

## NPYM Ministry & Oversight Report 2016

*The Ministry and Oversight Committee of North Pacific Yearly Meeting, serves the Yearly Meeting, fostering the spiritual life and good order of the Yearly Meeting as a whole and at Annual Session.*

At our September meeting, we looked back at Annual Session 2015. Was there work we needed to follow up on or new initiatives we needed to take? During Annual Session, members of M&O led a discussion on “Safety in Meetings.” That discussion was continued during the year as Friends asked for information and resources. Some of us also attended the “Threshing Session about the Health of North Pacific Yearly Meeting.” We found from that discussion and others throughout the year that there is a profound difference in perception as to the health of our yearly meeting. Some feel that it is fine as is; others think there is too much business; others want more business. Some want more structure; some want less. There may be some who want our yearly meeting to be a mini FGC. We feel that concerns had been listened to; changes were made in 2015; and we are aware that the planning for Annual Session 2016 will reflect some of these concerns. We will continue to listen.

Our yearly meeting covers many miles and ranges of terrain. It is a struggle to try to serve the needs of Friends from Sheridan, Wyoming to Lopez Island, Washington—from Coos Bay, Oregon to Eureka, Montana. In the future, we know we will be using more advanced means of communication, but for now, we use conference calls to bring us together.

Mid-January 2016 we met by conference call with the topic, “Pastoral Care Among Unprogrammed Friends.” Nineteen Friends participated in the conversation, representing eleven Meetings and one Worship Group. Friends felt that the queries seemed helpful, and the session was fruitful.

These calls are limited by time and, in some cases, technical difficulties. After the calls, we share written minutes with participants, but not to the wider body of Friends. While some information might be useful to others, we feel that confidentiality helps set a climate of trust so that people are comfortable sharing. We noted that many comments seemed forthcoming and frank, deepening the conversation.

For many years it has been a tradition at Annual Session for the NPYM Ministry and Oversight Committee to gather with Ministry and Oversight/Ministry and Counsel members from monthly meetings. We did this at Annual Session 2015 and it was a good session, but we didn’t feel we had enough time. We decided to invite Ministry and Oversight/Ministry and Counsel members to join us for a no-topic phone consultation in February.

Six Friends joined NPYM Ministry and Oversight members on this call and the discussion was wide-ranging. However, we were disappointed with the numbers participating. We don’t know if the timing was bad; we didn’t get the information out to the right people; or if some Friends didn’t want to bring their own topic to the conversation. Friends who were with us talked about special programs they had sponsored, worship sharing regarding testimonies, find locations to meet, singing, deaths, and weddings. We are grateful for those who shared about their meetings.

In April the Ministry & Oversight Committee met in person on the Sunday following the Coordinating Committee meeting. While phone meetings do work well for us, it is a pleasure to be together.

We had planned to hold another topic-specific consultation call in early May, but decided against it. By then we were beginning to gather State of Society Reports, Memorial Minutes, and other information relating to the upcoming Annual Session.

In early February we started the process of selecting a visitor to Northwest Yearly Meeting. We sent out information and were delighted that four very-qualified Friends applied for the position. It was a

delight to have to make such a difficult choice. We chose Ann Stever, University Meeting, to represent us at Northwest Yearly Meeting later in July.

Our job description indicates that we are to liaison with other NPYM standing committees. We have not done this as well as we might have. One of us was able to meet with Outreach and Visitation Committee. And a Friend met once with Annual Session Planning Committee.

Our job description says that this committee is to foster the spiritual life and good order at Annual Session. We do our best. We have specific tasks we assign to one another. We pray and we hold in the Light, individuals, plenary sessions, and times of worship. We meet with newcomers and those who have concerns.

Your Ministry and Oversight Committee is a group of white elderly women, mostly from the west side of the Cascades (plus our ex-officio member, our wise and wonderful Presiding Clerk). We are not a full committee. We lament our lack of diversity and our lack of numbers. We look forward to the time when our Nominating Committee can find younger and more diverse Friends to serve our yearly meeting's needs. In the meantime, maybe we are who are meant to be. We serve as best we can.

In Friendship,

**Nancy McLauchlan**

Clerk, NPYM M&O