

Report to Meetings and Worship Groups from the NPYM Coordinating Committee Meeting of 7/25/2018

The NPYM Coordinating Committee met on July 25, the first day of Annual Session.

Nominating challenges among Friends was a major theme of this CC meeting. Here are some highlights from the discussion:

- Many meetings report trouble in finding enough people with enough energy to do the work—at least, the work as it is currently defined. We heard many variations on “we can’t find people for all our offices and committees” and several variations on “we will have to re-structure soon.”
- One meeting in NPYM operates as a “committee of the whole” for nominations. One meeting operates as a “committee of the whole” [members of the Religious Society of Friends only] for all necessary committee business.
- In one meeting, someone from the meeting’s leadership visits with every person in the meeting during the fall—not for a nominating “ask” but just to deepen the relationship between the individual and the group.
- If we’re having trouble with nominations, we are in good company. Nominating woes are common throughout Quakerdom, even in Britain Yearly Meeting.
- It doesn’t help that we are a “graying” society—or that almost all Friends of working age have full-time jobs outside the home.
- Nominations and finances are perpetual “see-saw” challenges among Quaker groups (and others): if one is not a current problem, the other likely will be.
- How can we adjust our structures so that we free up energy for issues that truly energize us?
- A jubilee year—a time when the meeting temporarily lays down everything except absolutely essential functions—can be a helpful pause to reconsider the group’s fundamental purposes, discern where the Spirit is leading, and rebuild a structure to support that.

Great advice heard at this Coordinating Committee meeting:

- If Friends are invested in the work and in the community, then it happens.
- “Look for the vision—and share the joy of the work!”
- An important question to ask new attenders is: “we can see you have this gift, could you try it out?”
- “Retire that phrase ‘we don’t do it that way!’”

Ways to Connect with Friends

Here are some specific requests and ways that we can connect with the wider community of Quakers:

- The NPYM Outreach & Visitation Committee is working to revise their job description, considering the various online communications which have become available since O&V was first created. They ask all of us to send their ideas about how they can best serve small worship groups and isolated or remote Friends.
- The NPYM Peace & Social Justice Committee has an active and highly motivated subcommittee on systemic racism. This group presented a draft minute for discussion during Annual Session. Watch for a revised draft to come to your meeting or worship group soon, for more seasoning before it goes to Annual Session 2019 for final consideration.
- The subcommittee on systemic racism is also planning an extended workshop, “Undoing Institutional Racism,” with the People’s Institute for Survival and Beyond. This workshop will be held in Olympia this fall – date still to be determined. Watch for details, and plan to attend if you can.

Ask your meeting’s member of the Coordinating Committee for more information about any of these items. There’s a lot going on in our Quaker community!