

Indiana Yearly Meeting Outgoing Epistle

Indiana Yearly Meeting met in its 195th annual session from 7th Mo. 28 through 31, 2016 at Quaker Haven Camp, near Syracuse, Indiana. Other than some times of rain and showers, the Lord blessed us with wonderful weather to enjoy our camp, fellowship, and business meetings.

The theme of our yearly meeting, "Greatness from God's Perspective," was taken from I Corinthians 1:26-28 "For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, and the base things of the world and the despised God has chosen, the things that are not, so that He may nullify the things that are..." This text was used for our devotional messages, led by Amy Cornell, J.D., MDiv., chaplain at White's Residential and Family Services. We were blessed to feel the Spirit of the Lord move through our services in the music and the speaking that was shared. This was truly a highlight of our time together.

We continue to rejoice in the work God is doing in Indiana Yearly Meeting. We come together with a sense of unity and common understanding in who we are in Christ as we worship, fellowship, and do business together.

We continue to stand in amazement at the way the Lord has blessed the yearly meeting financially and through our fundraising efforts. Yearly meeting assessments continue to exceed 100% fulfillment for the third year in a row, and we exceeded our fundraising goal of \$95,000 beyond assessments for our 2017 budget by over \$5,000 in commitments and funds received. Not only is the Lord blessing us financially, but after many years of downward trends in attendance, we see stability and are looking forward to future growth as Superintendent Doug Shoemaker challenged us to grow through planting new churches. In the next year he would like to see at least 3 of our meetings step out in faith to start the process of planting a new church.

We approved the recording of five ministers of the Gospel during our sessions. One was a first time recording, three were transfers, and one was a reinstatement of a pastor returning to Indiana Yearly Meeting. Again, these are an encouraging sign of flourishing growth and life in Indiana Yearly Meeting.

Post reconfiguration, the Faith and Practice Committee continues to review Faith and Practice to streamline and work to make it more representative and responsive to the improved culture of Indiana Yearly Meeting. While some changes gained final approval and others had their initial reading during our business sessions, the changes evoked good discussion regarding the future of Quarterly Meetings and committee appointments, the use of Coordinating Committees, tenure of office for appointments, and the recording of new ministers of the Gospel.

At the "Feast of Faith," the annual dinner near the end of our sessions, we enjoyed a well cooked meal by the staff at Quaker Haven Camp and a musical program by this year's worship leaders, The Kramers, of Peoria, IL. This is always a wonderful time of celebration enjoyed by all.

We were pleased to welcome visitors from Everence, Georgetown Friends in Illinois, Danville Friends in Indiana, Baltimore Yearly Meeting, Mesquakie Friends Center, Barclay College, Friends United Meeting and other Quaker organizations.

As our sessions draw to a close and we reflect on the year that has just passed and anticipate the year ahead, we humbly thank the Lord for his blessings and provision. He has blessed us with a spirit of excitement and unity in regards to the future and leadership that seeks Him in their decisions, which seems to be echoed throughout the monthly meetings. We are blessed indeed!