

**North Pacific Yearly Meeting Annual Session 2017  
Saturday, July 29, 2017**

**VII. Minutes of the Meeting for Business**

Singing prior to convening for business was led by Tom Rawson.

**1. Receiving Gift of New Faith and Practice**

Debbie Townsend, Theo Mace, Alice Robb, Lucretia Humphrey and Eugene Norcross-Renner presented the revised NPYM **Faith and Practice** for our approval. Committee member Jay Thatcher was unable to be present.

They met for the first time in 2005. It has been a long haul but a surprisingly joyous one. They combined editing the material in the previous edition and developing new materials. They asked meetings and worship groups for review as new sections were ready and posted. Sections were revised after feedback was received. All chapters were posted and sent out for final review in 2016. The committee considered every comment that they received in a true spirit of worship.

The new edition has several over-arching features. They strove to be descriptive, not prescriptive. They phrased the queries to make them more thoughtful. The work reflects the breadth of experience of meetings and worship groups in the Pacific Northwest. In the quotations they chose, they strove for gender balance, younger and local voices. They created new sections that are relevant now but that were not in the previous edition.

**The revised Faith and Practice was approved without discussion.**

Next steps are posting the new Faith and Practice on the website. Western Friend will print the book. Books will be sent to meetings and worship groups. The number of books to be sent to each meeting or worship group will be based on the number of members for whom assessment is paid plus two for each meeting or group. The Faith and Practice Committee remains in place to maintain the document and accept proposed new material.

## **2. Minute of Inclusion: Welcoming Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming People**

The committee of people who worked on this minute assembled at the facing table and the most recent version of the Minute was read.

The Presiding Clerk asked us to enter into worship as we responded to the question of whether we approved this minute.

People spoke in support of the minute by offering that gender identity is not a matter of choice; it is confirming who one is after much personal searching. Supporting each other is paramount. We must act in ways that show we believe there is that of God in everyone. We are to be open even to those who are not easy to welcome.

One Friend felt uncomfortable with approval of this minute and was not willing to stand aside. He could not unite with the idea that humans are multi-gendered and with the use of named categories for people. He also felt that it is important to welcome people and accept their conditions.

As worship continued, Friends spoke to the role of defining categories with names—denying a person a name denies their condition as they are. They also reminded us that we are in the presence of God as we make this decision and that we cannot anticipate all the implications of what we decide.

We were reminded that in Quaker process, standing aside can mean that we are not yet ready to unity with a decision. Standing in the way means that we think the decision is not right. When someone stands in the way it is the group's responsibility to discern whether that person's stop resonates with them and whether they should take more time to discern where the group is led. If the rest of the group senses that there is a Sense of the Meeting to move ahead the group can do so. Both the person who has disagreed with moving ahead and the group have the responsibility to stay engaged with each other as they move forward, always alert to the possibility of new Light. (This paragraph has replaced the original paragraph read during our session on Sunday, July 30. It is accurate, according to the person who spoke.)

The person who had said he could not approve the minute then stated that he was moved to stand aside and at the same time work with others for further clarity. (Added as a correction: He did not specifically refer to any specific committee with which to work.)

**The meeting approved the following minute:**

**Minute of Inclusion:  
Welcoming Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming People**

North Pacific Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, an organization of unprogrammed Quaker meetings and worship groups in Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and Montana, seeks to be an open and affirming faith community. We welcome all to share in worship and the activities of our common life.

North Pacific Yearly Meeting understands that the Divine Source is leading our Meeting to honor the gender identity and expression of each person, as understood by that person. We affirm that gender expression and identity may be fluid and changeable. We recognize that when we embrace the Light within the full spectrum of gender identities on our Meeting, our worship deepens and our community is enriched.

As part of our evolving struggle to live our testimony of equality, North Pacific Yearly Meeting minutes our commitment to becoming an affirming, safe, and nurturing place for everyone to live fully that which the Spirit is leading them to be.

We extend our loving care to people of all genders, including, but not limited to, transgender, genderqueer, cisgender, gender-fluid, agender, gender non-conforming, and intersex persons, their families and friends. We will continue to educate ourselves and our communities and take appropriate action to bring about a more equal world.

We extended worship. During worship one Friend offered the following quotation from scripture:

“A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will remove from your body the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.”  
Ezekiel 36:26.

**First Draft of our Epistle**

The Epistle Committee (Bill Ashworth, Chris Cradler, and Sakre Edison) read the first draft of our epistle. They are open to comments so that the epistle will reflect our complete work.

Respectfully submitted by Angelia Alexander, Recording Clerk