, Zoom discussions, and webinars.

Sunday evening opened with a missions presentation led by Dan Cammack, executive director of Evangelical Friends Mission, followed by the opening worship session, hosted by Keith Reeser, pastor of Newberg Friends Church. Kenny Snyder led us into worship with a time of singing, and our superintendent, Dr. Jim Le Shana gave the keynote address, introducing the theme, "Thriving". Jim encouraged us to thrive in Christ as a yearly meeting and as individual churches, joining together to fulfill the mission that God has for us. Following the worship service about 50 participants joined in a Zoom conversation, sharing greetings from around the Northwest and also from the Philippines. They also shared some of the ways individual churches have been coping with the pandemic and finding new effective ways of reaching out to their body and their community.

Monday morning began with a devotional by our featured speaker, Dr. Joseph Clair, on Psalm 89, which speaks of singing of God's faithfulness. Such singing is a component of thriving and coming together in unity. Then we were led in singing by Jon Fodge, pastor of Peninsula Friends Church. Tuesday also opened with a devotional time led by Dr. Clair continuing with Psalm 89 focusing on God's steadfast love, and music by Jackie Lehman of Greenleaf Friends.

Clerk Ken Redford began the business sessions by welcoming all participants and clarifying procedures for conducting business via the Zoom format. Boards submitted written reports, while several action items were presented for approval. Several people commented via "chat" that they appreciated being able to clearly follow charts and notations on their own devices rather than from a distance in the auditorium!

Timely and helpful workshops were offered in the afternoons on such topics as: using technology well to reach new people, missional ministry, prejudice and racism, church planting, church revitalization, growing a younger church, developing leadership, and moving forward through change.

Our usual table displays from camps, schools, and ministries are available this year by photo and video links, as is the book table! Special links are also offered for children and families, and for youth and young adults to participate in presentations and discussions.

The Monday evening service opened with music led by Rob, Shannon and Nick Whitaker from Sherwood Friends, and Jim Le Shana introduced our speaker, Dr. Joseph Clair, Dean of the College of Christian Studies, Liberal Arts, and Honors at George Fox University. His message focused on Psalm 1, likening our blessed and thriving spiritual selves to the flourishing tree planted by the source of water. Tuesday evening music was led by Ron and Kris Link from Meridian Friends Church, Idaho, followed by the concluding message from Dr. Clair. After the evening services we were invited to join in a Zoom discussion with Joseph Clair, and about 60 people participated.

We are encouraged and challenged to see ourselves as spiritually thriving individuals and a healthy and thriving church, with our identity in Christ our Savior, going out to fulfill God's mission for us. We ask for your prayers, and pray you will also be encouraged and challenged to thrive under Christ's blessing and guidance.

Ken Redford  
Presiding Clerk