

Friends Church of North Carolina
Annual Sessions Message, August 12 and 13, 2022

To Friends Everywhere:

We send greetings to all Friends as we gather for our Annual Sessions at Quaker Lake Camp and Conference Center. We all experience so much of God's creation when we come to this beautiful setting. The Camp is very blessed with many activity areas and accommodations. The theme for the sessions was "Be Thou My Vision" taken from Philippians 3:14. This year -2022- we celebrate 350 years of Quakerism in North Carolina. Seth B. Hinshaw wrote in his book The Carolina Quaker Experience "The first voice of a Christian preacher heard in North Carolina was that of a Quaker, William Edmundson, who came to the colony in May 1672".

Presiding Clerk, Brenda McKinney began our sessions at 3:00 on Friday, August 12, 2022 with a time of worship at business. Committee on Clerks presented their recommendations for Clerks for the coming year. Brenda is stepping away and Roger Holt was approved as the next Presiding Clerk. Various reports were shared including the Superintendent, Mike Wall's report sharing that a Hispanic church in Yadkinville and a Kenyan Friends Church outside Baltimore are interested in becoming members of FCNC. Five Meetings shared how they are doing outreach and growing the family of Christ. Jared Warden shared about the activities during the year for Young Friends. There has been much involvement by youth across FCNC. Mike Fulp presented the report from FCNC Ministry and Counsel and brought the recommendation to record the gifts of ministry of Sterling Brown. Two individuals, Valli Chilton and James Moore, were approved to go under the care of the Recording Committee.

In the evening we gathered for a time of worship including special music by African Friends in North America and a message from Bob Carter, Kenyan Missionary. The Carters began mission work in 1985 serving FUM at Friends Lugulu Hospital and as of last year Bob is retired from clinical care and is focusing more on public health issues and medical education. Bob began by telling us the Lord loves us at FCNC and is pleased with us. Bob encouraged us to stay connected to the Head-Jesus and to each other. We are to build up, encourage and minister to one another. Our time of worship continued as we recorded the ministry gifts of Sterling Brown. A reception followed.

Sterling Brown led the Morning Praise on the Porch overlooking the beautiful lake. The Representative Body resumed business at 9:00. Among the reports, NCYM, Inc. shared the concern there are 8 cemeteries spanning over 300 years that the Body needs to decide about perpetual care or do we follow Quaker ways of simplicity and let them return to a natural state. Scott Carter reported the Missions Committee is able to send funds to many mission areas but requests for funding exceed the available funds. He encouraged participation in the Silent Auction being held to benefit the Missions Committee. Colin Saxton reported on FUM North American Ministries and the Billy Britt Fund. Affiliated Organization, Barclay College and Kaleo Academy reach high school to graduate school adults developing and enriching gifts of ministry. We were encouraged to seek them out for our teenagers to participate in their leadership training program.

Quaker Lake Camp, LLC Director, Heather Varner, shared there was a "regular" camp this year after 2 years of COVID and they were blessed with campers and all the needed staff and little sickness. There

are other activities on the year-round campus with two being the Pumpkin Fest and the December Candlelight Worship service. Beulah Gullion reported Friends Campus Ministries is a vital program with a purpose of strengthening Christ-centered Quaker values of our college students in four cities in NC but reaching more than one college in most locations. The fourth campus begins with the fall 2022 semester in the Wilmington area.

The offerings taken during the Annual Sessions went to the Billy M Britt Fund for North American Ministries to support FUM being better able to develop sustainable and effective emerging ministries to support and resource our local and Yearly Meeting. Billy was a Pastor in and Superintendent of NCYM Yearly Meeting and had a heart for leadership development, spiritual formation, congregational vitality, growth of our Quaker Meetings, and unity among Friends.

Following the lunch hour Bob and Hope Carter again shared with us a message of how to pursue a vision for ministry. Missions are at the heart and soul of following Jesus. How are we going to “woo” the world to Jesus? A Memorial Service followed led by Southern Quarter in recognition of those of our Meetings who died during the previous year. Many rose to speak of the contributions to Friends these folk gave during their lives. Following the Memorial Service Friends enjoyed free time or participated in optional workshops. The workshops related to our celebrating 350 years of Quakers in North Carolina. Richard Wilcox presented a session entitled “North Carolina Quakerism and William Edmundson”; followed by a workshop by Don Farlow “Suffering of Quakers during the Civil War”.

The evening worship began with special music by Renee Matthew Jones and Family and was followed with a special presentation. Diane Faison-McKinzie who resides in Winston-Salem gave a moving presentation “The Spirit of Harriet Tubman” a one-woman play about a leader in the Underground Railroad. Harriet Tubman was an American abolitionist and political activist born into slavery in the early 1820’s. She fought for equality and justice, women’s suffrage and dedicated her life to helping those in need. Diane, who gave a wonderful performance, was a 30-year educator, is an actress, visual artist, speaker, and writer. Her studies were at NC Central University and the University of Virginia.

A Minute of Appreciation was read for Brenda McKinney. Brenda has served FCNC faithfully as our Presiding Clerk for three years.

The FCNC Annual Session message, which is to be sent to other Yearly Meetings and Quaker Groups, was read and approved. The closing minute was read by Clerk, Brenda McKinney adjourning this Annual Session of Friends Church of North Carolina as it continues the valuable influence of Quakerism in North Carolina.

Brenda McKinney, Presiding Clerk

Prepared by Yadkin Valley Quarter: Geraldine Brannon, Brent McKinney, Judy Ritter