

State of the Intermountain Yearly Meeting, June 2018

Molly Wingate, Presiding Clerk

I heard for 13 meetings and 3 worship groups this year when I requested state of the meeting reports. You can read them in the bookstore and on line at IMYM.org. I strongly encourage you to take heart by finding out what other meetings are doing to build a beloved community in their location.

We are rising to the challenges that face us. For some meetings, it is having enough people to be a worship group. For others the challenge is facing our whiteness, our privilege, our assumptions. We struggle to be honest with ourselves and to be hospitable. Throughout our yearly meeting, Friends wish to match the openness they have in their hearts and minds with their actions and their welcome.

Some of our struggles are internal ones. Challenges within our meetings. As we make changes, we sometimes find that we do not have the unity we thought we had, and we start over with our discernments. I read over and over how meetings were willing to be uncomfortable among themselves and to move through the discomfort to new clarity. We stretch. We stumble. We grow.

The spirit is alive and well in our meetings' actions. We see the spiritual base of social actions as Friends connect with our local communities' religious and social action groups in creating Sanctuaries in our communities and in our meetinghouses. Many meetings and individual Friends practice their faith in work with homeless people, finding fair housing, striving for sustainability, ending wars, providing health care and many more actions. We will have a chance to connect on some of these topics in our interest groups tomorrow and Friday.

Meetings also rise to the challenges of caring for our members' and attenders' spiritual lives. Several meetings commented on the clearness, care and clearness, and anchor committees they support.

Friends helping Friends discern, watching for the movements of God or Spirit.

As I read the state of the meeting reports, I found ideas for how to approach a few challenges my monthly meeting faces. I also found inspiration in Friends speaking truth to power, and I was humbled by the range of challenges each group of Friends rises to meet. Whether you have read these reports in preparation for coming to around Yearly Meeting, haven't read them yet but plan to visit the bookstore for that specific purpose, or you don't get around to it until you return, I urge you to savor the lives of our constituent meetings and worship groups. You are part of something alive. Your fellow Friends accomplish Spirit Led actions great and small with integrity and grace throughout our Yearly Meeting.

Our Yearly Meeting also faced a challenge. We wanted to erase any financial barriers for Friends to attend the annual gathering. Our experiment in Pay as Led this year did bring more registrations and newcomers than last year. Monthly meetings supported the experiment and Friends have been generous. We won't know the financial results until we pay all our bills, but we faced this challenge with faith and have some positive results.

We will continue to have challenges and our track record with them looks good. Even when those challenges make us uncomfortable. So I have a challenge for you. Each of you. Please answer these three questions: What role does the Yearly Meeting play in your life and the life of your Monthly Meeting? What role do you want it to play? How can I help?